

October 5
Adults and Next Gen
Lesson 39

2025
CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE

**HOW SHOULD I TREAT
THOSE DIFFERENT
FROM ME?
John 4:1–42**

HOW SHOULD I TREAT THOSE DIFFERENT FROM ME? John 4:1–42

MAIN IDEA

Jesus didn't allow differences to keep Him from ministering to others, and neither should I.

OUTLINE

Weekly Reading Recap

Era Overview

Introduction

1. **Jesus Entered Spaces Where He Was the Minority (John 4:1–6, p. 993)**
 - History of the Samaritans
 - Jesus' Decision To Enter Samaria
2. **Jesus Entered Conversations With People Who Were Different (John 4:7–27, pp. 993–994)**
 - The Difference Between Talking *at* People and Talking *With* People
 - How To Create a Personal Connection With Someone
 - Ask questions.
 - Actively listen.
 - Be open.
 - Look for openings.
3. **Jesus Entered Inconvenient Ministry Opportunities (John 4:28–42, p. 994)**
 - Jesus allowed His schedule to be changed.
 - Our mentality should match Jesus'.

Redemption Thread

Call to Action (Choose a person or people group to connect with this week.)

Conclusion

Special Note

This Life Group series draws from the work of Iva May and her team at Chronological Bible Teaching Ministries Inc. Foundational concepts, such as dividing the Bible into 14 Eras, the Redemption Thread, and understanding how God speaks, acts, and reveals Himself in each era, come directly from her work. We are thankful for her willingness to allow us to utilize her

14 Era framework and concepts to create these lessons. Our aim with this series is to encourage participants to read the Bible chronologically, but it is not intended to replace or replicate the comprehensive work of Iva and her team. For more resources on reading the Bible chronologically, we highly recommend visiting chronologicalbibleteaching.com.

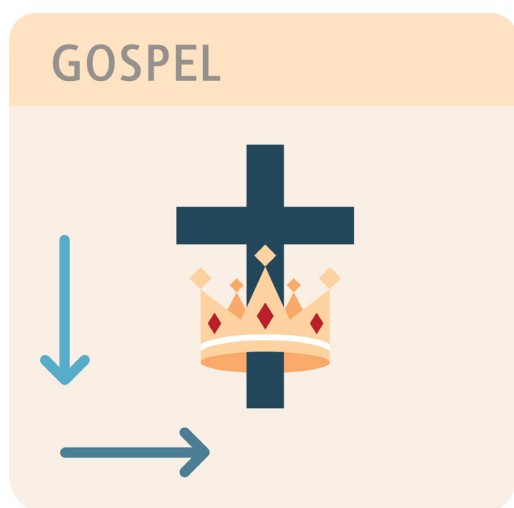


WEEKLY READING RECAP

This week's reading covered the beginning of Jesus' public ministry as He began teaching and healing across Galilee. He called several fishermen to follow Him as disciples, and His authority grew as more people began to hear His message about the kingdom of God. Jesus healed many people, such as a man with leprosy, a paralyzed man, and Peter's mother-in-law. Jesus' teaching challenged societal norms by calling people to love their enemies and trust in God rather than seek earthly rewards.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. Which teaching of Jesus challenged you the most this week?



ERA OVERVIEW

Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Gospel Era. Utilizing page A19 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Gospel Era and its connection to the larger story.

INTRODUCTION

Taking the scenic route is a concept that has slowly faded in our Google Maps era. When we don't know the route to our destination, we plug in the address and follow the directions that will get us there the quickest. However, in Jesus' time, God's people did the opposite when traveling from Jerusalem to Galilee. They didn't take the direct route through Samaria but instead took the long route *around* Samaria. Why did they take this route, and what did it reveal about their hearts? Did Jesus approve of their choice? In our lesson today, we'll examine those questions and ultimately discover how Jesus wants us to treat people who are different from us.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. Do you prefer to take the scenic route or the direct one when traveling?

JESUS ENTERED SPACES WHERE HE WAS

THE MINORITY (John 4:1–6, p. 993)

Ask someone to read John 4:1–6 (p. 993).

History of the Samaritans

When Jewish men and women traveled from the region of Judea (where Jerusalem was located) to Galilee, they had a choice to make. They could either take the direct route through Samaria or cross the Jordan River and travel north along the east bank, avoiding Samaria altogether. The reason they kept away from Samaria takes us back to the Divided Kingdom Era, when Assyria invaded the northern kingdom of Israel. After exiling most of the people, the Assyrians imported foreigners into the region, which led to the Israelites intermarrying with them. The descendants of these marriages, who were only partly Jewish, became known as Samaritans. The Jews in Jesus' time looked down on Samaritans and believed they were inferior. They thought themselves to be superior so much so that they wouldn't even walk through Samaria lest the Samaritans' presence contaminate them.

IF YOU WANT TO REACH PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT, YOU MUST LEAVE YOUR COMFORTABLE SURROUNDINGS AND STEP INTO THEIR WORLD.

Jesus' Decision To Enter Samaria

Depending on your version of the Bible, John 4:4 (p. 993) might say that Jesus "had to" or "needed to" go through Samaria. This phrase comes from the Greek word *dei*, "to be necessary," which, throughout the book of John, refers to a divine necessity or requirement. Jesus didn't go through Samaria because it was the shortest route but because He had a divine encounter He needed to have.

Even though God wants to reach all people, many Christians stay within the comforts of being surrounded by people like them; however, Jesus intentionally walked into a place where He would be in the minority. Why would He do that? Because if you want to reach people who are different, you must leave your comfortable surroundings and step into their world.

Are you willing to walk across the street and get to know a family from a different racial background than yours?

Are you willing to walk into a room filled with people who are all younger or older than you?

Are you willing to spend time with a group of people who have different religious or political beliefs from you?

It's easy to say that you believe the Gospel is for everyone, but it's only when you're willing to break through societal boundaries that you'll find a divine encounter God wants you to have.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think John emphasized that Jesus had to go through Samaria?
2. Why are people often very uncomfortable with people who are different from them? When you feel uncomfortable, what do you need to remember to help you push past your feelings?

TALKING AT PEOPLE HINDERS CONNECTION WHILE TALKING WITH PEOPLE CREATES BONDS.

JESUS ENTERED CONVERSATIONS WITH PEOPLE WHO WERE DIFFERENT (John 4:7-27, pp. 993-994)
Ask someone to read John 4:7-10 (p. 993).

After walking into the Samaritans' space, Jesus had another choice to make. How would He engage with them?

The Difference Between Talking *at* People and Talking *With* People

Jesus didn't go in screaming spiritual truth and condemning people, but He only made a simple request for a need He had. He found a natural way to approach the Samaritan woman, which allowed for a quick conversation with her. He didn't enter her space looking to preach at her but to converse with her. This approach allowed Him to quickly turn the conversation in a spiritual direction because He spoke *with* her rather than *at* her.

- Talking *at* people raises barriers while talking *with* people lowers them.
- Talking *at* people produces resentment while talking *with* people produces curiosity.
- Talking *at* people hinders connection while talking *with* people creates bonds.

Jesus' willingness to engage in conversation with someone incredibly different from Him resulted in an amazing exchange (John 4:11-26, pp. 993-994).

- Jesus proved Himself to be greater than Jacob, who dug the well (v. 13).
- Jesus revealed that He knew the woman's past (vv. 16-18).
- Responding to the woman's question about worship, Jesus declared that true worshippers of God worship Him in spirit and truth (vv. 19-24).

- Jesus declared Himself to be the Messiah when the woman said she believed that the Messiah was coming (vv. 25-26).

This is why conversations *with* people are so important. When the woman attempted to shift the conversation away from her past by changing the subject, Jesus was able to bring her back to the importance of worship. When she expressed belief that one day the Messiah would come, He was able to reveal the truth about Himself. These developments only occur in genuine conversations.

WHEN YOU'RE TALKING WITH SOMEONE INSTEAD OF AT THEM, THEY'RE MUCH MORE WILLING TO LISTEN AND STAY ENGAGED.

How To Create a Personal Connection With Someone

How can you create a personal connection with someone?

- **Ask questions.** People love to talk about their families or professions, so ask them about those topics. Plus, their answers will give you the opportunity to find common ground with them.
- **Actively listen.** Listen to understand, not just to respond.
- **Be open.** Share about your life and background. This will help establish yourself as someone who is honest and trustworthy.
- **Look for openings.** As you get to know someone, look for a natural opening to discuss Jesus. The Samaritan woman was thirsty, so Jesus used that to start a conversation about how He is the Living Water.

Scripture doesn't tell us why this woman came to the well during the middle of the day, which was unusual because women usually came at the beginning of the day when it was cooler. Many scholars have theorized that she was a pariah in her town because of sinful relationships with men, so she came in the middle of the day when no one else was there. Jesus alluded to this when He said that she had been married multiple times and that the man she lived with wasn't her husband.

Connecting with others who are different, whether due to their identity or past choices, can be challenging and awkward, but when you're talking *with* someone instead of *at* them, they're much more willing to listen and stay engaged.

It's incredible what can happen during a conversation that's neither rushed nor driven by a rigid agenda. In the Samaritan woman's conversation with Jesus, she

went from being shocked by Jesus' request to being curious about His thoughts and engaging with Him.

All because He talked *with* her.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What's the difference between talking *at* someone and talking *with* them? Why is this distinction important when attempting to talk with someone about Jesus?
2. Who are some people in your life who are different from you that you need to start a spiritual conversation with? What would be a good connection point for you to start with?

YOU MAY BE WILLING TO DIE FOR JESUS, BUT ARE YOU WILLING TO BE INCONVENIENCED FOR HIM?

JESUS ENTERED INCONVENIENT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES (John 4:28–42, p. 994)

Ask someone to read John 4:28–30, 39–41 (p. 994).

Jesus allowed His schedule to be changed.

The woman immediately left the well and called everyone to come and meet Jesus. These people were amazed by Jesus and begged Him to stay for two more days so they could listen to His teachings. What began as a lunch stop at the neighborhood well became a 48-hour overnight ministry retreat. Jesus willingly adjusted His schedule so He could spend plenty of unhurried time with the people and teach them.

Why would Jesus do that? He answered that question while explaining His motivation to the disciples.

Ask someone to read John 4:34 (p. 994).

Jesus' sole motivation while on earth was to do God's will and finish the work that God the Father had for Him. That was it. Every moment of Jesus' day was dictated by fulfilling and completing God's work. He didn't allow Himself to be distracted by His personal desires, sins, or dreams.

Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:4 that "Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them" (p. 1,236, Missions Era).

Jesus was the perfect embodiment of this mindset, as He always sought to do God's will, all the way up to the cross.

Read Luke 22:42 (p. 1,092)—"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

Our mentality should match Jesus'.

Jesus was willing to die because it was God's will, but many of us struggle to obey God because His will is inconvenient and outside of our plans and desires.

We choose our comfort instead of His commands.

We crave our desires instead of His directions.

Jesus did the opposite, and since was willing to step into an inconvenient ministry opportunity, a great harvest of people decided to follow Him.

You may be willing to die for Jesus, but are you willing to be inconvenienced for Him?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do we often choose comfort over obedience when it comes to God's will?
2. What factor keeps you from being fully committed to following God's will? Is it your career, dreams, family responsibilities, or finances? Why do you believe God hasn't already planned accordingly for that area of your life?

GOD DESIRES THAT ALL PEOPLE COME TO KNOW HIM, AND HE HAS DONE THE WORK TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE HAS THE FREEDOM TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.

REDEMPTION THREAD

In the Patriarch Era, God promised Abraham that the whole world, not just a select group of people, would be blessed through Abraham's family. Shadows of this fulfilled promise occurred throughout the Old Testament: In the Conquest Era, Rahab, a native Canaanite, was rescued from the destruction of Jericho. In the Judges Era, Ruth, a Moabite, was accepted into Israel, and her decisions of faith became well-known. Additionally, both Rahab and Ruth became ancestors of Jesus. In the Divided Kingdom Era, God healed Naaman, an Aramean, from his leprosy. During the Missions Era, after Jesus' death and resurrection, God sent Peter to a group of Gentiles, and the Holy Spirit filled them, grafting them into God's family and paving the way for the entire world to be blessed, thus fulfilling His original promise.

Read Galatians 3:28–29 (p. 1,137, Missions Era)—"There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you."

God desires that *all* people come to know Him, and He has done the work to ensure that everyone has the freedom to have a relationship with Him.

CALL TO ACTION

Give each person an index card and ensure everyone has access to a pen. Ask everyone to write down the name of a person or a group of people different from themselves with whom they wish to establish a connection. Challenge them to take one step this week to work toward an authentic connection.

CONCLUSION

Our main idea today is “Jesus didn’t allow differences to keep Him from ministering to others, and neither should I.” Our differences on the outside easily drive us apart, but there’s only one internal difference that matters to God—whether someone has a relationship with Christ or not. We live in a diverse city that’s home to people from diverse backgrounds, including different generations, abilities, races, languages, and nationalities. Bellevue will never accomplish its vision to be a catalyst for spiritual awakening in Memphis until we are willing to put aside our comforts, see past our differences, and choose to be like Christ. What barrier can you cross this week so you can reach someone different from you?

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Additional Resources

“What Can We Learn From the Woman at the Well?”
gotquestions.org/woman-at-the-well.html

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NEXT GEN

HOW SHOULD I TREAT THOSE DIFFERENT FROM ME? **John 4:1–42**

OPENING

Activity: The Long Way

Supplies: Small cones

Take your students to the hallway and form two teams. Inform them that they will compete in a relay race. Designate one spot as the starting line and use a cone to designate a turnaround spot. Also use cones to create two paths for the teams to follow. Give Team A a direct path to the turnaround spot and Team B a circuitous route to the turnaround spot. Allow the teams to compete in the relay race. Afterward, ask Team B how they felt about having to take the long route.

(Activity variations: Instruct the students to hop, skip, crawl, or walk backward in the relay race.)

Explain to the students that in today’s lesson they will learn how the Jewish people always took the long route around Samaria so they wouldn’t have to interact with Samaritans. Instruct everyone to listen closely to determine what Jesus believes about taking the long route.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been somewhere and felt like the odd one out? How did you respond?
2. What kind of people do you find it hardest to relate to or connect with? Why?
3. Why do people tend to avoid others who are different in background, beliefs, or lifestyle?

APPLICATION

Instruct your students to stand in a circle. Say statements such as these:

- Step inside the circle if you’ve ever avoided talking to someone because they were different.
- Step inside the circle if you’ve ever felt God nudging you to talk to someone, but you didn’t.
- Step inside the circle if you’ve ever been the one avoided.
- Step inside the circle if you’ve ever had someone show kindness to you when you didn’t expect it.
- Step inside the circle if you want God to give you the courage to enter uncomfortable spaces for His purposes.

Allow volunteers to explain why they stepped into the circle after each question.

CONGRATULATIONS— YOU FINISHED LESSON 39!



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October 12
Adults and Next Gen
Lesson 40

2025
CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE

**HOW DO I REVEAL THAT
I UNDERSTAND THE
GOSPEL?
Matthew 13:1–23**

HOW DO I REVEAL THAT I UNDERSTAND THE GOSPEL? Matthew 13:1–23

MAIN IDEA

I reveal I understand the Gospel by living a life of divine fruitfulness.

OUTLINE

Weekly Reading Recap

Era Overview

Introduction

1. Lack of Gospel Understanding Is Revealed Through:

- Disregard (Matthew 13:4, 19, pp. 1,015–1,016)
- Disappointment (Matthew 13:5–6, 20–21, pp. 1,015–1,016)
- Distractions (Matthew 13:7, 22, pp. 1,015–1,016)

2. Gospel Understanding Is Revealed Through:

- Divine Fruitfulness (Matthew 13:8, 23, pp. 1,015–1,016)
 - Moderately Fruitful
 - Generously Fruitful
 - Abundantly Fruitful

Redemption Thread

Call to Action (Write Psalm 119:17–18 on a card and ask God to open your eyes to His truth.)

Conclusion

Special Note

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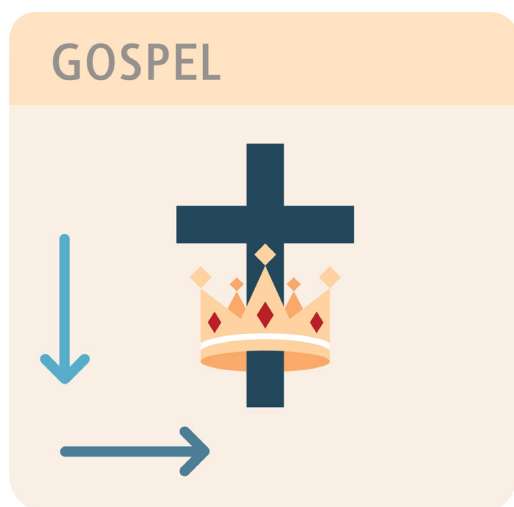


WEEKLY READING RECAP

Our reading this week covered an exciting stretch of Jesus' ministry that was filled with teaching and miracles. Jesus demonstrated His divine authority by calming a storm, casting out a legion of demons, healing a bleeding woman, and raising a girl from the dead. Jesus taught multiple parables, including the Parable of the Sower, which we'll discuss today. He also taught that He is the Bread of Life, which caused many people to turn away from Him. Even though He displayed His power through teaching and miracles, the Pharisees continued to demand more proof, setting the stage for future conflict.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. What's one new thing you learned about Jesus this week?



ERA OVERVIEW

Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Gospel Era. Utilizing page A19 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Gospel Era and its connection to the larger story.

INTRODUCTION

The email inbox—what used to be an innovative form of technology that allowed you to instantly communicate with others has become the place where spam, advertisements, and electronic invitations go to die. The average person has 200 emails in their inbox and receives 120 more emails per day.¹ With this onslaught of messages, it's easy to see how people miss important messages that need their attention and action.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. How many emails do you have in your inbox? (Leader, give a prize to the person who has the most and the person with the least.)

In our lesson today, we'll look at the Parable of the Sower, a story of a farmer that Jesus used to reveal

how many people miss His important message about God's kingdom. Additionally, we'll examine how you can reveal that you truly understand Jesus' message.

LACK OF GOSPEL UNDERSTANDING IS REVEALED THROUGH:

Ask someone to read Matthew 13:1–9 (p. 1,015).

Imagine being on the shore, part of a large crowd, attentively listening to Jesus. You listen to Him share many stories, including this one about a farmer, and you begin to wonder what all these stories, or parables, mean. You look around and notice you're not the only one who seems confused by Jesus' stories.

It was common for the crowds to not understand Jesus' parables, or earthly stories with heavenly meanings. Thankfully, Jesus spent time with His disciples to ensure they knew the meaning of this particular parable.

Before we dive into the meaning of this parable, let's cover the basics of the story:

- Farmer = Jesus Christ or a Christian spreading God's Word
- Seed = the Word of God
- Soil = the hearts of people who hear the Word of God

The focus of this parable is not on the farmer or the seed, but on the soil. The different soils represent different levels of understanding of the Gospel. The first three soils reveal a lack of understanding of what the farmer is sowing. Let's examine them.

SOME PEOPLE THINK GOD WILL SOLVE ALL THEIR PROBLEMS, AND THEY EXPECT TO BE PRAISED FOR THEIR DECISION TO FOLLOW CHRIST. SINCE THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S TRUTH IS SHALLOW, THEY QUICKLY FALL AWAY.

Disregard (Matthew 13:4, 19, pp. 1,015–1,016)

Ask someone to read Matthew 13:4, 19 (pp. 1,015–1,016).

The first soil is solid soil. This is the hardest of all the soils listed. The ground is so hard that the seed cannot even penetrate it. Since the ground is barren and solid, the seed is an easy target for birds looking for a quick meal.

This soil represents someone who has a complete disregard for the Gospel. Their heart is so hardened that there's a complete lack of understanding of even the basics of Jesus' message. There's no space for Jesus' message to even penetrate their spirit, so it's quickly snatched away by our adversary, Satan. This person quickly dismisses Christ's message without a moment's thought and continues their life without thinking twice.

Disappointment (Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21, pp. 1,015-1,016)
Ask someone to read Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21 (pp. 1,015-1,016).

The second soil is stony soil. It has a small area available for the seed to sprout, but it's filled with rocks underneath. The small amount of fresh soil allows the seed to sprout quickly, but it quickly withers and dies because the roots are unable to burrow deep into the soil.

This soil represents someone who readily accepts the Gospel and views their relationship with God through rose-colored glasses. They think God will solve all their problems, and they expect to be praised for their decision to follow Christ. Since their understanding of God's truth is shallow, they quickly fall away when their problems aren't instantly solved or they receive pushback or persecution from nonbelievers.

A PERSON'S ACTIONS ARE DICTATED BY THEIR HEART.

Distractions (Matthew 13:7, 22, pp. 1,015-1,016)
Ask someone to read Matthew 13:7, 22 (pp. 1,015-1,016).

The third soil is strangled soil. The seed sprouted and grew but was quickly overwhelmed by the thorns around it. These thorny bushes created an impenetrable barrier to the sprout, blocking its path to the sun and the nutrients it needed to survive in the soil. As a result, it quickly died.

This soil represents someone who accepts the Gospel but is overwhelmed by the worries of the world. They're consumed with how to solve life's challenges: how to survive, provide, and become successful. These worries lead them to pursue a single goal: amassing wealth. By solely pursuing this goal, their allegiance quickly turns away from Christ.

In each of these examples, a person's actions are dictated by their heart. A hardened heart completely disregards God's truth. A disappointed heart falls away and believes that God didn't hold up His end of the bargain. A distracted heart wanders away from being wholeheartedly devoted to Christ. These individuals did not lose their salvation, but they never genuinely repented of their sins and submitted to Christ as their Lord.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever seen someone get excited about Jesus but then fall away when life became difficult? What did they misunderstand about the Christian life?

2. Why do you think Jesus focused this parable on the condition of the soil (the heart) rather than the seed or the farmer?

MOST PEOPLE DON'T FULLY GRASP HOW FRUITFUL THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST CAN BE.

GOSPEL UNDERSTANDING IS REVEALED THROUGH:

There's one last soil that Jesus mentioned in His parable. Where the previous three soils all resulted in the seed dying or not sprouting, this last soil led to:

Divine Fruitfulness (Matthew 13:8, 23, pp. 1,015-1,016)
Ask someone to read Matthew 13:8, 23 (pp. 1,015-1,016).

This fourth soil is the soft soil. This soil has been adequately prepared to receive the seed, and the seed receives the nutrients and support it needs to prosper and grow. The seed produces a crop 30, 60, or even 100 times as much as was planted!

This soil represents the person who has a soft heart that is prepared to receive God's Word about Jesus. This person receives God's Word and allows it to impact their decisions, beliefs, and actions.

Unfortunately, most people don't fully grasp how fruitful their relationship with Christ can be.

THE FRUITFULNESS THAT ANYONE EXPERIENCES IS THE RESULT OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS BECAUSE GOD IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN CHANGE HEARTS.

Moderately Fruitful

This person loves the Lord and attends church. Even though they have a relationship with Christ, there are areas of their life that remain untouched by God's truth and Spirit.

Generously Fruitful

This person's impact is evident in their service to others. Some examples include serving in the church, investing in others, leading a Life Group, and giving generously to the church. Their decisions and actions point to the Lord, and they seek to tell others about Jesus.

Abundantly Fruitful

This person has completely abandoned their old life and actively seeks to reflect Christ in all they do. The Lord's presence is evident in everything they do, other people's lives are changed

because of this person's actions, and the fruit of the Spirit radiates through them regularly.

It's essential to remember two key points. First, the fruitfulness that anyone experiences is the result of God's faithfulness because God is the only one who can change hearts. Second, it's only by the grace of God that anyone grows in their understanding of God's Word. After Jesus was resurrected, "he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45, p. 1,109). God gives more understanding to those who *desire* more understanding.

If you desire more understanding of God's Word so that your life may be more fruitful, you can pray Psalm 119:17-18 (p. 671, Divided Kingdom Era)—"Be good to your servant, that I may live and obey your word. Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Not allowing God to access certain parts of your life hinders fruit being produced—so why do many people guard those parts from Him?
2. Who is someone you know who's abundantly fruitful? Why does their life produce more fruit than others?

REDEMPTION THREAD

God has always been interested in people's hearts. If someone's heart is right before the Lord, then their actions will glorify Him.

Ask someone to read Deuteronomy 6:5 (p. 242, Exodus Era)—"And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength."

Ask someone to read 1 Samuel 16:7 (p. 352, Kingdom Era)—"But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'"

Ask someone to read Proverbs 4:23 (p. 500, Kingdom Era)—"Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life."

Jesus reiterated this truth in Matthew 22:37 (p. 1,074). When He was asked for the greatest commandment, He replied, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind."

CALL TO ACTION

Give each person an index card and a pen. Direct everyone to write Psalm 119:17-18 (p. 671, Divided Kingdom Era) on the card. Instruct them to place it in a prominent location in their house this week to remind them to ask God to open their eyes to His truth so their life may grow in fruitfulness.

CONCLUSION

Our main idea today is "I reveal I understand the Gospel by living a life of divine fruitfulness." Spend time this week evaluating whether your life is producing any fruitfulness, and ask yourself the

question, "What is the condition of the soil in my heart?" Wrestle with the answer and confess to God that you need Him to change your heart. At Bellevue, we desire to be a catalyst for spiritual awakening in Memphis and beyond. However, that will only occur when each of us submits our lives to Christ, trusts Him with our disappointments, and sets aside our distractions. Only then will we see the Lord accomplish divine fruitfulness through our church!

NEXT GEN

HOW DO I REVEAL THAT I UNDERSTAND THE GOSPEL?

Matthew 13:1-23

OPENING

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever missed an important instruction because you weren't paying attention? What happened?
2. If God is always speaking through His Word, why do many people miss what He's saying?
3. What do you believe a fruitful life looks like? According to your definition, are you living a fruitful life?

APPLICATION

Write these phrases on your whiteboard:

- Lack of understanding
- Moderately fruitful
- Generously fruitful
- Abundantly fruitful

Give every student a note card and a pen. Instruct them to examine the phrases on the board and then write down the condition of their heart. Direct them to spend time in prayer asking God to help the soil of their hearts become softer to Him so they can become more fruitful.

Encourage any student who wrote down "Lack of understanding" to talk with you afterward about repenting of their sin and following Christ.

Citations

1. Martynas Pupkevicius, and Nikola Djordjevic. "How Many Emails Are Sent per Day and Other Email Statistics." *Moneyzine*, 30 June 2022. moneyzine.com/careers/how-many-emails-are-sent-statistics/. Accessed 11 July 2025.

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Additional Resources

"Why Did Jesus Teach in Parables?"

gotquestions.org/Jesus-parables.html

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**CONGRATULATIONS—
YOU FINISHED LESSON 40!**



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October 19
Adults and Next Gen
Lesson 41

2025
CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE

**HOW DOES GOD
RESPOND TO SINNERS?
Luke 15:11–32**

HOW DOES GOD RESPOND TO SINNERS? Luke 15:11–32

MAIN IDEA

God joyfully offers salvation to the rebellious and the religious.

OUTLINE

Weekly Reading Recap

Era Overview

Introduction

1. God's Response to the Rebellious (Luke 15:11–24, p. 1,054)

- God permits freedom to choose. (Luke 15:11–13, p. 1,054)
 - The father allowed the son to insult him.
 - The father allowed the son to leave him.
 - The father allowed the son to waste his inheritance.
- God allows painful consequences. (Luke 15:14–19, p. 1,054)
- God celebrates repentance. (Luke 15:20–24, p. 1,054)

2. God's Response to the Religious (Luke 15:25–32, pp. 1,054–1,055)

- God pursues prideful hearts. (Luke 15:25–30, pp. 1,054–1,055)
- God offers eternal riches. (Luke 15:31, p. 1,055)
- God calls for celebration. (Luke 15:32, p. 1,055)

Redemption Thread

Call to Action (Repent and follow Jesus if you are rebellious or religious.)

Conclusion

Special Note

This Life Group series draws from the work of Iva May and her team at Chronological Bible Teaching Ministries Inc. Foundational concepts, such as dividing the Bible into 14 Eras, the Redemption Thread, and understanding how God speaks, acts, and reveals Himself in each era, come directly from her work. We are thankful for her willingness to allow us to utilize her

14 Era framework and concepts to create these lessons. Our aim with this series is to encourage participants to read the Bible chronologically, but it is not intended to replace or replicate the comprehensive work of Iva and her team. For more resources on reading the Bible chronologically, we highly recommend visiting chronologicalbibleteaching.com.

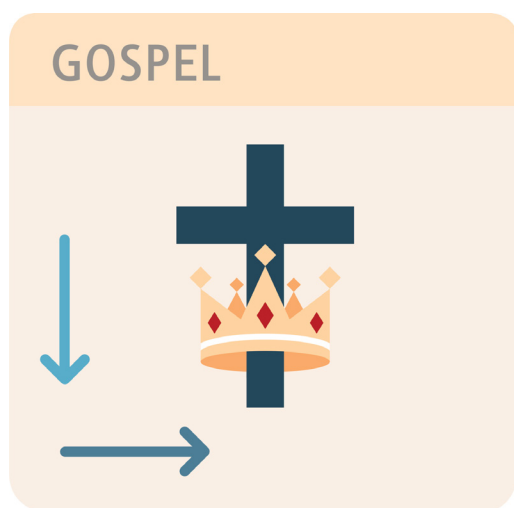


WEEKLY READING RECAP

Our reading this week followed Jesus as He continued to heal, teach, and prepare His disciples for the future. Jesus healed a demon-possessed man whom His disciples could not heal, highlighting the importance of prayer and faith. He continued to face opposition from religious leaders and confusion from His own family. Jesus boldly declared His identity, which prompted an attempt by the people to stone Him. He also taught about the narrow door to heaven and how many people will be turned away because they do not truly know God.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. How does Jesus' teaching about entering the kingdom of heaven differ from what the world proclaims?



ERA OVERVIEW

Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Gospel Era. Utilizing page A19 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Gospel Era and its connection to the larger story.

INTRODUCTION

Leader, share a story from your life about a time when you thought you knew better than your parents. Share details about the situation, what you thought, the decision you made, the outcome, and what you learned.

In our lesson today, we'll examine another parable of Jesus. In this story, Jesus used the relationship between a father and two sons who both believed they knew better than their father. We'll discover the meaning of this story and learn how it reveals God's heart toward everyone, both the rebellious and religious.

GOD'S RESPONSE TO THE REBELLIOUS

(Luke 15:11–24, p. 1,054)

When Jesus taught, tax collectors and notorious sinners often came to listen to Him. Since their

presence and Jesus' kindness toward them angered the Pharisees, Jesus told several parables about God's love. First, He told the Parable of the Lost Sheep, and then He shared the Parable of the Lost Coin (Luke 15:1–10, p. 1,054). However, Jesus wanted to drive home His point even more, so He had one last story to share. Remember, a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

Before we dive into the parable, let's determine who each of the characters represents:

- Father = God
- Younger son = Rebellious sinners
- Older son = Self-righteous religious sinners

God permits freedom to choose.

(Luke 15:11–13, p. 1,054)

Ask someone to read Luke 15:11–13 (p. 1,054).

THE FATHER DIDN'T FORBID HIS SON FROM LEAVING HOME BUT INSTEAD ALLOWED HIM TO WALK OUT THE DOOR EVEN THOUGH HE KNEW THE HEARTACHE THAT WAS COMING.

The father allowed the son to insult him.

Ancient Israel was an honor-shame culture, meaning that a person's identity and social standing were shaped by how their community perceived them. The son's action would have brought great shame to the father. Additionally, by asking for his inheritance early, the son basically communicated to his dad that he wished he were dead.

The father allowed the son to leave him.

The father could have refused to give his son part of the inheritance, but he willingly divided it and gave him his share. He didn't forbid his son from leaving home but instead allowed him to walk out the door even though he knew the heartache that was coming.

JUST AS GOD DOESN'T FORCE PEOPLE TO LOVE AND LIVE WITH HIM, HE ALSO DOESN'T MIRACULOUSLY INTERVENE WHEN THEIR CHOICES BRING PAINFUL CONSEQUENCES.

The father allowed the son to waste his inheritance.

The father gave his son his inheritance even though he knew the son would likely squander it. The son spent everything his father had worked hard to earn, and it was all gone quicker than the son could have imagined. God gives every person the freedom to choose what

they want concerning their relationship with Him (Deuteronomy 30:19, p. 266, Exodus Era). If a woman insults God and spits in His face, He allows her. If a man runs away from God and squanders all the gifts that God has given him, God doesn't stop him. Every person has the freedom to live their life how they choose.

God allows painful circumstances.

(Luke 15:14–19, p. 1,054)

Ask someone to read Luke 15:14–19 (p. 1,054).

The reality of life hit the younger son after he spent all his money on wild living. Once the funds ran out, his friends left, and his food disappeared. And the father did not rush in to rescue his son from the consequences of his own decisions.

Just as God doesn't force people to love and live with Him, He also doesn't miraculously intervene when their choices bring painful consequences. If a young man chooses to have sex before marriage and discovers he's contracted a disease, God doesn't take it away. If a parent ignores family relationships for decades, God doesn't force the ignored family to spend time with the parent when they're lonely. Poor choices lead to painful circumstances.

GOD ISN'T WAITING TO GIVE A HEAVENLY SCOLDING AND LECTURE, BUT HE'S READY TO CELEBRATE EVERY PERSON WHO REPENTS OF THEIR SIN AND MAKES JESUS THEIR LORD.

God celebrates repentance. (Luke 15:20–24, p. 1,054)

Ask someone to read Luke 15:20–24 (p. 1,054).

As the younger son pondered eating pig food, he finally came to his senses. He determined to return home as a servant, believing he was no longer worthy to be called his dad's son. However, the father, who was looking out for his son, saw the son walking home and *ran* to him.

Men in the first century didn't run because it would have been shameful to hike up their tunic and expose their legs. However, the dad willingly shamed himself to greet his son and embrace him. When the son repented of his sinful actions, the father threw him a party because his son was home! (This act would have been shocking to Jesus' listeners. In their society, if a son squandered his inheritance or shamed his family, the community would perform a *Kezazah* ceremony, a public ritual in which the offender would be cut off. Possibly, the dad in Jesus' story ran to his son before the community could do that to him.)

God is always waiting for people to return to Him in repentance. He isn't waiting to give a heavenly scolding and lecture, but He's ready to celebrate every person who repents of their sin and makes Jesus their Lord. God shamed Himself

when He died for us on the cross, and today He's anxiously waiting for every person to return!

Read Luke 15:10 (p. 1,054)—“In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do many people have to hit rock-bottom before realizing their need for God?
2. What stands out to you about the father's response when his son returned home?

GOD'S RESPONSE TO THE RELIGIOUS

(Luke 15:25–32, pp. 1,054–1,055)

Jesus could have stopped the parable right here, and everyone would have loved it. However, He had an additional point to make to the Pharisees, who were listening intently.

SALVATION IS NOT ABOUT DOING THE RIGHT THING BUT ABOUT BEING WITH THE ONE WHO IS THE EMBODIMENT OF EVERYTHING RIGHT.

God pursues prideful hearts.

(Luke 15:25–30, pp. 1,054–1,055)

Ask someone to read Luke 15:25–28 (pp. 1,054–1,055).

When the older brother, who had dutifully stayed with his father, heard that his father was throwing a party for his rebellious brother, he became angry and refused to join in. He was indignant that his dad would celebrate his brother but had never thrown a party for him at any point. Instead of leaving his older son to stew in his anger and self-righteousness, the father proactively went to him!

Just as the Pharisees believed that their good works made them righteous, churches are filled with people who believe their actions elevate them above the “sinners.” What they fail to grasp is that you can do all the “right” things yet still be separated from God. Salvation is not about *doing* the right thing but about *being with* the One who is the embodiment of everything right. God calls the religious to repent of their pride, submit, and join Him so He can cover them with His righteousness.

God offers eternal riches. (Luke 15:31, p. 1,055)

Ask someone to read Luke 15:31 (p. 1,055).

The father plainly told his older son that he would share everything he owned. He had held nothing back from his son.

God offers the religious something much more than what they can attain through their self-righteousness. Your best effort at being good and doing right is like

a filthy rag in God's presence (Isaiah 64:6, p. 736, Divided Kingdom Era). God doesn't want you to hold a dirty rag, but instead, He wants to shower you with His loving presence, wise plan, and eternal providence.

WHETHER YOU'VE ATTENDED CHURCH SINCE YOU WERE A BABY OR ARE STILL RECOVERING FROM YOUR BAD CHOICES LAST NIGHT, GOD MAKES THE SAME PLEA: "I WANT YOU TO BE FOUND, NOT LOST! YOU ARE DEAD, BUT THROUGH ME, YOU WILL FIND LIFE!"

God calls for celebration. (Luke 15:32, p. 1,055)
Ask someone to read Luke 15:32 (p. 1,055).

The father made one last plea in an attempt to help his older son understand. The younger son had chosen repentance, and it had given him a new life. He once was lost, but then he was found. Whenever someone finds new life or is found, that's worthy of a celebration!

Repentance is the only way to salvation, so when someone chooses to turn from their sinful life, that decision is worthy of celebration and praise no matter what their background is. When someone steps from darkness into light, there should be no room for judgment or condemnation. It's a time of celebration!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What makes pride so dangerous, especially when it's hidden behind religious activity?
2. How can someone be "close" to God in terms of their activity but still be far from Him in their heart?

REDEMPTION THREAD

Jesus ended the story with the father's plea to the older son to enter his home and join the party. Interestingly, Jesus finished the story with a cliff-hanger, and His listeners (and we) were left wondering what decision the older son would make. Would the son acknowledge that repentance, and not good works, was the only way to enter his father's house? Or would he hold on to his sin and stay separated from his father?

From the beginning of the Creation Era, God has made it clear that the only way to be right before Him is through submission and repentance. Whether you've attended church since you were a baby or are still recovering from your bad choices last night, God makes the same plea: "I want you to be found, not lost! You are dead, but through Me, you will find life!"

CALL TO ACTION

Ask everyone in your Life Group to close their eyes and consider their relationship with Christ. Remind them that whether they are rebellious or religious, both ways lead them away from an eternal relationship with Jesus. Encourage them to talk with you after class if they would like to repent of their sin and become a follower of Jesus. Pray over your Life Group.

CONCLUSION

Our main idea today is "God joyfully offers salvation to the rebellious and the religious." God is joyfully calling you into a relationship with Him today. Don't wait another day to leave your former world behind and follow Him into a relationship that's filled with peace. The first step in Bellevue's pathway is to have a personal relationship with Jesus. If you've never made that decision before, today is the day!

NEXT GEN

HOW DOES GOD RESPOND TO SINNERS? Luke 15:11–32

OPENING

Activity: Rebellious or Religious

Supplies: None

Designate one side of your room as “rebellious” and the other side as “religious.” Inform the students that you’ll read a statement and they should indicate whether they think the statement describes someone rebellious or religious by walking to the corresponding side of the room. Here are some statements you can say:

- “I’ve done a lot of wrong, but I feel like I’m too bad for God.”
- “I’ve been doing all the right things but mostly for applause.”
- “I read my Bible every day so I can impress people with my Bible knowledge.”
- “I stopped going to church because I don’t feel like I’m good enough to be there.”
- “I memorize portions of Scripture and quote them in public as much as possible.”
- “I often tell people that I don’t drink or cuss.”

Explain that people who are rebellious and those who are religious both need to be forgiven by God. Tell your students that in today’s lesson they’ll see how God responds to the rebellious and the religious through a parable that Jesus taught.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever thought you knew better than a parent, a teacher, or a coach? What happened?
2. Why do you think some people run away from God while others try to impress Him?
3. How is God’s response to people who mess up different from your response when people mess up?

APPLICATION

Give each student a piece of paper and a pen. Instruct them to write a letter to God from the perspective of either the younger son or the older son from today’s parable. Encourage them to be honest about their relationship with God as they write.

Afterward, pray over your students and ask God to bring each of them to a place of repentance of their sin.

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Additional Resources

“What Is the Meaning of the Parable of the Prodigal Son?”

gotquestions.org/parable-prodigal-son.html

*All thoughts and ideas listed under Additional Resources may not be completely in agreement with Bellevue’s theology, and their listing should not be considered as an endorsement.

CONGRATULATIONS— YOU FINISHED LESSON 41!



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October 26
Adults and Next Gen
Lesson 42

2025
CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE

**AM I WILLING TO
PAY THE COST TO
FOLLOW JESUS?
Matthew 4:1-11**

AM I WILLING TO PAY THE COST TO FOLLOW JESUS? Mark 10:17–31

MAIN IDEA

Jesus calls me to give up control of everything in my life and follow Him.

OUTLINE

Weekly Reading Recap

Era Overview

Introduction

1. **A Sincere Question (Mark 10:17, p. 1,060)**
 - How can I earn eternal life?
1. **A Shocking Answer (Mark 10:18–21, p. 1,060)**
 - Sell everything and follow Me.
2. **A Somber Response (Mark 10:22, p. 1,060)**
 - The young man walked away.
3. **A Supernatural Promise (Mark 10:23–31, pp. 1,060–1,061)**
 - It's impossible for anyone to enter God's kingdom.
 - When you give away for Jesus' sake, you receive abundantly in return.

Redemption Thread

Call to Action (Answer the following questions: “What am I holding on to? Why won't I give it to Jesus?”)

Conclusion

Special Note

This Life Group series draws from the work of Iva May and her team at Chronological Bible Teaching Ministries Inc. Foundational concepts, such as dividing the Bible into 14 Eras, the Redemption Thread, and understanding how God speaks, acts, and reveals Himself in each era, come directly from her work. We are thankful for her willingness to allow us to utilize her

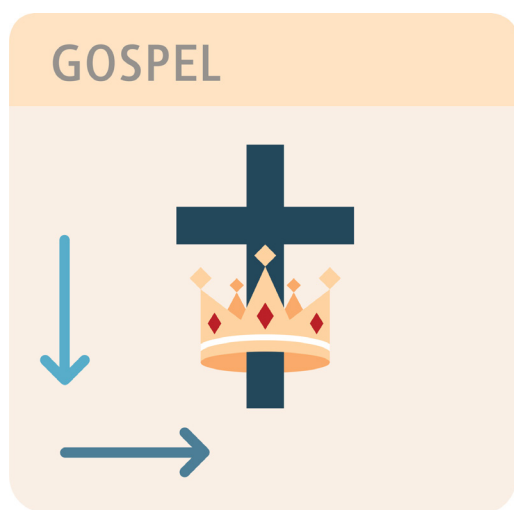
14 Era framework and concepts to create these lessons. Our aim with this series is to encourage participants to read the Bible chronologically, but it is not intended to replace or replicate the comprehensive work of Iva and her team. For more resources on reading the Bible chronologically, we highly recommend visiting chronologicalbibleteaching.com.

WEEKLY READING RECAP

In our reading this week, we witnessed Jesus in some of the final moments of His public ministry. His resurrection of Lazarus prompted belief in some people and opposition in others, setting in motion the religious leaders' plan to kill Jesus. Jesus taught about many topics, including prayer, humility, and faith. We read about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and the exuberant welcome He received from the people. Jesus continued to speak boldly as certain people moved against Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. What did our reading this week reveal about Jesus' heart and mission?



ERA OVERVIEW

Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Gospel Era. Utilizing page A19 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Gospel Era and its connection to the larger story.

INTRODUCTION

Leader, share a story from your life about a time when you started a project, bought an item, or did something else similar only to find out later that the cost was greater than you expected. Share about the feelings you had at the beginning of the venture, your realization that you were in over your head, and what happened after that.

In our lesson today, we'll examine a conversation Jesus had with a young man who desired eternal life. We'll look at the man's response to Jesus' answer as he decided whether he was willing to pay the cost required to have eternal life.

A SINCERE QUESTION (Mark 10:17, p. 1,060)

How can I earn eternal life?

Ask someone to read Mark 10:17 (p. 1,060).

As Jesus was heading toward Jerusalem, a young man whom Luke says was a religious leader (Luke 18:18, p. 1,061) asked Jesus a sincere question. He desired eternal life with God and wanted to know what he had to do to achieve that goal.

Since this man was a religious leader, he followed the law and taught others to do the same. He knew how to stay ceremonially pure, followed the yearly festival schedules, and offered all the proper sacrifices. Yet he still felt like he was missing something, so he wanted to finally feel peace that he was going to make it to heaven at the end of his life.

That's how lots of people feel at the end of the day. They start out feeling proud of themselves:

- "I was kind to my neighbor today even though he always plays his music too loud."
- "I was pretty honest with my taxes, much more so than most people."
- "I did a great job on my project today because I worked really hard preparing."

But the question always lingers: "Are my actions enough to get me into heaven?"

This is a question that has resonated with people throughout history. Most people understand that there's more to life than our earthly existence, and they desire to be with God after they die. But they picture standing before God as He stands behind a large scale. They imagine that God will pour all their actions, good and bad, onto the scale, and if the scale tips to the good side, then He will grant them heavenly approval.

That's what this young man was looking for—more "good" actions so he could tip the scales in his favor when the time came for him to stand before God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do so many people believe that their "goodness" is the way to open the door to heaven?
2. What kind of "good" actions do people rely on to feel spiritually secure?

A SHOCKING ANSWER (Mark 10:18–21, p. 1,060)

Sell everything and follow Me.

Ask someone to read Mark 10:18–21 (p. 1,060).

Immediately, Jesus confronted this man's sense of goodness. By asking the rhetorical question "Why do you call me good?" (Mark 10:18, p. 1,060) and answering that only God is good, Jesus was making it clear that there is only one who is good enough to be in heaven—and it wasn't this young man.

But Jesus wasn't done shaking the ground beneath the young man's feet.

Jesus then listed most of the Ten Commandments that deal with people's relationships with others. Matthew's account of this story adds that Jesus summed up His answer with, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 19:19, p. 1,061), which is the spirit of those commandments.

JESUS DIDN'T WANT THE YOUNG MAN TO DO MORE BUT TO SURRENDER MORE.

The man based his request on being a good person, so Jesus met him on those terms. In essence, Jesus said, "If you think you can earn eternal life, then you'll need to live a flawless life."

The man's response? "Jesus, I've obeyed all the commandments!" And it's very likely he *had* obeyed the commandments. What began as the Ten Commandments evolved into 613 regulations over the years, and this man sought to obey all of them.

But Jesus called his bluff.

Knowing that the young man hadn't kept the commandments as well as he thought and knowing he loved something else more than the Lord, Jesus gave the man a shocking answer.

"Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me" (Mark 10:21c, p. 1,060).

Jesus' answer flipped everything upside down for this young man. No matter how good he was, he wasn't good enough for heaven. Jesus didn't want the young man to do more but to surrender more.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What assumptions was Jesus confronting when He asked, "Why do you call Me good?"
2. Have you ever relied on your own "goodness" to feel right with God? How does this passage challenge that belief?

A SOMBER RESPONSE (Mark 10:22, p. 1,060)

The young man walked away.

Ask someone to read Mark 10:22 (p. 1,060).

At that moment, the young man realized he didn't truly love his neighbor as himself. He may have obeyed God's law, but his heart was not in alignment with God's priorities. Outwardly he was a good, religious person, but inwardly, he was as selfish as a despised tax collector.

He was willing to be "perfect" on the outside for God, but he didn't want his heart to be perfect. What

Jesus asked for was too much for him. Following God demands absolute submission, and this young man was unwilling to bend his knee concerning his money.

He stood face to face with the One who promised that God would supply all his needs—and it wasn't enough. So, he walked away disappointed.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Jesus specifically challenged this man about his money and possessions? What does money tend to reveal about our hearts and trust in God?
2. This man stood face to face with Jesus and still walked away. What does this tell us about the power of idols and how deeply they grip our hearts?

NO ONE CAN GAIN ENTRANCE BY THEIR GOOD WORKS BECAUSE THEIR ACTIONS WILL ALWAYS FALL SHORT. GOD EXPECTS PERFECTION, AND THERE'S NO ONE OUTSIDE OF JESUS WHO HAS EVER BEEN PERFECT.

A SUPERNATURAL PROMISE

(Mark 10:23–27, pp. 1,060–1,061)

Ask someone to read Mark 10:23–27 (pp. 1,060–1,061).

We can imagine Jesus watching the young man walk away with sadness on his face as He turned to His disciples. Burdened, Jesus declared how difficult it is for the rich to enter heaven. He declared that just as it is impossible for a camel to go through a needle, it's impossible for the rich to gain entrance to eternal life. In Jewish society, riches and wealth were seen as divine blessings, so the disciples were shocked because they believed rich people had the fast track to heaven.

ALL THE YOUNG MAN HAD TO DO WAS CLING TO JESUS AND FOLLOW HIM, AND HE WOULD HAVE DISCOVERED ETERNAL RICHES IN GOD'S PRESENCE INSTEAD OF HOLDING ON TO SCRAPS APART FROM GOD.

It's impossible for anyone to enter God's kingdom.

The point Jesus made was not only that it's impossible for the rich to enter the kingdom of God but also that it's impossible for anyone to enter His kingdom. No one can gain entrance by their good works because their actions will always fall short. God expects perfection, and there's no one outside of Jesus who has ever been perfect.

But what is impossible for people is possible for God. Jesus completely fulfilled the law, lived a perfect life, honored God with every thought

and action, and became the perfect sacrifice so that the rich and poor could enter heaven.

Peter, looking at his possessions in comparison to the young man's, piped up and loudly declared that the disciples had given up all their possessions for Jesus. Let's look at Jesus' response.

Ask someone to read Mark 10:29–31 (p. 1,061).

Jesus made a supernatural promise that only makes sense in God's kingdom.

When you give away for Jesus' sake, you receive abundantly in return.

Jesus promised that when His followers give away control of their possessions, relationships, and status, they will receive a hundredfold back when they enter His kingdom. All the young man had to do was cling to Jesus and follow Him, and he would have discovered eternal riches in God's presence instead of holding on to scraps apart from God.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. If Jesus made the same request of you that He made of the young man, how would you respond?

THE HARDEST DECISION IS TO OPEN YOUR HAND, BUT ONCE YOU DO, YOU'LL DISCOVER THAT GOD WILL ACCOMPLISH MORE WITH YOUR SURRENDER THAN YOU COULD EVER DO ON YOUR OWN.

REDEMPTION THREAD

God desires the entirety of our hearts, which will lead to our obedience. In the Creation Era, God expected Adam and Eve to obey His one instruction, and they failed. In the Patriarch Era, He wanted Abraham to wait patiently for Him to fulfill His promise about a son, but Abraham struggled and had a son with a woman other than his wife. In multiple eras, God called His people to trust Him and follow Him alone, but they continued to turn to idols because their hearts were divided. However, Jesus showed us through His life what it looks like to have a heart fully committed and devoted to God, and because of His perfection, we now have access to God's kingdom in heaven. People will never be good enough to earn entrance to heaven, but when we give away control of everything in our lives and follow Jesus, we receive the admission ticket that He earned for us.

CALL TO ACTION

Give each person an index card and ensure everyone has a pen. Write these questions on the board: "What am I holding on to? Why won't I give it to Jesus?" Instruct everyone to write their answers on their card. Then direct them to rip up their card when they're ready to give up control of that one thing to God, whether they make that decision during Life Group or later in the week.

CONCLUSION

Our main idea today is "Jesus calls me to give up control of everything in my life and follow Him." For many of us, money and possessions are what we hold on to the tightest. However, anything we hold in a closed hand is a sign that we're not trusting God with everything. The hardest decision is to open your hand, but once you do, you'll discover that God will accomplish more with your surrender than you could ever do on your own. It's OK to wrestle this week with this truth, but be encouraged—you'll experience peace and joy when you finally open your hand.

NEXT GEN

AM I WILLING TO PAY THE COST TO FOLLOW JESUS? Mark 10:17–31

OPENING

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever done something “good” mostly to look good to others? What does that reveal about you?
2. If you heard someone say, “God wants your heart, not your good behavior,” what would you think they meant?
3. What’s something in your life that would be really hard to give up even if God asked?

APPLICATION

Give each student three pieces of paper: one green, one yellow, and one red. Explain that you’re going to name a possession, a habit, or a comfort, and they should respond with how willing they would be to give it up if God asked them to. Direct them to hold the green paper up if they would give it up easily, the yellow paper if it would be hard to give it up, and the red paper if they refuse to give it up.

Examples of what you can name:

- Your first choice for college
- Popularity
- Going to a party that everyone who is anyone will be at
- Video games
- Social media
- Music playlists
- Your phone or device

Allow volunteers to explain their answers. Then ask, “What do our answers reveal about our hearts?” Share that everyone has something they’re unwilling to give up. Form several groups and instruct the students to pray for each other.

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Additional Resources

“Why Did Jesus Tell the Rich Young Ruler He Could Be Saved by Obeying the Commandments?”

gotquestions.org/rich-young-ruler.html

*All thoughts and ideas listed under Additional Resources may not be completely in agreement with Bellevue’s theology, and their listing should not be considered as an endorsement.

**CONGRATULATIONS—
YOU FINISHED LESSON 42!**



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