

Holding On & Holding Out

The topic Priorities

The object About 20 quarters, and a jumbo-sized plastic Easter egg with a \$20 bill inside with the word *God* written on the egg in dark ink. Write the letters large enough to stretch most of the way around the egg, so that the word isn't immediately readable unless you draw attention to it.

The lesson Spread out all the quarters on the table. Then tell a student volunteer that she can use only one hand (either her left or right, not both) to pick up as many quarters as she can hold in that hand. She must hold all the quarters in the hand she begins

with and
may not
lay
down
any
quarters
for any
reason.

The
prize? She
keeps all the

money she's holding on to until the allotted time ends. (You may want to use this very phrasing with the volunteer, for subtle



reasons you'll see in a moment.) Get the student to agree to the challenge, then pull the Easter egg out of your pocket and tell her the catch: she's got to pick up the quarters *while holding the plastic egg in the same hand*. If she wonders why a plastic egg, just tell her it's a test of dexterity and priorities—and don't explain it any further than that.

Then let the volunteer go for it...and as soon as she lets the plastic egg drop in her desire for more quarters, call time. Let the student return to her seat with her quarters. Then point out what's written on the plastic egg—*God*—open it, and display the \$20 bill.

The game, of course, demonstrates how easy it is to loosen your grip on your relationship with God when you start clinging to other things that crowd him out. It's not that you want to toss away your commitment to Christ—it's just that you can get so involved in other stuff, other schedules, other people, other activities, that God gets crowded out. And your Christian commitment plummets. It comes down to either holding on to Jesus or holding out on him.

The Word Matthew 6:19-34; Luke 12:33-34

See also Luke 14:15-24; Revelation 3:15-19; Haggai 1:9; Luke 18:18-25

Discussion starters

1. What did Jesus mean when he said, "**Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**" (Luke 12:34)?
2. Why is it hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God (see Luke 18:25)?

Life changers

1. What do you tend to cling to that crowds God out?
2. Where is your treasure? *What* is your treasure?
3. If Jesus told you, "One thing you lack" (like he told the rich young ruler in Luke 18), what one thing would he be talking about?