

Lesson 4 / June 22, 2008

Stuffed with Stuff

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 4 Focus:

Go after God, not stuff.

Lesson 4 Bible Basis:

Exodus 20:15, 17;
Matthew 6:19-34

Students will look at newspaper sales advertisements, choose which items they would like to buy, and discuss why choosing God, not stuff, is most important.

Materials:

Sales advertisements inserted in the newspaper (screen ahead of time for appropriate content)

Have students get into pairs and give each pair a sales advertisement from the newspaper. Have these students take five minutes to look through the flyer(s). Encourage each student to choose three things advertised that they would buy if money were not an obstacle. If students can't find three things in their particular flyer have them trade flyers with another pair or two during the five minutes.

Regroup and have all students share about their three things.

Ask various individuals:

- ▶ **Is this something you need or something you want?**
- ▶ **Were you planning or wanting to buy this item before you saw today's sales flyer?** *(Most students may have wanted the items chosen but few likely will have had an actual plan for purchasing these things.)*
- ▶ **How does this ad affect your thoughts and feelings about this product?**
- ▶ **Do you think your particular advertisement was true to the product's real use or did the advertisement make certain products look more appealing than they really are? Explain.** *(Answers will vary.)*

After quizzing various students on their favorite items, see if you can have the entire group come to a consensus on the best advertised item. Allow a few students to call out their favorite advertised item and have students raise hands to vote "yes" or "no" if they think that this item is the "must-have" item of the year or not.

Mention that the website gifts.com suggests items for both teen boys and girls that might be "must haves" as well.

Lesson 4 Memory Verse

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

—Matthew 6:33

A few things on the list for boys are:

- An outdoor home theatre kit (includes INFLATABLE big screen TV and two 80 watt speakers...all for \$2,500)
- Solar powered backpack (Keep your mobile phone, camera, MP3 player or PDA charged up—carry books and recharge at the same time!)
- Digital camera swim mask (the world's only swim mask with an integrated waterproof digital camera)

A few things on that list for girls are:

- Handheld bad breath detector (self-explanatory)
- IKaraoke for iPods (sing American Idol songs from the privacy of your own home)
- Water-powered eco-clocks (“as long as you have access to water, this alarm clock will be able to get you up on time”)

Ask students:

- ▶ **Why do you think manufacturers target preteens and teens to buy stuff that obviously is not a necessity?** (*Silly gadgets sell; young people enjoy having the latest things; even if something isn't necessary, it can be fun to have, marketers know that the preteen and teen market is a hot one, etc.*)
- ▶ **What makes you want to buy something?**

Today's lesson is about going after God, not stuff. It isn't hard to see that the world wants us to go after stuff far more than it wants us to go after God. Let's take some time to see what the Bible has to say about our desire for things and God's desire to provide for our needs.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Middle School Teacher's Guide*; your Step 4 appears below.)

Sources:

<http://www.gifts.com/recipients/teen/gadget-guru/ohr14a264icp>

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Today's Scriptures all relate to each other. Exodus 20:15 delves into the issue of stealing. Exodus 20:17 talks about coveting and wanting what others have. These issues are related because stealing (or shoplifting) often happens as a result of wanting things that don't belong to us—in other words, coveting. The Bible wants us to know that there is danger in constantly thinking about things and wanting them because it could lead us to steal, which has great consequences—from possible jail time to committing more crimes to get what we want.

The other Scripture passage (Matt. 6:19-34) is a part of the Sermon on the Mount. It frequently uses the word “worry” and emphasizes that it is something Christians do not need to do. Most things we worry about have to do with things we don't have. Jesus was trying to convey to believers that they do not need to worry about things because God will provide what is needed. Today's Scripture memory verse, Matthew 6:33 focuses on seeking God's kingdom and righteousness first, saying that other things will be added to our lives after that.

Back to the topic of stuff . . . did you know that self-storage is a \$22 billion-per-year industry? According to the Self Storage Association, square footage or rentable storage has increased 740 percent in the past two decades. It took the self-storage industry more than 25 years to build its first billion square feet of space; it added the second billion square feet in just 8 years (1998-2005). The total self-storage space in the United States is more than 3 times the size of Manhattan Island (NY). Also, nearly 1 in 10 households in the United States rent a self-storage unit.

Some questions to ask before storing stuff (as paraphrased from savingadvice.com):

1. Is it really worth the price of storing it?
2. Could you find more creative ways to store things at home?
3. Could you set a deadline for when you have to go through your items?
4. If you are storing things during a remodel, wouldn't the work go quicker if you had to stumble over things rather than store them?
5. If you are saving things for another time, wouldn't it still be cheaper to replace items from things found at a yard sale, etc.?

Lesson 4 Memory Verse

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—Matthew 6:33

6. Wouldn't it be cheaper to rent a boat when it is used, than to store it for a lifetime?

7. Couldn't you find a trusted friend to store a few valuables and do the same for him or her?

Ask students:

- ▶ **Why do you think people pay storage fees every month to keep “stuff” they never even see?** *(A good reason might be inheriting furniture when a loved one passes on, a bad reason might be because we don't want to stop accumulating stuff and its easier to store it than to weed through it.)*
- ▶ **What do you think of clutter and hoarding?** *(Answers will vary.)*
- ▶ **What do you think God thinks of it?** *(God wants us to share with those in need. He doesn't want us to be consumed by our things. Things in and of themselves aren't bad, but wanting them more than we want God is.)*
- ▶ **What would be a creative way to recycle or give some of your stuff away?** *(Have a garage sale and donate the money to a charitable cause, swap with others, give items to a charity that can sell them for a profit to help others.)*
- ▶ **In Matthew 6:19, where does God say for us to lay up our treasures?** *(“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth.”)*
- ▶ **What do you think this means as far as our stuff is concerned?** *(It is just stuff. Spiritual matters are far more important.)*

It is easy to want more and more. God wants us to be satisfied with what we have. If we are too busy storing up stuff, we can't store up what is important, spiritual things and a better understanding of God.

- ▶ **What is one thing you can do to make stuff less important in your life?** *(Invite students to share.)*

Follow through on this goal and find someone to share with next week about how you went after God, not stuff this week!

Close in prayer.

Sources:

http://www.savingadvice.com/blog/2008/05/08/102120_stop-storing-and-save-storage-units-are-a-waste-of-money.html

http://www.storageadvisors.com/Downloads/SSA.org_FactSheet.pdf

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