

Lesson 12 / November 23, 2008

Looking Through the Keyhole

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 12 Focus:

Selfish motives cause us problems.

Lesson 12 Bible Basis:

Proverbs 3:13; 17-18,
James 3:13-4:4

Students will consider different kinds of wish lists.

Have you written your Christmas wish list yet? It may not be too late to text in some WOW gifts from Neiman Marcus. Did you know that you could order a life-sized sculpture of you and a friend built completely out of Legos? The cost is only \$60,000.00. Or maybe you want to add a limited edition motorcycle for \$110,000. You could ride it to school. Think of the gas savings!

- ▶ What is on your Christmas wish list this season?
- ▶ What is one thing you've wished for but you couldn't have, like the ability to dunk a basketball or buy a car that is out of your price range?

Sometimes people spend an extraordinary amount of time wishing for things that aren't always possible. Like, wishing you were six feet tall instead of five feet tall or that you had a different nose or longer legs, or that you had 10 times as much money as everyone else.

- ▶ What is wrong with wishing for these things? (*You forget to enjoy or appreciate what you do have. It wastes a lot of time and energy and thought process.*)

Another problem with focusing on these things is that it can become an obsession. It can become addicting as you live in a fantasy world where you want to be something or someone you are not.

- ▶ What does the word obsession mean to you?
- ▶ What are things that you or your friends or people you know have obsessed about? (*image, relationships, material things*)

Let's talk about one area where it's easy to get obsessed. Body image is the way you see yourself. For some people, they can get so focused on their body that they don't see other things that are just as important. Some do things like throw up after meals, or stop eating, or diet excessively.

Lesson 12

Memory Verse

The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

—James 3:17

An obsession causes keyhole vision: A person can only see one thing, the part of their body they don't like or the thing they want so badly. When you become obsessed, it can throw you off track. It can get scary and mess with your health or your relationships with people you care about or cause you to lose sight of what's really important.

▶ **What might happen if our wish lists became less about our wants (or us) and more about others or our faith?**

You can get rid of keyhole vision. One way is to change the focus. It's almost Thanksgiving, a perfect time to stop everything and think about what you do have and give thanks.

▶ **Let's brainstorm. What are things that you are thankful for?**

Our memory verse today describes wisdom like this: Someone who is pure living, peace-loving, considerate, yielding to God, full of mercy, and sincere; a life that is full of good fruit (making a difference) and being fair and just.

These are qualities available for all believers—you and me, too! That's something to be thankful for. The cool thing about these traits is that they are like spiritual contacts or eyeglasses, or maybe even binoculars. They help us see things differently, and help us to figure out what is important, and how to use our energy and time and brain on those things.

▶ *(Read the list of qualities out loud again.)* **Which would you choose for your wish list and why?**

In the next portion of this study, we learn about two types of wisdom. One is earthly and one is from heaven. Let's go deeper.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *High School Teacher's Guide*; Step 4 appears below.)

Resources:

Neiman Marcus Fantasy Christmas Wish List
http://www.neimanmarcus.com/store/sitelets/christmasbook/fantasy.jhtml?cid=OCBF9_NMO3602&cmCat=christmas&icid=NMCBpage75

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Looking Through the Keyhole

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STEP 4 

Lesson 12

Focus:

Selfish motives cause us problems.

Lesson 12

Bible Basis:

Proverbs 3:13; 17-18,
James 3:13-4:4

Students will consider how selfishness robs character little by little.




Materials:

- poster board
- old newspapers and magazines
- scissors

Check out this headline: “A Russian Church Disappears One Brick at a Time!”

Last July, a 200-year-old two-story Russian church stood in a village. It served the community as a church and then as a school for disabled children. It was vacant, but Orthodox officials hoped to put it back into use. But when they went to the site to view the building, it had vanished!

Local villagers stole one brick at a time and sold them for one ruble (about four cents) each. A local businessman bought the bricks, though he doesn't confess to the crime. After all, he only purchased bricks.

-  **Why do you think the villagers got away with this crime for so long?** *(Removing a brick at a time didn't attract attention. The building was dismantled slowly, so people assumed that it was just falling apart from natural causes.)*
-  **Who do you consider to be the real thief? The villagers? Those who didn't report it? The businessman buying the bricks?**
-  **What did they gain from dismantling the church? What did they lose?**

Just like the church, when a person lives selfishly they may gain temporary satisfaction. There is a payoff. You want something, you go after it no matter the consequences, and chances are you will get it. But you also lose something valuable. It may not be obvious from the outside. But over time, others see it, and the person who lives selfishly loses the benefits of living a wise life.

What does this look like in real life? When a person makes friends because of what they want from them, it will eventually be revealed. Being fake can't be disguised forever.

-  **What does it feel like to have a person want something from you, but who doesn't care about you or who isn't looking out for your best interests?**

Lesson 12

Memory Verse

The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

—James 3:17

▶ **Have you ever done something for a selfish reason—to gain something you really wanted—but you ended up losing instead? What did you want and what did you lose?**

▶ **Let's look at the following scenes. In each, let's talk about what they might gain and what they could possibly lose:**

- Girl chooses guy because he's got money and he's hot, but she isn't in to him
- Guy takes steroids in spite of parents' and coaches' warnings
- Guy demands Wii for Christmas and financially-struggling mom gives in
- Homeless guy gets beat up while groups of students look on
- Fast food clerk gets order wrong and girl lets him "have it"

Have students break into small groups of three to four. Ask them to work as a group to create a headline, cutting out letters or words and pictures from old magazines and newspapers to create a brief news headline and pictures from one of the stories above. Like the story of the Russian church, this is the "after" story.

Ask these questions: What happened? What is the one thing that stood out as a result? What will be remembered about this incident? (The headline could be as simple as "Mom Discouraged at Christmas" or "Fast Food Fiasco!")

Solomon, who was the son of David and Bathsheba, was asked by God what he wanted. Can you imagine that wish list? After all, it's God doing the asking! Solomon asked for one thing: wisdom.

His half-brothers hated him. His father announced that he would be king, a huge offense to his older brothers. By rights, they were supposed to be on the throne. He had older brothers that had already killed family members. He could have asked for gold or women or mansions, but he knew that wisdom would keep him safe and help him rule the country.

▶ **In Proverbs 3:18 it says that Wisdom "is a tree of life to those who embrace her." Like Solomon, how can you embrace wisdom?**

Leave the students with this thought: It is a personal choice to make a wise decision or to pursue what we want for selfish reasons. This is called "temptation." We can ask God to give us wisdom to make the right choice when we are tempted. Allow students time to pray in small groups for strength and wisdom in times of temptation.

Resources

Russian Orthodox Church Stolen – Brick by Brick
http://home.peoplepc.com/psp/newsstory.asp?cat=strange&id=20081113/491bb450_3ca6_1552620081113752083180

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