

# Treasure

Session 5 • Matthew 6:19-34



## ENGAGE

**PREPARE:** Make copies of **Pack Item 9** (Handout: *Praying Scripture in Matthew's Gospel*) and **Pack Item 11** (Handout: *The Sermon on the Mount*).

**INTRODUCE:** Read the opening paragraph on page 47 as adults make a mental list of their debts.

**ASK:** Do you agree or disagree that misplaced priorities fuel debt? Explain your answer. (p. 47)

**STATE:** Regardless of where individuals stand on the issue of debt, we can agree that humans are prone to let material possessions dominate our lives. When we do, the world steals our proper focus from God and we fail to trust Him like we should.

**REVIEW:** Remind adults that this is the second of three sessions drawn from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 11** (Handout: *The Sermon on the Mount*) and direct them to scan through the content. Encourage them to share what they recall from the previous session.

**CONTEXT:** Share this information from **Understand the Context** (p. 47) to help set the context for Matthew 6:

- *"In chapter 6, Jesus contrasted sincere religious activities with the insincerity of those He called 'hypocrites.' Jesus was speaking of motivation. The hypocritical scribes and Pharisees were motivated by selfishness and pride. They performed acts of piety for the attention and accolade of others. Jesus's followers were to engage in acts of devotion out of a desire to glorify God."*

**TRANSITION:** In Matthew 6:1-18, Jesus touched on topics like benevolence, prayer, and fasting. The real key to living as a Christ follower in this world is trusting Him with all your heart. That's going to be the focus of this session.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

**READ:** Call on three volunteers to read **Matthew 6:19-21, 22-23, 24** as the group determines which of the three passages is most convicting and which is most inspiring.

**DISCUSS:** Allow adults to share their responses to the three sets of verses that were read. Discuss what this passages says about wealth as well as what it *doesn't* say. Emphasize that God never condemns wealth when used properly, but He does not want us controlled by material possessions.

**SHARE:** Direct attention to the **Did You Know?** feature (p. 49). Note that more than 2,300 Bible references to money and possessions prove it is an important topic.

**RECAP:** To highlight the danger of storing up improper treasures, share this content:

- **(6:19)** *Jesus gave the reason for not storing up treasures on earth: we could lose these things because of moth, rust, or thieves who destroy or steal such treasures. In those days wealth was usually either in cloth (clothing and perhaps tapestries), jewelry, or money; things that easily might be damaged or taken by thieves. What James (Jesus's half-brother) wrote in James 5:2-3 speaks to the impermanence of such material things.*

**EXPLAIN:** Use the following to highlight the significance of the eye and the choice people must make between two masters.

- **(6:22-23)** Jesus used the eye to illustrate the importance of proper perception. Through this lamp of the body, we observe everything around us. But it's important that our source of spiritual perception stays healthy (or clear). We maintain proper focus when we see as God sees. In context, Jesus addressed the issue of one's treasure and its effect on the heart. He made it clear that we cannot serve two masters. Believers should focus on heavenly treasures rather than worldly possessions. If we love God supremely, we will serve Him alone.

**ASK:** How can we assess where our true devotion lies? (p. 49)

**READ:** Call on a volunteer to read **Matthew 6:25-30** aloud. Direct half the group to count how often the word "worry" is used as the other half counts the number of questions Jesus asked.

**SHARE:** Allow the "worry" group to share what they counted. Encourage adults to identify the sources of worry Jesus mentioned in the passage (*food, drink, clothes*). Emphasize that these were legitimate concerns in the first century. To supplement the context, share the following:

- **(6:25)** *In the first century, questions about what to eat or drink or what to wear had nothing to do with menus or fashion trends. They focused on basic needs for survival. But Jesus emphasized that human existence consists of more than food and clothing. Regardless of economic circumstances, every person should remember that life is about more than our physical stuff. We all have deep spiritual needs that will define our eternity.*

**ASK:** What kinds of things might you be tempted to worry about—and why? (p. 49)

**SHARE:** Allow the "questions" group to share what they found. Highlight that Jesus's questions were not for information but for reflection. Point out that the examples of birds and flowers reminded His listeners that they could trust God to take care of their needs, eliminating the need for worry.

**ASK:** What are practical things you can do to get through times when you have "little faith" in God? (p. 49)

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read **Matthew 6:31-34** aloud while the group listens for repeated words or phrases.

**ASK:** Why does “tomorrow” create so much anxiety for us? (p. 49)

**DEFINE:** Note that Jesus referred to those who grasp after food, drink, and clothing as unbelievers because He taught us to counter those concerns with daily prayer.

**RECAP:** Use the following to explain the two reasons Jesus gave to avoid worry: *We don’t want to act like unbelievers, and we know we can trust God to meet our needs.*

- **(6:32)** Jesus offered two reasons to avoid worrying. First, we don’t want to act like Gentiles. Jesus demonstrated love for all people: Jews, Gentiles, or Samaritans. In this instance, “Gentiles” was a general term for unbelievers. When we allow materialism to consume our lives, we are behaving like those who have no relationship with God. A second reason to avoid worry rests in our heavenly Father. If we have a relationship with God as Father, we believe He cares for us and wants to provide for our needs.

**ASK:** What situation do you need to entrust to God today? (p. 49). Discuss responses, reminding adults of the futility of worrying about tomorrow and the power of faithful trust in God.

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## CHALLENGE

**HIGHLIGHT:** Point out that today’s passage makes it clear that God provides all of our

needs from His abundant resources, so we should trust Him—not obsess over material possessions like they belong to us or worry as if He will not come through when we need Him to move in our lives.

**DISCUSS:** Encourage adults to read and reflect on the first **Apply the Text** question on page 53: **What would you consider to be your greatest barrier in seeking first the kingdom of God?** Allow a few volunteers to share their struggles and practical ways to put kingdom priorities first.

**PRAY:** Encourage adults to use the **Explore the Bible Prayer Guide** (p. 15) to pray through this Scripture passage during the week. Close the session in prayer, asking God to give adults the wisdom and boldness to trust Him and to seek His kingdom as their highest priority in life.

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## AFTER THE SESSION

Send the group a text or email, directing them to think through the **Apply the Text** suggestion on page 49. Encourage individuals who are comfortable to share a personal need they are facing. Commit to praying for those needs and challenge other adults to join you in praying for one another. Suggest that they be sensitive to how God may move them to be the “answer” to one of these prayers.