

## Katherine Drexel (1858-1955)

Katherine came from one of the wealthiest families in America. Her father was a banker, and had over \$1 billion when he died. He split this money up between each of his three daughters, so Katherine got about \$350 million.

Katherine decided she had to use this money to serve God. In particular, she wanted to help blacks and native Americans. This was still during the era of segregation, so blacks and native Americans could not attend most schools. Society and even the church had forgotten them.

So Katherine devoted her fortune to helping these people. In total, she founded 145 missions, 62 schools, and a university all dedicated to reaching the black and native populations. In fact, she was so committed to this cause that she refused to use any of her wealth for herself—she took a “vow of poverty.” This means that she did not use money. Instead of buying food, she would only eat food donated to her. Instead of buying clothes, she would wear only the clothes donated to her.

This was a time when everyone thought it was okay to mistreat blacks and natives. Some people even used the Bible to justify this bad behavior. But Katherine realized that God loved these people, and committed her life to showing them God’s love.

### Questions

1. What would you do with \$350 million? How many video game could that buy?
2. Katherine found an injustice in society that no one else could see. Are there injustices in today’s society that we’re blind to?
3. Katherine once said:

Christians have no time to worry about what others will think.  
Our business is simply, “What will our Father in heaven think?”

Did she live this out?

4. The book of Luke (18:18-30) record Jesus commanding a rich man to give up everything and give it to the poor. How does Katherine’s response differ from the man in the bible? What is *your* response?