

# counter cultural

## week two

### Week 2

## Generosity Beats Materialism



**Key Verse:** “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:19-21

### I. Introduction (15 minutes)

- **Break the ice:** Break off into pairs and play “Rock, Paper, Scissors” (or Gorilla, Man, Gun). Depending on the number of youth involved, you may want to make this like a tournament where the best 2 of 3 wins and the winner moves on to a new opponent. Have a candy bar or small prize ready for the overall winner.
  - **Say,** “Last week, we started talking about living counter-culturally. We started talking about living according to the culture of God. And specifically, we are talking about living in such a way that we’re not worried about what material things we can get. Instead, we are worried about how we can give. We want to imitate God’s generosity.
  - **Say,** “We just played ‘Rock, Paper, Scissors’ and you know how the game works. Rock beats scissors, scissors beat paper and paper beats rock. But, in real life, what beats getting more stuff? Here’s the answer... Generosity beats materialism.”

***Leader’s Note:** If numbers allow, participate in the games with the youth. Engage with them and talk it up like you’re a reigning world champ in this type of game.*

### II. Discussion (40 minutes)

- **Discussion question #1:** What role do you think materialism and consumerism play in the culture around us? In other words, how much do materialism and consumerism affect our lives?
- **Discussion question #2:** Let’s get a little more personal. Have you bought anything in the last month...or the last week...that you didn’t really need? Have you bought anything to “keep in step” with your neighbors or out of compulsion and just because it was something that caught your eye?

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- **Say**, “I don’t think God wants to sell everything we have and live in poverty, but in Matthew 6, Jesus makes it clear that it is easy for us to fall in love with – and quickly accumulate – earthly treasures.”
  - Matthew 6:19-21 says, “*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*”
- **Ask** someone in the group to recount the story of the Rich Young Ruler. (If no one volunteers, you can always read it or paraphrase from Mark 10:17-31.)
  - **Say**, “Materialism has always had a way of grabbing people’s hearts. This guy probably never had a fine meal at a restaurant, he never watched TV, he never had air conditioning, heat or electricity, he never wore a pair of comfortable running shoes or experienced the luxuries that we know today, but his heart was still enslaved to material items. Today, the temptation to store up earthly treasures is one of the most common temptations that we face...and it’s one of our greatest barriers to becoming like Jesus.”
  - **Ask**, “What’s the key phrase for today?” (Generosity beats materialism.) “Jesus was trying to show this guy that all of his stuff would never make him happy. But, imitating the generosity of God would allow him to have the best life possible.”
- **Say**, “In Luke 16, Jesus talks extensively about money and generosity. One of the more memorable stories from this chapter is the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Let’s read it together.”
  - **Ask** for a volunteer to read Luke 16:19-31
- **Discussion Question:** One of the points of this story is that the rich man loved stuff more than he loved people. How do we see this played out in our society today?
- **Discussion Question:** Do you think it is possible to live in a society like ours and truly follow Jesus’s teachings on radical generosity?
  - **Say**, “I want to leave you with one final passage to think through today. 1 Timothy 6:17-19 says, ‘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. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 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.*’”

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- **Discussion Question:** Are we “rich” by the world’s standards...and if so, how do we apply 1 Timothy 6:17-19 to our lives?

### **III. Action (5 minutes)**

- Spend some time as a group discussing the possibility to coming up with a generosity project for the group. Ask if there are people in their close circles of friends or family who are hurting in some way and have the group start praying about how you may be able to serve the ones who are hurting.
  - **Close with prayer** that focuses on confessing our struggles with materialism and asking for the ability to live radically generous lives that honor God.