



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Find time to explore these questions as a family after each session.

Session 1

- What is the difference between a want and a need? Give real-life examples.
- Do you believe it's OK to pray for money? If so, under what circumstances? If not, why not?
- Does the pursuit of wealth lead to "ruin and destruction"? Give examples of how it does or doesn't.
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "Is it OK to pray for more money?"

Session 2

- What is your reaction to Jesus' statement that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:23–24)?
- What does a person's wealth have to do with his or her relationship with God?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "What's so wrong with wanting money?"

Session 3

- If someone lacks the basic necessities of life, is it enough to tell him or her not to worry? What *is* enough?
- If a person has no money, what can or should he or she do?
- What responsibility do those with resources have toward those without those resources?
- Where is your treasure?

Session 4

- Describe a time when you gave generously to someone or some cause. Why did you do that?
- How did that generous giving make you feel?
- In what ways can or do you give to God? What have you received in return?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "Are we really supposed to give our money away?"



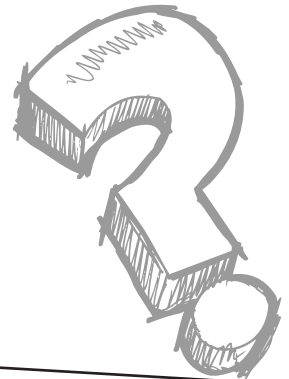
SESSION 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 Timothy 6:6–10 (The Message)

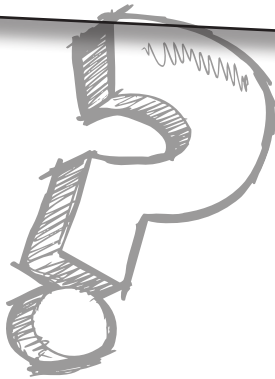
⁶⁻⁸A devout life does bring wealth, but it's the rich simplicity of being yourself before God. Since we entered the world penniless and will leave it penniless, if we have bread on the table and shoes on our feet, that's enough.

⁹⁻¹⁰But if it's only money these leaders are after, they'll self-destruct in no time. Lust for money brings trouble and nothing but trouble. Going down that path, some lose their footing in the faith completely and live to regret it bitterly ever after.

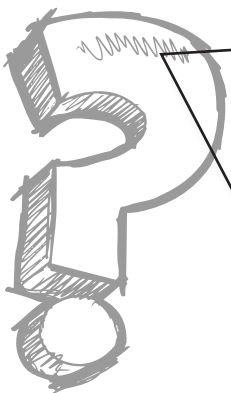
1. How do you define *contentment*? How does this Scripture passage define *contentment*?



2. What are some specific examples of how the lust for money can bring trouble?



3. In what ways can the possession of money get in the way of Christian faith? In what ways can it help strengthen faith?



Scripture taken from *The Message*.
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SESSION 1 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*





TIMOTHY'S LOST LETTER

Of course, there is great gain in (1) _____ combined with
(2) _____; for we brought (3) _____ into the world, so that
we can take (4) _____ out of it; but if we have food and clothing,
we will be (5) _____ with these. But those who want to be
(6) _____ (7) _____ into temptation and are trapped
by many (8) _____ and (9) _____
desires that (10) _____ people into
ruin and destruction. For the love of
(11) _____ is a root of all kinds
of evil, and in their eagerness to be
(12) _____ some have wandered
away from the (13) _____ and
themselves with many (14) _____.





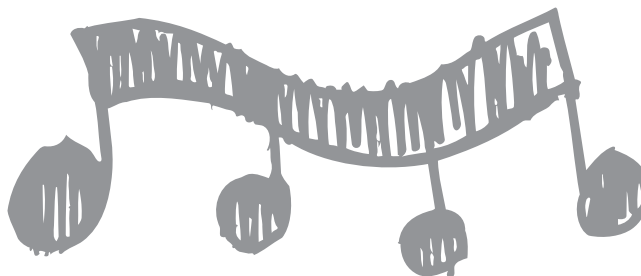
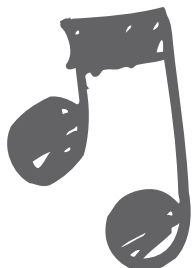
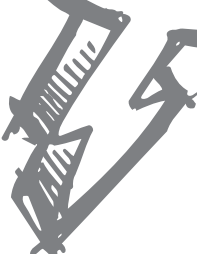
BE THOU MY VISION

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art—
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
Great God of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

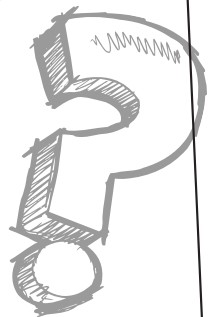
Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Translator: Mary E. Byrne (1905)
Versifier: Eleanor H. Hull (1912; alt.)



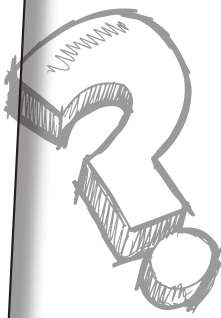


SESSION 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

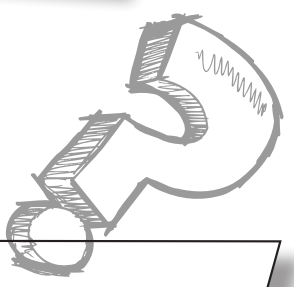
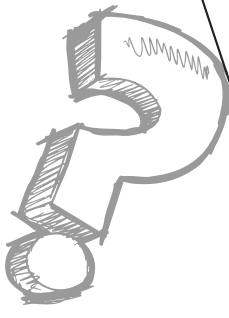


1. The rich young man begins his conversation with Jesus by asking, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" (v. 16). When have you asked or wondered about that question? How would you answer?

2. 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?




3. Based on 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 humans have, if God is ultimately the one in charge?



4. What one word sums up how this Scripture passage leaves you feeling?

5. How does Matthew 19:16–30 help you respond to the question, "What's so wrong with wanting money?"





SESSION 2 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*

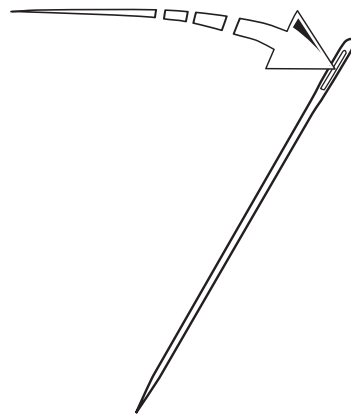
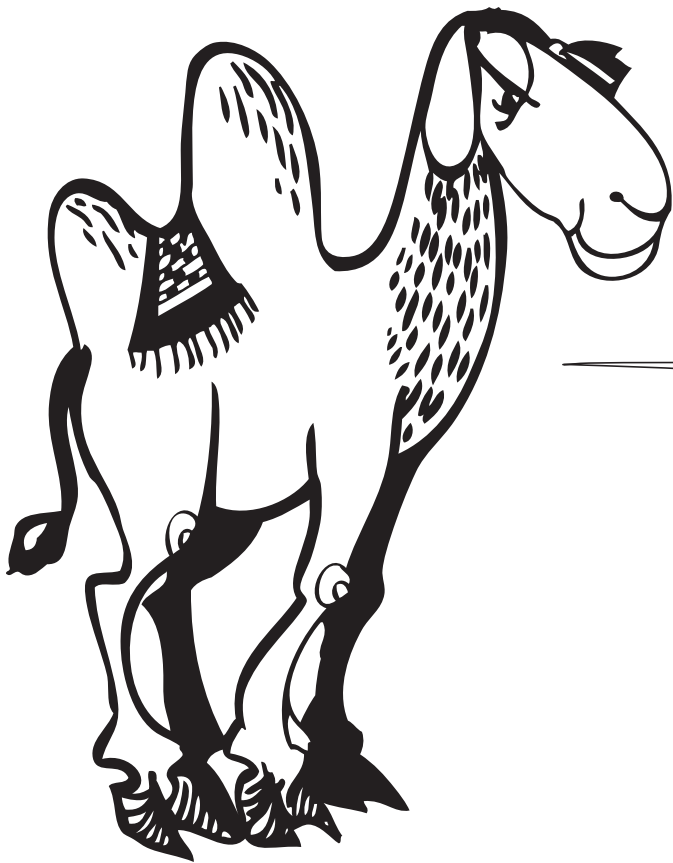
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THE CAMEL'S QUESTIONS

Use some or all of the following questions to test the claims of the rich young man's group and the disciples' group. You may also add your own questions.

1. *For the rich young man's team:* When you say you follow these commandments, what are you leaving out? Are there other things you should be doing (or not doing)?
2. *For the disciples' team:* Have you really left everything to follow Jesus?
3. Why were you so surprised when Jesus said, "it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven"?
4. Jesus says, "many who are first will be last, and the last will be first." If that's the case, what good are your good deeds? Have you really been putting yourself last or are you just trying to make yourself look better?





DICEY QUESTIONS



What's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear "Don't worry"?



Why do you think some people have a lot and others have very little?



If you could ask Jesus one question, what would it be?



What does it mean to trust God?




Would you rather be a bird or a flower, and why?



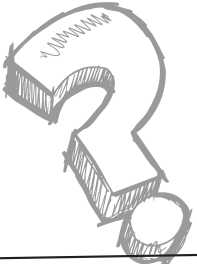
Where is your treasure?



SESSION 3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. 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?



2. 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?



3. Verse 33 seems to ratchet things up even more: “Sell your possessions, and give alms.” Is this realistic? Why or why not?



4. Do possessions get in the way of a relationship with God? Why or why not?

5. Read verse 34. Where is *your* treasure?

6. How does Luke 12:22–34 help you respond to the question, “What if I don’t have any money?”



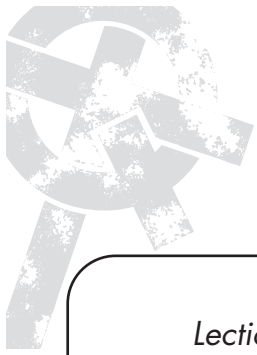


SESSION 3 FAITH STATEMENT

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

FAITH



LECTIO DIVINA GUIDELINES

Lectio divina ("divine reading") is an intentional, contemplative way to connect with God's Word. This ancient spiritual practice involves listening to multiple readings of the same Scripture passage interspersed with short periods of silence. If possible, invite different types of voices to be readers (e.g., young and old, male and female).

1. Relax in God's Presence

Dim the lights. Light a candle or oil lamp. Play contemplative music. Take a few minutes to relax in God's presence.

2. Listen for God's Word

First Reading

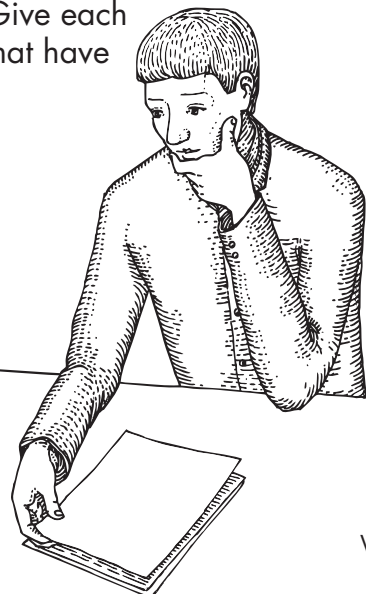
Have a group member slowly read the Scripture passage out loud two times while the rest of the group members listen for a word that "jumps out" to each of them. Give each person an opportunity to share his or her word (without comment or explanation) with the rest of the group. Allow a time of silence before the next reading.

Second Reading

Invite each group member to think about his or her word during the next reading, considering the question, "How does this word and this Scripture passage connect with my life?" Have a second reader slowly read the Scripture passage out loud to the group and allow a time of silence after the reading. Repeat the question, and then give each person an opportunity to share his or her response.

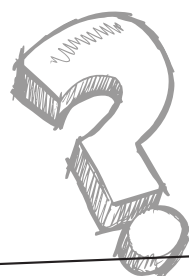
Third Reading

Invite each group member to think about the questions, "What is this passage calling me to do?" and, "Who is this passage calling me to be?" during the next reading. Have a third reader slowly read the Scripture passage out loud to the group and end with a time of silence. Give each person an opportunity to respond to the question, "What have you heard from God in this Scripture passage?"






SESSION 4 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. 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?

2. 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?

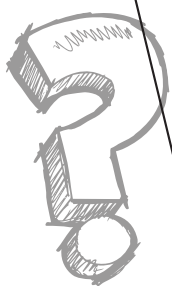


3. When you give to the church, what, if anything, do you expect to receive in return?




4. How does the priest Azariah account for the people's generosity (v. 10)?

5. Do you believe that God is generous toward those who are generous? Why or why not?



6. How does 2 Chronicles 31:2–10 help you respond to the question, "Are we really supposed to give our money away?"





SESSION 4 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 (Inclusive Language Text),
9.46c

FAITH





SESSION 4 GROUP WORK GUIDE

Using the available Bible dictionaries, commentaries, and other resources, research the topics listed below your group name. Be prepared to share your findings with the other groups.

Chronicles Group

- The Books of Chronicles: what they are, why they exist
- Author of the Books of Chronicles
- Timeline of the Books of Chronicles
- Pagan shrines: *pillars, sacred poles, high places*

People Group

- Hezekiah
- Levites
- Zadok and Azariah

Time-and-Place Group

- The two kingdoms: Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah)
- Why there are two separate kingdoms
- Passover
- Burnt offerings and sacrifices