

LESSON 9 SNAPSHOT

BOTTOM LINE:

Jesus doesn't want us to major in the minors!

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn "I should focus on what is really important!"

KEY PASSAGE:

Matthew 23:23-24, 22:34-40, Our Main Focus

MEMORY VERSE:

"My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Colossians 2:2-3

SUMMARY:

The Pharisees were focusing on small and trivial things like following regulations to a tee and worrying about man made laws. Meanwhile they were ignoring God's most important laws. They basically made a big deal out of the laws that were easy for them to follow and downplayed the laws that they didn't want to obey. We can all do this sometimes. Jesus tells us to keep the main thing the main thing and stop majoring in minor issues.

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Help us to focus on what is really important and follow your laws. Keep us from being distracted by minor things that don't matter.

In Jesus' name,
Amen

MEMORY VERSE

“My goal is that their hearts may be encouraged and strengthened. I want them to be joined together in love. Then their understanding will be rich and complete. They will know the mystery of God. That mystery is Christ. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in him.” Colossians 2:2-3 (NIRV)

“My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Colossians 2:2-3 (NIV)

“I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God’s mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Colossians 2:2-3 (NLT)

“That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Colossians 2:2-3 (KJV)

LARGE GROUP:

Put the memory verse up on the big screen. Challenge the kids to read it out loud together and then see if they can say it by memory. Turn off the screen and lead the kids in reciting the verse by memory. Finally, say, “If you remembered it awesome. But the main thing is you understand what the verse means. Can anyone give us a summary of what our memory verse is about?” Encourage the kids to keep learning the verse and to focus on what is most important...it’s meaning.

SMALL GROUP:

(Ahead of time, get a chocolate kiss for each kid.)

Hand each kid a chocolate kiss. Ask them to unwrap the kiss. Then ask, “What part is most valuable, the wrapper or the chocolate?” Let them eat the chocolate kiss and compare the chocolate to God’s word and the wrapper to man made rules and traditions. Say, “As much as this kiss looked pretty being all wrapped up in foil, the foil is not the main part, it’s just the minor part of the kiss. The chocolate is the main part. Don’t eat the wrapper! When we read God’s word and pray to Him, we are focusing on what the main part of our religion is, a relationship with God. When we focus on the wrapper, it’s like focusing on what to wear to church, how to act so people are impressed, and making sure you know all the words to the songs. These are minor things; they are not what being a Christian is really all about! So focus on the chocolate...the main part. Focus on reading God’s word and your relationship with Jesus, because that is why we are really here!” Read the memory verse to the kids and ask them where the treasure is.

SKIT

Okay, That's Funny!

ITEMS NEEDED:

Plastic bags
A few pieces of garbage
Spray bottle

CHARACTERS:

Scott
Bill

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:

Wilderness expert – Scott
Wilderness expert – Bill

Begin with Scott and Bill standing center stage. Scott and Bill are both holding a plastic bag and there are a few pieces of garbage on the floor.

SCOTT: Welcome wilderness class! I'm Scott.

BILL: And I'm Bill.

SCOTT: Welcome back! Today is going to be all about preserving the wilderness.

BILL: That's right. We love nature. We love the way God created the plants, the animals, the lakes, the streams...

SCOTT: And since it's so beautiful, we want it to stay that way!

BILL: But sometimes people don't take care of the earth very well.

SCOTT: Like throwing litter on the ground.

BILL: Today Scott and I are picking up trash that we've found just thrown on the ground.

(Scott and Bill pick up the pieces of garbage.)

SCOTT: But why does it matter? What can garbage really do to hurt the earth?

BILL: Well, an animal can easily get caught in a piece of garbage or cut themselves on a

SKIT

sharp metal can.

SCOTT: Not only that, but they can eat something plastic and hurt their stomachs.

BILL: Yes, unfortunately there are a lot of man-made substances that animals cannot live with.

SCOTT: So, keep our planet clean. Clean up after yourself!

(Bill gets out a spray bottle and starts pretending to spray the ground around him.)

SCOTT: Uh...Bill?

BILL: Yeah?

SCOTT: STOP THAT! What are you doing?

BILL: Oh, this? I just have some weeds in my lawn that I don't really like so I'm spraying them.

SCOTT: Bill, that is a chemical.

BILL: So?

SCOTT: So, you are worrying about cleaning up trash but you are doing something 100 times worse to our planet!

BILL: What do you mean?

SCOTT: Well garbage is a minor thing that we can do to help clean up. But a major thing we can do is to stop spraying chemicals.

BILL: What's wrong with them?

SCOTT: Chemicals that kill weeds also kill the bees, the butterflies, the insects, the birds, and they also cause cancer in humans. These sprays are not just killing weeds, they are hurting everyone!

BILL: Oh! I didn't know.

SKIT

SCOTT: A lot of people don't know that. They think that if they pick up a little bit of litter, that they are doing their part to help the wilderness stay clean. But a MAJOR thing they could do to really help the environment is to stop spraying their lawns! And for farmers to stop spraying their crops.

BILL: But don't those chemicals keep away bugs and help things grow.

SCOTT: They do, but they are killing many species of animals. The animals that eat the bugs don't have food. The animals that eat those animals that ate the bugs, don't have food now either. And it keeps going like that.

BILL: YIKES!

SCOTT: And without bees, there will be no delicious honey for us to eat!

BILL: Yeah, I see your point.

SCOTT: And all that just so that you don't have weeds in your yard! Who cares anyway, dandelions are pretty, why get rid of them?

BILL: Yes, I see what you're saying. I'm working on this minor problem of littering and ignoring the major problem of harmful chemicals!

SCOTT: Exactly. Let's clean up our planet so we can enjoy God's beautiful creation. And let's not ignore the BIG things that are really hurting it. Like chemicals, plastic, oil spills, and more.

BILL: I want to keep this earth full of animals, bugs, plants, and keep on enjoying it for years to come.

SCOTT: Me too! See you all for one more week of wilderness class where we will explore new territory!

End Scene

OBJECT LESSON

ITEMS NEEDED:

Sign that says, "BIG DEAL VS LITTLE DEAL!" and Lollipops for each kid.

This sign says, big deal versus little deal. Some things are a big deal. On the other hand, some things are a little deal. We should focus most of our attention on things that are a big deal and less attention on things that are a little deal. Because if it's a big deal, it is most important!

I'm going to give a few examples and I want you to shout out if you think that thing is a big deal or a little deal. Ready?!

Picking out an outfit for school. That was a little deal.
Calling 911 for an emergency fire. That was a big deal.
Choosing what color lollipop you get. That was a little deal.
Choosing what job you will have. That was a big deal.

Things that are a big deal have a greater effect on our lives. What job you will have is an important decision that will affect much of your life. Choosing what color lollipop you get, although it's nice to have a choice, will not affect you longer than a few minutes because a lollipop doesn't last that long. You see what I mean? Big deal vs little deal.

We should place our focus on things that are a big deal and less focus on the things that aren't as important. But sometimes we are tempted to place all our focus on something that is not important. For instance, if we put all our focus on picking up litter at our local park but no focus on cleaning up the rest of the planet, what kind of impact will that actually have? It will help our local park but it won't help the rest of the world. In the same way, when we put all our focus on man made rules or small regulations to follow and nothing on God's law, we are focusing on the wrong things. Today we are going to find out how the Pharisees put a lot of focus on the wrong things and no focus on what was most important.

Jesus doesn't want us to major in the minors. That means, He doesn't want us to put major importance on things that are not important to God. So as much as it would be nice to be able to pick out your favorite color lollipop, sometimes you just have to get what you get and be thankful for it. Because there are way more important things to be focusing on!

Hand each kid a lollipop and don't let them pick which one they get this time...to help the message sink in.

LARGE GROUP GAME

Gnats and Camels Game

ITEMS NEEDED:

Nickels and Pennies

INSTRUCTIONS:

Split the kids into two groups. One group will be in charge of tagging the other kids. The other group will be handed either a nickel or a penny and told to hold on to their coin tight in their hand. Tell the kids not to let anyone know which kind of coin they have. Then say, "Everyone holding on to a nickel is a camel. Everyone holding onto a penny is a gnat. But don't tell anyone which one you are." When you say go, the kids who are "it" will try to tag as many camels as they can. The kids holding the nickels are camels and the kids holding the pennies are gnats. The challenge is that no one, apart from the kid holding the coin, knows which ones are camels and which ones are gnats. If a kid tags a gnat the gnat can hold up their penny and then turn around and chase the one who was "it". The person who was "it" is no longer "it" because they tagged a gnat and is in danger of being tagged. But a gnat can't chase anyone until they have been mistaken for a camel and tagged. If the gnat catches the one who had tagged them and was "it", that person must sit down. Then the gnat can resume pretending to avoid other people who are "it". Some kids may have noticed they were a gnat and know to avoid them now but others still might not have noticed and may tag the gnat again. When someone who is 'it' tags a camel, the camel must hold up their nickel and sit down.

The game ends when all the camels have been tagged or when all of the people who are "it" were tagged by gnats. The gnats and the camels are on the same team, even though they have different roles.

VARIATIONS:

N/A

WHAT'S THE POINT?

When we focus on the wrong things, the minor things, like a little gnat, we are letting the important things slip away. But when we focus on the large camel, we won't miss out on what is important. The challenge in this game is that we don't know the difference between the big deal and the little deal. Sometimes in real life we have a hard time seeing that too. But we can learn what is most important by aligning ourselves with Jesus and what He teaches us. Then we won't focus on the minor things, but the major!

LARGE GROUP LESSON

TAGLINE:

Jesus doesn't want us to major in the minors!

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn "I should focus on what is really important!"

KEY PASSAGE:

Matthew 23:23-24, 22:34-40, Our Main Focus

INTRO:

Hey guys! We have been having some fun today. The activities are all great, but do you know what our main focus is when we come to church? Can anyone raise their hand and tell us?

Right! God loves us and wants to have a close relationship with us. When we go to church, we learn more about God, grow closer to Him, and follow where He leads us. The Church helps us in our relationship with God and to also make friendships with other believers.

Jesus didn't want us to miss out on the main point, the main focus, the major leagues, the most important thing. So many of us can get distracted by the little things in life and we miss the main purpose of why we are here. Today we are going to read what Jesus said to the Pharisees. Those guys were focusing on trivial, small, nitpicky things. They weren't focused on what really mattered. Let's dive in right away and hear what Jesus has to say!

READ MATTHEW 23:23-24, 22:34-40

MAIN POINT:

Ha! Did you hear that part about the gnat and the camel? Oh, Jesus always says things in the most entertaining ways. Straining out gnats but swallowing camels whole! That would be like me worrying about getting seeds in my drink so I was sure to strain out every seed from the strawberries...but then a big old bug came and landed in my smoothie and I was like...ehh..whatever, and took a big gulp! Now imagine that bug the size of a camel. WOOOOWY! Why on earth would the Pharisees worry about doing little things perfectly but then sin in really big ways.

Jesus tells us what the most important commandment is. He said to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself. That means what matters most to God is that we love Him and one another. The Pharisees ignored these most important laws from God. They were too worried about wearing their shawl in just the right way, saying their prayer in just the right direction so the sun hit their hat and theyyeah I'm making these rules up. But you get the point. They were things like that. Things that were just surface level. For show. Trying to look good and seem religious. But when it came down to what really mattered...To loving God and having a close relationship with Him where

LARGE GROUP LESSON

they talked to Him and got to know Him, eh...they didn't bother with that.

And loving others by helping them when they were in need and treating their neighbors the way they would want to be treated. Well...let's forget that one too! Can you believe that? Okay, that's funny! How could they skip the most important stuff and pay all their attention to the little nothing stuff. The little gnats.

There is a camel staring them in the face and they don't even see it! Okay, that's funny! But more than funny, that's sad. They are missing the big picture and the purpose God has for them.

DRIVE IT HOME:

I don't know about you, but I don't want to miss God's purpose for me. I don't want to focus on things that don't really matter. I want to focus on the major things! Let's not ignore what God teaches us in the Bible. When we love God and love others as we love ourselves, we are doing what is most important! **JESUS DOESN'T WANT US TO MAJOR IN THE MINORS!** Instead, Jesus wants us to **FOCUS ON WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT.** We can do that today by focusing our hearts and minds on Jesus and on loving one another well. Take notice of that big old camel standing right in front of you! As funny as that sounds! Let's pray together.

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Help us to focus on what is really important and follow your laws. Keep us from being distracted by minor things that don't matter.

In Jesus' name,
Amen

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION K-2ND

ICEBREAKER:

Be honest, what are some little things that can distract you sometimes and seem like a big deal? Examples: Wearing the coolest clothes, having the newest toys, being first in line, getting the closest seats, etc.

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

(Ahead of time, get a chocolate kiss for each kid.)

Hand each kid a chocolate kiss. Ask them to unwrap the kiss. Then ask, "What part is most valuable, the wrapper or the chocolate?" Let them eat the chocolate kiss and compare the chocolate to God's word and the wrapper to man-made rules and traditions. Say, "As much as this kiss looked pretty being all wrapped up in foil, the foil is not the main part, it's just the minor part of the kiss. The chocolate is the main part. Don't eat the wrapper! When we read God's word and pray to Him, we are focusing on what the main part of our religion is, a relationship with God. When we focus on the wrapper, it's like focusing on what to wear to church, how to act so people are impressed, and making sure you know all the words to the songs. These are minor things; they are not what being a Christian is really all about! So, focus on the chocolate...the main part. Focus on reading God's word and your relationship with Jesus, because that is why we are really here!" Read the memory verse to the kids and ask them where the treasure is.

SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:

Have kids sit in a circle. Pick one kid to go first. Tell them to stand up and point to any kid in the circle. Then going clockwise say "Camel hump 1, 2, 3". As they say those words begin by pointing to the first kid they pointed to while saying "camel", then pointing to the next kid clockwise and say "hump", then the next kid to say, "1", then the next kid to say, "2", and the final kid to say "3". Whoever they are pointing to when they say three is out of the game. The kid next in the circle clockwise to the one who got out will stand up and start it all over again saying "Camel hump 1, 2, 3". Whoever they point to going clockwise when they get to 3 is out. But remember they can start with anyone they want in the circle. Once they get down to just a few kids they will point to a kid more than once. Continue until you only have two kids left!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Matthew 23:23-24, 22:34-40

What does Jesus say is the most important commandment?

What did the Pharisees focus on?

How can we redirect our focus back to the main thing?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION K-2ND

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Forgive us for focusing on things that aren't important. Help us to put you in the center of our lives so that we keep the main thing the main thing.

In Jesus' name,
Amen

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 3RD-5TH

ICEBREAKER:

Be honest, what are some little things that can distract you sometimes and seem like a big deal? Examples: Wearing the coolest clothes, having the newest toys, being first in line, getting the closest seats, etc.

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Matthew 23:23-24, 22:34-40

What does Jesus say is the most important commandment?

What did the Pharisees focus on?

What are things that can distract us from focusing on what is important?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 3RD-5TH

How can we redirect our focus back to the main thing?

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Forgive us for focusing on things that aren't important. Help us to put you in the center of our lives so that we keep the main thing the main thing.

In Jesus' name,
Amen

POWERPOINT REVIEW GAME

Our main focus should be to look religious to other people and follow all the man-made traditions.

FALSE

Our main focus should be to love God and love other people in the same way that we love ourselves.

TRUE

Jesus compared what the Pharisees were doing to straining out gnats but not camels.

TRUE

One way that we can focus too much on minor things is when we focus our attention on being first in line.

TRUE

A great way to keep our focus on the most important thing is to pray, read God's word, and go to church to learn about God.

TRUE

MAKE IT STICK

OKAY, THAT'S FUNNY LESSON 9

5 SIMPLE WAYS
YOU CAN MAKE
THIS LESSON STICK
WITH YOUR KIDS

THIS WEEK'S LESSON

5 Simple Ways to Make This Week's Lesson Stick



IN THE CAR:

Why doesn't Jesus want us to major in the minors? Jesus doesn't want us to place too much importance on rules and regulations instead of what really matters. The most important commandment is to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 23:23-24, 22:34-40, Our Main Focus



HANGING OUT:

Make this week's lesson real:

Ask your kid what is one minor thing that can be distracting for them.

Ask your kid what time of day they are most likely to be distracted from what's most important.



AT DINNER:

Here are some great discussion starters:

What is one way you can spend time loving your neighbor as you love yourself?

Who is a Christian in your life who is a good example of loving others well?

Who is a Christian in your life who is a good example of spending time in their relationship with God?



AT BEDTIME:

Quiz your child on this week's memory verse:

"My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Colossians 2:2-3



PARENT TIME:

A great way of helping kids focus on what's important is to ask them this week, "Is this a gnat or is it a camel?" Pointing them back to the story that Jesus told. It will help them remember to focus on the main thing...the camel...and not focus so much on the gnats.

Example of gnats: Making sure your hair looks perfect before you go to church. Example of a camel: Making sure you spend time reading your Bible once a day.

TAKE HOME

Supplies: Velcrow tape, laminated small 1-inch square papers, cardstock paper, and crayons

Give each kid a piece of card stock and have them write at the top of their page, “Is this a gnat or a camel?”

Next, ask them to draw a gnat on the left side of their page and a camel on the right. Give them a few examples of camels and gnats they can draw in case they would like to copy one or aren’t sure what they look like. You can use a projector screen, hand made drawings, or samples of cartoons.

After kids are done creating, hand them each two pieces of cut Velcro Tape. Be sure to give them both the rough and soft sides of the Velcro Tape. Ask them to peel off the back of the sticker and put one piece of soft Velcro on each side of their paper. Then have them peel off the backs of the rough side of the Velcro and stick each one to a small laminated 1-inch piece of paper.

Explain that they can write on this laminated paper with a dry-erase marker. Hand out some markers for kids to try out as samples. Ask them to think of a scenario that happens a lot at home or school. Then tell them to stick it to the gnat side if it’s a little deal and the camel side if it’s a big deal. Encourage them to use this at home to help them see what things are important and what things can be let go of or not spent too much time on.

Give them a few examples like: “Maybe you have a baby brother at home who likes to take your toys and play with them. When you see this, you get upset. You can use this as a tool to see if this is a big deal or not. Write down, ‘Brother takes my toys’. Then decide what side to put it on. If you decide it’s a little deal, this might help you not stay mad long and learn to share your toys. If you decide that it is a big deal, because it is something breakable or expensive, you might want to keep your things up higher out of reach from now on.”

“Or maybe you notice that there isn’t enough time to do devotions because of school work, sports, dance, and multiple activities you are involved in. Decide is this a little deal, a gnat, or a big deal, a camel. If you aren’t sure, think about what we learned today and what is most important to God. Write down, ‘Spend time doing devotions’ and put it on the Camel side. Once you realize it’s a big deal, talk to mom and dad about leaving space in your schedule to do devotions every day or seeing if they can move some things around to help you schedule out your day better.”