

Unlocked: Pleasing God

Jesus knew that people sometimes struggled with money so he talked about it often. He knew that money could get in the way of people having a heart fully focused on God. Some people had a lot and were careless with it; others didn't have enough and barely were able to take care of themselves and their families. Some people worked hard to have as much as they could and looked down on those who didn't have as much.

In Jesus' time, tax collectors usually had a lot of money, and they were not popular with the people. They were known to steal people's money by taking more tax money from people than what they actually owed.

Do you know the story of Jesus meeting a tax collector named Zacchaeus? It is in the Bible in Luke 19:1-10. It is a funny story! Read it together and act it out as you read it!

Discuss these questions together:

- Why did Zacchaeus climb up in a tree? (verses 3 and 4)
- What did the people call Zacchaeus? (Verse 7)
- Zacchaeus did something really surprising when Jesus said he was coming to his house for dinner. What did he do? (verse 8)
- What changed for Zacchaeus? (verse 9)

Zacchaeus realized that Jesus was God's Son, and that Jesus had come to help people have a friendship with God. Zacchaeus wanted that friendship and when he understood God loved him even though he had done wrong things, it changed him in a wonderful way. He decided to return money to those he had wrongfully taken it from, and he even planned to give them more than he had taken!

Having a friendship with God led him to want to please God with what he had.

**“ Well done, good and faithful servant!
You were **FAITHFUL** over a few things, I
will put you in charge of many things.
SHARE your master's **JOY!**”**

Matthew 25:21



Last week we learned about earthly treasures and heavenly treasures. God gives us both! When we have a friendship with God, we want to please God with our earthly treasures – the things we have along with our talents, abilities, and time. As we please God, He rewards us with heavenly treasures that last forever!

When you love God and have a friendship with Him, you want to please him with your whole heart – with all that you have.

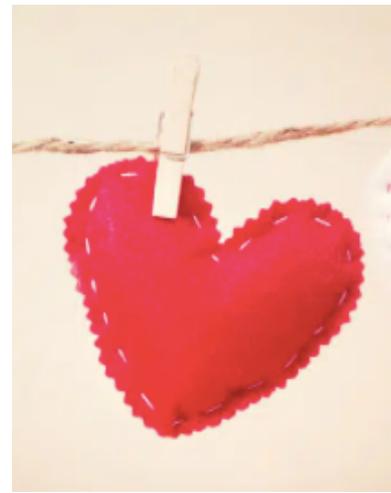
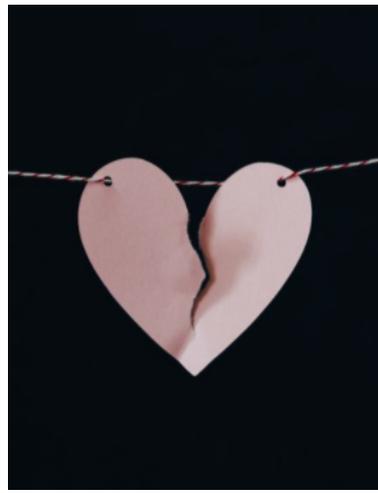
In the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus, we saw Zacchaeus change from valuing money just to have more, to understanding that he could use the money he had to bless and help others. We were created to have a heart for God, to please God, and to live for God. But sometimes things like money can get in the way and try to get us to have a divided heart.

A divided heart is one that loves God and lives for God only part of the time or only in certain ways but not in others. Sometimes we say we love God and want to please Him, but we may not be willing to obey God in every part of our lives. Maybe you honor God and show love to God at church but at home, you are selfish or unkind to your family. Or maybe you easily share some of your toys with your brother or sister but when you get a new toy, you don't want to share it with them.

There was a man who came to Jesus because he wanted to please God and have eternal life. When he listened to the advice Jesus gave him, he was shown to have a divided heart. He was willing to please God and do the right things in order to gain eternal life, but when Jesus showed him something in his life that he wasn't willing to give to God, he walked away sad and angry. There was another way the man could please God and have treasure in heaven, but he wasn't willing to do it. Read the story in Matthew 19:16-30.

The man in the story valued something – what was it? (verse 22) Jesus helped him to see that he valued having money and wealth more than he wanted to please God with what he had.

It wasn't wrong for the man to have money and wealth, but he didn't ask God how to use his wealth to bless others and to be pleasing to God. The man didn't truly understand that all he had was given to him by God.



Has someone ever asked you what you would do with a million dollars? Each person write or draw a picture of what they would do if they were given a million dollars. Share your lists or pictures, then talk about it as a family.

Jesus told a story in the Bible to help us understand what God wants us to do with the things He has given us – whether it's money, talents, abilities, or time. It is in Matthew 25:14-30. This story also helps us see the heart of God. God is rich in love for us and generous toward us, and rewards us when we want to please Him.

In the story, each of the master's workers were given money while the master was on a trip. The first two workers took what was given to them and used it wisely to make even more. The third worker hid the money the master gave to him.

What did the master say to the first two workers when he returned from his trip? What happened to the third worker who had hidden the money given to him?

The first two workers wanted to please their master and do the best with what was given to them and as a reward, even more was given to them! What is something God has entrusted to you? What ability or talent could you use this week to bless someone and bless God? Pray and ask God to show you how you can use what He has given you to please Him.

Earthly Treasures for a Heavenly Purpose

Parents, continue to encourage your child to pick some “Heavenly Treasure” and practices to do this week. Each time they sow a Heavenly seed like reading their Bible, praying for a friend, or practice memorizing a Bible verse, give them some money to go into their Heavenly Piggy Bank. Help them to see the great treasure they are storing up already!

Next, add two more “banks” for your child – one for Spending and one for Tithing. Make a list of jobs or chores your child(ren) can do to earn extra money. As they earn money, help them to place some of it in their Spending bank and some of it in their Tithing bank.

When they have collected some money in their Spending bank, have them make a list of things they could use their money for. Pray with them and ask God to help them decide how to use their money.

With the money collected in their Tithing bank, plan a time for them to give it to their church or to someone you want to help or to a mission you want to support. Again, ask God to show you and your child what He would have you do.

