

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 12: God's People Live for Him

Unit 12 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"How Should God's People Live?

They Should Live Like Jesus!" *PFI ESV Songs 12, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 12 Bible Verse and Song: Ephesians 5:1-2

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 5:

God's People Are Good Stewards of His Gifts

God is the Creator of all things and all things belong to Him. There is nothing that we have that God did not give to us: our bodies, our belongings, our money, our lives. Yes, everything is a gift from God to us.

What does God want us to do with all these good gifts He have given us? He wants us to be good stewards of them. What is a steward? A steward is someone who takes care of someone else's things.

God tells us in His Word how He wants His people to be good stewards of His gifts to them. He wants them to serve Him with their bodies—with their hands, their mouths and all of their strength. He wants them to freely share what they have with others. He wants them to use their money generously to take care of their families, to help others and to spread the good news of salvation through Jesus.

In heaven, God promises to reward each of His people according to how they stewarded His gifts during their lives on earth. God's people know that they can't be good stewards of God's gifts on their own. They know that it is the Holy Spirit, working in their hearts, who helps them be the good stewards He wants them to be. We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: 1 Peter 4:10-11

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ."

CASE STORY

Luke 11:13-34

Our story is: The Case of the Treasure Seekers.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who came to Jesus seeking treasure? How did he want Jesus to help?
2. What treasure did Jesus tell him (and the others) to seek? How could they get this kind of treasure?

This story takes place in Israel in New Testament times, when Jesus lived on earth.

A young man walked down the dusty road with an angry look on his face. "I can't believe my older brother! He is so selfish and unfair to me!" this young man was thinking. "As if it wasn't enough for him to get the usual, double share of our dead father's things, he had to decide to keep it all—even the little bit that was to come to me! Well, I'll fix him now! That teacher Jesus, who everyone's been going to, is in town. I hear he's a good teacher and wise man. He will want me to have my share of my dead father's things. I'll get him to tell my brother to give me what I deserve! Surely if he says my brother should give me some of his things, he will listen." he thought angrily to himself.

Before long, the young man reached the edge of the crowd of people who gathered around Jesus. Some had come to hear what Jesus had to say about God and His kingdom. But all too many came because of what they hoped Jesus might do for them. The young man in our story was one of those. He knew just exactly what he wanted Jesus to do for him!

But how to get TO Jesus. That was the first problem this young man had to solve. The crowd that swarmed around Jesus that day numbered in the thousands! People were even trampling each other, they were so anxious to get to Jesus for help.

Somehow, the young man squeezed his way all the way through that crowd, even if it meant stepping over the mats of the weak and crippled or slipping past the blind man who couldn't see the gap that had formed in front of him. This young man did whatever it took to get up to Jesus.

"Teacher, tell my brother to divide my dead father's things with me!" he blurted out, interrupting Jesus' teaching time with His closest disciples.

Jesus stopped talking and looked at the young man;

and because Jesus is God, He knew just exactly what was going on in that young man's heart, even though He had never even seen him before. Here was a young man not just looking for justice. This was a young man filled with greed. He was a seeker of earthly treasure—he wanted more and more stuff to make his own life good and easy, when what he really needed was the heavenly treasure of knowing God better and using all that God had given him to love others and tell them about Jesus. Jesus would not help this young man continue to live this foolish way.

"Young man, I'm not here to decide between you and your brother about your dead father's things," Jesus told him. "I'm here to talk to you about what real life is all about...and it has nothing to do with how much stuff you have!!"

Jesus then turned and said to the whole crowd, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. Don't spend your life just trying to get more and more things. Don't be a seeker of earthly treasure, like getting more stuff. Use the things that God has given you to know God better, to love others and tell them about Me. Then you will have heavenly treasure, the kind that lasts forever and ever!"

"Let me tell you a story," Jesus went on. "Once there was a farmer who had fields and fields of fine wheat. He had had lots of years of good crops and had grown very rich. He had a big house, he had everything he wanted. His storehouses of grain were brimming over. He was so rich that he could afford to have servants work his fields for him. God had been very good to him and blessed him with everything he needed. Yet the man did not think of God to thank Him or to help out others in need."

"Well, before long it was harvest time and once more this rich farmer was going to have an incredible harvest of grain," Jesus continued. "But this year, the bountiful harvest was a problem, for the rich farmer's storehouses were already full of grain. What should he do with the extra? Did he remember that it was the Lord who had richly blessed him with the land and the fine harvest? Could it be that the Lord had plans for all that extra wheat? Wasn't there a poor widow woman who lived down the road with barely enough food to feed herself and her children? Could it be that the Lord wanted him to share with her? Would he take the grain and make a thank offering with it, giving it to the priests in the Temple to enjoy? He could always sell the

extra and give away the money to help one of his relatives. But no, he didn't choose to do any of those things. This rich farmer was a seeker of earthly treasure. He wanted to get more and more stuff. He didn't think about using the things that God had given him to know God better, to help others or tell them about God. He didn't want heavenly treasure. He wanted to keep all his good things to enjoy just for himself.

So the farmer made his plans: "This is what I'll do, planned the rich farmer, "I will tear down my barns and build even bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. Then I can relax. I will have plenty of good things laid up for many years. I can take life easy. I can eat, drink and be merry," Jesus said.

"Oh, if only the rich man had realized how foolish it is to be a seeker of earthly treasure. For earthly treasure never lasts. For God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'"

Jesus finished his story and told the crowd: "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, don't worry about your life, what you will eat. Don't worry about your body--what you will wear," Jesus told them. "Life is more than food. The body is worth more than clothes. Think about the ravens--those big, scavenger birds. They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

"And look at the lilies that grow wild in the fields," Jesus said. "They don't do any work at all to clothe themselves, but not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed as beautifully as one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the people who don't know Jesus are only seekers of earthly treasure. They run after all such things, but you don't need to for your Father knows that you need them,"

"Be seekers of heavenly treasure," Jesus urged them. "Seek to know God better and better. Use all that He has

given you to love others and tell them about Me. Seek His kingdom, and these other earthly treasures you need will be given to you as well."

"Don't be afraid, little flock," Jesus told them. God is the loving shepherd of His people. He is pleased to take care of you and to give you the kingdom of God—life with Him forever! So sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," Jesus told them.

Our Bible Truth is:

God's People Are Good Stewards of God's Gifts

Our Bible Verse is: 1 Peter 4:10-11

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ."

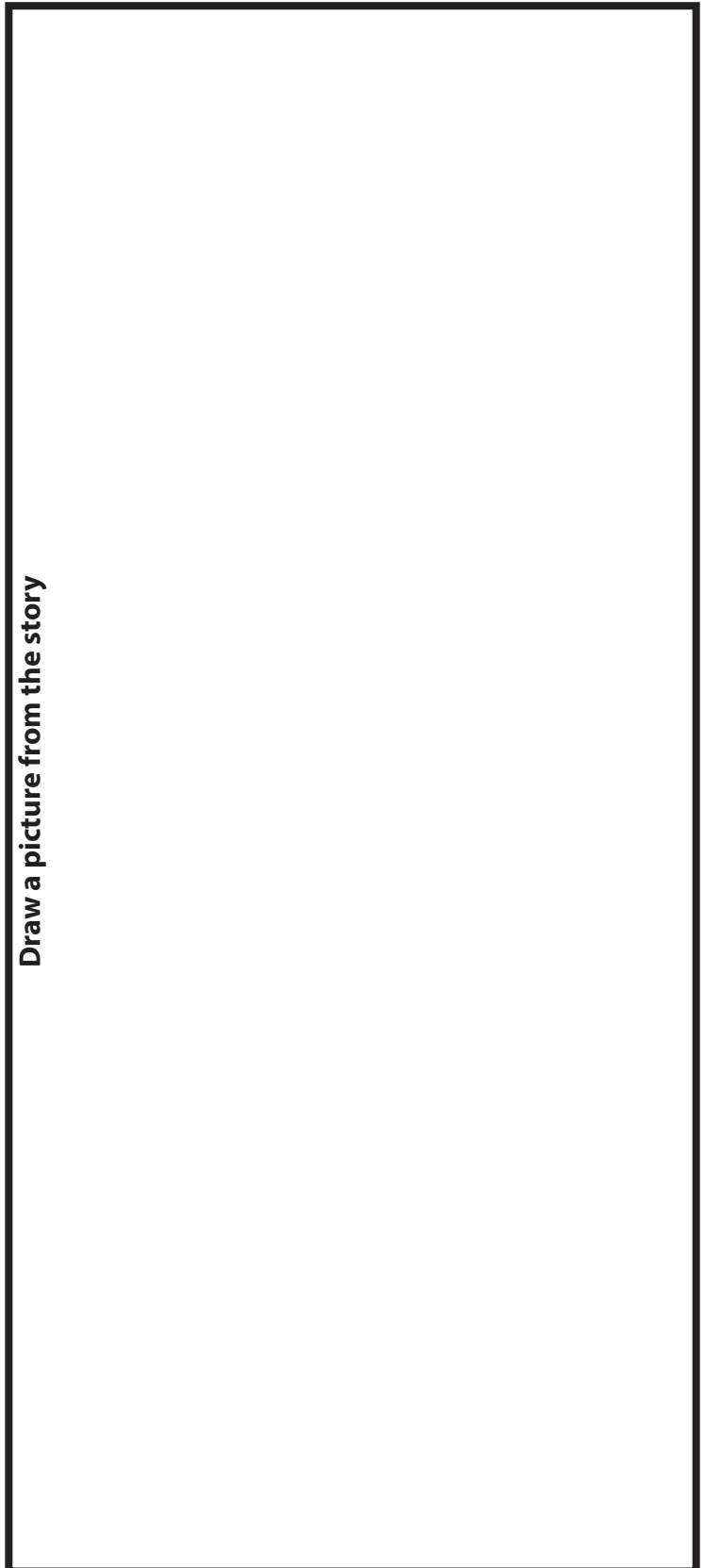
What happened to the young man? Did he understand what Jesus was saying? Did he see that he had been seeking earthly treasure rather than the riches of heaven? Did he see his greedy heart for what it was—desiring more things rather than thinking about God and using what he had in His service to love others and tell them about Jesus? The Bible doesn't tell us.

But what about you and me? God is calling us to different from the young man—to stop being greedy for more and more things, as if they are most important. He is calling us to be different from the rich farmer, who thought only of his own needs and desires rather than using his riches to love others and help them know about Jesus.

If we are His people, having turned from our sins and trusted for forgiveness in Jesus' death on the cross, we know that God promises to give us everything we need and often gives us so much more than just what we need. We know that even the best things we can ever have or hope to have here on earth are nothing compared to what He promises us in heaven.

Let's praise God for freeing His people from being greedy and worrying about things here on earth, knowing that He will always take care of them. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts that we might turn from our sins and

trust Jesus as our own Savior. Let's ask Him to make us heaven treasure seekers, desiring to know Him better and better and using all we have—our things, our bodies and especially our hearts—to love others and help them know more about Jesus.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

God's people have to try to be good stewards of what God has given them all by themselves.

Answer: False! God gives them His Holy Spirit to live inside them and help them to be good stewards. We can be God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who came to Jesus seeking treasure? How did he want Jesus to help?

Answer: A man whose father had died and he wanted Jesus to tell his brother to share his inheritance (the money and things that had belonged to his father) with him.

b. What treasure did Jesus tell him (and the others) to seek? What was it? How could they get this kind of treasure?

Answer: Jesus told them to seek heavenly treasure. Heavenly treasure is seeking to know and love God most of all. They would have heavenly treasure as they used everything God had given them to love God and to love others.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

1 Peter 4:10-11

"As each has ___ a gift, use it to serve one another, as good ___ of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that ___ supplies—in order that in ___ God may be glorified through Jesus Christ."

Answers: received; stewards; God; everything.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being the Teacher of Truth. We praise You for being the Good Shepherd who Your people can trust to take care of their needs.

C God, we confess that many times, we are like the young man who was greedy for more earthly riches, instead of desiring the heavenly riches that come in knowing and obeying You. We confess not trusting You to take care of our needs. We want to hold onto our things because we are afraid You won't take care of us.

T God, we thank You for giving us Your Word that we might not seek after earthly riches, but seek You and Your and heavenly riches.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit and give us a desire for You and Your heavenly riches. Help us to trust in You, not in the things You give us.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Be Thou My Vision

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 19

Verse 2

Be Thou my Wisdom,
And Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee
And Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father,
I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling,
And I with Thee one.

Words: Ancient Irish; tr. Mary E. Byrne

Music: Traditional Irish Melody; harm. David Evans

God's people want God to be their Wisdom, that they would know how to use their lives to please Him. They want Him to be their true Word, that they might believe His Word and obey all it tells them about how to use the good gifts He's given them. They want His Holy Spirit to be dwelling in them so that even in their hearts they might have the wonderful fellowship with God He created them to have. They want Him to ever be with them, so that everything in their lives, from the thoughts of their hearts to their words and their actions, please Him and might be used as He wants them to be used. This is how they can be good stewards of all the gifts God has given them.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

As Each Has Received a Gift

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 20

As each as received a gift,
Use it to serve one another,
As each as received a gift,
Use it to serve one another,
As good stewards of God's varied grace,
Use it to serve one another,
As good stewards of God's varied grace,
In order that in everything ,
God may be glorified.
In order that in everything ,
God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. *repeat*
First Peter Four, ten and eleven.

Words: 1 Peter 4:10-11 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2015

This verse reminds us God is the one who gives us everything we are and have. He wants us to be good stewards of them. He wants us to use these gifts to help and encourage others; and, to bring praise to His name. He gives us the strength to do this, through His Holy Spirit, when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.