



Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C
Sunday School

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025

A GENEROUS GIFT

SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalms 133:1**

School/Class: But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

Superintendent/Teacher: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

School/Class: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. **Psalms 119:105**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Therefore he says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

ALL:

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

2 Peter 3:18

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025

A GENEROUS GIFT



- Bible Basis: Matthew 23:2-12; Mark 12:38-44
- Bible Truth: Jesus denounced the scribes and Pharisees' need for recognition and affirmed the compassion and humility of the poor widow's gift.
- Memory Verse: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will: OBSERVE the contrast that Jesus made between the arrogance of the religious leaders and the piety of the humble, poor woman; REFLECT on the tension between wanting recognition and selfless giving that often receives no recognition; and RESOLVE to become more selfless in giving.
- Background Scriptures: [Matthew 23:2-12](#); [Mark 12:38-44](#) & [John 1:10-18](#) – Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025
A GENEROUS GIFT



Matthew 23:2-12; Mark 12:38-44 KJV

- 2** Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:
- 3** All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.
- 4** For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.
- 5** But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,
- 6** And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025
A GENEROUS GIFT



Matthew 23:2-12; Mark 12:38-44 KJV

7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025
A GENEROUS GIFT



Matthew 23:2-12; Mark 12:38-44 KJV

38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces,

39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:

40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Pharisees. A very influential religious group of Jewish men that existed in Judea from second century B.C. through the first century A.D. The word Pharisee is ultimately from a word meaning "separated ones" or "set apart" in Hebrew. The group was comprised of laymen who adhered to strict observance of the Sabbath, purity rituals, tithing, and food restrictions based on the Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish traditions. They also believed in the resurrection of the dead.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Scribes. One of several groups in first-century Judaism. The scribes were trained in writing and were very influential as interpreters and teachers of the Law. They also acted as agents of the Roman Empire and the local rulers, preparing legal documents and recording deeds. They could belong to other groups, such as the Pharisees and Sadducees (e.g., "the scribes of the Pharisees" in [Mark 2:16](#); [Acts 23:9](#), ESV).

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Widows. The Torah contains several injunctions regarding the care for widows to protect them from being taken advantage of because they have lost their husbands. For instance, Exodus 22:22 states: "You shall not ill-treat any widow or orphan." According to the rabbinical tradition, a widow is disallowed from inheriting her husband's estate. However, she is entitled to receive a settlement on the estate from which she can maintain her livelihood if and when she remarries.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: We will acknowledge that people desire to be recognized and held in high esteem by others.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus Teaches His Disciples

After Jesus makes His entry into Jerusalem and is exalted by the people who shouted hosannas in celebration of the Messiah's coming ([Matthew 21:1-11](#)), He enters the Temple, the center of Jewish religious and political activity. On seeing this, Jesus cleanses the Temple of exploitative merchant activity ([Matthew 21:12-17](#)). Jesus then turns His attention to the religious leaders, observing the religious leaders and teachers' abusive practices ([Matthew 21:23-23:36](#)). He then begins to instruct His disciples and the crowd of people on the ways of the Kingdom of God that are in stark contrast to the personal practices of unrighteous religious leaders.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will understand that God honors those who are humble and selfless in our devotion to Him.

I. A LACK OF HUMILITY

Matthew 23:2-7

Jesus reveals the Pharisees' and scribes' hypocritical behavior to the crowds and His disciples. To begin with, Jesus encourages the role of the scribes and Pharisees and applauds them for taking on the important task of interpreting and teaching the Torah (or Law) (v. 3). Jesus does not deny the Torah and the importance of the Pharisees' and scribes' role, yet He denounces their hypocritical actions toward their responsibilities. The scribes and Pharisees are making a mockery of the Law by pursuing their own self-interests at the expense of the community. They are abusing their authority as teachers and community leaders, stepping over others to raise themselves up. They are more concerned with appearing as privileged figures (reflected in the clothes they wear and their sitting in the best seats in the synagogue), than loving their neighbor as themselves.

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025

A GENEROUS GIFT



Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

I. A LACK OF HUMILITY

Matthew 23:2-7

1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

Many times in the Gospel, Jesus speaks not only to His core group of twelve disciples but also to the multitudes. In this instance, He speaks concerning the practices of the scribes and Pharisees in relation to their status in the Kingdom of God. The scribe (Gk. grammateus, gram-mah-TUSE) was an expert interpreter and teacher of the Mosaic Law, usually called on to answer difficult questions for the local courts and the Sanhedrin council. Jesus affirms that they sit in Moses' seat (v. 2).

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025

A GENEROUS GIFT



Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

I. A LACK OF HUMILITY

Matthew 23:2-7

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Although many scholars argue that this was an actual seat in the synagogue used to make authoritative decisions and explanations by the law of Moses, there is no evidence of this; instead, Jesus affirms their authority in interpreting the Law. He says that whatever they tell the people to observe, they should observe (Gk. tereo, teh-REH-oh); this word means to guard or keep watch. In this context, it means to attend to carefully or take care of; by implication, it means to listen and obey. Jesus says to attend to what they say and do it, but not copy what they do, because "they say and do not."

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025

A GENEROUS GIFT



I. A LACK OF HUMILITY

Matthew 23:2-7

Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.

Jesus makes a general statement describing their actions and the way they have twisted the Jewish faith. He describes the burdens (Gk. phortion, for-TEE-on) of the scribes and Pharisees. These burdens were metaphorically the religious rituals, which the religious leaders derived from the Mosaic Law. They are described as being heavy (Gk. barus, bahROOS), which means weighty and in this context severe and stern. They lay these burdens on other men's shoulders while they do not lift a finger. The shoulders carry weight for the body, which emphasize their strength. The finger is one of the weakest parts of the body. In other words, the Pharisees put people under a life-consuming burden and will not make the smallest effort to help people please God.

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025

A GENEROUS GIFT



I. A LACK OF HUMILITY

Matthew 23:2-7

Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

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Jesus also comments on their motives. All their religion is for the applause of others, as seen in their showing off their phylacteries (Gk. phylakterion, foo-lak-TAY-ree-on), small cases filled with strips of paper on which were written specific passages from the Torah ([Exodus 13:11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:16-21](#)). The word for phylactery was first used for a fortified place stationed with a garrison. The word could also more generally mean a preservative or safeguard, which is related to the meaning here, as observant Jews believed the phylacteries could ward off evil spirits and demons. These small cases were worn on the forehead and the left arm against the heart to remind them of their obligation to keep the Mosaic Law in their head and heart ([Deuteronomy 6:8, 11:18](#)).

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025

A GENEROUS GIFT



Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

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Instead of serving this purpose, the Pharisees used them to broadcast their religious devotion to others. In addition, they "enlarged the borders of their garments." The borders (Gk. kraspedon, KRAHS-peh-don) of their garments were the traditional blue and white tassels worn on the edge of their mantles or cloaks ([Numbers 15:38-41](#)). These also were used to remind the Jews of keeping God's commandments. The Pharisees and scribes elongated these in order to appear more religious.

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025

A GENEROUS GIFT



Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

I. A LACK OF HUMILITY

Matthew 23:2-7

6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

Jesus goes further to point out their selfishness and hypocrisy. The Pharisees loved the upper-most rooms (Gk. protoklisia, pro-toh-klee-SEE-ah) at feasts – this means that they love to sit in prominent places, at the head tables during banquets, and positions of honor. Although there is information on the Greek, Persian, and Roman seating arrangements of the time, it is not known what particular seat this was for Jews. Ancient evidence contains people's complaints against being seated in low status positions. In another place, Jesus would explain the proper way to handle seating arrangements ([Luke 14:1-11](#)). For now, He rebukes the Pharisees and scribes for their desire of the first place.

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025

A GENEROUS GIFT



Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

I. A LACK OF HUMILITY

Matthew 23:2-7

6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

Jesus also says the Pharisees and scribes love the chief seats (Gk. protokathedria, pro-toh-kathed-REE-ah) in the synagogues. Although a simple translation of the word is the "first seat" the seating arrangements in synagogues during the first century varied, so it is hard to pinpoint exactly where this seat would be placed. We can estimate that this seat must have been closest to the bema, a precursor of the pulpit, where the Scriptures would be read. There is also the possibility that more honorable guests would have been given chairs while others sat on mats. Both the synagogue and the banquet were public gatherings that presented an opportunity for the religious leaders to call attention to their spiritual importance.

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025

A GENEROUS GIFT



Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. 8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

I. A LACK OF HUMILITY

Matthew 23:2-7

Greetings in the first century were a very important social component, containing rules on how to address peers, inferiors, and superiors. To not greet a teacher of the Law was a serious offense. Another sign of the Pharisees' self-seeking was their desire to be called Rabbi (Gk. rhabbi, rah-BEE), meaning "great one." By implication, it also means "master" or "my lord." It was the custom of Jews to refer to their teachers this way, even when not in their presence.

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025

A GENEROUS GIFT



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I. A LACK OF HUMILITY

Matthew 23:2-7

Jesus condemns this practice. He says not to call anyone Rabbi or "great one." There is only one great one – Christ. He continues to proclaim all His followers as "brethren," family and peers not adherent to a hierarchy.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

The Master Teacher

Pupils often called their rabbis father (Gk.pater, pah-TARE). While Jesus uses the formal designation of father, which in a Jewish context was also used for God, pupils were known to address their rabbis as "Abba" (Aramaic for "our dear father") a way to address them with respect and also signify the type of relationship between student and teacher. The rabbis in turn addressed their pupils as children. Jesus says this is not how it works in the Kingdom of God; there is only one Father, God Himself. He also says there is only one Master (Gk. kathegetes, ka-they-gay-TACE), which means guide or teacher.

II. INSTRUCTION IN HUMILITY

Matthew 23: 8-12

Jesus' disciples should not desire to be exalted by the people because of their leadership position in the church. Instead, Jesus demands His disciples practice servanthood when He says, "he that is greatest among you shall be your servant"(v. 11). A person's actions will cause others to lift that person up. So, to follow the instructions of the Kingdom, the disciples must do the opposite of the prevailing practice. Jesus says, "And those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" ([v. 12, NLT](#)).

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025
A GENEROUS GIFT



Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

II. INSTRUCTION IN HUMILITY

The Status Quo is Reversed

Matthew 23:8-12

Jesus outlines a different path to greatness and significance. He says whoever is the greatest (Gk. meizon, MADE-zone) or has the highest rank and status must become a servant (Gk. diakonos, dee-AH-ko-noce). This word means an attendant or waiter, and one who executes another's commands. This is different from the common word for slave (Gk. doulos, DOO-loce) in the New Testament; diakonos emphasizes the activity of the work-er, whereas doulos denotes the relation between the one serving and the one being served. Jesus further adds that those who exalt (Gk. hupsoo, hoop-SOH-oh) or lift themselves high will be abased, or brought low and humiliated.

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025
A GENEROUS GIFT



Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

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II. INSTRUCTION IN HUMILITY

The Status Quo is Reversed

Matthew 23:8-12

The reverse also holds true; those who humble themselves will be exalted. The same Greek verb for humble is used for abased (tapeinoo, tah-pay-NOH-oh). The KJV is trying to convey that the verb appears in both the active and the passive voices here. In other words, if you try to make yourself lower (humble yourself), you will be raised up, but if you try to lift yourself up, you will be made lower (abased). The NLT nicely captures Jesus' contrast of the two types of people by translating His words literally.

III. EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY

Mark 12:41-44

The Temple establishment was supposed to provide social protection and economic assistance to widows (Deuteronomy 14:29, 26:12-13); instead, under the scribes' leadership, it had become an institution of oppression.

Nevertheless, the widow's offering is an example of an act of humility and generous giving, in spite of her hardship. This act is not depicted in the Matthean version of the story

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025

A GENEROUS GIFT



III. EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY

The Greedy Scribes

Mark 12:41-44

Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

Mark 12:38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, 39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: 40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation. 41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

Jesus sits across from the treasury (Gk. gazophu-lakion, god-zo-foo-LA-kee-on). This is a word used for the different rooms in the Temple, which contained money, public records, and the property of widows and orphans. It is reported in Jewish tradition after the first century that there were ten vessels shaped like trumpets to collect voluntary offerings as well as tax money. The treasury was located in the Temple's Court of Women. This would make it accessible to all Israelites no matter what gender. Jesus watches people give their offerings and sees the rich giving much, but a poor widow stands out from the crowd. She throws in two mites (Gk. lepton, lep-TAHN), which were the smallest and lightest coins. Together two of them made up a farthing (Gk. kodrantes, kod-RAHN-tays), which was only worth 3/8 of a cent.

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025
A GENEROUS GIFT



III. EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY

The Greedy Scribes

Mark 12:41-44

Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-44

43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

The action of the widow prompts Jesus to call His disciples to a true example of greatness in contrast to the Pharisees, scribes, and all the rich people who gave their offerings. They all gave an offering from their abundance (Gk. perisseuo, peh-rees-SUE-oh), meaning the overflow or what was left over. They gave what they could afford to give. The widow, on the other hand, gave of her want (Gk. husteresis, hus-TEH-ray-sees) or what is lacking. She gave all of her living (Gk. bios, BEE-ose), the general word for life and by extension the resources, goods, and wealth by which life is sustained. Jesus praises the widow for her absolute trust in God, as opposed to the Pharisees and scribes along with the rich worshippers who trust in themselves.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Humility and Serving Others

In Matthew, Jesus simply explains to His disciples the role of humility in servanthood. In Mark, the widow's act serves as an example of the humility elaborated on in Matthew by illustrating the role of humility and the act of servanthood. By contrast, those who insist on self-promoting their importance will receive condemnation in the last days.

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: We will understand that Christians are to give with a good heart and intentions that are right before God.

BIBLE APPLICATION

Christians of every circumstance, especially those in leadership positions, tend to yearn for recognition. Everyone wants a title, but not everyone wants to be called a servant. American society, in fact, is established on the basis of privilege and non-privilege. Only by radical departure from the world's values and priorities will Christians be the disciples of the one Teacher and Lord. Only by practicing explicitly selfless acts of humility will Christians be exalted.

STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: We will accept that Christians should adopt selfless giving as a way of life.

STUDENT RESPONSES

Who are you trusting in for your advancement? Who are you trusting with your reputation? This week, seek to serve others who would be considered lower than you. Offer to serve one of your subordinates at work. Give to a person or organization without them knowing it was you. In this way, you will be seeking to be admired by Jesus and not others.

Prayer

We bless You Lord,

For first loving us and giving us Christ. Help us to give and care for those in need even though we do not have much. Your kindness and love remind us that we are to care for one another.

In Jesus' Name we pray,

Amen.

Lesson 4 December 28, 2025
A GENEROUS GIFT



Next Sunday
January 4, 2026
Lesson 5
A Bride Worth Waiting For
Genesis 29:15-30