

# Smashing Idols

## Week 2 | Materialism

*Lisa Scheffler, author*

What is your definition of “wealthy”? How much money do you need to be considered “rich”?

At the time of Jesus, a wealthy person was someone who had a change of clothes, including a cloak to keep you warm, enough food to eat today *and* tomorrow, and adequate shelter from the elements.<sup>1</sup> According to a 2021 survey, Americans think that you need a net worth of about \$2 million dollars to be wealthy.<sup>2</sup> A remarkable difference in perspective!

During our *Smashing Idols* series, we are considering some of the ways we are drawn into the worship of modern-day false “gods.” Too often, we are tempted to bring our offerings to idols who demand much, but ultimately fail to deliver the peace, security, and prosperity we seek. For the next several weeks, one by one, we’re going to tear down those idols, smash them into the dust, and lift our eyes to the love, majesty, and goodness of our God.

This week, we’re focused on a big and powerful idol — money.

## Day 1

Jesus warns us that we can’t serve two masters, “either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money” (Luke 16:13). It’s far too easy for us to make an idol out of money and all that it can buy. In our modern, American culture, think about all the time, thought, and creativity that goes into making and spending money.

The idol of mammon (money) has two faces. One face is insatiable in its desire for more, even though it is made of gold and decorated with jewels. The other is pale and nervous with creased brows and anxious eyes. One face is the picture of greed, the other of anxiety. As Pastor Tim Keller puts it, “For Jesus, greed is not only love of money, but excessive anxiety about it.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David Kotter, *For The Least Of These: A Biblical Answer To Poverty*, Institute for Faith, Work & Economics, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Ryan Derousseau, “Here’s How To Find Your Definition Of Wealthy,” *Forbes* (May 27, 2017) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ryanderousseau/2021/05/27/heres-how-to-find-your-definition-of-wealthy/?sh=7cce23ba7d11>

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Keller. *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope that Matters*, (Penguin Publishing, Kindle Edition) 56.

Our study this week is calling us to take a good, hard, honest look at our relationship with the false god of money. Today, we're starting with some verses that help us see the Bible's perspective on money.

## Read

### Ephesians 5:5 (NIV)

*<sup>5</sup> For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

### Ecclesiastes 5:10 (NIV)

*<sup>10</sup> Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless.*

### Hebrews 13:5–6 (NIV)

*<sup>5</sup> Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,*

*“Never will I leave you;  
never will I forsake you.”*

*<sup>6</sup> So we say with confidence,  
“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.  
What can mere mortals do to me?”*

## Ask yourself

- How does the comparison you read in the introduction between what the ancient world thought was wealthy and what Americans now think support Ecclesiastes 5:10? How have you seen this verse in action?
- Why do you think the author of Hebrews chose those particular quotes from the Old Testament (Deut 31:5 and Psalm 118:6-7) as an antidote to the love of money?

## Pray

Let's begin this week with communal prayer. Pray this as part of a family of believers and a member of Christ's body.

*Almighty God, Sovereign Lord, and Creator of all,*

*Nothing compares to you. Your love, compassion, power, and majesty are unsurpassed. Your glory cannot be contained, even in the vast universe you've created. Your love for each of us is beyond measure.*

*Yet, our heads are so easily turned. Our hearts are so easily bent. We chase the favor of false gods of financial success. We seek satisfaction in what money can buy. We ignore the needs of others in our pursuit of more.*

*Show us your glory, Father. Draw our hearts to you so that we may be satisfied with your love. May the idols of materialism appear as ridiculous to us as they do to you. May we use the good gifts that come from your hand to bless others.*

*It's in Jesus' name that we ask this, Amen.*

## Talk about it

No doubt. You will benefit from discussing God's Word with others. The "talk about it" questions are good to answer on your own, but even better to discuss with someone else. Find a friend, neighbor, co-worker or family member to talk with about what you're learning.

- How do you see money and possessions as an idol in our culture?
- What effects do you see from our culture's pursuit of financial success? In communities? On families? On yourself?

## Day 2

*Lisa Scheffler, author*

What does greed look like? If you try to picture it in your mind, do you see Ebenezer Scrooge from *A Christmas Carol*? Or the dragon Smaug guarding piles of gold in *The Hobbit*? Or maybe a *People Magazine* spread showing a wealthy celebrity or business mogul lounging on their private yacht?

We tend to define greed in terms of the extreme. In his book, *Counterfeit Gods*, Tim Keller recalls, "As a pastor I've had people come to me to confess that they struggle with almost every kind of sin. Almost. I cannot recall anyone ever coming to me and saying, 'I spend too much money on myself. I think my greedy lust for money is harming my family, my soul, and people

around me.’ Greed hides itself from the victim. The money god’s modus operandi includes blindness to your own heart.”<sup>4</sup>

Materialism is not an upper-class problem, but an every-class problem. In our passage for today, Paul warns us to beware.

## Read

### Luke 12:13–21 (NIV)

<sup>13</sup> *Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”*

<sup>14</sup> *Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?”*

<sup>15</sup> *Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”*

<sup>16</sup> *And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. <sup>17</sup> He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’*

<sup>18</sup> *“Then he said, “This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. <sup>19</sup> And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”*

<sup>20</sup> *“But 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?’*

<sup>21</sup> *“This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”*

### 1 Timothy 6:6–10; 17–19 (NIV)

<sup>6</sup> *But godliness with contentment is great gain. <sup>7</sup> For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. <sup>8</sup> But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. <sup>9</sup> Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

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<sup>4</sup> Keller, Timothy. *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope that Matters* (p. 52). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

*17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*

## Ask yourself

- In Jesus' parable, God calls the rich man a fool? What had he done that was foolish?
- What do you think it means to love money? What does are the consequences of that love?

## Reflect

Biblically speaking, greed is an insatiable desire to possess and acquire. To be greedy means to never be satisfied or content with God or what he has provided, but to always want more.

In his Gospel, Luke records an incident where a young man asks Jesus to intervene in a family dispute. "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." (Luke 12:13). You can tell by the way he phrased his request that this man is not looking for arbitration, but for Jesus to take his side. Jesus, more concerned with the heart than the inheritance, issues a strong warning to not only the man, but the entire crowd. "Watch out!" Jesus replies. "Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions" (12:15).

We don't know what was going on in the man's life that caused Jesus to issue such a rebuke. There's nothing inherently wrong with wanting one's inheritance, having money, or owning things. The Bible gives us examples of wealthy kings and landowners such as Job, Abraham and David who were rich in possessions and in love for God. Jesus is warning against greed and finding our hope in the idol of money or the things it can buy. These false gods have lots of enticements, and as Jesus said, there are all kinds of greed.

The insatiable desire to possess and acquire is encouraged by our consumerist culture. We live in a land of such abundance that — through advertising — a product or service may try to manufacture a "need" for itself. The message comes through our screens, "You are not okay right now. But don't worry; we can save you!" These products and services offer redemption through consumption.

To be greedy in America is to bow before idols that demand the endless acquisition of possessions and the never-ending search for experiences that can be bought. Yet, we adopt this quest for more in the hope that these things will get us one step closer to wholeness, comfort, and rest. Even when the things we buy fail to meet our expectations, the idol assures that the next purchase will. But idols lie.

Like the man in the parable who builds bigger and bigger barns, the insatiable need for more and more denies the reign of the one true God who holds the ultimate power of life and death. The life we're living now is temporary; we literally can't take our stuff with us. Meanwhile, the love of money may be leading us into all kinds of evil.

Greed is a form of pride that only takes one's own needs and desires into account. Think of how much exploitation comes from human greed? Greedy people exploit other image bearers and use them to enrich themselves. They ignore those in need and justify their disregard — as if somehow the poor deserve their poverty.

The solution? Be rich towards God. Financial prosperity comes and goes with the ebb and flow of the market. Only God is certain, so it is in him we must put our hope.

What better way to demonstrate we have put our hope in God than to be generous with our money? When we use our money to bless others, we are investing in God's economy which will always deliver on its promises.

When we share our bounty with others, we will be laying up treasures for a future age. Instead of trying to find our lives in the abundance of our possessions, we will take hold of the life that is truly life.

## Talk about it

- How are we foolish in the same way as the man in Jesus' parable? How does our culture promote such foolishness?
- Come up with some tangible ways to smash the idol of greed. For example, how could being generous keep us from the love of money?

# Day 3

*Lisa Scheffler, author*

Yesterday we considered that the motivation for turning to the idol of money might be greed. Greed isn't like an open wound that calls for obvious medical attention. It's more like a hidden tumor that grows undetected until it becomes life threatening. If we put our hope in our financial health, rather than our spiritual one, we are flirting with disaster.

The desire to have more is often accompanied by a fear of losing everything. We think money will buy us security and protection from calamity. Jesus addresses this fear in the Sermon on the Mount. He knows how susceptible we are to fear and how meager our faith in him can be. During his time on earth, he taught his disciples that only trust in him allows for a healthy view of money.

In Day 2 we looked briefly at Jesus' warning: "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions" (Luke 12:15). He then illustrates

his rebuke with a parable about a wealthy farmer who attempts to stockpile his abundant harvest so he can relax, only to find that he has already arrived at end of his days.

Recall that Jesus ends the story this way:

*<sup>20</sup> “But 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?’*

*<sup>21</sup> “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:20–21)*

Jesus then moves on to address his disciples, and that is the passage we are focusing on today.

## Read

### Luke 12:22–34

*<sup>22</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. <sup>23</sup> For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. <sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: 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! <sup>25</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? <sup>26</sup> Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?*

*<sup>27</sup> “Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> 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—you of little faith! <sup>29</sup> And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. <sup>30</sup> For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.*

*<sup>32</sup> “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

## Ask Yourself

- Are you prone to worrying about having enough money? If so, how does that anxiety affect your life and relationships?
- What reasons does Jesus give for having faith in God. How could those reasons combat anxiety?

- According to verse 31, what should we do instead of worrying? What does this mean to you?

## Reflect

In Luke 12, Jesus deftly transitions from warnings about greed to warnings about worry because both show a dangerous lack of faith in the goodness of God. He told the parable of the rich man to warn against the foolishness of storing up possessions on earth. “Jesus is not saying possessions are bad, but that the selfish pursuit of them is pointless.”<sup>5</sup> The man’s focus on his possessions led him into self-centered greed.

Now Jesus shifts his attention specifically to his disciples (Luke 12:22), for whom the promises he’s about to speak are intended. He warns them against the fear of not having enough. Like greed, worrying can also cause us to focus on accumulating money and possessions rather than on loving God and people. While greed can tempt us to put our faith in riches to find joy and wholeness, worry insists that we find our security through them. “Greed can never *get* enough, worry is afraid it may not *have* enough”<sup>6</sup> In either case money becomes an idol we seek out to meet our needs.

According to Jesus, faith in God can keep us from making an idol out of money. God’s love for us is such that he will provide for his children. Using creation as an example, Jesus demonstrates the gentle care of God who feeds common birds and adorns flowers. Our Father is not a reluctant or stingy Caregiver.

We can hoard our money in order to feel safe, but anyone who has watched the value of their home or 401K float up and down with the changing economic tide knows that there is no security in wealth. The loss of a job, a natural disaster or a serious medical crisis can decimate even the most conscientious person’s savings account. We hear stories of these financial crises all the time. You may have been through one yourself.

Yet Jesus assures us that the Father will not only take care of his children now, but has “already given you the kingdom.” The children of God are rich beyond measure. What earthly riches could compare with the extravagant goodness of God? We are free to be generous in this life, because in light of eternity, we are exceptionally wealthy.

Material possessions break and rot, but people are eternal. Loving others, building relationships and pointing people to Jesus have far more worth than earthly riches. Investing in the kingdom means pouring our God-given resources into that which will have everlasting impact. That kind of treasure-building can take many forms. We can be called to meet physical needs as well as emotional and spiritual ones.

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<sup>5</sup> Darrell L. Bock, Luke, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), Lk 12:13.

<sup>6</sup> William F. Arndt, The Gospel According to St. Luke, Bible Commentary Concordia, 1956).



When Jesus tells us not to worry about having enough food or clothing, where do you think the care he promises will come from? Sure, God could send manna from heaven to feed us, but more likely he is going to use people to meet the need of his beloved child. In God's economy we get to be the agents of his grace. Within the body of Christ, we should be honored to be each other's safety net in times of need.

So how can we smash the idol of money when it's fear that sends us to bow at its feet? Instead of worrying about our needs (that in many cases aren't really needs), why don't we give to those who lack a place to live, food to eat, or clothes to wear. Instead of buying into the idea that wholeness is a thing we can buy, why don't we invest in spreading the gospel so others can find the ultimate peace.

## **Pray**

Before the Lord, take a moment to assess your fears about money.

If you are prone to worry about your financial security, even though you have stable income, invite the Spirit to show you the root of that insecurity. It might be a fear stemming from childhood, a lack of faith in the goodness of God, a disbelief that you are worthy of God's care, or some other factor.

If you are in a difficult financial situation, your worries have a more direct cause. Pray over your spending habits. Consider taking a class like Financial Peace University to help you get control of your finances.

Of course, if you lack basic necessities, let the church know. As the body of Christ, we want to help.

Pray over your next steps.

## **Talk about it**

- Based on these verses, how would you describe "heavenly treasure"? How can focusing on our future with Jesus help us when we are worrying about money today?
- What should we do when we have legitimate financial concerns? How can we trust God during difficult times? How could being generous to others help?

## **Day 4**

According to legend, a reporter asked millionaire tycoon John D. Rockefeller, "how much money is enough?" Rockefeller replied, "Just a little bit more."

While the story may not be true, the sentiment resonates. It's the way most Americans view money and possessions. Very few people are content with just enough money to put food on

the table and a roof over their heads. They want more. And that “more” is translated by advertisers into invitations to get the “latest,” what’s “new and improved,” a “must-have,” or something “cutting edge.” We become convinced that we don’t *want* the latest phone, a brand-new car, or a luxury vacation — we *need* it.

As we’re seeing this week, the two-faced idol of money and possessions prey upon our insatiable desires and our fear of scarcity. We want to enjoy all the benefits of the good life and insulate ourselves from anything bad, and we believe the idols who tell us money is the key to both. How much is enough? Just a little bit more. The goal posts keep moving and we find ourselves in a never-ending pursuit of the “win.”

We’re not alone. The biblical figure whose story we’re reading today found himself in a very similar trap. Only Jesus could free him.

## Read

### Luke 19:1–10

*<sup>1</sup> Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup> A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. <sup>3</sup> He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.*

*<sup>5</sup> When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” <sup>6</sup> So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.*

*<sup>7</sup> All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”*

*<sup>8</sup> But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”*

*<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”*

## Ask Yourself

- How had greed made Zacchaeus a social outcast? What did his wealth cost him?
- Why do you think Jesus attracted a man like Zacchaeus?
- What is surprising about Jesus’ invitation to Zacchaeus? What about Zacchaeus’ response?

## Reflect

If such a publication had existed, the city of Jericho might have a featured spot Judean Weekly's "Best Places to Live." Archaeologists tell us that Zacchaeus's hometown was described as the "garden city" because it contained vast estates that acted as winter palaces for Judean Kings.<sup>7</sup> If there had been such a thing as a Chamber of Commerce back then, it surely would have advertised Jericho as a city that could give you *everything*.

In this place of wealth, royalty, and beauty lived Zacchaeus, a man who was taking advantage of what this city had to offer by amassing a fortune of his own. Yet we might conclude that he found his success hollow. The way he was making his money was not winning Zacchaeus any friends. His fellow Jews would have labeled him a crook, and worse, a traitor to his people.

The Roman empire levied notoriously heavy taxes on occupied lands, not only to fill its coffers, but to keep the inhabitants firmly under its thumb. Roman authorities chose tax collectors from among the locals. In exchange for their service, the Romans turned a blind eye to any extra "taxes" their collectors gathered to line their own pockets. As you can imagine, these activities would not make such people popular with their kinsmen. Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector.

Beyond his occupation and his small stature, the only other thing Luke tells us about Zacchaeus was that "he wanted to see who Jesus was" (Luke 19:10). We know that stories about Jesus of Nazareth had spread throughout the area and that crowds often gathered in large numbers to hear him teach and witness his miracles.

We also know that Jesus had a reputation for reaching out to tax collectors and others who were on the fringes of society. Perhaps Zacchaeus, miserable in his wealth and tired of being an outcast wanted to see the compassionate miracle-worker who spoke harshly to the Pharisees but kindly to the "sinner."

Of course, it could have been guilt that motivated him. Maybe that morning he had eaten his ample breakfast and looked around his fine home, and felt the stirrings of conscience. Jesus was also known to be a forgiver of sins.

Zacchaeus was just hoping to catch a peek of Jesus as he climbed that tree, but what he got was a full-fledged encounter with the Son of God. Sometimes that happens in our own lives. We timidly take a step, daring to hope for just a glimpse of God's goodness, and Jesus overwhelms us with his presence and generosity.

While Zacchaeus was basking in the acceptance of the Savior, the crowd was appalled. What was Jesus thinking? The crowd didn't realize that they were as reliant on God's grace as Zacchaeus was. The tax collector knew he wasn't worthy. When Jesus called up to him, he knew the gift he'd been given.

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<sup>7</sup> A Negev, *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land*, (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1990).

Out of his joy at being accepted by Jesus, Zacchaeus responds with generosity. Like a prism, Zacchaeus receives the light of God's grace and then immediately bends that grace outward to share it with others. That's what Spirit induced transformation looks like. Followers of Jesus aren't reservoirs storing up the love and kindness of God for themselves. They are conduits of God's goodness, allowing it to flow out to others. But we cannot be that conduit unless we turn from the false gods of our culture and worship Jesus alone.

When offered the love and acceptance of Christ, Zacchaeus counts his riches as nothing. Unlike those mumbling and judging in the crowd, Zacchaeus knows he is a sinner and that Christ's offer of fellowship should be rightly met with gratitude. He hasn't found satisfaction in Jericho's "good life" and can now see his wealth as a tool to help others.

Zacchaeus saw the Savior's beauty and worth and realized that what Jesus was offering was more valuable than all the riches of Rome. Worshipping Jesus gave him far more satisfaction than worldly wealth. Jesus can bring us to the same realization. He can loosen the grip we have on our idols and pull us into his arms. Like Zacchaeus, we can let go of our old lives and step forward into a future with Jesus Christ.

## Pray

Allow the Spirit to invite you into the story of Zacchaeus. We probably share more in common with the Jewish tax collector than we realize. Jesus' astounding grace, loving acceptance, and willingness to forgive should prompt our acts of repentance and generosity. Ask the Spirit to reveal those to you as you pray.

## Talk about it

- What are you able to let go of in light of God's love for you? What wrongs are you motivated to right, especially in the realm of finances?
- How does the story of Zacchaeus encourage you to smash the idol of money? How are you receiving God's love and grace through Jesus and sharing them with others?

# Day 5

On Day 5 of the Engage God Daily, we spend some time digesting what we've learned and inviting the Spirit to transform us. Today we're going hear from Jesus once more and listen as he asks us to make a choice about who or what we will worship.

## Read

**Mark 10:17–27**

*17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”*

*18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”*

*20 “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”*

*21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

*22 At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.*

*23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”*

*24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 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.”*

*26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”*

*27 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”*

## **Reflect**

Notice Jesus’ reaction to the wealthy man who comes running up to him, “Jesus looked at him and loved him” (verse 21). Jesus knows every heart. He knows the grip that false gods have on us. He knows how they tempt and draw, and the false promises they make. Jesus wants to break their hold and set us free, but we have to be willing to smash the idol.

Notice the reactions of both the man and the disciples. What Jesus asks seems both unreasonable and impossible. But Jesus knows what the man needs and loves him enough to insist he let go of his idol. Do we trust Jesus enough to loosen our grip on the things of this world? Will we grab hold of the “life that is truly life”?

The rich man came to Jesus because he’d caught a glimpse of who he really was. He recognized that when you meet Jesus, you fall on your knees before him. And Jesus knew exactly what cage the man was locked in and offered him the key.

The man walked away. What will you do?

Let's review the steps we're going to be taking each week:

1. **Recognize.** Under the Spirit's guidance, we're going to identify the idols of our hearts and recognize how God meets the need we're trying to satisfy with an idol.
2. **Repent.** We're going to turn from that idol — release it and repent of it. In the words of Deuteronomy 12:3, we're going to smash our idols!
3. **Revere.** We're going to turn to God. We're going to worship God with our whole hearts and ask the Spirit to grow our faith. We're going to gratefully receive the abundance that God offers us in Christ.

Today spend some time with Jesus. Fall at his feet and ask him if money and possessions have a grip on you. Welcome the Holy Spirit's wisdom and conviction. Ask him for eyes to see the unmatched glory of God that makes all our worldly possessions dim shadows in comparison. Offer yourself and everything you own to God, and let the Spirit lead you.

## Pray

*Father,*

*You see into my heart. You know how I'm tempted by the false gods of money. You know my fears and my appetites and love me enough to call me to something better. I know the gods of this world are nothing.*

*Your love and generosity are so clearly on display in all the wonderful gifts you've given me. I see them in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Teach me to be generous as you are generous.*

*Amen.*

## Talk about it

- Discuss with a trusted friend or family member your biggest takeaway from this week. Ask for them to pray for you and help hold you accountable as you commit to smashing idols in your life.

## Coming next week

When we lack peace or are trying to escape from reality, there are some idols that many people turn to — drugs and alcohol. Next week, we'll discuss how to smash those idols.