

## Being Content

### STEP 1 **Life Need** (5–10 minutes)

- Study some commercials to discover their hidden messages.
  - “Hidden Messages” Teaching Aid—separate before class, clear tape

### STEP 2 **Bible Learning** (15–20 minutes)

- **Bible Study:** Learn what Jesus taught about owning material possessions.
  - Bible Adventures* pp. 2–3, “Ten Commandments” Teaching Aid, Bibles
- **Bible Review:** Emphasize the proper perspective on what is the most important treasure.

### STEP 3 **Bible Application** (5–10 minutes)

- **Memory Work:** Discover how we can overcome greed.
  - Bible Adventures* p. 1, pencils

### STEP 4 **Life Response** (about 5 minutes)

- Complete a self-evaluation concerning our “treasures.”
  - Bible Adventures* p. 4, pencils
- **Optional Activity:** Prayer journal assignment

## Memory Verse

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have.

—Hebrews 13:5

indicates items you will need to prepare before class

### Bible Basis:

God commands people not to covet (Exod. 20:15, 17). Jesus shows the danger of coveting through the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:13–21, 33–34).

### Bible Truth:

It’s more important to store treasures in heaven than to greedily desire having more things here on earth.

### Lesson Aim:

That your students will be challenged to value spiritual things more than material possessions.

## Understanding the Bible

This week’s lesson about the rich fool will emphasize the dangers of coveting.

This week’s story is commonly called

the parable of the rich fool. It is given this title because the main character is a rich man by his society’s standards, but a fool as far as God is concerned. In this parable, a man had stored up treasures for himself on earth, making wealth the main goal of his life. However, he had not done anything to be spiritually rich. When the man died, his foolishness was revealed.

Jesus told the parable in response to a question regarding inheritance rights. A certain man wanted his brother to divide an inheritance with him. By appealing to Jesus, the man showed his covetousness—he desired what didn’t belong to him.

In Jesus’ day, the average person acquired food and shelter through agriculture. Most people had adequate food, but very few would have been in a position of being so wealthy that they had to build bigger barns, as in Jesus’ parable. In the eyes of the world, the man in the parable had a secure, happy future—the best that life had to offer. The man’s foolishness blinded him to the kingdom of God and the judgment awaiting those who do not follow God.

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### Understanding the Bible —cont'd

The main point of Jesus' parable is that it is more important to have treasure in heaven than to build it up on earth. In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus said His followers should not build up treasures on earth because a person's heart would always be where his treasure was. In verse 24 we are warned about trying to serve God and money. Jesus says it is just not possible to serve both!

According to Jesus, we build up treasure in heaven by selling our possessions if need be. The money is then used for the benefit of those who have little or none (Luke 12:33-34). In 1 Timothy 6, Paul lists some specific treasures God desires us to have: contentment, righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. A person who is right toward God will have a treasure he cannot lose.

## TIPS

### Classroom

**Here are some tips to help you gently guide your students toward a better perspective about possessions.**

- Take an informal survey asking your students about something they received or bought during the last few months. Do they still use it a lot? Does it still seem as important now as it did when they first had it?
- You may want to point out that taking proper care of what we have is also important. You can demonstrate this in the classroom by having your students take turns caring for the supplies and materials.
- You could share a personal experience that brought you real joy and true satisfaction but didn't involve material possessions.
- Ask your students about a time when they gave up something or bought something special for someone else—how did it make them feel?

## PRESESSION ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities to do as students arrive.

■ Set out a large sheet of poster board. Write the memory verse in the center, but not in large letters. Tell students to draw or describe on the poster what they would do with a million dollars.

□ poster board and markers

■ To get your students thinking about a proper perspective regarding material possessions, have them list some of the things that they own. They can do this on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper. Then have them remove any that are not eternal. How many are left? What are they?

□ whiteboard or large sheet of paper and markers

■ For Worship Time, use the songs on the DisKit CD from the Creative Teaching Aids packet.

□ DisKit CD, CD player



## Understanding Your Students

Preteens growing up in today's culture are very conscious of possessions. By the time they are 10 or 11 they already have an idea of what's "in" and "out." In their eyes popularity may mean owning the newest, most expensive pair of shoes or having the latest

electronic device.

Many preteens may see the possession of certain things as making them more important than others. They may also see it as a solution to all of their problems.



STEP 1 

Life Need  
(5–10 minutes)

## Lesson Aim:

That your students will be challenged to value spiritual things more than material possessions.

**Objective:** That your students will discuss how advertisements may cause us to want things we don't really need.

**Materials:**

- “Hidden Messages” Teaching Aid—separate before class
- Clear tape






The “Hidden Messages” Teaching Aid will help your students identify some of the hidden messages found in advertisements. This activity and discussion will help them examine their attitudes about possessions.

Before class, punch out the four arrows from Teaching Aid 4, “Hidden Messages.” Divide the class into four teams and give each group one of the arrows. Place the “Hidden Messages” poster where all students can see it.


Advertisers try to make us believe that our lives are incomplete without their products. They want us to think we'll live happily ever after if we buy what they have to sell.

Ask each team to identify which ad appeals to the desire identified on their arrow, and what the ad outwardly is about (soda, amusement park, game, jeans). Ask for a volunteer to use clear tape and attach their arrow to the ad they picked out. (If they think the arrow could go on more than one ad, have them choose the one it fits best.) Teams may enjoy acting out their ad.

Have your students find a partner and discuss the following questions.

-  **Think of a real ad you've seen or heard recently that caused you to want the product advertised. Tell your partner what the ad was selling.**
-  **What promises did it make about the product?**
-  **How would having that product make your life better?**
-  **How would not getting it affect your life?**
-  **Do you think you will get the product? Why or why not?**

Bring your students together again and ask them this question.

-  **What are some things that make you want a product that you don't have?** *(Let students answer without comment. Students may talk about seeing a friend have the product or seeing it advertised on TV. Some students may talk about a product being an accessory to a video game they have or a sport they participate in. Some may even say that they believe that getting the product will make them happier. Most, however, will probably admit that seeing a product advertised or in a friend's possession is key in making them wish they had the same thing.)*

Today's Bible story shows what Jesus teaches about wanting more things than we need.



# STEP 2

Bible Learning  
(15–20 minutes)

## Bible Basis:

God commands people not to covet (Exod. 20:15, 17). Jesus shows the danger of coveting through the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21, 33-34).

**Objective:** That your students will learn what Jesus teaches about the owning of material possessions.

**Materials:**

- Bible Adventures pp. 2–3
- “Ten Commandments” Teaching Aid
- Bibles

**Bible Study**

Distribute *Bible Adventures* for Lesson 4 among your class. Have them turn to “Rich and Foolish,” the Bible study found on pages 2 and 3. Read aloud to them the introductory paragraph from *Bible Adventures* after they have bookmarked Luke 12 in their Bibles.

The parable in this week’s lesson was told by Jesus in answer to a question about an inheritance. Ask students:

- ▶ **Who can tell me what an inheritance is?** *(An inheritance is property passed from a relative or family member who dies, to a living family member or members. It is a way of keeping property in a family, and making sure family members are provided for.)*

Ask a student to read the first footnote. Then have a volunteer read Luke 12:13-15 from the Bible. Discuss the following questions:

- ▶ **The man and his brother were arguing about an inheritance. What did the man want Jesus to do?** *(It’s possible that he wanted Jesus to tell his brother to split their inheritance 50/50 instead of the customary arrangement of the older brother receiving a double portion. Or there may have been some other problem we don’t know about.)*

- ▶ **What did Jesus tell the man and anyone else listening?** *(That they should be on guard against greed; life is not measured by how much they own.)*

- ▶ **Jesus ignored the man’s question and pointed out the real problem. What was it?** *(The man was being greedy and not content with what he had.)*

Have a volunteer read the transitional paragraph and footnote 2, then ask someone else to read the first Scripture Spotlight section, Luke 12:16-19.

- ▶ **What was the man’s attitude about himself and his riches?** *(He was very satisfied; he was sure he was set for life; he was proud.)*

- ▶ **How did he plan to live from then on?** *(He was just going to relax and take it easy.)*

Have students read the next brief paragraph silently to themselves, then assign someone to read Luke 12:20-21 from the Bible.

- ▶ **What happened to the rich man?** *(That very night he died and his riches went to someone else.)*

- ▶ **What did Jesus mean by “rich toward God”?**

BIBLE STUDY BASED ON EXODUS 20:15, 17; LUKE 12:13-21, 33-34



# RICH AND FOOLISH

**W**herever Jesus went, thousands of people came to hear Him. Jesus often spoke of His loving Father in heaven. He told the people to trust in God and to depend on God’s love for them.

**Read Luke 12:13-15. The man and his brother were arguing about an inheritance.<sup>1</sup> What did the man want Jesus to do? What did Jesus tell the man and anyone else listening? Jesus ignored the man’s question and pointed out the real problem. What was it?**

Exodus 20:15, 17 tell us not to steal and not to covet—to wish for or be jealous of the good things that others have. Jesus warned the people not to be greedy; there is more to life than having lots of money. To help the people understand what He meant, Jesus told a parable.<sup>2</sup>

**SCRIPTURE SPOTLIGHT**  
Luke 12:16-19

*The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, “What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.”*

*Then he said, “This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns<sup>3</sup> and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’”*



<sup>3</sup>Barley, wheat, and millets were valuable grain crops in Palestine because bread is such an important food.

**What was the man’s attitude about himself and his riches? How did he plan to live from then on?**

The rich man didn’t think about people who had nothing to eat. He didn’t think about God, who had



<sup>4</sup>Once grain was harvested, it was stored in large clay pots, in dry wells, or in storage barns.

<sup>1</sup>Normally, only sons could inherit family wealth. The eldest son got a double share of property.

<sup>2</sup>Parables were short picture stories that Jesus used to teach a lesson.

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Jesus told the people that money and possessions do not make people happy. Only God can give true riches—blessings that can never be stolen or lost. We should trust God to supply our needs and be satisfied with what He gives us.

think about God, who had given him all his riches. He only thought of himself and enjoying life.

Read Luke 12:20-21. What happened to the rich man? What did Jesus mean by “rich toward God”? What did Jesus’ parable have to do with the man’s question (verse 13)? Read Luke 12:33-34. How does the attitude shown here compare with that of the rich man?



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*(Making God most important in life; valuing God more than anything, especially riches.)*

▶ **What did Jesus’ parable have to do with the man’s question (verse 13)?** *(The man who asked the question in verse 13 was also greedy and thinking only of himself.)*

Have another student look up Luke 12:33-34.

▶ **How does the attitude shown here compare with that of the rich man?** *(The rich man was looking for ways to hold on to his possessions. But he didn’t think of anyone besides himself. These verses remind us that our greatest treasure is God—only God will last, while the things we own on earth will be destroyed.)*

Have a volunteer read the summary paragraph in *Bible Adventures*. If you have time, ask the following bonus questions, not found in *Bible Adventures*:

▶ **Why do you think people are not satisfied with what they have?** *(People see what others have and want it; advertisements make us aware of things we don’t have.)*

Point out that people may try to fill an emptiness inside with things, when only God can fill that spot.

### Bible Review

As you discuss the parable, bring out some of the facts about wealth in Bible times. Money was scarce and there were no banks. Wealth consisted chiefly of grain or other products that could be stored away. This farmer with his big barns would have been envied by other people.

Because he was so rich and comfortable, this man in the parable forgot about God. He forgot that it was God who provided the sunshine and the rainfall when it was needed. Often such a rich farmer may have been glad when bad years came and other people’s crops failed. His neighbors would have to come to him and beg for food. The farmer’s wealth gave him power over them. If a wealthy farmer died without any family, all his grain was divided among the people in his town. This may have been what God was referring to when He asked, “Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?”

▶ **Why do you think God called the rich farmer a fool?** *(Because the man didn’t recognize what was really important. The farmer died without believing in God.)*

The farmer worked hard to get things that were not lasting. He neglected the things that were eternal.

STEP 3 Bible Application  
(5–10 minutes)

**Objective:** That your students will understand how God can help them overcome tendencies of greed.

**Materials:**

□ Bible Adventures p. 1, pencils

Have students turn to page 1 in *Bible Adventures* and read the directions aloud. If you have a larger class, students could work together to look up the verses. When all of the verses have been found, have students read them aloud and fill in each “direction” with the correct words.

- ▶ According to Hebrews 13:5, what can we be happy about? (*We should be happy with what we have.*)
- ▶ Why can we be happy? (*Because God promises He will never leave us.*)
- ▶ Matthew 6:8 tells us that we don’t ever need to be greedy for anything. What is the reason for this? (*God knows what we need even before we ask for anything, so we don’t need to worry.*)
- ▶ What does that mean to us? (*God will take care of those who serve Him.*)
- ▶ According to Proverbs 11:25, what are we told will happen if we share with others? (*We will be greatly rewarded.*)

**Memory Work**

Have someone read the Key Verse aloud. After your students have unscrambled the words, have them write the words on the lines.

The Key Verse gives us two instructions.

- ▶ What is the first one? (*Keep your lives free from the love of money.*)
- ▶ What does that mean? (*It means not to be greedy and want money more than anything else.*)

This verse does not say that earning or having money is wrong. Money is a gift from God, and we should be thankful for it. The verse means that we are not to make money the number one priority in our lives.

- ▶ What is the second instruction found in this verse? (*Be content with what you have.*)
- ▶ How would you say this in your own words? (*Be happy, don’t envy others, and be satisfied.*)

It may be hard not to be jealous of people who have more than we do. But God can give us the power to resist that temptation and to be content with what we have. God will help us overcome the Greed Bug by giving us what we need.

# STEP 4

Life Response  
(5–10 minutes)

## Bible Truth:

It's more important to store treasures in heaven than to greedily desire having more things here on earth.

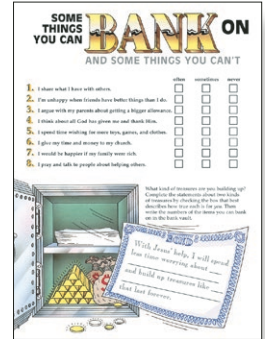
**Objective:** That your students will evaluate where their treasures are—on earth or in heaven.

**Materials:**

- Bible Adventures p. 4, pencils

Have your students turn to page 4 in *Bible Adventures*. Our lives often become cluttered with all kinds of stuff. Some of it is important, but a lot of it has very little lasting value. As followers of Jesus, we need to understand the difference between earthly and heavenly treasures.

Explain that this is a private page and all class members may mark it in the way that is true for them. Encourage your students to be as specific as possible when they fill in the “Bank Bond.” Let students work in separate areas around the room. After a few minutes, gather the class back together.

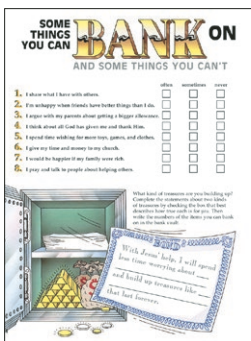


▶ Which statements on this page show us some ways to have treasures in heaven? (*Sharing our money and possessions, giving of our time and money, praying for the poor, encouraging others to join you in helping those in need, and thinking about God's blessings and thanking Him.*)

Only things such as the love of Jesus, friendship, sharing with others, and trust in God are worth having as our greatest treasures. These things are eternal and their value will never change. By valuing these above everything else, we are “storing up treasures in heaven.”

### Closing Activity

Close the class in prayer. You may want to use one like this: Dear God, thank You for caring for us and freeing us from worry about what we need. Help us to desire heavenly treasures more than earthly ones. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



### Optional Activity

In your prayer journal this week, choose something that you want to work on from page 4 of *Bible Adventures*. Write it in your journal and pray about it this week. Write down how you see God changing your life in that area.