



MIND

session page

Image Bearing

Matthew 22:15-22 | Session 9.12

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at faithelement.net.

Context

Begin by asking:

- When do you tend to think of the number of people and things you "owe" something to – and not just money, but time, energy and loyalty?
- What are the most common things to which many of us owe our money, time, energy, and loyalty?
- How do we determine the order of importance for these things?
- How do we prioritize when two loyalties come into conflict?
- In what ways do our priorities show themselves?

Content

Read Matthew 22:15-22, and watch the Bible Background Video before asking:

- How can you tell what was behind the question they asked Jesus and what are they trying to accomplish before they even ask it?
- In what ways does this shape the way we see Jesus' response?
- Why do you think these leaders used this particular topic to try to trap Jesus?
- What aspects of this question have the potential to be divisive and explosive, even today?

Show an image of a denarius, reminding the group that it contains images of Caesar, claiming he is both divine and "high priest," then ask:

- From your knowledge of Judaism, what would the Jews have found offensive (even repulsive) about this coin?
- Why, then, might it be significant that Jesus did not have a coin himself to show them?
- What really belongs to Caesar?
- When Jesus used the word "image," his Jewish hearers might have thought about Genesis 1:26-27. In what ways might that have formed the way they heard Jesus' response?
- What question did Jesus really answer?
- Why doesn't he answer their original question... and why is Jesus' question more important?

Closure

Continue by asking:

- There are several ways to interpret what Jesus says – how do you understand it?
- Given that Caesar in that time wasn't just a person, but a symbol of an occupying government, and a system that oppressed the Jewish people in their religion and everyday lives. If this scene were to play out today, what might "Caesar" represent?
- To what do we typically demonstrate our utmost loyalty and why?
- In what ways might our other loyalties align when we have God in the correct place?
- In what ways might our faith challenge people whose loyalties lie outside of it, and how might we reach them with the Gospel?

Close with prayer.

Writer: Jon Parks



CURRENT

session page

Image Bearing

Matthew 22:15-22 | Session 9.43

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)
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Context

Invite the group to think about recent fundraisers they have seen. Share what gimmicks people, students, neighbors have used to prompt giving funds to a cause.

- Why do you think these fundraising efforts were successful?
- What made people willing to give their money for a cause?

Show the [Best Ice Bucket Challenges](#) and ask:

- What do you think made this fundraiser so popular that it became an Internet sensation?
- Why do we hear so little about it now, only a couple of years later?
- Why does doing good for others seem so infectious at times, and at others so hard?
- What does our capacity to give to others say about our humanity?

Content

Read [Matthew 22:15-22](#), and watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- Why do you think the Pharisees tried to trap Jesus during a discussion of money?
- How are these people looking for Jesus to align his thoughts with what they understand as "truth"?
- When have you experienced something that felt like this kind of a trap?
- Imagine that you were standing there when Jesus talked about the coin. How might you have reacted to his response?
- In what ways does Jesus demonstrate getting right to the heart of the matter, even in this response to those who would trap him?
- When have you similarly had an image suddenly gain new meaning for you in the way you understand God in the world?
- The Bible background video says: "As people of faith, we know that all we are and own belongs to God. And all things we do are to be offered to God." What might that look like?

Closure

Share with the group this story about a late night TV host committing to donate money to hurricane relief efforts in Puerto Rico.

- What stands out to you in this story and why?
- Stephen Colbert could have easily donated more money, in a straightforward way. Why do you think he developed the idea of donating in connection with celebrities?
- Besides being funny, why does it matter that celebrities were invited to participate in the fundraising by submitting an embarrassing picture?
- Does giving mean more to you when you are invited to participate or required to give?
- How is it useful to sometimes offer an image that defies what is expected?
- How can that kind of vulnerability build Christian community?
- Why might it be easier to invite people to participate in such a thing, even if it is messy or unscripted, instead of keeping our plans more straightforward and streamlined?
- In what ways can inviting people to offer their own moments of vulnerability help meet a need in our world?

Pray together to end the session, asking God for the courage to be vulnerable and risk offering your whole self to God.

Close with a prayer.

Writer: Erin Hall



MYSTIC
session page

Image Bearing

Matthew 22:15-22 | Session 9.43

Before the Session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Materials needed: Enough pennies for every group member to have twenty
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at faithelement.net.

Context

Read aloud [Matthew 22:15-22](#) then share the Bible Background Video

This reflection is a visio divina i.e. a visual meditation/prayer time that accompanies a conversation with God.

Reflection

Give each person twenty pennies and invite the group to a silent reflection time as follows:

- Take the pennies and divide them according to the ballpark percentages of how you spend your money. You can decide to spend your money on whatever categories you wish, but include one category as "God's."
- After you have arranged your pennies in your categories, take some moments to consider what is in front of you.
- Pay attention to the thoughts and feelings that surface for you.
- Acknowledge God's presence with you as you ponder.
- What things come to mind that you can share with God?
- What response does God seem to give, if any?
- Feel free to rearrange your pennies at any time as your reflection continues.
- Continue reflecting with God and noting any insights, challenges or struggles.
- When you have come to a place where you want to end the prayer, spend a few moments and just rest in God's presence.

Give volunteers an opportunity to share their reflection experiences, creating a safe, confidential space for people to share where no one need comment on, fix, or advise anyone else as he or she shares.

Close with a prayer.

Writer: Joy Yee



MEDIA
session page

Image Bearing

Matthew 22:15-22 | Session 9.43

Before the Session

- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).
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Context

Start by asking:

- How do you feel about taxes?
- When was the last time you heard someone say that they felt that they should pay more taxes?
- How do you think a citizen feel about the concept of taxes?

Play Homer's taxes and ask:

- What about this video rings familiar to you and why?
- How precise do you think people should be when working on their taxes and why?
- Why do you think so many people wait till the last minute to pay taxes?

Content

Read [Matthew 22:15-22](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like:

- In what ways did Jesus' opponents use taxes to create a debate or a puzzle (and not just in this narrative)?
- Why would the followers of the law work with the people supporting the government?
- What do you think of how the leaders tried to compliment Jesus in order to get Jesus say something wrong?
- How do you think the ideas of the Pharisees (such as an image on a coin being idolatry and the probable claim of divinity by the Roman emperor on the coin) factored into this discussion?
- How do you think the leaders felt about Jesus' powerful answer to the question?

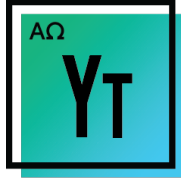
Closure

Play the [Render unto Caesar movie clip](#) and ask:

- How seriously does Tony Stark take the things that belong to Caesar?
- How seriously does he probably take the things that belong to God?
- If we are to give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, what things are we to give back to God?
- In what ways does our status as citizens of an earthly nation properly relate to our citizenship in a heavenly kingdom?
- How can we be the image of God as we balance our two citizenships?
- What would it look like if we are we giving to God those things that belong to God?

Close in prayer.

Writer: Jon Self



YOUTH

session page

Image Bearing

Matthew 22:15-22 | Session 9.43

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Review and prepare some questions from the web sites mentioned in the Context section.
- Listen to the FaithElement podcast for this session.
- Use the social media prompts on this session's webpage to help youth begin engaging the session ahead of their gathering.
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at faithelement.net.

Intro

Play the [Wayne's World movie clip](#) and ask:

- What did you think of this clip and why?
- What is your impression of athletes or celebrities endorsing products they probably never use?
- What athletes or celebrities do you most identify with the products they sell and why?

Context

Pull up a website that has trick questions, such as dumb.com or rootreport.com and survey your group and see how many of them can guess the correct answers. After some time of asking questions and receiving answers ask:

- Which questions were you upset with yourself for getting wrong and why?
- What made some of these questions pretty tricky to answer?
- In what ways have people tried to trick you?
- How do you feel about being tricked and what do you do about it?
- What are some things about which you are most concerned about being tricked and why?

Content

Read [Matthew 22:15-22](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask your group:

- What makes this question to Jesus a trap question rather than simply a legitimate question?
- How might Jesus have gotten into trouble with his possible answers?
- Why was this a question that was meant to trick Jesus, specifically?
- Why was Jesus answer so shocking to them?
- In Jesus' answer, why was it important to be loyal to Caesar or to God?
- What does it mean to "give to God what is God's?"

Closure

Play the Ricky Bobby commercials (Stop at 1:05 to avoid some bleeped out profanity) and ask:

- When you look at this parody of a NASCAR driver, what impression do you get of where his loyalties lie and why?
- Think of the products you most use during the day. To what corporations, companies, teams, government entities do those products belong?
- In what ways is it tempting to find your identity in those things?
- What does your life look like when allegiance is shown to them?
- What does it mean to be created in the image of God?
- What happens if that becomes the identity of your life?
- What would change if you truly gave to God what is God's?

Close this session in prayer.

Writer: Don Breeden



MIX
session page

Image Bearing

Matthew 22:15-22 | Session 9.43

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at faithement.net.

Context (From the Mind Session Page)

Begin by asking:

- When do you tend to think of the number of people and things you "owe" something to – and not just money, but time, energy and loyalty?
- What are the most common things to which many of us owe our money, time, energy, and loyalty?
- How do we determine the order of importance for these things?
- How do we prioritize when two loyalties come into conflict?
- In what ways do our priorities show themselves?

Content (From the Current Session Page)

Read [Matthew 22:15-22](#), and watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- Why do you think the Pharisees tried to trap Jesus during a discussion of money?
- How are these people looking for Jesus to align his thoughts with what they understand as "truth"?
- When have you experienced something that felt like this kind of a trap?
- Imagine that you were standing there when Jesus talked about the coin. How might you have reacted to his response?
- In what ways does Jesus demonstrate getting right to the heart of the matter, even in this response to those who would trap him?
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Closure (from the Media Session page)

Play the [Render unto Caesar movie clip](#) and ask:

- How seriously does Tony Stark take the things that belong to Caesar?
- How seriously does he probably take the things that belong to God?
- If we are to give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, what things are we to give back to God?
- In what ways does our status as citizens of an earthly nation properly relate to our citizenship in a heavenly kingdom?
- How can we be the image of God as we balance our two citizenships?
- What would it look like if we are we giving to God those things that belong to God?

Close in prayer.