

LESSON 3: WHY JESUS GAVE

This includes:

- 1. LEADER PREPARATION**
- 2. LESSON GUIDE**

1. LEADER PREPARATION**LESSON OVERVIEW**

Most of us think about money when we talk about giving, but giving takes on many forms. And if we're honest, most of us don't necessarily enjoy talking about giving. Those conversations can be awkward and can force us to examine our own desires and motives. But when properly understood and practiced, giving can be an incredible source of joy. So *why* is it important that we give? This lesson will help your students examine this habit of Jesus, with a focus on why he gave.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- 1. WHAT:** Jesus demonstrated a life of giving—a model that we can follow and emulate in our lives.
- 2. WHY:** Teenagers who learn the value of giving can begin a lifelong journey of acting, living, and giving graciously.
- 3. HOW:** Students will explore Jesus' habit of giving and discuss specific ways they can incorporate this habit into their own lives.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Luke 20:20-26

SECONDARY SCRIPTURES

2 Corinthians 8:7-8 and 9:7

TEACHING PREP

**LEADER
TIP**

Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you'll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.

Read Luke 20:20-26.

Jesus' enemies were trying to trap him—certainly not the only time this happened to Jesus. Spies, pretending to be honest, began by flattering Jesus. Then they asked him what they thought was a trick question: “Now tell us—is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

Jesus answered simply but powerfully: “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.” It would have been great to see how Jesus left his enemies speechless, but it's much more intriguing to truly consider what Jesus said. What we have isn't really ours to begin with. And we often make giving a much bigger issue—and struggle—than it needs to be. Yes, citizens need to pay taxes (even sales

tax if students aren't dealing with income taxes just yet). But the rest of our money? It still belongs to God. Looking at the habits of Jesus helps us see how to handle our money.

Jesus practiced the habit of giving. Now, before we're convinced we need to give away everything and live on the streets, complete with sunken cheeks, we need to explore *why* Jesus gave. It's much more about the heart than the actual act of giving.

Jesus gave because he knew he was valued, because he trusted God, and because Jesus was secure. Jesus didn't look to things or money to build himself up. He didn't worry about the future or if his needs would be provided. He knew that God was faithful to fulfill all of his needs—including security.

If our lives are not centered on Jesus, we try other things to fill his place. When we treat our money, our time, and our talents as ours alone, we become infected with greed. And then we're less likely to embrace the gracious act of giving.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

TEXTS OR TWEETS

Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- What is one thing you could never give away? We'll see how our answers differ when we get together this week.
- When has someone given you something really special? Let's talk about it tonight.

PARENT EMAIL

Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

This week, we're continuing our series on the habits of Jesus. Each week, students are looking to Jesus, at one of his habits, and exploring how this habit relates to their own lives.

In this week's lesson, we looked at Luke 20:20-26, and we discussed how Jesus said to "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God." We saw that Jesus had a habit of giving, but maybe not for the expected reasons. Jesus gave because he knew he was valued, because he trusted God, and because he was secure.

This week, find some time to talk with your teenager—maybe in the car or at the dinner table. Consider these questions:

- What is your favorite possession, and why is it so meaningful?
- What could you give someone else—whether it's time, money, a possession, or an act of service?
- How do you plan where you'll spend your money?

Thanks for supporting our students and this ministry. Have a great week!

LESSON 3: WHY JESUS GAVE**2. LESSON GUIDE****GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]****LEADER
TIP**

Each student will need 10 pennies for the opening activity. You'll also need a marker and three to five sheets of paper.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then lead students in this opening activity.

Ask students to form a circle. Then ask them to call out the main ways they typically spend their money. (Answers might include things such as coffee, food, music, movies, or clothes.) Decide on three to five categories that are the most common, and write each on a sheet of paper. Set the papers in the middle of the circle, and give each student 10 pennies.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *You each have 10 pennies. Image that your pennies represent how much money you can spend for the week. Figure out how much you spend on each of our categories. For example, if you usually spend half of your money on coffee, place five of your pennies on that sheet of paper.*

Go through each of the categories and ask students to place the pennies on the corresponding sheet of paper. When finished, some students may have pennies left over, but many won't have any.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Now that you've spent your money, you're probably feeling pretty good. You have a new shirt or a fresh latte. But think about how you might respond if one of these situations happened this week:*

- *A friend doesn't have enough money when you and your friends go out for coffee.*
- *Your younger brother is just a couple of dollars away from saving up for a new toy he's been wanting.*
- *The youth group is collecting money to sponsor a child from another country, but the money can't come from parents.*

ASK:

- *How might you help people in those situations if you've already spent all your money?*
- *How might you balance your priorities so you're able to help other people's needs?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *This activity was designed to get you thinking about how you spend money. Some of us tend to be spenders, while others tend to be savers. We're all asked to give to help and bless others, but why? Why is it important and beneficial to give? We'll gain some answers as we look at why Jesus gave.*

TEACHING POINTS



Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Luke 20:20-26 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus' enemies were trying to trap him—not the only time they tried this. Let's dive into this Scripture and see what it reveals about why Jesus gave.*

1. JESUS KNEW HE WAS VALUED

ASK:

- Think about the times you feel most valued—what specific things contribute to that feeling?
- Complete this sentence: *If I only had _____, then I'd be happy.*
- Describe a time you bought something but later regretted it.
- How does buying something new make you feel?
- The last time you bought something with your own money for someone else—why did you do it?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Sometimes we believe “things” will make us feel better, help us fit in, or transform us into the person we want to be. This is a reflection of greed—an infection that causes us to pursue and obtain more and more, in an attempt to help us feel better about ourselves. Maybe we'll fit in better. Maybe we'll look better. Maybe people will like us more. But Jesus is the only one who can fill that part of our lives and give us our true value. When our value is rooted in Jesus, we are more open to the gracious act of giving.*

2. JESUS TRUSTED GOD

ASK:

- What is something you're saving up to purchase—and why is it important to you?
- How might you react if a friend or family member asked for help—and the help that person needed would require the money you're saving?
- How does our attitude toward money reveal how much we truly trust Jesus?
- When do you find it easiest to trust Jesus?
- When do you find it most difficult to trust Jesus?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus is constantly at work providing for us and protecting us. We can trust him—and his plan for us. When we're secure in Jesus and his plan, we can be open to the gracious act of giving instead of hoarding all our money and resources.*

3. JESUS WAS SECURE

ASK:

- How would you define the “gift of time”?
- Describe when you spent time with someone who needed a friend. What was most powerful about that experience?
- What’s the difference between someone who’s secure and someone who’s arrogant?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus was also secure in who he was. He was God the Son, and he had a clear purpose. Jesus intentionally chose to spend time with people—friends, as well as people in need. We can be driven—through work, sports, or achievements—to seek the security that can only be found in a relationship with Jesus. When we’re secure in Jesus, we can be more open to the gracious act of giving.*

EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three to discuss these questions.



ASK:

- Read 2 Corinthians 8:7-8. Describe a specific “gracious act of giving” you’ve experienced from someone else.
- Why are gracious acts of giving so powerful and memorable?
- Why is gracious giving a demonstration of authentic, genuine love?

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

LIVING IT OUT

ASK:

- If you choose to hold on to something that you could have given away, how can that create problems in a relationship?
- What are some creative, realistic ways you can give to others?
- What habit can you begin, starting today, that will help you give graciously—or more graciously?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Later in 2 Corinthians, we’re told this: “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully” (2 Corinthians 9:7). The act of giving graciously is something we can choose to do—it shows the condition of our heart. Because of what Jesus did for us and is doing in us, we can joyfully find ways to give to others.*

SUMMARY



LEADER
TIP

Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson's content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

"Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving" (2 Corinthians 8:7).