

LESSON 15

Respect Earthly Goods



Learning Objectives

In this lesson you will:

- Affirm the right of all people to own possessions.
- Explore the seventh and tenth commandments.
- Realize our duty to be good stewards of all that God has given us.

Opening Prayer

“How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your creatures.”

— *Ps 104:24*



Opening Activity

Scan the QR code to access the online resources.

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Introduction

As we learned in the last lesson, God calls us to respect every person. And that respect must also apply to every person's earthly goods. We are not what we own. Our possessions do not define us, but we must treat our possessions with respect. When we follow Jesus, we love everything he loves and respect what we own because ultimately, everything belongs to God.

You may have experienced situations similar to these:

- Jimmy left his new bike on the front lawn. The next day it was gone. Someone had stolen it.
- Christine had a favorite doll. She was very careful with it, but one day her younger brother grabbed it and broke it.
- Kyle and his family liked to go camping. This year, however, they could not go to their favorite spot. A careless camper had caused a forest fire. Now the area is just burnt trees and ashes.

These examples deal with taking care of earthly goods and respecting the possessions of others.



Point **1**

Seventh and Tenth Commandments

Two commandments deal with possessions:

- The seventh commandment says, “You shall not steal” (Ex 20:15).
- The tenth commandment says, “You shall not covet . . . anything that belongs to your neighbor” (Ex 20:17).

The seventh commandment emphasizes our actions regarding possessions. We are not to steal or destroy or deface property that belongs to other people.

The tenth commandment speaks to our attitudes regarding possessions. The word “**covet**” means “to want or desire for ourselves.” Two wrong attitudes are connected to the sin of coveting.

The first attitude is **greed**—wanting everything for ourselves.

The second attitude is **envy**—being jealous of what other people have.

Point **2**

Stealing and Cheating

In the Gospel according to Luke 19:1-10, we read about Zacchaeus, who was a greedy tax collector. He did not care who he hurt to get money. He built up his own wealth and possessions by **cheating** other people. He disobeyed God's commandments.

Every person has a right to own things—to possess private property. When we take someone else's property, we are saying that we care more about the possession than the person. We stop loving them the way that Jesus taught us. That hurts them. When Zacchaeus met Jesus, he was sorry for stealing and cheating. He promised to pay back four times the amount he stole. When we take something that is not ours, we have to make it right by giving it back or paying for it.





Point 3

Respect for Property

Respect for property means taking care of what we have. It means leaving things in good condition, so others can use them, too. Taking care of things is called **stewardship**. God wants us to be good stewards of the earth and of private property.

Gifts and Offerings

At every Divine Liturgy, we offer God thanks for all we have been given. We thank God for food, clothing, shelter, and possessions. We thank God for the beautiful earth. After the creed and before the Anaphora, the gifts of bread and wine are transferred from the side table to the altar. The bread and wine represent Jesus' offering of himself to God on the cross. They also represent all that we have. They remind us to respect the earth and all property as gifts from God. They remind us to be good stewards and share what we have with others.

Activity 1

Create a Care Package

Directions: *Those who are suffering from poverty often have many needs, including physical, spiritual and emotional needs. As a class, bring in items to create a care package for someone in need, and give it to your teacher to give to someone who needs it. Include a card signed with encouraging messages from your class.*

- Non-perishable food (chips, crackers, granola bars etc.)
- Non-carbonated, non-perishable Bottled Drinks (water, juice, etc.)
- Gift cards
- A rosary
- A scapular
- An icon
- Prayer cards
- New or unused clothes (socks, underwear, gloves, hats)



Activity 2

Jesus and Zacchaeus

Directions: *Get five students to play the following parts: Narrator, Jesus, Person 1, Person 2, and Zacchaeus. Let them rehearse and present the play to the class.*

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Narrator Zacchaeus was a tax collector. He wanted to get ahead fast in life, so he cheated people out of their money.

(Zacchaeus stands on stage with Person 1 and Person 2.)

Zacchaeus You owe the government \$5,000.

Person 1 That's everything I have!

Zacchaeus Too bad, that's the law.

(Person 1 hands him \$5,000 in play money. Zacchaeus pockets some of the money and gives the rest to the government.)

Zacchaeus Next!

(Person 1 stands aside looking sad. His pockets are empty. Person 2 stands in front of Zacchaeus.)

Zacchaeus And you owe \$7,000. There's a fine for not paying on time last year.

Person 2 But I'm sick and I need to pay for medicine!

Zacchaeus	<p>Too bad, that's the law.</p> <p><i>(Person 2 hands him \$7,000. She looks sad. Again Zacchaeus pockets some of the money and puts aside the rest for the government.)</i></p>
Narrator	<p>One day Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming to his town. Of course, Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. After all, Zacchaeus wanted everything.</p> <p><i>(Jesus enters and Person 1 and Person 2 crowd around him.)</i></p>
Narrator	<p>There was a big crowd and Zacchaeus was very short. He had to climb a tree in order to see Jesus.</p> <p><i>(Zacchaeus stands on a step stool.)</i></p>
Jesus	<p>Zacchaeus, come down quickly! Today I must stay at your house.</p> <p><i>(Zacchaeus jumps down from the stool. He is happy.)</i></p>
Person 1	<p>I do not get it. We're good people and Jesus didn't ask to stay with us.</p>
Zacchaeus	<p>Please, Lord, if you come to my house I shall give half of my possessions to the poor.</p>
Person 2	<p>Zacchaeus is nothing but a liar and a thief.</p>
Zacchaeus	<p>Lord, if I have stolen anything, I shall pay it back four times over.</p> <p><i>(Zacchaeus takes the money out of his pockets and gives it back to Person 1 and Person 2. They are happy. Jesus walks away with Zacchaeus.)</i></p>
Jesus	<p>Today, salvation has come to this house.</p>



Maronite Wisdom

“Good and Holy God and Father, through your only Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you have prepared this spiritual and holy banquet for us. Accept these pure offerings and grant us the gift of your Holy Spirit. Make us worthy to approach your sanctuary with pure hearts and clear consciences. Grant us the peace that your only Son gave to his holy disciples, so that we may give one another that same peace with a holy kiss. We raise glory to you, to your only Son, and to your Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.”

— *Book of Offering: Anaphora of Saint John Maron*



My Role Model

Saint Anthony the Great, Father of Monasticism

When Anthony's parents died, they left him a lot of money. Now he could afford to do anything he wanted. What do you think he decided to do? Anthony gave half the money to his sister. He gave the rest of the money to the poor. Then he went into the desert to devote his life to prayer. Anthony did this because he wanted to follow Jesus perfectly. He knew earthly goods were nice to have, but they did not really make people happy. True happiness could only come from living like Jesus. Anthony did not become a saint overnight. Even after he gave all his money away, he was still tempted to sin. For example, sometimes he was very hungry. He was tempted to steal food from people who passed by. But Anthony never did this. Instead, when people came to him for help, he shared whatever he had with them. Anthony knew God wanted him to respect the possessions of others. He also knew it was important to share and live simply. So this is what Anthony did. And this is how he grew in holiness. He is our role model for living the seventh and tenth commandments. We honor Saint Anthony the Great on January 17.

Saint Anthony, pray for us.

Recall



Match the words in Column A with the correct descriptions in Column B.

A

- ___ 1. Anthony
- ___ 2. Covet
- ___ 3. Envy
- ___ 4. Greed
- ___ 5. Seventh Commandment
- ___ 6. Stewardship
- ___ 7. Tenth Commandment
- ___ 8. Zacchaeus

B

- A.** Tax collector who repented of cheating people
- B.** Describes the actions we are to have regarding possessions
- C.** Describes the attitudes we are to have regarding possessions
- D.** Saint who gave away all his possessions
- E.** Taking good care of the earth and what we have
- F.** Wanting something that belongs to someone else
- G.** Being jealous of what other people have
- H.** Wanting everything for ourselves

Weekly Journal



How can you take better care of your clothes, toys, sports equipment, and other possessions?

Write: One way you can share one of your possessions with someone.

Concluding Prayer



Almighty God, you accepted the offerings of the just in the past. We ask you now to accept these offerings. We recognize them as your gifts to us. We offer them back to you as a pledge of our love. They show our wish to live by your commandments. In exchange for these gifts, grant us the gift of eternal happiness. Welcome us into your kingdom. Amen.

Climbing the Mountain

Bonus Materials for Students & Teachers



Lk 19:1–10

Jesus and Zacchaeus

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

Reflection

Our actions and attitudes are connected. Jesus came to Jericho, a city located seventeen miles northeast of Jerusalem, to bring about one of the greatest conversions in the Bible. Jericho also happens to be one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world. Jesus shows his great love for sinners, while Zacchaeus shows his great desire to repent from his wrong deeds, especially for violating the seventh commandment. Did you know that a person who steals needs to replace the item? If that is not possible, the thief needs to donate an equal amount of money to a church or charity.

Saintly Quote

“When you do good to someone, do not await a recompense from him, and you receive repayment from God on both accounts; and if you are able, neither do good so as to receive reward in the future age, but rather, practice virtue because of the love of God.” — *Saint Isaac the Syrian*

Questions

1. How do you feel about Zacchaeus climbing a tree to see Jesus pass by?
2. What does it feel like when you hear “the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost”?

Reaching the Summit

For Teachers & Parents



“The seventh commandment forbids unjustly taking or keeping the goods of one’s neighbor and wronging him in any way with respect to his goods.” — CCC 2401

Envy

Envy is a sin that has existed since Cain and Abel. Cain killed his brother Abel because he was jealous of him (Gen 4:1-16). Saint Basil tells us that “freedom from envy is consistent with the good, so envy relates to the Devil” (Ascetical work, Hom XI).

Envy is a capital sin. Capital sins are the main reason why we go against God and sin more; they lead to other sins, and make us more likely to sin in the future. That means that it can lead to other sins (CCC 1866). Envy can lead to sins like pride (loving yourself more than God), avarice (focusing too much on money and

possessions), wrath (being very angry at someone or hating them), gluttony (eating and drinking much more than you should), and sloth (being lazy).

Examples of Stealing

As mentioned earlier, the seventh commandment involves stealing. Here are some examples:

- Grace likes to spend time at the mall. While in the stationery store, she steals rubber stamps, erasers, pens, or cards when no one is looking.
- Augustine takes money from his mother's purse without asking permission.
- Sue wants to do well on the math test. She has not studied, so she copies some of Jennifer's answers.
- Matt's older brother has an autographed baseball from a major league player. Matt takes the ball and sells it, so he can have extra spending money.
- Laura buys cookies and receives too much change back. She says nothing about the mistake.

Stewardship

Stewardship can help us overcome envy and other related sins because we realize that everything is a gift from God. Stewardship involves being caretakers of God's gifts. If we are given a precious gift, we ought to care for it well. God has given us each other as a gift too. Being a good steward of what God has given us involves using our time, talents, and treasures in the service of God and others.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel about envy being a capital sin?
2. How can you help your children overcome envy?



Words to Know

Q. What is **cheating**?

A. Cheating is deliberately trying to trick others by not playing by the rules or by taking an illegal shortcut. Cheating is unfair. It deprives others of what is rightfully theirs. Cheating is also a sin against the seventh commandment.

Q. What does it mean to **covet**?

A. To want or desire for ourselves something that belongs to another person. This sin violates the ninth and tenth commandments.

Q. What is **stewardship**?

A. Our duty to be good managers, or caretakers, of our possessions and the earth. Jesus calls us to be good stewards of all people, nature, and material goods.



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