

Priorities, Possessions and Time Management

Listed Scriptures

Gen 13:8-13, 14:14-15:1

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students will view their material possessions as second place compared to their relationships with God
- 2) That the students will be able to talk about how they determine value

Memory Verse

"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mt 16:26)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Gen 10-17

W A R M U P



Imagine you have a younger brother and both of you are in your late 30's. Both of you are well established and making reasonable salaries. You have a nice car, a good size house, a great job and you also maintain a good savings plan that enables you to give tithe to the church. One day, your younger brother suddenly comes and tells you that he is going through bankruptcy and he demands that you give him a large sum of money in order to pay off some of his debts. What would you do for the sake of your relationship with your younger brother?



Part 1

Possessions

Choosing between possessions and people (or between riches and relationships) is a hard decision to make. But many of us have to face this kind of choice in life. We can choose to love our possessions or to love people. How do we make this decision? Does God care about how we value relationships and the way we value our possessions?

1. Let's take a look at Genesis 13:8-13.

Abram was a very wise man when it came to putting people before possessions. When did Abram allow Lot to take whatever he wanted? What do you think this did for their relationship?

(Abram was indeed wise. By allowing Lot to choose the best land, Abram showed Lot that peace in a family and his relationship with Lot was more important than his wealth. If Abram had held on tightly to what was rightfully his, he would have had family problems that might have lasted for years.)

2. Let's read Genesis 14:1-15:1.

After Abram and Lot parted, Lot went on to enjoy a good life in the best of the land. However, later on in his life, several kings surrounding Sodom rose up and looted the city, taking Lot and his family with them. After Lot was captured, what did Abram do?

(Abram took 318 trained fighters and set out in pursuit of the looters. Abram's men attacked and recaptured all the goods, and saved Lot and his family as well.)

3. What reward did the king of Sodom offer Abram for his deed?

4. Why did Abram turn it down?

5. What did this do for his relationship with the king of Sodom?

(The king told Abram that he could keep all the goods for himself. But Abram refused them because he had earlier made an oath to God. Abram turned this offer down because accepting a gift from the king would bind Abram politically to the leader. Abram had already determined to not let the attraction of

these riches lead him into an unhealthy relationship.)

6. What did Abram give to the priest Melchizedek?

7. What did this do for his relationship with God?

(Abram gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything that he had as an offering to God. Abram's offering showed God that He was more important to him than his wealth.)



Part 2

Priorities

"Does God really care about what I do with my money and my possessions? What difference do these decisions make to Him?" Since God made you in His image, what you do with your money and possessions do matter a lot to Him. Let's take a look at monetary priorities. We have many things in our lives that demand money, including our tithe, bills, food, education, and clothes. Sometimes, we may even feel that there just isn't enough money for everything. People get caught in a life-long trap when they put aside their Christian values for the love of money. The worst thing is that we might even do something that we know isn't God's way because it makes more money for us. Therefore, a good list of priorities helps keep us focused on godly use of money and attitudes. When we use money the way God wants us to, we won't want things that are unhealthy. So, what is your priority? Let students work on their list of priorities for about 5 minutes.

Priorities help us make decisions on whether we can or should do certain things. Before we do anything, buy anything or go anywhere, we should take a look at our list of priorities. For example, work is important, but imagine working seven days a week. We may make a lot of money, but what does it support? Does it support our desire for money? Yes. Does it make our family happy? No, they never get to see us. Does it make God happy? No, He doesn't get to spend time with us either. Does it support the values that we want to live by? No, there's no room in our lives for anything but money.

Do our priorities follow God's plan for our lives? God has designed our lives to have balance in all things. Our prayer time, our devotional time, our families, school, work, rest, relationships, personal time and recreational time should be balanced if we are following God's will.

So, where do we put God in our lives? The Bible makes it very clear where God should be on our list—the top! When it comes to investing our time and money, our list should be God, family, school or work, then recreation. There are a few standards that God wants us to focus on when it comes to money and possessions. Read the following verses and discuss why they are important values and standards for us to go by.

1. Concerning Contentment

We should be very thankful for the things we have. “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you’” (Heb 13:5). Read 1 Timothy 6:6-8. “Godliness with contentment is great gain for we brought nothing into this world...”

2. The Importance of Working Hard

A lot of people don’t like to work and want everything. Their philosophy is, “Why worry about tomorrow, go for the now!” Therefore, a lot of people go around buying all kinds of stuff on credit. But remember, as God’s people, He wants us to save for the things we need. “He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment” (Prov 12:11).

3. Managing Money

We should be using our money wisely and with an ear to God’s heart. “And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Heb 13:16).

4. Planning Ahead

God wants us to be planners. What we do today is our foundation for tomorrow. “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed” (Prov 16:3).

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

Why did Abram let Lot choose whatever land he wanted first? What does this tell us about Abram’s priority and also his faith in God?

- 2 How did Abram make sure he did not “owe” the King of Sodom anything? Why did he want to do that?
- 3 What does Hebrews 13:5 tell us about the right attitudes we should have towards riches?
- 4 What advice does Hebrews 13:16 have for us with regard to our relationships with the people around us?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Part A- The Danger of Materialism

Tolstoy once told a story of an outlandish real estate sale. Some Russian tradesmen made an offer to sell all the land a person could walk around on in one day—for one thousand rubles. The person had to be back by sunset, however, or lose his money. A peasant heard of the offer and sold everything he had to take advantage of it. He gave his one thousand rubles to the men and set off. He walked for a while and saw all the beautiful hills that he wanted for his own. After walking past those, he saw even more land that he wanted. He quickened his pace to include that property. Dusk was approaching, and he had to make his way back—but there was just a little more he wished to have. He began to race back to meet the deadline of darkness, encircling as much property as humanly possible. He ran as hard as he could to the starting point. He made it on time, but collapsed dead upon the mark. Now all the land that he needed was a six-foot hole in which to be buried.

Question: What would you do if given a similar opportunity?

Teaching Tips

As Tolstoy’s story illustrates, “more” only leads to death. Your students will tell you that more of everything is better, because it provides popularity, prestige, and even power. The bottom line is that “more” claims to provide security, the number one emotional need of teens. However, the only thing that can really provide this kind of security is a relationship with God. After all, He is the provider of all that we have.

Questions to think about:

1. Read 1 Timothy 6:6-8. According to this verse, what is the key to contentment?
2. What is your own definition of godliness?
3. Since God will provide for our needs, both physical and emotional, how should we value our priorities?
4. Why is it that our attitude toward our possessions has a big effect on our relationships, especially our relationship with God?
5. Each one of us will die one day. What will be your possession if God tells you that tomorrow is your last day?

God gave us our resources for several reasons. Surprisingly, one of those reasons is the pleasure they bring. But once you desire the pleasure of the gifts more than the giver, your desires become idolatry. What does God say about that? Let's read James 4:4-5. This verse tells us that God will not tolerate second place.

The ultimate reason people accumulate wealth is to increase their sense of security. God, the creator and provider of all wealth, knows that only a relationship with Him will provide the true security that people seek. Just like what we studied earlier, Abram's choices were grounded in his confidence that trusting God was the most profitable choice he could make, even when the benefit wasn't immediate.



We need to ask ourselves, "What is our treasure?" Read Luke 12:34. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The message is very clear to us. What we value reflects our hearts. Imagine if we had to sit forever in a room with the things we valued. Many of us would be sitting alone with bags of money. How about sitting in a room full of our loved ones, and strangers to whom we gave time, love, support and care? That's a treasure room God would be proud of. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus Christ told us that we need to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." That's what God treasures and values. Let's pray to ask God to give us the wisdom.