

Lesson 3: Less Is More

What we want students to learn: That no matter how much stuff we have, or want, it doesn't add any real meaning to our life.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To accept the challenge to see what stuff they can do without and consider donating it to someone who is needy.

Scripture Focus: Luke 12:13-21

Overview: This is an interesting lesson, and maybe a bold one. You're going to build off a key phrase in Jesus' words from Luke 12: "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." You're going to help your students understand exactly what this phrase means, but then you're going to take it a step further. You're going to challenge your students to consider parting with some of their stuff as a reflection of their internalization of this truth. You'll have the chance, if you choose, to encourage students to work with their parent(s) to donate some of their stuff to charity, maybe even one your church sponsors. In this way, you'll be providing them with a practical way to live out Jesus' teachings on our stuff.

🎥 Teacher Prep Video

The *Jesus And Stuff* Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "Jesus And Stuff Lesson 3 Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-stuff-teacher-prep>

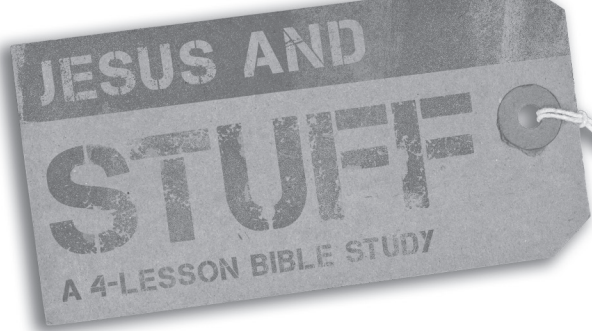
Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know who wrote the book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **What's The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

The Details

- **Author:** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian and a companion of Paul.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.
- **Purpose:** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus so as to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.



The Setting

There's a lot going on leading up to Luke 12. In Luke 10 Jesus sends out his disciples and tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. In Luke 11 Jesus teaches His disciples the Lord's Prayer, and has his "woe to you" confrontation with the Pharisees. By the time we see Jesus in Luke 12, we find Him teaching His disciples amidst a larger crowd. Though the crowd would no doubt hear what Jesus was saying, Luke tells us that the teaching was primarily for His disciples.

The Main Point

The heart of this lesson is found in verse 15, and could really be seen as the key verse for this entire four-lesson study. It's pretty straightforward, as Jesus often was: "Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Greed is the nearly insatiable drive for more. It's a gnawing in your stomach that makes a person completely unsatisfied with what he or she has, and drives him or her to acquire more. But Jesus knows where this ends. No amount of stuff can make us happy. Only a life focused on Christ and His Kingdom results in true joy.

Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

The Lead In

- **Goal:** To help students begin to ask questions about what really adds meaning to life.
- **Set-Up:** None needed.

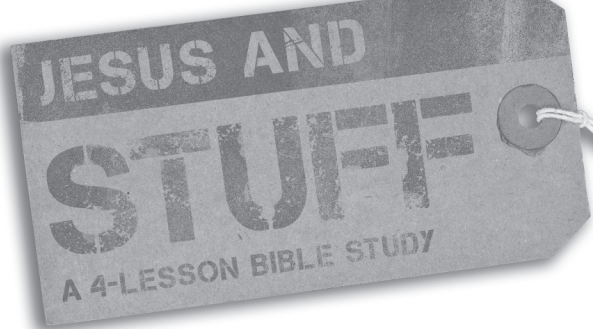
FIRST, explain to students that you're going to lead them in a brief discussion centered around one question: "How much is enough?" Ask students:

- **Do you have enough stuff?**
 - o Answer: See how students answer this. Don't elaborate. Maybe ask it twice, but be OK with the silence. If students answer yes, ask one to explain his or her response. If students answer no, do the same.
- **Maybe this is a better question: Could you have enough stuff?**
 - o Answer: Again, when students answer yes or no, engage them. Have them explain why they answered as they did.
- **Is it possible to have too much stuff?**
 - o Answer: Repeat the same process for examining students' opinions here.

FINALLY, ask: How much stuff is really enough? Let this last question sink in a moment. An answer will probably be a little harder to articulate. After it hangs out there for a moment, say something like:

- **These questions are hard to answer. They are intentionally difficult to answer because I want you to begin to really think about the amount of stuff you have, the stuff you want that you don't have, and how much you truly desire to obtain the stuff that you want. Each one of us, at different times in our lives, have wanted something we thought would really make a difference in our lives. But how often did it turn out to be true? Jesus had some interesting thoughts on this very phenomenon. As we begin our third lesson on Jesus and Stuff, let's take a closer look at what He said.**

Transition to the Main Event.



The Main Event

- **Goal:** To help students understand that no matter how much stuff we have, or want, it doesn't add any real meaning to our life.
- **Set Up:** None needed.

FIRST, take a moment and see if anyone can remember what you discussed in Lessons 1 and 2. Use the following bullet points to help fill in the gaps:

- **Lesson 1: We learned that Jesus said it's impossible to both love our stuff and truly love God.**
- **Lesson 1: We learned the importance of understanding that our stuff is fleeting; only the impact you have for God will go with you to heaven.**
- **Lesson 2: We learned that if our love for our stuff comes between our devotion to God, we're doing it all wrong.**
- **Lesson 2: We learned the importance of honestly evaluating whether or not our love for our stuff competes with our devotion to Christ.**

THEN, instruct students to turn to Luke 12 in their Bibles. While they're doing so, help provide some of the context for the passage using the Details and Setting sections of your Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read Luke 12:13-21. When you've finished, lead students in a discussion. Ask:

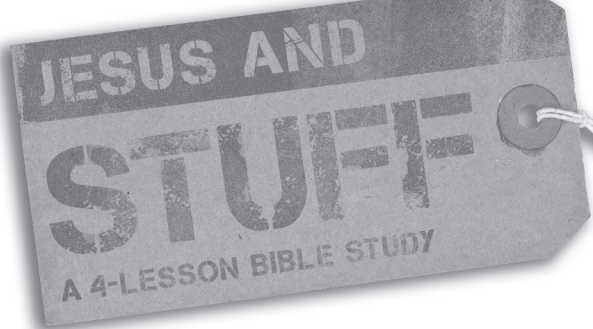
- **Look at verses 13-15 and summarize what's going on here.**
 - o Answers will vary. Make sure students have a good grasp of the issue the man was raising and Jesus' response.
- **Jesus makes a powerful statement here in verse 15. In your own words, what is the truth Jesus is teaching here?**
 - o Answers will vary. But make sure students understand that Jesus is talking about how futile it is to look for meaning in our possessions.
- **We live in a culture that puts a tremendous value on having stuff. Can you think of some examples where you are aware of being pressured to buy or otherwise acquire stuff?**
 - o Answers will vary, but some examples might include any type of advertising, product placements in movies, friends who show off clothing or gadgets, and so on.
- **Do you see examples of people in this world who seem to search for happiness or meaning in their stuff?**
 - o Answers will vary, but reality TV is full of this. Without putting anyone down, there is celebrity after celebrity who spend money lavishly but still have a tremendous amount of personal issues and trials of their own making.
- **Why do you think people are so determined to seek out meaning and fulfillment in their possessions?**
 - o Answers will vary.

Transition into the rest of the passage by reminding your students of last week's lesson. Say something like:

- **Remember the rich young ruler? He was a good guy. He followed the Law and was kind to others. He was also super rich. But recall that he went away sad when Jesus told him the way to eternal life. The rich young man had all the possessions he could handle, and yet he was unfulfilled. It's the same with us today.**

NEXT, have students look at verses 16-21. Explain to them that Jesus comes on the heels of his teaching to the man with this parable. Remind students that a parable is a story that teaches. Lead students in a discussion. Ask:

- **Jesus is trying to show how futile it is to amass possessions and how meaningless they are in the long run. How does this story make that point?**



- o Answer: The man imagined he would have years and years to enjoy the fruit of his labor. He assumed he would take great pleasure out of his abundance. The only problem is that he couldn't know he would die.
- **So, let's carry this story on out a bit. The man put a lot of faith in his possessions. He had a plan where his life would be greatly improved by them. But then he died. Once he was dead, how much better would his possessions make his life?**
 - o Answer: Once he was dead, his stuff couldn't make his life one bit better. Which is the main point. Our stuff has no ability to add real value to our lives.
- **Can anyone put Jesus' final words here in verse 21 into context? What do you think Jesus is trying to say here? What does He mean?**
 - o Answer: We should be really cautious about our attempts to amass possessions. This is almost always motivated by greed. The opposite of being greedy is being giving. And God wants us to be giving of our selves, our time, and our possessions, not just to others, but to Him.

FINALLY, help students grasp the distinction between what brings real value to our lives. Say something like:

- **Let's be honest: our stuff can make our day-to-day lives a little easier, or more entertaining, or more fun. But in terms of adding real value, not only do they not enhance our lives, when we become too attached to our things, our stuff can actually lead us away from God. We can have too much stuff. We can want too much stuff. When is enough stuff too much? When it gets in the way of us following Christ. Let's dig in a little bit more here as we close our time together.**

If there are no further questions or comments, transition to the Last Word.

The Last Word

- **Goal:** To help students accept the challenge to see what stuff they can do without and consider donating it to someone who is needy.
- **Set-Up:** Decide on an object or more that you will be donating to a charity. Bring this object to class.

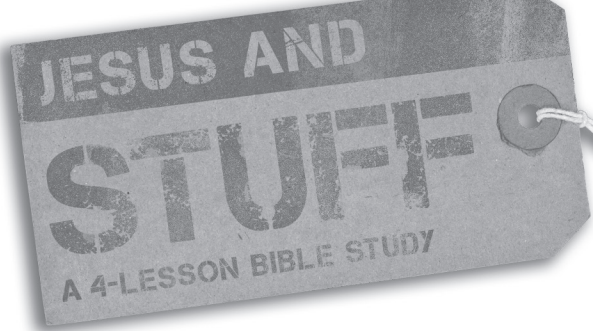
BEGIN by displaying the object you've brought with you. Put it in a prominent place where students can see it.

THEN, tell the students the story of how you came into possession of the item. It doesn't have to be elaborate. But explain why you bought it, or how you came into possession of it. If you acquired it to meet a certain need include that detail. If you just really wanted it, say so. But give enough of the backstory to help students become a little invested or attached to it.

NEXT, explain to students that you have decided to give it away. Maybe you have decided to give more than this away. Explain the motivation for doing so is to make a statement that the meaning of your life is not defined by your possessions. This thing brings no eternal joy to you. And because of this, you're going to give it away.

THEN, do something bold. Say something like the following:

- **I want to challenge you to do the same thing. I want you to go home today and tell your parents what you've been learning. I want to challenge you to articulate to them Jesus' teaching about our stuff and how little real value it brings to our lives. And then, I want you, with your parents' permission, to choose one thing, or a dozen things and donate them to a charity. And I want you to do this as a way of driving home Jesus' point in a way that is real. When you've done this, I want you to text me and let me know. Maybe next week we'll even share what we gave away.**



FINALLY, wrap up by encouraging students to really follow through with this, and to do so being mindful of the only thing that really brings eternal value to your life: a relationship with Christ. If there are no questions or thoughts close in prayer.

- **If you want to, follow up with your students mid-week and see if they actually gave anything away.**
- **Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Facebook, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions and with being mindful of the choices they make during the week.**

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.

