Unit 23, Session 4

Jesus Teaches About Treasure

Summary and Goal
In this session, we will discuss Jesus’ teaching on treasure. Jesus’ ideas about treasure extend far beyond the monetary. Jesus is a treasure far more precious than silver or gold, and that fact enables us to be generous with our tangible treasures. Our God is able to provide for every single one of our needs, and that fact helps us to trust Him instead of the amount of money we have. The kingdom of God is bursting at the seams with blessings for those who belong to Jesus, which in turn should embolden us to hold our earthly treasures with loose fingers instead of greedy, clasping hands. In short, our ideas of treasure change drastically when Jesus becomes our ideal treasure.

Session Outline

Background Passage: Luke 12:13-34

Session in a Sentence
Jesus warned His disciples about hoarding treasure instead of living generously with whatever God gives.

Christ Connection
When Jesus taught His disciples about money and possessions, He warned about hoarding treasure instead of living with generosity. Jesus left His place of splendor with the Father and lived on earth without wealth so that He could complete the work the Father had given Him to do: establish the kingdom.

Missional Application
Because Jesus is our greatest treasure, we live with generosity, trusting in God’s provision of our needs, as we seek to steward well the resources God has entrusted to us.
Group Time

Introduction

EXPLAIN: Use the paragraph in the DDG (p. 75) to provide a brief description of the character Ebenezer Scrooge from Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, noting how the story speaks to greed and its consequences.

Ebenezer Scrooge is the main character in Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. The miserly old man can't even be moved to generosity on Christmas Day, a time of year when even the greediest penny-pinchers have been known to share a bit more than usual. On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by three ghosts: the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. These three ghosts uncover the past root of Scrooge's greed, the far-reaching present results of that greed, and the dire future consequences of his greed. Through this experience, Scrooge learns his lesson, has a change of heart, and becomes an example of joyful giving.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

Why is money such an effective snare for people's hearts? (it is an easy means by which to compare ourselves to others; because of our sinful nature, we struggle with jealousy and envy of others; money provides us with an opportunity to feel self-sufficient; having money can draw people's attention to us; we don't keep money in eternal perspective)

SAY: Jesus does not lull His disciples to sleep and send them cautionary dreams about the dangers of greed. Instead, He tells them outright to examine their ideas about treasure. Our eternal rest depends wholly upon God having sent His treasured Son to die on the cross so that we might turn from our idols of silver and gold and cling to Him alone for comfort, provision, and blessing.

SUMMARIZE: In this session, we will discuss Jesus' teaching on treasure. Jesus' ideas about treasure extend far beyond the monetary. Jesus is a treasure far more precious than silver or gold, and that fact enables us to be generous with our tangible treasures. Our God is able to provide for every single one of our needs, and that fact helps us to trust Him instead of the amount of money we have. The kingdom of God is bursting at the seams with blessings for those who belong to Jesus, which in turn should embolden us to hold our earthly treasures with loose fingers instead of greedy, clasping hands. In short, our ideas of treasure change drastically when Jesus becomes our ideal treasure.

For session-by-session training podcasts, please visit MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject. For additional teaching options and other resources, please visit GospelProject.com/additional-resources.
**Point 1: Be rich toward God (Luke 12:15-21).**

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read Luke 12:15-21 (DDG p. 76).

> 15 He then told them, “Watch out and be on guard against all greed, because one’s life is not in the abundance of his possessions.”

> 16 Then he told them a parable: “A rich man’s land was very productive. 17 He thought to himself, ‘What should I do, since I don’t have anywhere to store my crops? 18 I will do this,’ he said. I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones and store all my grain and my goods there. 19 Then I’ll say to myself, “You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.”’

> 20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared—whose will they be?’ 21 That’s how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 76) to explain how the gospel affirms that our worth is not determined by what we do or what we have. What matters is our relationship to God through the free gift of His Son.

> “What’s he worth?” Most of us understand this question concerns a person’s monetary status, but how many of us stop to think about what the question implies? Before Jesus launched into a parable about a rich man, He told his listeners not to measure their worth by the abundance of their possessions because our worth is not determined by what we do or what we have. Our earnings, either spiritual or physical, will never amount to the priceless love that God freely gives us through faith in His Son.

- It’s easy to say and claim to believe that money doesn’t make the man, but truth be told, most of our happy endings revolve around people having a lot of it. Many stories and fairy tales begin with the juxtaposition of royalty and poverty, purporting to show us that it’s what is on the inside that counts. But we would be remiss if we didn’t also underscore the fact that, by the end of the story, everyone is usually rich. Such is the worldly culture we live in, where abundant riches serve as a chief marker of a person’s status.

- According to the gospel, however, we cannot work our way into heaven, and we cannot save enough to buy our way into heaven. In and of ourselves, we will always be weighed and found wanting. This is the status we all have because of sin. We cannot earn the favor that is required to become sons and daughters of the Most High God. The God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Ps. 50:10) is not impressed by our temporal wealth and circumstances. Heaven cannot be earned; it comes with God’s free gift of salvation through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.
EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 76) to show how the rich man in Jesus’ story has a lot in common with many people today, both in terms of his pursuit of earthly goods and the end of accumulating them.

Jesus told the story of a rich man who has a lot in common with many people today. Already having more than enough, he reasoned bigger is better. He stockpiled his goods and told himself that he’d never have to work again. His only job would be to eat, drink, and be merry. What a life! But then God told him he would die that very night. It’s a morbid story, but it hits on a truth we all instinctively know: you can’t take it with you.

 Voices from Church History

“This should be the careful consideration of wise people, that since the days of this life are short and the time uncertain, death should never be unexpected for those who are to die. Those who know that they are mortal should not come to an unprepared end.”

—Leo the Great (c. 400-461)

- We could be like the ancient Egyptians pharaohs, buried along with every single treasure we own, and we still wouldn’t be able to cart those treasures to heaven or to hell. They would sit there with no place to go as our souls left this earth the same way they entered it—with nothing in tow.

- Jesus wasn’t using this parable to tell His followers not to have treasure. It was because of a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea that Jesus was able to be buried according to Scripture (Matt. 27:57-60; see Isa. 53:9). A woman prepared Jesus for burial by anointing Him with a very expensive oil (Matt. 26:7). Jesus’ response to this pouring of oil was not the same as His disciples’, who derided the woman for not giving her money to the poor (Matt. 26:8-9). Instead, He affirmed her for giving her very best for Him while He was with them (Matt. 26:10-13). He did not scold her for having expensive oil because having nice things is not the issue.

- Nice things become an issue when we hoard them for ourselves and our glory instead of using them to advance God’s glory and His kingdom. In the hands of the God who blessed us with them, our treasures can be mighty tools for His kingdom. When used for our own selfish gain, they can be an affront to the God we are called to serve. The man in the parable looked only to his life in the here and now; he ignored the eternal realities impacted by our motivations and actions in this life.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

What will it look like to be rich toward God? (viewing ourselves and acting as God’s stewards of all our money and possessions; looking for ways to honor God with our finances; looking for ways to bless and help others in their struggles through life; obeying God with how we spend our money; keeping our money and possessions in the proper perspective given the certainty of death and eternity)
Point 2: Trust in God’s faithful provision


\[22\text{ Then he said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, don’t worry about your life, what you will eat; or about the body, what you will wear.} \]
\[23\text{ For life is more than food and the body more than clothing.} \]
\[24\text{ Consider the ravens: They don’t sow or reap; they don’t have a storeroom or a barn; yet God feeds them. Aren’t you worth much more than the birds?} \]
\[25\text{ Can any of you add one moment to his life-span by worrying?} \]
\[26\text{ If then you’re not able to do even a little thing, why worry about the rest?} \]
\[27\text{ “Consider how the wildflowers grow: They don’t labor or spin thread. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these.} \]
\[28\text{ If that’s how God clothes the grass, which is in the field today and is thrown into the furnace tomorrow, how much more will he do for you—you of little faith?} \]

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 77) to show how Jesus’ words here echo His teachings elsewhere on prayer. Note what our worry says about ourselves and what we trust in.

Jesus’ words in this passage echo His teachings on prayer: **We do not have to worry that God is going to forget us; He already cares for us.** Worry is an easy sin for us to fall into. It creeps in without being invited, stealing into our work and needling us about whether or not we will be able to afford our daily bread. When we worry about the things of this earth, we betray hearts and minds that are centered not on the eternal provision of our loving Father but on our own efforts, which are entirely secondary.

- In the previous session, we talked about the place of prayer in our lives. Prayer is not a method to twist God’s arm and convince Him to do right by us; He is already poised to do right by His children. Instead, we pray in faith to express our needs to a Father who delights in hearing the cries of our hearts and in fulfilling our needs.
- Jesus referred to the ravens because the fact that God cares so tenderly for creatures who don’t know how to worry shows that our worry adds absolutely nothing to His provision for us and actually works against the cultivation of our faith in Him.
- This is not an invitation for us to flock to a commune where all we do is sit in a field unfettered by any responsibility. As image-bearers of God, we have a responsibility to work and resist laziness (Gen. 1–2; Prov. 6:6-11; 2 Thess. 3:10). Yet Jesus in this passage reminds us that our work is not what actually provides for us, though it is commanded of us and a means by which God provides for us. It is God who gives us work to do, and God who gives us provision through that work. It is God who sustains us in ways far beyond our material needs even as He cares for our material needs.
INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

What are some things we are prone to worry about? (providing food for our families; having adequate, even trendy, clothing; automobile maintenance; making the mortgage payment; that our children make wise choices; events on the national and world stage; violence in our community and country and how it may impact our families)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 77) to highlight Jesus’ main insight in pointing to wildflowers in His teaching about worry: God cares for fragile flowers without eternal souls, so how much more does He care for His children!

Jesus, as the Son of God, was intricately involved in the creation of our bodies, so He, better than anyone, knows that worry does not add a single day to our lives. In fact, all worry does is detract from our lives and our ability to worship our Creator. To make this point, Jesus pointed to the lilies of the field, which don’t have the capacity either for work or worry, and yet, they are completely taken care of. God cares for fragile flowers without eternal souls, so how much more does He care for His children!

- King Solomon, whom Jesus referenced in comparison with wildflowers, was an extremely wealthy man. Having humbly asked the Lord for wisdom to lead God’s people, the Lord granted Solomon wisdom and the blessing of riches (1 Kings 3:11-13). He did not lack for much, in part because he had the common sense to steward his resources well. Yet even Solomon, who had very little to worry about materially, was not arrayed as gloriously as the flowers of the field are.
- Our heavenly Father knows that our needs are not just material, and even more deeply spiritual. Our physical bodies are not much more durable than the lilies of the field, but nonetheless, we are worth exponentially more than them to our Father. So whether we are as rich as Solomon, poor and destitute, or anywhere in between, our God will supply all of our needs because He cares for His children (Phil. 4:19).
- We know that money is not a safeguard against worry. Americans live in one of the wealthiest nations in the world, and yet, we tend to be consumed by worry. In fact, the more money we have, the more worried we are about how we’re going to keep hold of it.

SAY: The only solution to worry is faith in our heavenly Father, who loves and takes care of His children. He cares for the birds and the flowers, and you are worth so much more to Him than they are. So recall His always faithful provision in your life and look to Him in faith for your future provision as well.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

What are some ways God has provided for you that can help you resist the temptation to worry about your present circumstances? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)
**Point 3: Seek God's kingdom first (Luke 12:31-34).**


31 “But seek his kingdom, and these things will be provided for you. 32 Don’t be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Make money-bags for yourselves that won’t grow old, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 78) to comment on the truth that God’s provision extends beyond our earthly needs—He promises that in Jesus our eternal well-being will always be secure.

God’s provision for us extends far beyond our daily bread. The eternal provision that God has made for us through the person and work of His Son does not negate our temporal needs but is far more important than our temporal needs. We have a God who cares deeply for the well-being of our mortal bodies, but He does not promise us ease on this earth. In fact, as we learned when speaking about the cost of discipleship, Jesus promised His followers the exact opposite. He does promise to care for our physical needs, but even more so, He promises that our eternal well-being will always be secure.

**Illustration:** George Mueller was a Christian who directed an orphanage in England during the 1800s. There are many tales of faith that follow Mueller’s journey as caretaker for these children, but one stands out:

- “The children are dressed and ready for school. But there is no food for them to eat,’ the housemother of the orphanage informed George Mueller. George asked her to take the 300 children into the dining room and have them sit at the tables. He thanked God for the food and waited. George knew God would provide food for the children as he always did. Within minutes, a baker knocked on the door. ‘Mr. Mueller,’ he said, ‘last night I could not sleep. Somehow I knew that you would need bread this morning. I got up and baked three batches for you. I will bring it in.’ Soon, there was another knock at the door. It was the milkman. His cart had broken down in front of the orphanage. The milk would spoil by the time the wheel was fixed. He asked George if he could use some free milk. George smiled as the milkman brought in ten large cans of milk. It was just enough for the 300 thirsty children.”
- This story of God’s gracious blessing is one that beautifully illustrates God’s care and provision for His children. But even though God can work in our lives the way he worked in Mueller’s, He doesn’t always choose to. Some mornings we might pray for food that isn’t there, and it may not come. Some days we may have faith that the milkman will arrive just in time, and he might be late, at least by our standards. And yet, we can still trust that God is good and that He provides for our needs, even when we have hungry bellies and parched throats.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.
How are we to seek God’s kingdom? (we pray for God’s kingdom to come; we obey the commands of our Savior and King, Jesus; we seek justice on earth in the name of Christ; we proclaim the gospel so people can hear about Jesus and believe in Him for their salvation; we repent of our sin; we gather with and build up the church)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 78) to describe why our dearest treasure should not be something that can be destroyed but only something no one can take away—the treasure of the Lord Himself.

Jesus said our greatest treasure isn’t something we can hold in our hands; rather, our greatest treasure is found in heaven. The things we can hold can always be lost, stolen, or destroyed. We can drop them, nick them, scratch them, and have to sell them. Therefore, our dearest treasure should be something that nothing can destroy and that no one can take away. This litmus test should revolutionize the way that we understand our treasures because the Lord alone should be our greatest treasure.

• Jesus declared that our heart will be where our treasure is, and He has also told us exactly where our hearts should be: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30). We should love the Lord our God with all of…
  – our hearts, leaving no spare room for the material things of this world;
  – our souls, giving complete ownership of ourselves and our possessions to Him;
  – our minds, dwelling on things above and not the mundane worries of this earth;
  – our strength, toiling for things eternal and not for things that are temporal.

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 78).

Stewardship: We are to invest the time, talents, and material possessions God has given us for His kingdom work, knowing that God is the true owner of all we have, and that our true treasure is found not on earth but in heaven. Motivated by God’s generosity to us made most clear in the gospel, we are to give God the best of what we have, regularly, sacrificially, humbly, and cheerfully, praying that God may be glorified in our stewardship of His provisions.

Essential Doctrine “Stewardship”: God’s intention for humankind is that we serve Him as faithful stewards of His creation (Gen. 1:28; 1 Cor. 4:1-2). We are to invest the time, talents, and material possessions God has given us for His kingdom work (Matt. 25:14-29), knowing that God is the true owner of all we have, and that our true treasure is found not on earth but in heaven (Matt. 6:19,21; Luke 12:16-21). Motivated by God’s generosity to us made most clear in the gospel, we are to give God the best of what we have (Prov. 3:9), regularly (1 Cor. 16:2), sacrificially (Matt. 12:41-44), humbly (Matt. 6:1-4), and cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:6-7), praying that God may be glorified in our stewardship of His provisions.
EXPLAIN: Jesus teaches us that our notion of treasure is usually too narrow. Treasure is not just pirate's booty and monetary wealth; it is not just earthly. Treasure can also be characterized as heavenly. Heavenly treasure is of far greater importance than its earthly counterparts, and it is because of this heavenly treasure that we can be generous with our earthly treasure. God gives us our earthly resources from His place of abundance, so we needn't fear, even when we face earthly lack. Because God is the giver of each and every good earthly gift we possess, we can hold those gifts in loose hands as faithful stewards to give as God calls us to. This was Jesus' intent with His teaching on treasure: to free us from the bonds of greed. The God revealed to us in Jesus is alone worthy of being our true treasure.

READ the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 79), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God's Word.

Because Jesus is our greatest treasure, we live with generosity, trusting in God’s provision of our needs, as we seek to steward well the resources God has entrusted to us.

- How will you honor God, the giver of all good gifts, especially salvation by faith in Jesus Christ?
- How might your group need to hold possessions loosely for the sake of the kingdom of God on display in your church?
- What are some ways you can live with Jesus as your greatest treasure to help you communicate the gospel to unbelievers?

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Our Triune God, fellowship with You in and through Jesus, the incarnate Son, is the greatest treasure we creatures can enjoy. By the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, help us to see the surpassing worth of the inheritance we have as the Father’s adopted children in Christ. Glorify Yourself in the way we rightly and wisely utilize the resources You have provided for the sake of the kingdom. Amen.

INSTRUCT: As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the Daily Study devotions in their DDG (pp. 80-82), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use Encourage One Another (p. 83) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.
Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Daily Study devotions in the DDG (pp. 80-82) will help group members get into God’s Word and study it for themselves. Encourage One Another (p. 83) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 80-82) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for Day 3 as a part of point 3 in the session: Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, we can view our own treasure as an added blessing, and not as the source of our value. We can give of it freely because the gift of greatest worth has already been given to us in Jesus.

Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God’s Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- Day 1: “Jesus gives us an important litmus test: Are we giving everything to build for today or do we have our eyes on eternity?”
- Day 5: “When we give, God is not concerned with an exact percentage of our wealth so much as He is concerned with the heart behind our giving.”

Visit www.GospelProject.com/Blog for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God’s Word.

Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member’s DDG (p. 83) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using The Gospel Project in their groups.

- Encourage group members to consider reasons why Jesus is superior to whatever specific earthly treasures they are tempted to value above Him.
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.
Additional Commentary

**Point 1: Be rich toward God (Luke 12:15-21).**

“Jesus refused to take on the role of a judge or an arbiter in the family dispute. What was needed was not a ruling by a teacher but recognition that the sin of covetousness was at the root of their dispute (12:14-15). So Jesus told a parable to illustrate the dangers of craving wealth and possessions. A rich man was given the gift of a bumper crop. But he had a problem: he did not know what to do with his surplus grain (12:16-18). The wealth stored in these barns would be his security for the future (12:19). However, in putting his security in his wealth, he was forgetting the one who had given him the unusual crop: the God of providence. Moreover, he had also forgotten his responsibility to show generosity and share his wealth with others (11:41). He may have had earthly riches, but he was not rich in the things of God (12:20). So when death came suddenly, he lost all (12:21).”

“Fool! Ironically, the man who took such great care to prepare for his own (earthly) needs turns out to be a fool. Instead of fulfilling his moral responsibility to care for the needs of others, he is rebuked for laying up treasure for himself and for not being rich toward God. Though this verse does not prohibit wealth, Jesus clearly warns his hearers concerning the dangerous eternal implications of wealth, with its seductive tendency towards complacency, self-sufficiency, and covetousness. Though the rich fool anticipates years of ease—a time to eat, drink, and be merry—instead an eternal destiny apart from God awaits him. As Jesus’ condemning words confirm, “This night your soul is required of you.”

**Point 2: Trust in God’s faithful provision (Luke 12:22-28).**

“This is one of the clear commands of Christ: Don’t worry. Jesus is speaking here in the imperative. In fact, it is a double imperative: Do not worry about either food or clothing—the basic necessities of life. Then Jesus explains why: ‘For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing’ (Luke 12:23; cf. 1 Tim. 6:8). In other words, there are more important things in life than waiting around for the next meal. Furthermore, your body is more than a mannequin to dress up with this outfit or that fashion. Your life and your body are for God and the glory of his kingdom. So do not make food and clothing your reason for living. Do not treat them as ends in themselves, but only as means to the higher end of living for God. To prove his point, Jesus gave two examples from the natural world—one for food and one for clothing. In verses 24 to 26 Jesus uses the raven as an illustration of the way God provides good things to eat, and then in verses 27 to 28 he uses the lily as an illustration of the way God provides good things to wear. In both cases, his point is to show how much more graciously God the Father will care for us as his children.”
“Just as with greed, worry can affect anyone, whatever his position in life. An attitude of anxiety is destructive to the physical life and hurtful to spiritual testimony (vv. 22-26). Height (…) ‘stature, years, maturity,’ v. 25) in this context seems to suggest the span of life. Again Jesus clearly noted the value of every life and the loving care He poured out on all His creation (v. 24). To use your energies in worry over things you cannot control—whether great or small—is futile and inappropriate. God does not overlook the necessities of His children according to His plan for their lives. When He allows suffering or even deprivation, such is never wasted in the divine economy. Drinking of the cup of His sufferings is never to be taken lightly. The privilege must be embraced for the opportunity of testimony and means of glorifying the Father.”  

**Point 3: Seek God’s kingdom first (Luke 12:31-34).**

“But seek his kingdom. Matthew 6:33 adds ‘and his righteousness,’ which is a strong emphasis in his Gospel. The exhortation means to pursue those things involving the kingdom of God rather than material possessions. To ‘seek his kingdom’ can be understood as: (1) desiring the consummation of the kingdom (Luke 11:2), which in turn may include the thought that believers can in some way advance the coming of the kingdom; (2) praying the Lord’s prayer; (3) seeking the blessings of the kingdom, i.e., treasure in heaven, rather than earthly possessions; (4) submitting to God’s rule. In the present context (12:21 and esp. 33) the third alternative makes the most sense.”

“Jesus’ warning here is to beware of the double danger of money. On the one hand, money easily generates greed and covetousness (vv. 13-21). On the other hand, the reality of money easily creates heart-deep anxiety in us (vv. 22-34). The gospel teaches us how to defeat both of these destructive sins. We must seek God’s kingdom first (v. 31), which will often mean letting go of our goods and money (v. 33). Jesus motivates us to this counterintuitive solution by showing us that when we do so, God our Father will provide for our needs (v. 31). He does so because as our perfect Father he knows our needs (v. 30). He cares for us deeply and considers us very valuable (v. 24), and it is his good pleasure to give us what we most need for eternal as well as earthly purposes (v. 32). Only this vision of our heavenly Father, combined with the promise of eternal riches (v. 33), can motivate us at the heart level to live free from the love of money (Heb. 13:5) and find eternal joy in following Christ.”

**References**

Jesus was born to die—a jarring statement indeed, but one that is quite true. Christmas and Easter are fused together, linked hand-in-hand in such a way that each is dependent on the other for its meaning. The theology of such a statement is solid but incomplete, for Jesus was not born to die immediately but rather some thirty years later. Jesus’ life, then, was not utilitarian—existing just so it could be taken away and picked up again—it had greater meaning and purpose. What Jesus did during those thirty years of walking the earth mattered; He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father. He satisfied the demands of righteousness that we could not so He might take away our sin when we trust in Him and so His righteousness might be credited to us, making us fully pleasing to the Father (2 Cor. 5:21).

In this volume we delve deeper into the marvelous truth of the incarnation to see still further glimpses of Christ’s glory on earth. His righteousness did not occur in a vacuum but rather among people, ordinary people like you and me. In each unit of this volume, we will look at Jesus’ interactions with people as through a prism, making slight turns to see different yet equally brilliant perspectives of Jesus’ works. In Unit 22, we will see Jesus’ power to heal coupled with His deep compassion for people, even those who were marginalized in society. In Unit 23, we will see Jesus’ riveting teachings empowered by His divine authority. And finally, in Unit 24, we will see Jesus’ miraculous power over nature, revealing His identity as Creator God.

Each ray of light we will see points to the same truth: that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God given for our salvation. Jesus was indeed born to die, but He lived so that we too might live.