

TEACHING GUIDE

# All That Glitters

*Sample*  
**OUTREACH**

# SERIES OUTLINE

***Write Up:** We all worship something. Our culture is full of false gods that we too often give our time, attention, energy, and affection to. Each glittery god gives us the illusion of security and satisfaction but, in the end, can never truly deliver. These glitter gods are riches, status, comfort, and, ultimately, self. Whenever we are distracted by the shiny idols in our lives, it steals us away from the only One worthy of our worship.*

## **Week 1:** Riches

**Scripture:** Mark 10:17-27 // Luke 12:15

**Write Up:** Jesus knew one of the greatest distractions to living a life fully dedicated to God is money. Money is not the problem; the love of money is the problem. When we become so dedicated to the glitter of expensive possessions and big bank accounts, we find ourselves missing out on what really matters most. When we let go of our stuff, our stuff lets go of us.

**Think:** A relationship with God is the most valuable thing I can attain.

**Feel:** Money cannot satisfy my deepest longings.

**Do:** Find ways in my life to be generous to others.

## **Week 2:** Status

**Scripture:** Galatians 1:10 // James 4:4

**Write Up:** Many of us spend so much of our energy trying to earn affection from people we don't care about. Social media fuels the fire of comparison, and we love to be thought of highly. So, we post things on social media in order to get likes and follows. Jesus warned his followers that we cannot chase after the world and be committed to Him. In the end, we live our lives for an audience of One. The goal is to please God alone.

**Think:** The only opinion that really matters in our lives is God's.

**Feel:** My value is found in relationship with Jesus and no one else.

**Do:** Take an honest look at the energy that goes into being popular with people and the amount of energy that goes into being connected to God.

### **Week 3: Comfort**

**Scripture:** Galatians 2:20 // 2 Corinthians 12:9 // Philippians 4:11-13

**Write Up:** The end goal of life is not happiness but holiness. Jesus demonstrated that our lives will never be completely free of suffering. Rather, the way of the cross is what we must embrace. Paul promises that, no matter what we face in life, Christ's grace will be sufficient for our weakness.

**Think:** Just because my life is comfortable does not mean I am in God's will.

**Feel:** No matter how hard life may be, Jesus gives grace to sustain me.

**Do:** Lean to be content in every circumstance by trusting in God's plan.

### **Week 4: Self**

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:3 // Romans 12:1-3

**Write Up:** In the end, all idol worship is a form of self-worship. The question becomes, who sits on the throne of our hearts? God or ourselves? The first law of the Ten Commandments is a warning to have no other god than Yahweh because, if we are the focus of our time, attention, energy, and affection, we will exalt our own wills above God's.

**Think:** I am not in charge of my life, God is.

**Feel:** Worship of self leads to disappointment.

**Do:** Spend time prioritizing God's desires for my life over my desires.

Sample

# SERMONWEEK 1

**Week 1:** Riches

**Scripture:** Mark 10:17-27 // Luke 12:13-15 // Proverbs 11:25

**Write Up:** Jesus knew that one of the greatest distractions to living a life fully dedicated to God is money. Money is not the problem; the love of money is the problem. When we become so dedicated to the glitter of expensive possessions and big bank accounts, we find ourselves missing out on what really matters most. When we let go of our stuff, our stuff lets go of us.

**Think:** A relationship with God is the most valuable thing I can possibly attain.

**Feel:** Money can never satisfy our deepest longings.

**Do:** Find ways in my life to be generous to others.

**Sermon:**

Good morning, church! It is so good to be able to gather once again as a family to open God's Word and learn something new today. The Bible tells us that our lives are highly influenced by the things that we love and the things that we value. They hold sway over the places we go, the people we associate with, how we spend our money, and how we treat others. This is because without even knowing it, we can find ourselves worshipping things like riches, status, comfort, and self. It is easy to determine what we worship because the objects of our devotion end up being the many things that receive our time, attention, energy, and affection. Today we begin a very important sermon series as we discover all the ways that we can be tricked into treasuring the wrong things. This morning, we are going to see what the Bible has to say about the allure of riches.

**Story:** In the 1840s, thousands of people from all over the country migrated to California because of something called the Gold Rush. Everyone was seeking their fortune as word spread about the precious metal being pulled from the earth. With great excitement and anticipation, families left everything to travel out west. Many were delighted, at first, only to be devastated as they amassed large amounts of what they thought to be gold, only to find out that what they had discovered was a mineral called pyrite, or fool's gold. Though pyrite looked like gold to the naked eye, it was worthless. It turns out, not all that glitters is gold. Imagine being a prospector during this era in our nation's history. Tirelessly you search for gold because it promises wealth and security. The glimmer of a stone catches your eye, momentarily blinding you to the reality that it is not what you truly desire.

In the same way, the world can dazzle us with alluring opportunities and fleeting pleasures that promise fulfillment, but they leave us empty and unsatisfied in the end.

One of the most common ways that we find ourselves drawn away from the things that really matter is our relentless pursuit of wealth and our insatiable desire for more. The world runs on the quest for riches. It controls nearly all that we do. But celebrity after celebrity and billionaire after billionaire have demonstrated for us that no matter how much you have, it cannot truly fulfill. The Bible is fully aware of the dead-end road of riches. In fact, it is something that it speaks to often.

We are given an account of Jesus' interaction with a very wealthy person who wants Jesus to intervene in his family's business because he wants more. Now to be clear, Jesus' issue in this passage is not with the amount of money this man has. His issue is with what this man is seeking to possess through his accumulation of more riches.

### **READ Luke 12:13-15**

This man is wanting Jesus to use his authority to ensure that his brother does not get all the inheritance from his deceased father. Jesus' response is twofold. First, he tells the man that being the middleman in this discussion is not his role. Second, he gives the man a warning. Jesus tells him to "watch out" because the disease of greed is deadly, and it will steal away his life if he is not careful.

### **POINT #1 – YOU CAN NOT BUY HAPPINESS**

What this man is looking for is something that we are all looking for. He wants a full and meaningful life. He wants to enjoy his years. This endeavor is not bad within itself. We should all want to live life to the fullest, but whenever we turn to money or things to make it a reality, we run the risk of losing it all. Many of us in the room this morning may have found ourselves chasing the glitter and shine of riches. Some have worked long hours to get it. Some have cheated and stolen to accumulate it. Others, it fell into their laps, but when our finances begin to overshadow other more important aspects of our lives, we are in dangerous territory. As Jesus said, real life cannot be found in spending our lives growing bank accounts, 401ks, and filling our garage with more stuff.

**STORY:** According to many, Hetty Green may have been the biggest miser who ever lived. A miser is someone who hoards wealth and works hard to spend as little as possible. After her father passed away, she was left with an inheritance of more than \$100 million in today's money. Though it was unusual for a woman to be involved with banking and investments at the time, she concentrated all her efforts and attention on growing her fortune. Her focus on money drove a wedge between her husband and their two children. The family was fractured due to her obsession with collecting and protecting her millions. Known for eating cold oatmeal to save money for heating and washing only the hem of her dress to save a penny on soap, she was sometimes called the "Witch of Wall Street." When her son, Ned, broke his leg as a boy, she tried to have him treated in a free clinic, before deciding to treat him at home. His leg would later have to be amputated. When she died, Hetty Green was worth the equivalent of some 4 billion dollars today. But, at what cost? She was wealthy, but she was miserable. She was prosperous, but she was empty. (ministry127.com)

Money and things cannot give us true happiness for a couple of reasons. First, they are temporal things. They don't last. Things break. Money gets spent. One day, when our time on earth is done, we will leave everything behind. Second, there is always something shinier that will grab our attention. We can never be happy with what we have because there is always a newer addition that comes out, and we always end up wanting more. Happiness and fulfillment are not found in riches, they can only be found in relationship.

## **POINT #2 – NOTHING IS MORE VALUABLE THAN JESUS**

In the Old Testament, there were all kinds of idols that would take God's people's time, attention, energy, and affection away from being focused on Him. Idols were often shiny gold figures that represented false gods that people would make sacrifices to. One of the most repeated commands in the scriptures is to not worship any false deity. God wanted His people to be fully dedicated Him without distraction. Not because He was trying to ruin the people's lives, but because He wanted them to experience the best kind of life that is only found in relationship with Him. In the New Testament, there are still idols, they just look a little different.

We read about Jesus having another conversation with a man called the Rich Young Ruler. We are not given a lot of information about him, but he runs up to Jesus and asks him a very important question. He asks Jesus how he can inherit eternal life. He wants to know how to receive the kind of life that transcends this physical world and will last for eternity in the spiritual one. Here is Jesus' response.

### **READ Mark 10:17-22**

Jesus' response to the rich man was for him to live out the Old Testament commands of God. The ones he mentions are from the Ten Commandments. What does the man say though? He says he has kept them all from the time he was a boy. He is doing it all. He is crossing every "T" and dotting every "I". There is only one thing that Jesus says he is lacking. Then he tells the man to go do something that he can not do. Jesus tells him to go and sell everything and give it to the poor. Then he can truly come and follow Him. How does the man respond? The Bible says that he went away sad. Why? Because he had great wealth.

You see, I think Jesus knew that the problem in the man's heart was not about the amount of money he did or did not have. The problem was that he valued his riches more than his relationship with Jesus. He was unwilling to live in obedience to him. He would rather be financially secure than eternally secure. Jesus' invitation to sell all he had and give it away was an indicator of where the man's heart was and what he valued most.

Now before we are too hard on this guy, I wonder how we would react to Jesus calling us to sell our possessions to give to others who have none. Would we joyfully part with our finances and things because we believed that somehow it would offer us something that was sweeter? Something that money can't buy. What always bothers me about this story