

# Managing money and riches. The story of Zacchaeus Lesson Plan

All these lesson plans cover all:

## UK RE attainment targets

*(Sacred Texts • Beliefs • Practices • Identity • Values • Living)*

Assessment sheets clearly show:

**KS1 → KS2 progression**

**Suitable for planning evidence,  
moderation, and Ofsted**

**ASSESSMENT AIMS: 6. Living (how beliefs affect actions and everyday life).**

- Can describe how beliefs affect everyday behaviour.
- Can explain how religious beliefs guide actions and choices.
- Can give examples of belief in action (e.g. charity, care for others).
- Can reflect on how learning influences their own thinking.
- Can make thoughtful personal responses.

## The topics covered:

- Greedy Zacchaeus lived only for himself, but Jesus changed him.
- Jesus came to seek out those who were lost.
- Saying sorry should be backed up with action.
- Is it possible to be rich and be a Christian?
- “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
- How can the little we’ve got help the poor?
- Jesus sees the poor lady giving a few coins, and God would reward her for giving that.

**Included: RE Assessment Checklist**

## **Teacher's overview of this ready-to-use lesson plan:**

**Here is the overview to satisfy the National Curriculum, combining multiple agreed syllabi:**

- How can following God bring freedom and justice? (People of God).
- Who and what influences how I live my life? How important is my behaviour?
- What is my personal code of conduct? What are my most important values in life?

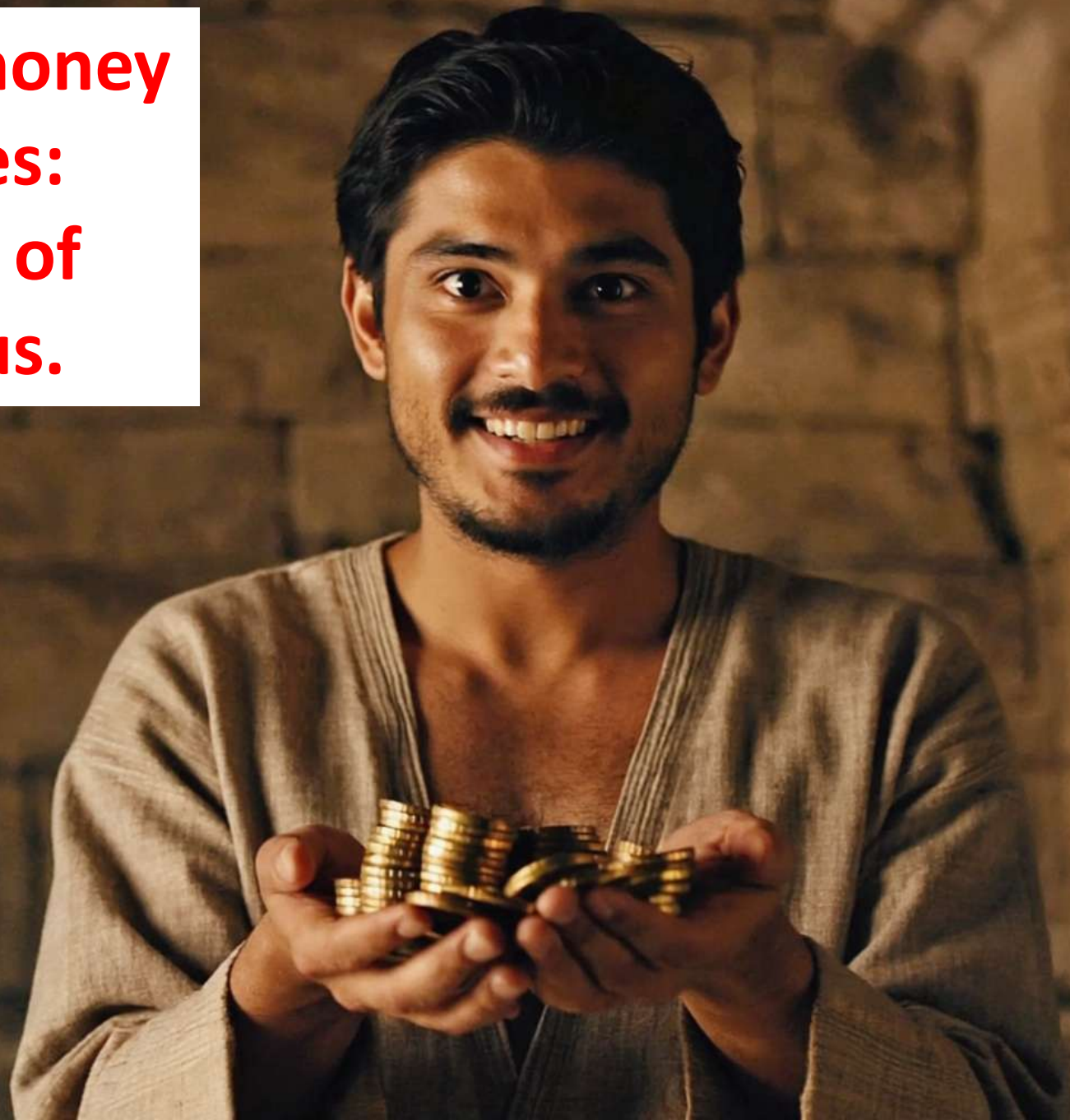
**These are the specific questions covered and are in the Assessment at the end of the lesson plan:**

- Q. Why is just saying “sorry” not enough some times?
- Q. Why did Zacchaeus want to see Jesus and what happened?
- Q. What did Zacchaeus do that made him unpopular?
- Q. What action did Zacchaeus take to show he was truly sorry for the wrong things he had done?
- Q. Complete Jesus' statement: “For where your treasure is...? Is it possible for a Christian to be rich? Explain how.
- Q. What was the story of the starfish and its meaning?
- Q. What did the poor widow give and why was Jesus so impressed?

**Resources required:**

None required.

**Managing money  
and riches:  
The story of  
Zacchaeus.**



**Imagine you know someone who has a reputation for not respecting other people's things.**

**Then one day, this person asks to borrow your ruler (calculator or whatever), and it quickly gets given back to you in several bits, with a hurried 'sorry'.**

**Then on another day, they ask to borrow your ..... (something expensive).**

**Q. Are you going to lend it to that person?**

**Explain your answer.**





**Answer: They need to show by their actions that they have changed from their old, bad ways.**

**To just say the word ‘sorry’ is not enough.**

**Some people choose to do something wrong and then expect a quick ‘sorry’ to continue hurting people.**

**Q. How does that make you feel?**

**We are going to look at ‘bad’ Zacchaeus when he met Jesus, which comes from a story in the Bible.**

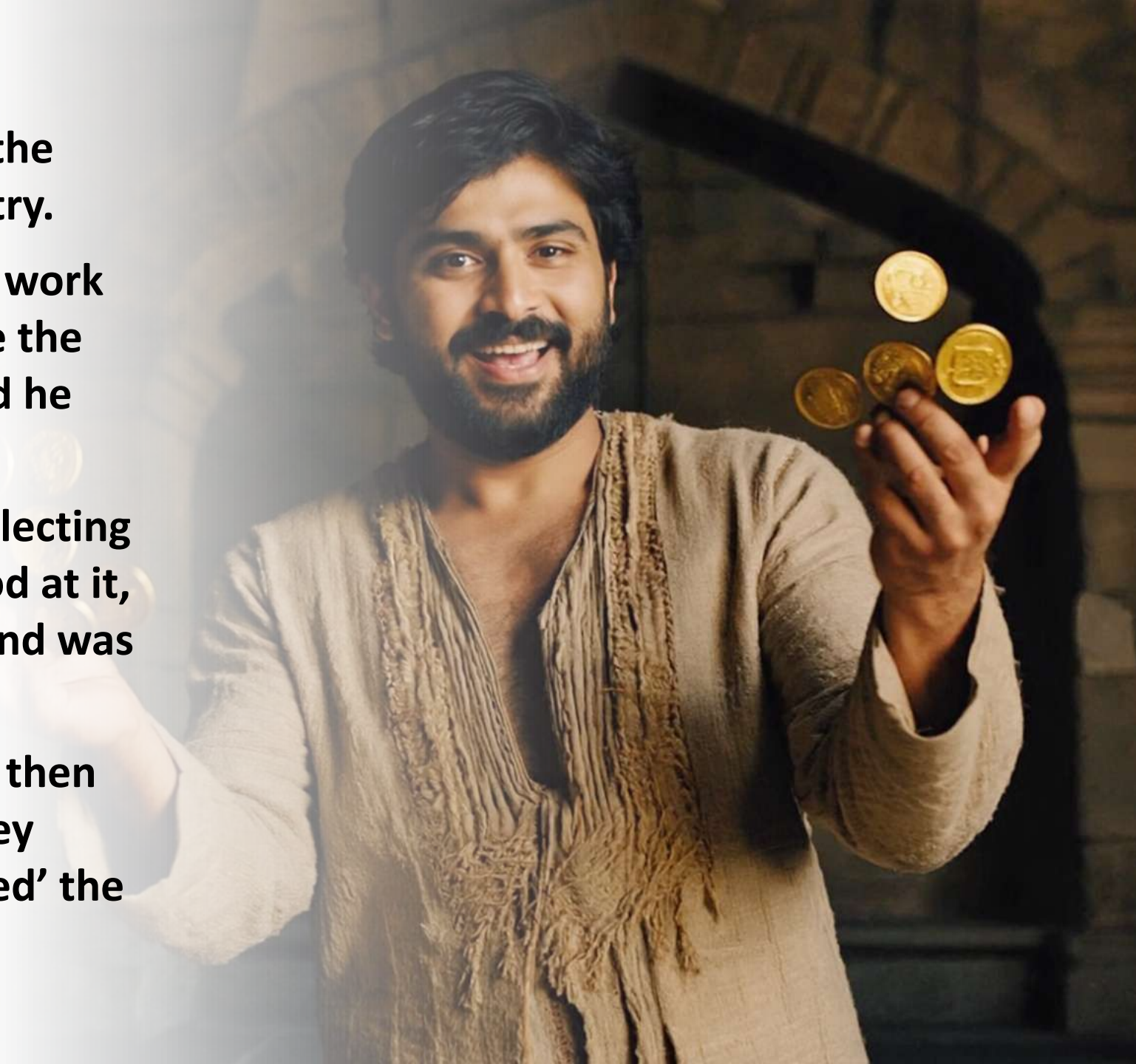
**He wasn’t one to go with the crowd – he didn’t want to be popular and fit in with everybody. He was out and out for himself, and if anybody gave him some abuse, it was just like water off a duck’s back – it didn’t bother him.**

**Earlier in his life, he had decided to become a tax collector working for the Romans, who had invaded his country.**

**Zacchaeus thought that rather than work against the Romans, he would make the best of the situation for himself, and he had become extremely rich!**

**His fellow Jews despised him for collecting taxes from them, and he was so good at it, he had risen up through the ranks and was now a 'chief tax collector'.**

**Most, if not all, of the tax collectors then used to charge higher taxes than they should have, and they then 'pocketed' the rest.**





**But something was happening within Zacchaeus. God was starting to make him feel uneasy about the way he was living his life.**

**Although he was very rich, he began to feel guilty for the wrong things he had done, and now Jesus was coming into his hometown.**

**Zacchaeus had heard a lot of things about Jesus, how he was going around healing people and teaching things about the Kingdom of God.**

**Zacchaeus felt that Jesus would have the answer, and he just wanted to speak to him, but the crowds were massive.**

**He was very short, so he couldn't even see Jesus, so he ran on ahead and climbed a tree which hung over the road.**



**Zacchaeus thought that he wouldn't be able to speak to Jesus because of the huge crowd, but he just wanted to see what Jesus looked like; that was better than nothing.**

**Jesus came into view, with the crowd pressing around him, and just as if it looked like he was going to pass directly under the tree and disappear in the crowd, Jesus stopped and looked up!**



**Zacchaeus' heart almost banged its way out of his chest!**

**But that was not all, Jesus said, "Zacchaeus!"**

**But how could Jesus know his name?**

**Jesus hadn't met Zacchaeus before.**

**It was God at work!**

**Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately, I must stay at your house today!"**

**This really confirmed to Zacchaeus that Jesus was the answer to the way he was feeling!**



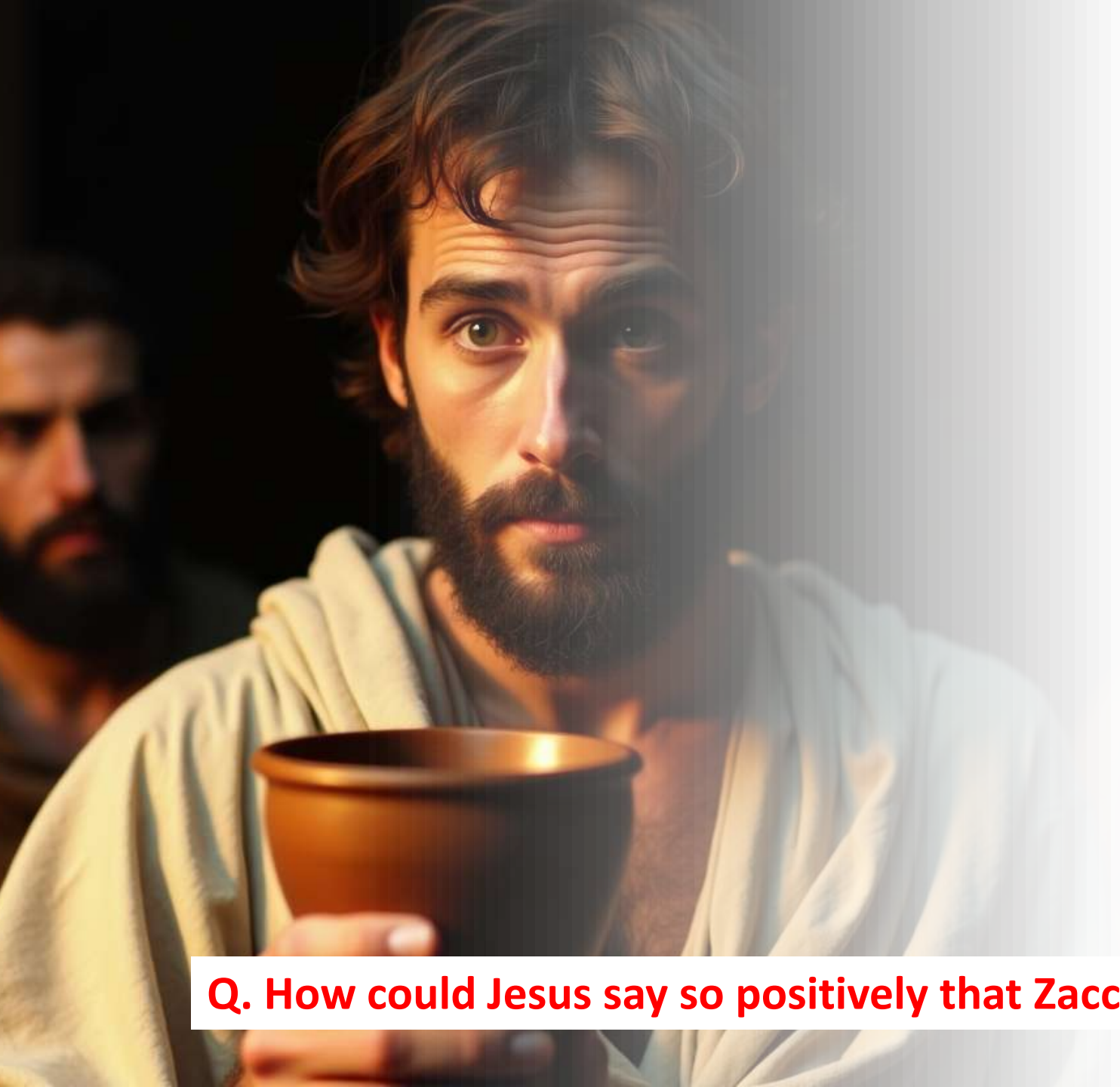


**The people in the crowd who knew Zacchaeus as a tax collector started to grumble that Jesus, who lived a life without doing anything wrong, wanted to go with a tax collector – the lowest of the low!**

**The moaning carried on all the way to his house, but then Zacchaeus turned to Jesus and said in response to their grumbling:**

**“Look, Lord! Here and now, I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”** Luke 19:8 NIV

**Q. What do you think of Zacchaeus for doing that?**



**The crowd could see by his actions that Zacchaeus was truly sorry for the wrong things he had done.**

**And Jesus said to him that salvation had come to his house and that Zacchaeus was now a true believer in God. He also said that this was the reason why he, Jesus, had come to seek out those who were lost.**

**Q. How could Jesus say so positively that Zacchaeus was now a true believer in God?**

**Answer: Because being a Christian means not just talking about it, but actually living a changed, good lifestyle.**

**Zacchaeus was proving by his actions that he was truly sorry for getting all that money wrongly from other people.**

**Just saying sorry was not enough.**

**Jesus said that he came to seek out those who were lost.**

**Sometimes Jesus spoke about himself being a shepherd who would go and search for the lost sheep.**

**Q. What does being lost mean here?**





**Answer: Being lost means being outside of God's family and away from God's company.**

**Jesus came to point people in the right direction towards God.**

**Christians believe that Jesus, being God, was able to know exactly what Zacchaeus was feeling, which is why Jesus chose to speak to Zacchaeus amongst all those hundreds of people.**

**Jesus was seeking him out by walking along that road.**

**Q. What made Zacchaeus lost?**

**Answer: He had been more interested in getting rich than in finding out about God.**

**Up until Jesus saw him, Zacchaeus had put himself first and God last.**

**Q. Is it possible to be rich and to be a Christian?**

**The answer is yes, provided the riches don't become more important than God.**



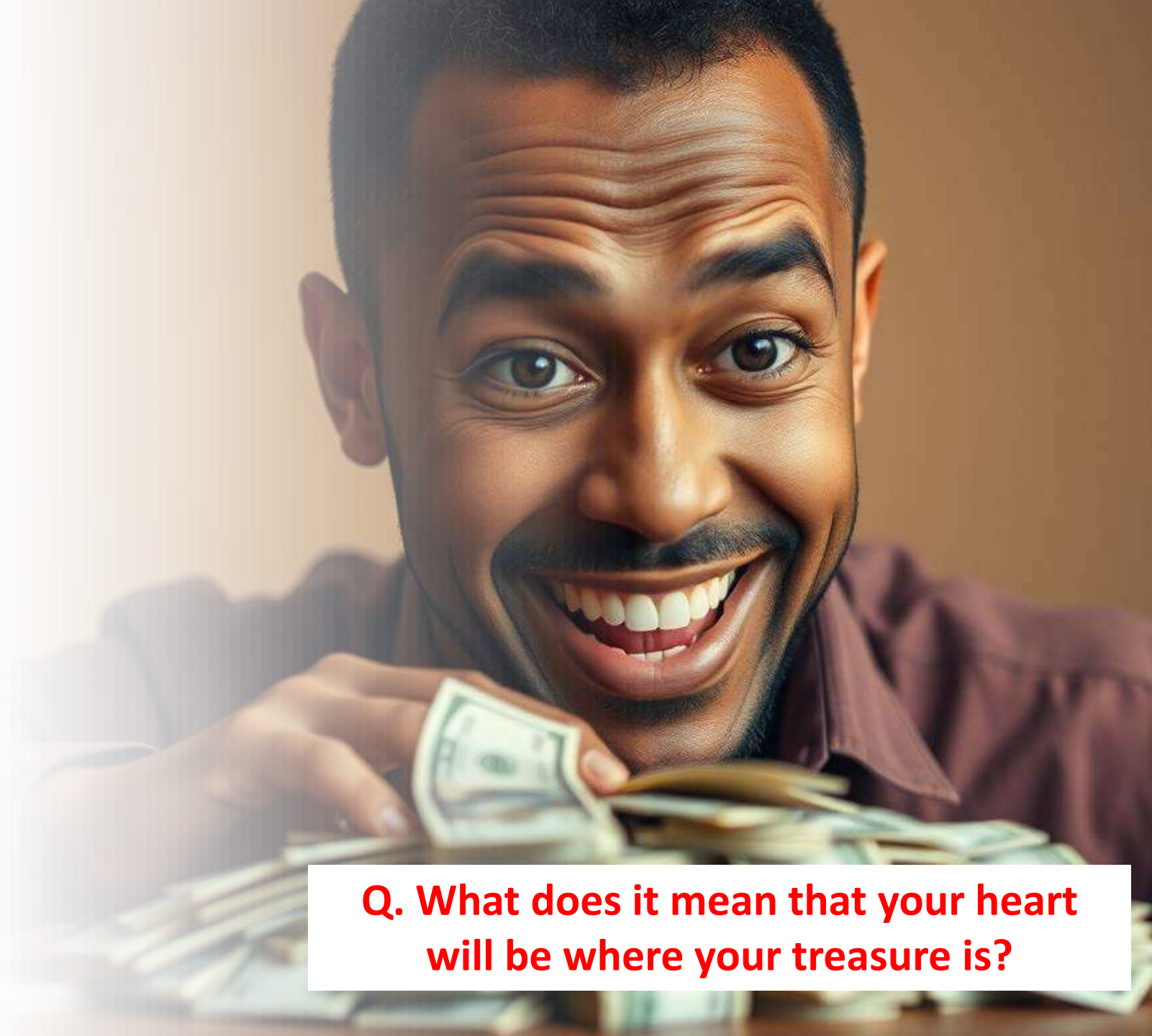
**It may be that God wants you to give a lot of it away to a charity, so what becomes more important, to obey God or hold onto the money?**

**When money becomes the most important thing to us, then that money becomes our god, something you idolise in your life.**

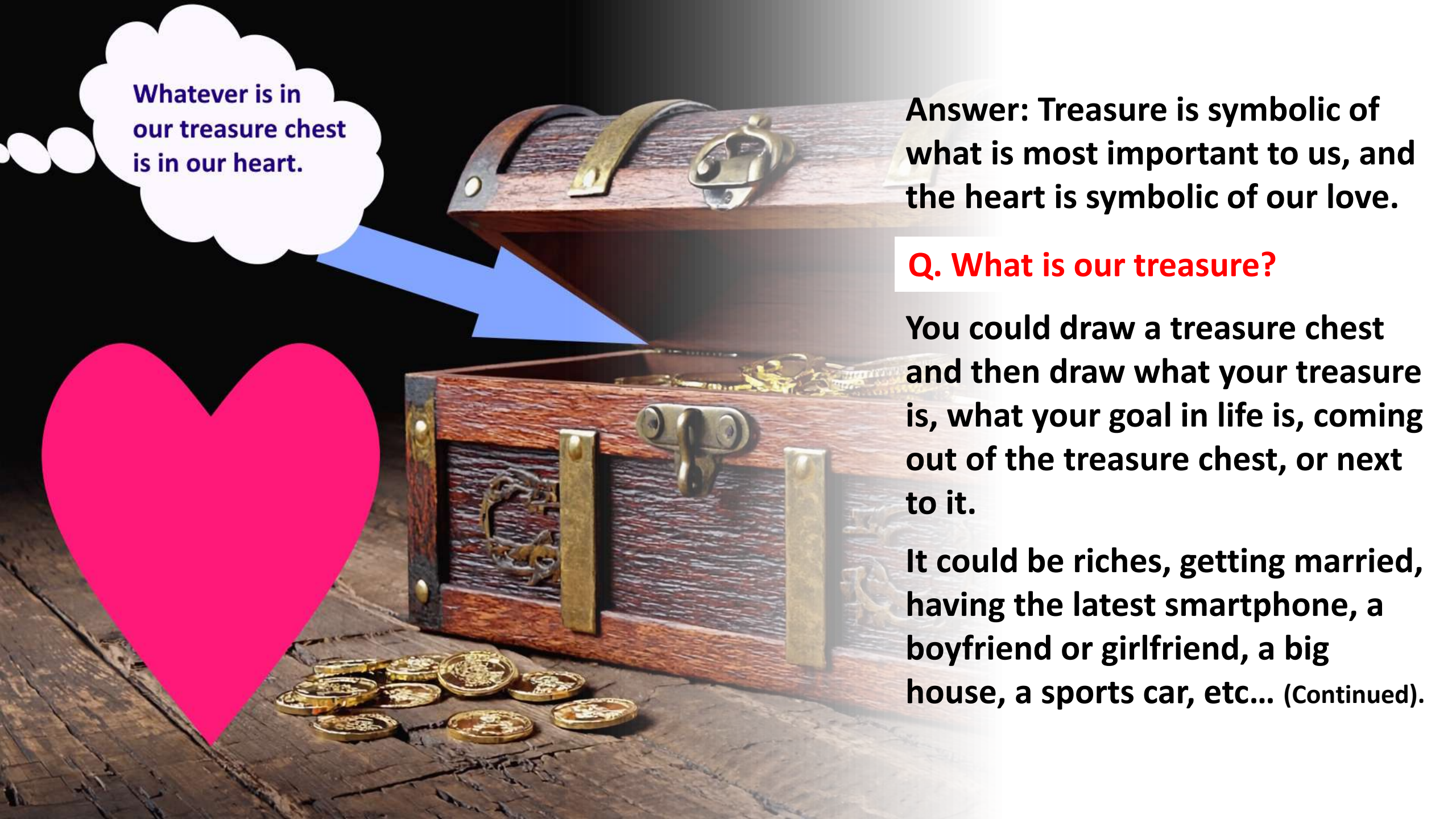
**Jesus said on another occasion:**

**“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”**

Luke 12:34 NIV



**Q. What does it mean that your heart will be where your treasure is?**



Whatever is in  
our treasure chest  
is in our heart.

**Answer:** Treasure is symbolic of what is most important to us, and the heart is symbolic of our love.

**Q. What is our treasure?**

You could draw a treasure chest and then draw what your treasure is, what your goal in life is, coming out of the treasure chest, or next to it.

It could be riches, getting married, having the latest smartphone, a boyfriend or girlfriend, a big house, a sports car, etc... (Continued).

So, whatever your treasure is,  
your heart will be set upon it,  
so draw a heart shape next to  
it or enclose your drawing.

Now, because your heart is set  
upon this 'treasure', your  
affections are set towards it,  
and you are in love with it.

Remember what Jesus said:  
"For where your treasure is,  
there your heart will be also..."  
(Continued).



**So, if you make getting married your treasure, then your heart will be set upon this, and because this becomes so big in your life, then other things get pushed out, and that includes God.**

**Christians believe that if you make God your treasure, then your heart will be set on God, and therefore you will love God above all other things.**





**Or perhaps you make money your treasure, then your heart will be set upon your money and getting more money, so you will be in love with riches and possessions.**

**But the trap of idolising money is not just for the rich.**

**You could be the poorest person in the world, and your thoughts of money could be the most important thing to you.**

**So even though you have no money, riches could still govern your thoughts and actions.**

**Q. Do you want to get rich, and why?**

**Q. Have you given money to help someone?**

Teacher's note: It may be appropriate to say about those who pretend to be beggars, but who are actually making lots of money from it.

Perhaps you think that you can give so little, it won't help all the millions of suffering people in the world, but a little act goes a long way. Here is a story that may make you think again:

A little boy was walking along with his granddad, then they saw hundreds of starfish stranded on the beach, and all of them were drying out in the blazing sun.

**Q. What would you do with the starfish?**





**So, the little boy started to pick them up, one at a time, and he walked to the water's edge and put the starfish back into the sea.**

**Then he went back for another one.**

**His granddad looked at all the hundreds of starfish and said to the boy, "Come on, you're never going to make a difference to all those starfish!"**

**But the boy replied: "No, but I can make a difference to this one", as he lowered another starfish into the sea!**

**Q. Discuss the little boy's actions, was he right?**

**Q. Is it correct to say: 'I can do nothing; there are so many people who are suffering'?**



**Christians believe that God knows how much or how little we help others.**

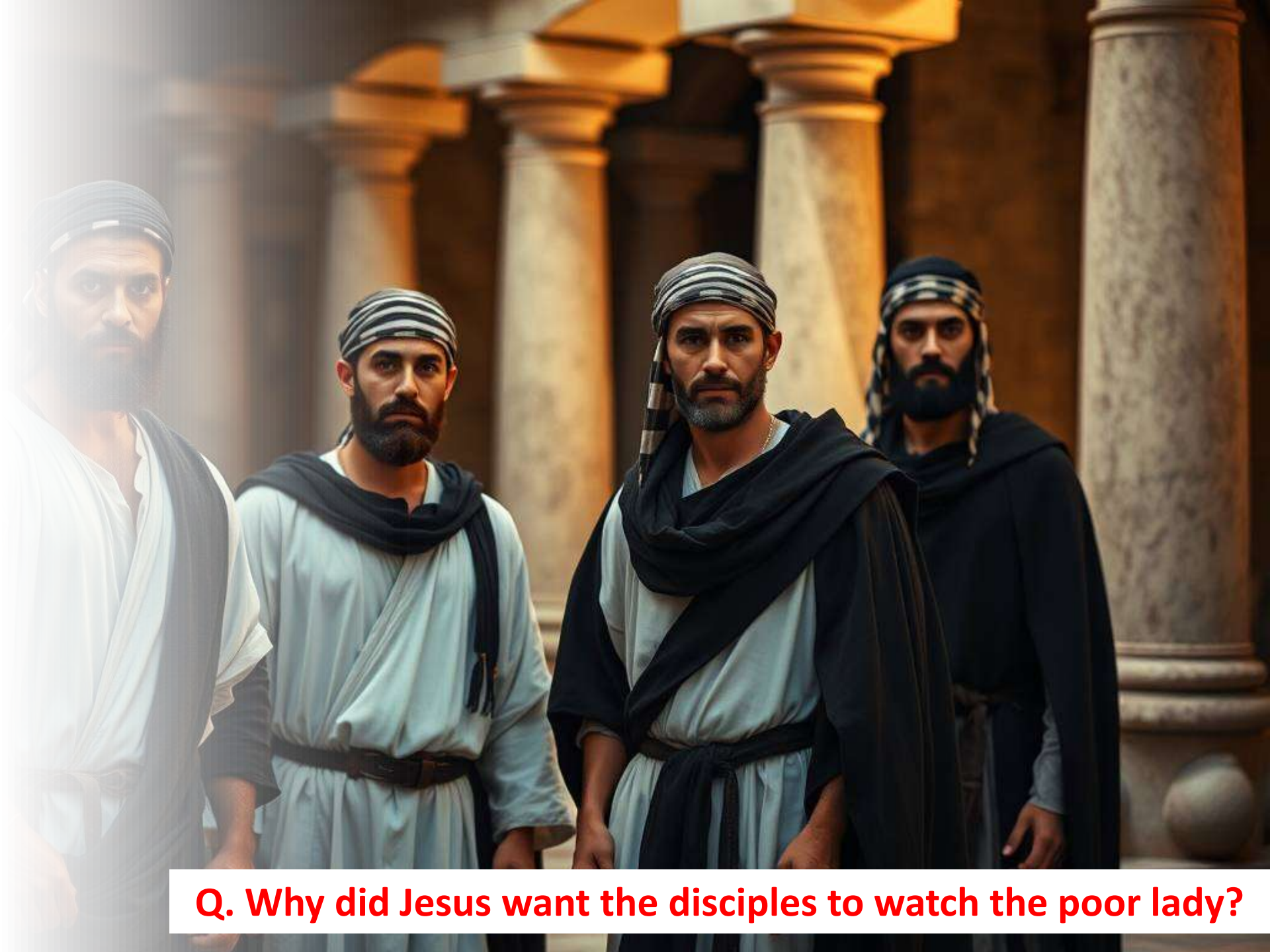
**One day, Jesus was in the Temple, and all the rich people were giving their money away.**

**They were talking loudly and making a big show of donating their money. They even threw their money in, so that it would make as much noise as possible!**

**Q. So why were they throwing their money in?**

**But then Jesus noticed a very poor lady, and he told the group who were with him to watch what she was going to do.**

**As she got next to the place where all the money was being donated, she quietly gave two small copper coins, which were worth only a few pence.**



**Q. Why did Jesus want the disciples to watch the poor lady?**

Jesus suddenly announced to his group,  
“I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she had to live on.” Luke 21:4 NIV

**Q. What was Jesus saying?**

The money that the rich people were giving was worth very little to them.

**Q. What did Jesus mean by that?**





**They wouldn't even miss that amount.**

**And because they had bragged about giving their money, God would not reward their giving.**

**But the poor lady who had so little money gave a large amount of what she had.**

**It cost her to give that much, and God would reward her for giving that.**



**Jesus explained what that reward might be if it is given in faith that God will use it,**

**“For if you give, you will get! Your gift will return to you in full and overflowing measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use to give – large or small – will be used to measure what is given back to you.”** Luke 6:38 (The Living Bible)



**That does not mean we give so that we can receive more back.**

**What we receive back may not be money, it may be friendship, or something completely different.**

**Q. What would happen if you gave something so that you could receive it back again?**

**Answer:**

**If the motive were to get something back, then that would be doing something very similar to those rich people in the temple, who loudly gave their money away so that others would praise them for their generosity.**

**Q. Do you agree?**



**But the Bible tells us that if you give money or gifts to others in a genuine way to help them, then you can rely on God to reward you at a time when you need it.**

**We have just looked at several situations from the Bible which, hopefully, have made you think about money and riches.**

**Q. Would you now consider giving something to help someone, or giving money to a charity?**



Name:

Date:

## **Specific assessment for this lesson:**

**Q. Why is just saying “sorry” not enough sometimes?**

**Q. Why did Zacchaeus want to see Jesus and what happened?**

**Q. What did Zacchaeus do that made him unpopular?**

**Q. What action did Zacchaeus take to show he was truly sorry for the wrong things he had done?**

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A printable Religious Education Assessment Checklist KS1 and KS2 is downloadable at:  
<https://notmanywise.uk/assessment-sheet>

See more free  
lesson plans,  
videos and other  
resources at  
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