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DISCOVERY

Scripture & Science for Kids



TREASURES IN HEAVEN

apostle Peter said: "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10-11).

As you grow older, you will learn to use your money wisely. You will learn that the things that seem important now really are not all that important. You will learn that the most important use you will find for money is to give it to others who need it. Don't be like the man in Matthew 25 who was afraid and hid his money in the ground. Be bold, and do the work of the church that God put us here to do.

Do you want to be rich? Would you like to be a billionaire one day? Almost everybody wants to be rich. God asked Solomon in a dream, "What shall I give you?" (1 Kings 3:5). Although Solomon could have asked to be rich, he did not. He asked for wisdom instead of riches. This pleased the Lord, and He gave Solomon both wisdom and riches. As long as we have wisdom, we will always be rich.

Everything that we have was given to us by God. Therefore we ought to use everything we have for God's glory. The money we have is a result of God's physical blessings. So do all faithful Christians have a lot of money? No. But is every Christian rich? Yes! Jesus taught more about the proper use of money than He taught about the subjects of lying, cheating, stealing, and murder combined. Jesus taught that money is not the most important thing, because eventually it will be destroyed. Instead, Jesus said: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:19-20).

When we give our money to the work of the church, we are laying up treasures in heaven. When we sacrifice some of our wants, in order to give to other people's needs, we are laying up treasures in heaven. We must use our money in God's best interest, because it really is His anyway. Everything on this Earth is God's, and we are just taking care of these physical blessings for a short while. The



You shall not steal

Ricky had always wanted a shiny gold watch, and there, sitting on his classmate's desk, was a brand new one. Ricky was supposed to be outside with the rest of his class, but he was leaving early today with his mom, so he was left alone for a few minutes. No one would ever know if he took the watch. He looked out into the hall, and then he looked at the pocket on the outside of his backpack. The watch would easily fit inside the pocket without anyone noticing it. What should he do? He knew that he might never get a watch like this one, and he probably would never have a better chance to take it.

As Ricky walked over to look more closely at the watch he recalled a lesson his Sunday morning Bible class had recently discussed. They were talking about Judas Iscariot, the apostle who betrayed Jesus. Ricky remembered how he had learned that Judas was also a thief. His

job was to hold the money box for all of the disciples, and yet without their knowledge he had been taking money from it. On one occasion, when Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, poured expensive oil on Jesus' feet, Judas asked: "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii [about a year's salary] and given to the poor?" (John 12:6). The Bible explains that Judas made this statement, "not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it" (John 12:5-6). Judas did not care about the poor, or about what Mary was doing; instead, he was jealous, greedy, and wanted the money. Judas was a thief who eventually "sold out" the Son of God for money! Once Ricky thought about how stealing would liken him to Judas, rather than to Christ, he decided to leave the watch where it was.



The Bible teaches that stealing is wrong. It was wrong under the old Law of Moses, and it is wrong under the new Law of Christ. The eighth commandment given to Moses and the Israelites was simply, "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15). When Jesus was on Earth, He put thievery in the same category as other wicked things like murder, adultery, and blasphemy (Matthew 15:19). The apostle Paul talked about thievery when he wrote to the church at Ephesus, "Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need" (4:28). Instead of stealing what others have, God wants us to work hard, earn money honestly, and then give to those who are in need.



GAMBLING

What is “gambling”? Dictionaries define “gamble” as “to play games of chance for money,” “to risk money on uncertain gain,” “to stake or risk money, etc. in the hope of great gain.” But gambling is not just taking a risk. Gambling takes place when risk is artificially created in order possibly to lose one’s own

possession. It is an attempt, through chance, to gain the possession of another. Both cannot win—someone must lose.

Forms of gambling in our society include card games, throwing dice for money, slot machines, betting on horse or dog races, betting on sporting events, buying lottery tickets, and playing bingo for money or prizes. We must take the time to study God’s Word and then think through these activities. Otherwise, we may well consider them to be harmless forms of entertainment. But we simply **must think** and meditate upon what God tells us in His Word.

One principle that runs throughout the Bible is that of stewardship. The Bible repeatedly and consistently paints the picture that God is the ultimate owner of all earthly possessions. The psalmist observed that the Lord owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10). James wrote that every good and perfect gift comes from God (James 1:17). Jesus referred to humans as stewards—those who are entrusted to take care of another’s property (Luke 12:42). And He declared that every person has the moral responsibility to be a faithful steward of the money that has been entrusted to him (Luke 16:10-11). Yet, each year people shell out billions of dollars gambling away the money that has been entrusted to them by God. Imagine the good, wholesome projects that could be supported annually by such enormous stores of cash—children could be fed, the Gospel could be preached, houses could be built, and the list goes on. Instead of such worth-

while projects, however, these billions of dollars are pumped into a system that leads to addiction and abuse. It would be difficult, indeed, to conclude that gambling is good stewardship of the money with which God has entrusted a person. In reality, to pour one’s money into a system that mathematically and statistically has been proven, time and again, to benefit the “house,” and take from the gambler, certainly would fall into the category of unfaithful stewardship. Concerning unfaithful stewardship, Christ said: “Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon [money or riches], who will commit to your trust the true riches?” (Luke 16:11). To stand before the throne of Christ, having squandered the money God entrusted to you on an idle and degenerative activity like gambling, would be a frightening thought indeed.

Gambling also does not fit with the work ethic that is so clearly taught in God’s Word. God wants people to labor, to work with their hands, to toil with the sweat of their brow. Paul said: “I have shown you in every way, **by laboring** like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35). He also wrote: “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather **let him labor, working with his hands** what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need” (Ephesians 4:28). In order to have food to eat in Thessalonica, he “**worked with labor and toil night and day**, that we might not be a burden to any of you” (2 Thessalonians 3:8). He also wrote: “If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat,” and those who were not working were to “work in quietness and eat their own bread” (vss. 10,12). God wants people to work, toil, and labor—not gamble!

The Bible also teaches that we should not be covetous or greedy. God wants people to work to have money for daily living—for self, family, and the

needy (1 Timothy 5:8; Galatians 6:10). But “making money to live” is very different from “living to make money.” God has always warned people not to lust after this world’s riches (Colossians 3:5; 1 John 2:15-17). Paul spoke of those who “are minded to be rich,” who have “the love of money” and who “trust in uncertain riches” (1 Timothy 6:9,10,17). Gambling is extremely addictive and promotes the “love-of-money” attitude that God’s Word so clearly condemns.

The fact is, Christians can have good clean fun and enjoy themselves, without gambling!



ACTIVITY PAGES



X Q P W V L S G B Z
 G V W S O N D X A B
 G J Z P G R X V J M
 J E G I N B K Y P X B
 A T H I I I X Z S Y E L C J X
 L E K N L W U D H G T Y I D Q
 S Q P A A L S L N Y U R G N L
 H Q B O E X Y I V B B A L U G
 M O P U T T T I O J I M I S G
 W L N P S A H O N K R I O B U
 H K Q E E A A I C G T J F Y G I
 S M L H S T F O E L N U O Q S
 X S C D R T E D K F O C N T Y
 K X C V R R A R A P C A A A N

WORD SEARCH



FILL IN THE BLANKS

- We should lay up _____ in heaven.
- Jesus was _____ when He lived on the Earth.
- As you grow older, you should learn to use _____ more wisely.
- Solomon wished for _____.
- Everything we own is actually _____.
- Judas not only betrayed Jesus, but was a _____.
- Another word for covetousness is _____.
- _____ is a waste of money, and a sign of bad stewardship.

Gambling
 Honest
 Stealing
 Contribute

Lying
 Oil
 Cheating
 Mary

Work
 Thief



Illustration by
 Emma Selma, NC

Hey kids, send your questions about the Bible and/or science to Digger Doug! Also, Digger Doug loves to receive your poems and artwork (lots of your work is featured in *Discovery*). Digger Doug can't return everything he receives, so keep a copy for yourself.

Digger Doug
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TRUE OR FALSE

- Stealing was not wrong in the Old Testament.
- Mary poured expensive oil on the feet of Jesus.
- Our treasures should be here on Earth.
- Solomon asked for riches.
- Every Christian is rich spiritually.
- Christians are supposed to give cheerfully to the Lord.
- Stealing is okay when you really want something.
- God wants us to work hard and earn money honestly.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- Greed is
 - wealth
 - covetousness
 - contentment
- We should lay up treasures in
 - our rooms
 - the Bank
 - heaven
- Stealing is
 - borrowing
 - taking what is right fully yours
 - sinful
- A sign of bad stewardship
 - gambling
 - giving to charity
 - giving to the Lord on the first day of the week

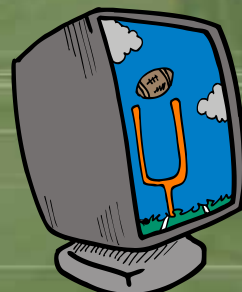
Dear Digger Doug,
 Was Jesus rich or poor when He lived on Earth?



Dear reader:

The apostle Paul wrote: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (1 Corinthians 8:9). Christ left His throne of glory so that through His life on Earth, the world might be saved. Nothing on this Earth compares to the glory of heaven. Jesus came to Earth, where He was born to a poor family. One hint that Jesus' earthly parents were poor is that when Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple shortly after His birth, they offered "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons" (Luke 2:24). The offering of birds reveals that they must have been poor. Had Joseph and Mary been rich, they would have offered a lamb (read Leviticus 12:8).

During His ministry, Jesus did not even have anywhere that He could call "home." He once said: "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20). Jesus came to Earth for the purpose of seeking and saving the lost. He did not come to Earth to fulfill any pleasures. Earth has no pleasures comparable to those in heaven. In everything that is good, Jesus was rich. He was rich in knowledge, faith, and love, and it is that type of richness for which we ought to strive.





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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

GREED

Have you ever wondered why there are so many commercials during TV shows? Just when something good is about to happen in the middle of your favorite show, boom! It happens. Another commercial runs for what seems like forever. Why all the commercials? Advertisers know you are watching, and they want you to become interested in what they are selling. Whether it's a toy, food, or entertainment, they en-



courage you to want what they are selling. And occasionally, it works. Sometimes we see something that we want, and soon that "want" turns into "I've got to have it!" Before long, we feel like we would give **anything** to have what we saw on that commercial. But wait a minute—give **anything**?

Jesus asked an important question that we all need to consider from time to time. The question was this: "What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26). No, we usually do not want the entire world for ourselves, but oftentimes our entire world revolves around what we want. This is called greed or covetousness. Our uncontrolled desire for something that we do not need, cannot have, or should not have, always leads us into other sinful activities. After all, the Bible teaches us that greed (the love of money) is a root of "all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). Consider the biblical example of Achan (Joshua 7:10-26). After conquering Jericho, the Israelites were commanded not to take anything for themselves, but Achan, motivated by covetousness, took several things for himself, and tried to hide them. When he was confronted about what he had done, he answered, "When I saw... I coveted them and took them." Also, notice that it started with a look. He "saw," and then he coveted and took (read 1 John 2:15-17).

We need to be careful about what we watch, and make sure we do not give covetousness or greed a way into our lives. **Anything** in this world can lead us to greed and covetousness. Therefore, let us remember Jesus' warning given in Luke 12:15: "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses."

ANSWERS

FILL IN THE BLANKS: 1. treasures; 2. poor; 3. money; 4. wisdom; 5. God's; 6. thief; 7. greed; 8. gambling. TRUE OR FALSE: 1-F; 2-T; 3-F; 4-F; 5-T; 6-T; 7-F; 8-T. MULTIPLE CHOICE: 1. B (covetousness); 2. C (heaven); 3. C (sinful); 4. A (gambling).

