

TEXT Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:13-21

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE Matthew 13:44-46

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain the importance of establishing the right priorities—that the heavenly investment of our lives is for eternity while any other investment is for this life only.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.—
Matthew 6:20

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. — Colossians 3:2

ANSWER
TITLE:

**SEARCH
TITLE:**

What Is Really Important Heavenly Investment

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The nature of Jesus' itinerant ministry to shifting crowds was such that He must have repeated similar material and admonitions many times and under a great variety of circumstances.

The Sermon on the Mount is one of six extended discourses given by Jesus and recorded most completely in Matthew. Some of these discourses are given in Mark

and Luke but always in shorter form and sometimes in other settings than Matthew's. The other lengthy sermons of Jesus are: the mission of the twelve (Matthew 9:35; 11:1); the parables by the sea (Matthew 13:1-52); on humility, offenses, and forgiving (Matthew 18); denouncing hypocrisy (Matthew 23); on eschatology (Matthew 24 and 25).

YOUR OPENER

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Heavenly Investment

TEXT: Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:13-21

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:44-46

KEY VERSE: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. — Colossians 3:2

RESPONSES

- 1. Allow time for students to give answers, which may include money and financial investments, houses, property, automobiles, household appliances, computers, sports equipment. You should conclude that many people in the world live without things that are regarded as necessities in the United States.
- 2. Our text brings out that moth and rust corrupt, thieves break through and steal. Discuss with your students the fact that earthly treasures are temporary for this life only. Money can be spent, stolen, or invested unwisely, thus it is gone. Houses, automobiles, clothing all wear out and must be repaired or replaced. Ask the students to name an earthly treasure that does not have some potential for erosion or loss.
- 3. Material things cannot satisfy the soul. Ask your students to trace the progression of the acquiring of material things, starting with a tricycle for an example. The tricycle gives way to the bicycle, the first automobile gives way to a newer and better automobile, the starter home gives way to a larger, more expensive home. Many people seek for better-paying jobs in order to afford more things, never being completely satisfied with what they have. Some people may gain what seems to be a super abundance of earthly treasures, but if they do so at the expense of their souls, what is the profit? What can a man give in exchange for his soul?
- 4. Answers will probably include: seeing Jesus, eternal life, a mansion, streets of gold, the tree of life, as well as many other eternal values.

Solomon in his wisdom sought for "that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life." He proved that earthly treasures did not satisfy (Ecclesiastes 2:3-11). Jesus Christ teaches us about the true investment: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:20,21). In a comparison of these two values, the person who is honest will recognize the need to choose the heavenly investment.

- 1. Name several things that in your consideration would be counted as earthly treasures. Then go back through your list and underline the items which are absolutely necessary to sustain physical life.
- 2. In the course of time, what could happen to each of the treasures you listed?
- 3. Earthly treasures are expected to bring happiness to the one who has them. While they may seem to bring contentment for a time, why does this eventually not work out? See Ecclesiastes 5:10.
- 4. What are some of the items you would include in a list of heavenly treasures?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. If money cannot buy heavenly treasures (1 Peter 1:18), how does one invest in these important things? See Malachi 3:16,17; John 14:1-3; 1 Peter 1:19.

6. In Luke 12:17, what did the rich man think was his problem? How did the rich man propose to solve his problem?

7. What was the rich man's real problem?

8. Jesus drew a parallel between the rich man and the one who is not rich toward God. He said the rich man was a fool, and "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Why do you think Jesus said that?

9. Explain the meaning of our key verse.

5. One invests in heavenly treasures by yielding his heart, life, and will to the heavenly Father. Discuss with your students how heavenly treasures may be gained by believing in our Lord Jesus Christ, by following Christ and seeking those things which are from Above, by fearing the Lord and speaking often of Him. These are a few examples. Ask your students to furnish other examples of investing in heavenly treasures. They may cite Moses who esteemed the reproach of Christ as greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, the Apostle Paul who was persuaded that Christ was able to keep all that had been committed to Him, or Peter who had assurance of a heavenly inheritance.

6. The rich man was concerned that his barns could not hold his harvest. Ask the students how much storage the man already had. Discuss the possibility that, initially, the man may have thought he would be satisfied when the original barns were filled. Now they were filled, but the man was still worried: "What shall I do?" Bring out that a "man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). In reference to the second question, the rich man planned to build barns big enough to hold all his produce. Enquire of your students how much earthly treasure really belongs to us. How much are we going to take with us when we leave this world? Has not God made every one of us stewards over that which He allows us to have?

7. He concerned himself only with earthly treasures and did not consider the welfare of his soul. Discuss with your students what the rich man's reaction might have been had he known his soul was to be required of him that night. Does anyone know how short or long his life will be on this earth? Ask your students, "How much is your soul worth?" Discuss with them the importance of taking care of their most valuable treasure early in life.

8. Discuss your students' answers, emphasizing that the rich man thought he could satisfy his soul with earthly treasures, that he would live a long time, that he could accomplish his plans without any problems, and that he had no thought about his soul's spiritual welfare. Bring out that all these things may also be the thoughts of people in our present day.

9. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Use your students' explanations to wrap up this lesson, reinforcing once again the importance of establishing the right priorities.

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YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What is a spiritual investment?

Where is the line drawn between possessing material goods and being possessed by them?

Why are some people obsessed with "keeping up with the Joneses," as the saying goes?

What does the word *invest* mean?

What are some of the returns/profits of a heavenly investment?

According to Matthew 6:19, what happens to treasures we lay up for ourselves on earth? What are some of these earthly treasures people save for themselves today?

In Matthew 6:20, Jesus tells us that we should lay up treasures in Heaven. How do we invest in or store up treasures in Heaven?

In our ANSWER story, what caused Darla to begin to consider that perhaps she had placed too great a value on her bicycle?

THINGS TO DO

Take to class two banks or boxes with slits in the top, some coins, and slips of paper describing work we can do for the Lord. Put coins into one bank, telling how the money can be taken out easily and spent. Then put the slips of paper into the other bank, explaining how these can never be "spent." They are a heavenly investment, and God keeps record of them, and will reward the investor for them in Heaven.

Get several pamphlets and booklets from a bank on money market funds, IRA's, etc. Compare what each one offers that the others don't. How do God's funds match up?

Choose several objects that were once new and are now ready to be thrown out; for example,
A battery — dead
An old shirt — moth eaten

A light bulb — burned out

An old toy — broken

A felt pen — dried up

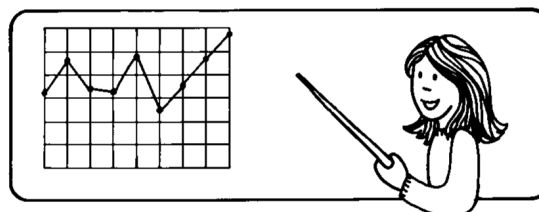
Discuss the life span of these objects and how they all expire at some time. Talk about how God's love is unlimited and consistent in every detail and never runs out.

From catalogs and magazines, cut out pictures of houses, cars, bikes, or anything that might be considered a treasure. Mount these pictures on construction paper. Wrap a small shoe box with gold foil and decorate it to represent a treasure chest. Put the pictures inside. Use this as a visual aid to explain to your class some of the things people in our day value highly. Discuss the probable length of time each item pictured will last, and compare this to the "treasures" which will last for eternity.

Answers for ANSWER

How Do You Rate?

Have you ever seen those charts that show you if the stock market has gone up or down? See the sample square. Let's see how you rate in heavenly investments. Use the large graph below and answer each question. Draw a short line between each answer (up or down) to show where you stand.



	Do you . . .	Believe in God?	Love Jesus?	Read your Bible?	Believe the Bible?	Pray?	Witness?	Love your enemies?	Forgive?	Have patience?	Respect others?	Attend Sunday school?
Always												
Sometimes												
Seldom												
Never												