



Is It OK to Pray for More Money?



Session Objective

Participants will explore the concept of want versus need: When we desire money, is it because we need it in order to live or simply because we want it? This session examines the idea behind the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer ("Give us today our daily bread") and the ways in which it does and does not address the topic of money.

Faith Statement

Question 130. What is meant by the fourth petition, "Give us today our daily bread"?

We ask God to provide for all our needs, for we know that God, who cares for us in every area of our life, has promised us temporal as well as spiritual blessings. God commands us to pray each day for all that we need and no more, so that we will learn to rely completely on God. We pray that we will use what we are given wisely, remembering especially the poor and the needy. Along with every living creature we look to God, the source of all generosity, to bless us and nourish us, according to the divine good pleasure.

— Study Catechism: Full Version



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- What is the difference between a want and a need? What are some examples of this difference?
- Why do you pray? What sorts of things do you pray for?
- Does the reasoning behind your prayer requests matter to God? Why or why not?
- Is it ever OK to pray for money? Why or why not?



Explore

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10 and the faith statement and explore the following questions:

- Verse 7 says, "we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it." Is that an argument for being happy with nothing? Why or why not?
- The author defines being content as having adequate food and clothing (v. 8). How do you define contentment?
- Does the pursuit of wealth lead to "ruin and destruction"? Give examples of how it does and/or doesn't.
- In what ways does the possession of money inhibit religious faith? In what ways does it help strengthen faith?
- How does the message of 1 Timothy 6:6-10 compare with what the faith statement says?
- What insights does the faith statement provide?



Express

Use the following questions to help the participants express what they've learned:

- How do 1 Timothy 6:6-10 and the faith statement make you feel about your wealth, your stuff, and yourself?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "Is it OK to pray for more money?"
- What difference does it make in your life whether or not you have a response to this question?



Exit

Close the session with a time of prayer, giving thanks to God for the blessings of family, friends, church, and this time together. Invite the youth to pray for discernment and wisdom in figuring out the difference between want and need, and for growth toward wise and godly stewardship of material resources.





Session Objective

Participants will discuss the idea that, while money itself is neutral, what we do with it and our desire for it can cause problems. Participants will explore how a person can be called by God to be financially successful and still be a good steward of his or her money, as well as how money can supplant God.

Faith Statement

Question 112. What do you learn from [the eighth] commandment?

God forbids all theft and robbery, including schemes, tricks or systems that unjustly take what belongs to someone else. God requires me not to be driven by greed, not to misuse or waste the gifts that I have been given, and not to distrust the promise that God will supply my needs.

— *Study Catechism: Full Version*



Engage

Open your time together in prayer, and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- What would you do if you had a million dollars?
- What does someone's wealth have to do with his or her relationship with God? Explain your answer.
- Is there anything wrong with wanting money? Why or why not?



Explore

Read Matthew 19:16–30 and the faith statement and explore the following questions:

- The rich young man begins his conversation with Jesus by asking, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" (v. 16). When have you asked or wondered about that question? How would you answer?
- Later, Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven" (v. 23). Why do you think Jesus said this?
- Considering Jesus' statement, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible" (v. 26), how do you think God decides whether someone will "enter the kingdom of heaven"? What responsibility do people have, if God is ultimately the one in charge?
- How does the message of Matthew 19:16–30 compare with what the faith statement says?
- What insights does the faith statement provide?



Express

Use the following questions to help the participants express what they've learned:

- When you read Matthew 19:16–30, does it ultimately leave you feeling hopeful, frightened, condemned, or something else all together? Why?
- Is the faith statement enough to guide you in a faithful relationship with money throughout your life, or is more required? If so, what's missing?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "What's wrong with wanting money?"



Exit

Close the session with a time of prayer. Invite the youth to engage in a time of meditative reflection on their relationship with money and wealth, being conscious of the power of material possessions to take over our lives. Close with a corporate prayer, asking that God help you all to not "distrust the promise that God will supply [our] needs."





Session Objective

Participants will explore what it means to not worry about physical goods. This is not a call to stop taking care of oneself or others. Rather, it is a warning to not let the desire for money and things become all-consuming. God still provides for us, and nothing—not even poverty—can remove God's love from our lives and hearts.

Faith Statement

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"
With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
—A Brief Statement of Faith, lines 72-79



Engage

Open your time together in prayer, and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- If someone lacks the basic necessities of life, is it enough to say to him or her, "Don't worry!" Why or why not?
- When you're worried about something, how do you deal with it?
- What's the difference between not worrying and trusting God?
- If someone—even you—has no money, what can or should that person do?
- What responsibility do those with resources have toward those without those resources?



Explore

Read Luke 12:22-34 and the faith statement and explore the following questions:

- After saying to his disciples, "do not worry about your life . . ." (v. 22), Jesus goes on to list three reasons why they need not worry. What are these three reasons? (See vv. 23-25.) Are these reasons for not worrying good enough for real life? Why or why not?
- The message in verses 26-31 seems to be, "Trust God." Can you trust God to provide for your material needs or do you think this applies mostly to spiritual needs?
- Verse 33 seems to ratchet things up even more: "Sell your possessions, and give alms." Is this realistic? Why or why not?
- In what ways do the Luke 12:22-34 and the faith statement give similar messages? In what ways are they different?
- What insights does the faith statement provide?



Express

Use the following questions to help the participants express what they've learned:

- Do possessions get in the way of a relationship with God? Why or why not?
- Read Luke 12:34. Where is *your* treasure?
- Is the faith statement enough to guide you in a faithful relationship with money throughout your life, or is more required? If so, what's missing?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "What if I don't have any money?"



Exit

Close the session with a time of prayer. Invite the youth to pray for those in need, and even that they might be an answer to the prayer of someone in need.





Are We Really Supposed to Give Our Money Away?



Session Objective

Participants will begin to explore the concept of stewardship of money: What is the importance of tithing and giving back to God? What does it mean that our hearts reside with whatever we treasure?

Faith Statement

The reconciliation of humankind through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God's good creation. Because Jesus identified himself with the needy and exploited, the cause of the world's poor is the cause of his disciples. The church cannot condone poverty, whether it is the product of unjust social structures, exploitation of the defenseless, lack of national resources, absence of technological understanding, or rapid expansion of populations. The church calls all people to use their abilities, their possessions, and the fruits of technology as gifts entrusted to them by God for the maintenance of their families and the advancement of the common welfare.

—Confession of 1967, 9.46c (Inclusive Language Text)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- Describe a time when you gave generously to someone or some cause. How did that generous giving make you feel?
- In what ways can or do you give to God? What have you received in return?
- Is God generous to those who give generously? If so, how? How do you know?



Explore

Read 2 Chronicles 31:2-10 and the faith statement and then explore the following questions:

- Why do the people give their possessions to God? What specific reasons and motivations can you find in the passage for the people's lavish giving?
- Does the Scripture passage say what the people expect to receive from God in return? If not, what do you think the people might hope or expect to receive from God?
- How does the priest Azariah account for the people's generosity (v. 10)?
- How does the message of 2 Chronicles 31:2-10 compare with what the faith statement says?
- What insights does the faith statement provide?



Express

Use the following questions to help the participants express what they've learned:

- When you give to the church, what, if anything, do you expect to receive in return?
- Do you believe that God is generous toward those who are generous? Why or why not?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "Are we really supposed to give our money away?"
- What difference does it make in your life that whether or not you have a response to this question?



Exit

Close the session with a time of prayer, giving thanks to God for this time together. Invite the youth to pray for those who are enslaved by poverty and to give thanks for one another.

