



YouthBytes.org - A Powerful Tool for Youth Workers

YouthBytes is a simple, yet effective tool in the hands of those who have a passion to reach and teach this generation. The Episode Guide is designed to help you implement YouthBytes into your particular setting at whatever level you choose: from a full meeting schedule to just a small video to enhance your meeting. We encourage each worker to add his or her own stories, experiences and illustrations to make your particular scenario work. The discussion questions are also just a starting point and we encourage each group to go further and deal with local issues and topics that might be relevant.

Each YouthByte Episode will include :

- Video summary
- Icebreaker
- Primary Lesson
- Facts, figures and illustrations used in the episode
- Key Scriptures
- Discussion Questions
- Complimentary story

We look forward to getting your feedback and comments for these Episode Guides. Also let us know what subjects you would want new YouthBytes to cover. As always, testimonies are welcome. Comments, ideas, and testimonies can be sent to feedback@youthbytes.org.

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Disc 3 ~ Fool's Gold Gold Rush



Video Summary

This episode tells the story of Jedediah Daniel who, in the 1800s, set his sights toward the Wild West to strike it rich in the California Gold Rush. As with other gold miners of that era, he had great self-discipline and determination. Facing hardships and potential ruin, he was willing to risk everything he had to start a new life for himself. As Jedediah searches for a viable gold vein in the mountains, he faces many obstacles and has several opportunities to give up and go home.

His story is a lot like our walk of faith. When we enter into relationship with Jesus Christ we become aware, through His Word, that there are riches in Christ that are yet to be discovered. This fact energizes our faith and drives us to do whatever it takes to strike the spiritual gold that does not perish. Spiritual gold; faith in God a substance that can never be taken away!



Icebreaker ~ Is Anyone up There?

A man fell off a cliff, but managed to grab a tree limb on the way down. The following conversation ensued:

"Is anyone up there?"

"I am here. I am the Lord. Do you believe me?"

"Yes, Lord, I believe. I really believe, but I can't hang on much longer."

"That's alright! If you really believe you have nothing to worry about. I will save you. Just let go of the branch."

A moment of pause, then: *"Is anyone else up there?"*



Primary Lesson ~ Faith More Precious than Gold

All humans have a desire to be rich, to make a name for themselves. This has been true since the beginning of time, but there have been a very precious few who have understood the mystery of true wealth. The Bible states in 1 Peter that our faith, faith in Christ, is more precious than gold, yet we seldom focus on this fact. And when we do set our sights on a deeper faith-walk with God, we find ourselves giving up after a few short years. God has prepared for each of us a future and a life that can not only be rewarding and adventurous for us, but can also bring glory and honor to Him.

The secret to this success with God is not found in our efforts to impress Him but our efforts to please Him, and this can only be done through a life committed to faith in Christ. There are many who have had an encounter with God and it has revolutionized everything about them, they in a sense “found gold” but because the going got tough, they decided that it was somehow not worth it and their continued efforts would be in vain. Jesus promises us that our life of faith and commitment to Him will be rewarded in this life and the life to come, but there will be tests and obstacles along the way. If we will remain faithful and keep our eyes fixed on Him, we are promised a crown of life at the end of our lives.



Facts, Figures & Illustrations ~ The California Gold Rush

The major California Gold Rush lasted from 1849 to approximately 1869. The Mother Lode (a name for the California gold fields) produced approximately \$250,000,000 worth of gold. The Gold Rush changed California forever. However, most miners went home broke. The real money was made by freighters and merchants who brought and marketed supplies. Levi Strauss ‘struck it rich’ by making and selling dry goods and durable pants.

Although there have been many gold rushes, the California Gold Rush brought over 200,000 new people to California in just a few years. Many novice prospectors mistook pyrite for real gold. Pyrite is often called ‘fool’s gold.’ It can be identified in the field by the sulfur smell of the powdered mineral. Its metallic luster and pale-to-normal, brass-yellow hue have earned it the nickname fool’s gold due to many miners mistaking it for the real thing, though small quantities of actual gold are sometimes found in pyrite. In fact, such auriferous pyrite is a valuable ore of gold.

There were two main ways of mining gold. Digging shafts into the side of a hill or down into the ground was called *lode mining*. *Placer mining* involved using water with tools (pans, long toms, hydraulic monitors, or others) to sift through the dirt.

A California-bound airline in 1849!?! Don’t laugh; it almost happened. Rufus Porter, founder of Scientific American, planned to fly 49ers west on propeller-driven balloons powered by steam engines. He went as far as to advertise the expedition, and 200 brave souls signed up for the trip. But the “airline” never got off the ground.

Because of poor planning, many western-bound 49ers were unprepared for the hot, dry deserts of Nevada. A few sharp businessmen in California knew this and took advantage of the situation. They traveled eastward with barrels of water. Extremely thirsty, many 49ers paid \$1, \$5, even \$100 for a glass of precious water.

Source: www.pbs.org/goldrush



Key Scriptures (From New King James Version, unless otherwise noted)

1 Peter 1:7 ~ *That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than **gold** that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

John 10:10 ~ *The thief does not come except to **steal**, and to **kill**, and to **destroy**. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

Hebrews 11:1 ~ *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

Matthew 13:44 ~ *The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.*

2 Corinthians 13:5 ~ *Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Christ Jesus is in you?— unless indeed you are disqualified.*

2 Corinthians 5:7 ~ *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*



Discussion Questions

1. Why is faith so important? Why does the Bible say it is more precious than gold? Discuss Hebrews 11:6 and how it relates to your life.
2. What are the areas in your life where you have given up and stopped looking for gold? Maybe it is in the form of relationships with friends, families, or even with God? What are some practical steps you can take to begin to reopen those closed mines in your life and begin to work in faith again?
3. Why is the promise of a gold rush so enticing? What part of our nature is drawn into this lust for natural, instant wealth? Conversely, spiritual gold isn't discovered overnight, but through many labors and trials. Discuss the difference between the natural desire for quick wealth, and the true Biblical definition of spiritual riches, and what it takes to obtain it.
4. What would you do, and how far would you go to obtain gold that was ready for mining? Using this same ravenous desire as a model, to what extent would you pursue the riches of God's Kingdom? Do you remember a time when you were that passionate for intimacy with God, that everything else was worthless? How can you stir each other up to this same passion again?



Complimentary Story ~ The True Value of a Life Saved

Many years ago a prospector was returning from Australia where he had made a fortune in gold mining. Being a simple and shrewd fellow, he never sold his gold for cash; he chose to carry his riches on his person. A large belt and hand-woven leather vest were the safest place he felt his gold would be for the long sea journey back home.

As the ship left port he looked back over the country that changed his life and the fortunes of his family forever. Two days into the journey however, a violent storm tossed the ship through the menacing seas. As the hours past the captain announced the ship had suffered irreparable damage and that the ship needed to be abandoned. As people scrambled to board the life boats, the miner quickly made his way to one of the boats and watched from a distance as other boats were lowered to the still restless sea. In the mad rush that ensued, a young girl of seven years of age was accidentally pushed over board into the sea. The scream of her mother's voice snapped the miner to attention.

Forgetting his gold he jumped into the water and raced to save the now sinking child. He grasped her little hand pulled her up from a certain death. But the added weight of the child now acted as an anchor to the already cumbersome belt and vest full of gold. His mind raced, he had a choice to make, if he held onto the girl they would both drown, but if cut the heavy gold loose they could both live.

Without hesitation he unbuckled the belt and ripped the vest off of his person and he swam with ease to an approaching life boat. Cold and tired, the miner handed the terrified child to the grateful mother.

With tears in her eyes she said, "Sir, you have given me the greatest treasure on earth, the life of my little girl!" The miner was moved with compassion yet he was also greatly distressed by the loss of his entire fortune. It wasn't until the little girl turned and hugged his neck, sobbing did he fully understand the true value of what he had done.