



The Nourishing Vocation Project Near and Now:

*Values: What are they, and why do they matter?
Where your treasure is*

Warm-up Question

What do you treasure?



[Hidden and maybe a bit rusty treasures](#) by [stanze](#) licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#).

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

Where your Treasure Is

Read [Matthew 6:19-21](#)

Bible Reading Reflection

Pastor Eugene Peterson, in his biblical paraphrase *The Message*, writes [Matthew 6:21](#) this way: “the place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.” Similarly, theologian Martin Luther said, “your god in reality is that around which you entwine your heart and on which you place your confidence.” Ultimately what we treasure reflects what we value, and misplaced values can become false gods, treasures stored upon earth.

This reading from Matthew’s Gospel comes in the midst of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5-7](#)), the longest, single collection of Jesus’ sayings and teachings in the Bible. It follows Jesus’ words about prayer and fasting, and it introduces a series of sayings that deal with the commitments of the heart.

In the ancient world, much like today, material wealth often signified one’s status, position, and power in society. Jesus’ words against storing up earthly wealth – valuing wealth for wealth’s sake or personal gain, rather than valuing wealth as a means to serve the neighbor – are a call to his followers of every age to re-examine what they value and why. Jesus’ words are a call for each of us to test the commitments of our hearts and see if those commitments, those values, reflect earth-bound self-serving greed or the neighbor-serving mercy of the reign of God.



Discussion Questions

1. How often do we think about what we value?
2. What are your five most important values?
3. Which of your personal treasures or values are tangible?
4. Which are intangible?
5. In what ways are your treasures, your values “stored up on earth?”
6. In what ways are your treasures, your values “stored up in heaven?”
7. How do your values serve the neighbor in love?
8. What makes it difficult to live the values of the reign of God today?
9. How would you describe the treasures of heaven?

Activity Suggestions

Ask everyone to bring one thing that represents something they value most in life. Invite people to share what they value and why. Talk together about how these values can love and serve the neighbor.

Give everyone a blank piece of paper. Invite them to write down something that they value that gets in the way of their service to the neighbor. Fold the papers in half. Have each person nail their papers to a cross

As a group, make a comprehensive list of values. Invite each person to choose their top 20, then top 10, and finally to rank their top five values. Invite people to share how their top five values guide their lives, paying particular attention to service of the neighbor.

Prayer Concerns

Philanthropists, elected officials, people behind the scenes who daily work to serve the neighbor

Closing Prayer

Help me, O God, to value what matters and to live my life reflecting those values. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

