



A RECORD 13 NAMES
SHAMED THE TOP
LEFT CORNER OF THE
BLACKBOARD—**OVER HALF
OF THE CLASS.**

Inspire (for parents)

I'll always remember that particular Friday. Mrs. S. seemed especially fed up as she handed out that week's "Snoopy" notes to my first grade class. Every Friday, each student received a blue ditto note with a picture of Snoopy on it. Kids who behaved well all week got "Happy Snoopy" notes. Those who had done something to warrant getting their name on the board received sad Snoopys. At home, our fridge was a collage of smiling Snoopys, a month's worth of blue dittoed affirmations.

This particular week had been a rough one for the class. A record 13 names shamed the top left corner of the blackboard—over half of the class. Over and over, I read the crowded list. The names blurred together, but I was certain mine wasn't there.

So when Mrs. S. handed me my Snoopy note, I took it without looking. It wasn't until I was walking home from school that day that I pulled Snoopy from my backpack. I stared at the paper in my hands. Snoopy, with his sad little eyes and a frown on his little doggy mouth, stared back at me. I burst through our front door, my tears now frantic sobs. My mom simply enveloped me

in a wordless hug. I gasped out an explanation. Then she took the blue note out of my hand and tore it up.

I'd become a slave to man's approval; captive to an identity I'd created for myself. But my mom offered me freedom that day. She didn't care if my name was on that crowded blackboard. She didn't love me because I was well behaved. She just loved me.

My mom lives three thousand miles away now. She can't hug me every time I bring home a sad Snoopy note. But I now know an even greater freedom—a freedom that only God offers.

by Sharron Jackson

Getting Started

Scripture: **Luke 12:13–21**

(The Rich Fool)

Main Point: Jesus Offers Freedom

This resource is designed to allow your family to have time in God's Word **before your children attend church**. Because God's plan is for parents to be the primary spiritual nurturers of their children's faith, we know that as you grow spiritually, your children will grow spiritually as well.

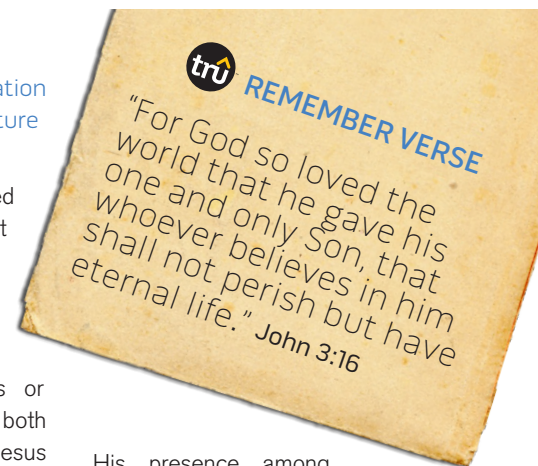
Equip (for parents)

Equip is additional background information that will help you introduce this Scripture passage to your children this week.

Jesus' parable of the Rich Fool offered freedom to a brothers' squabble about inheritance. The one brother's question was not inappropriate in first-century Jewish culture. In fact, at this time in history, Israel thought of itself as a theocracy, which meant that rabbis or "teachers of the law" were the arbiters of both the law of the land and of spiritual law. Jesus likely refused to directly answer the brother's question because He knew the brother's real problem did not lie in receiving or not receiving his fair share of the inheritance; the brother's real problem was greed.

Directly after Jesus responded to the brother's greed with the parable, He addressed His disciples' worries with a series of images and questions. Though we don't hear the disciples complaining, we infer they were worried about their physical well-being—what they would eat, drink, and wear. Though the disciples' problem was the exact opposite of the brothers'—lack of money vs. surplus—Jesus encouraged His disciples to change their perspective. He did this by asking them to consider the untroubled nature of the animals and flowers, which, obviously, have no money, reminding them of the pointlessness of worry. "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"

Through both of these narratives, Jesus, like a typical rabbi of His day, aimed to jolt His listeners out of their preoccupation with trivial concerns. But Jesus took it one step further. He asked His listeners to focus their attention, instead, on the eternal concern of God's kingdom—which He was making a reality by



His presence among them and His upcoming victory on the cross. ☺

Support (for parents & kids)

> **JUST FOR FUN**, read this part of The Big God Story at the table, right before you eat a meal. Open the Bible and read together **Luke 12:13–21**. After you have read this portion of Scripture, ask your children if they know what it means to be greedy? Then read **Luke 12:22–34**. Discuss with your children what Jesus told us not to worry about. Ask them why they think Jesus would say that. What does Jesus tell us we should seek after?

Remind your children that the parable they just heard from Jesus is part of The Big God Story, and they will hear more in church this week about how Jesus offers us freedom. Pray together, and ask God to help us not worry about things that are out of our control. Pray that as a family you will seek after God's kingdom first. ☺