



Part 4: Dying to Greed for Kingdom Generosity

Luke 12:13-21

The Way of Jesus includes dying to greed to be generous towards the Kingdom of God.

I. Our Temptation with Greed

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that **they may take hold of the life that is truly life.**” 1 Timothy 6:17-19

II. Jesus on Greed (Luke 12:13-21)

Note the context: Jesus has been speaking about eternal matters and warning of God’s judgment on hypocrisy (12:1-12), and a man interrupts him to get Jesus to settle a family fight about inheritance. Jesus does not even respond to the man but uses the opportunity to speak about greed.

A. The Warning against Covetousness (v.15)

“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” Luke 12:15

Greed is about excess; refers to the attitude of always wanting more beyond what we need. Left to ourselves, we live with greed in our hearts.

Jesus: life does not consist in the abundance of your possessions (i.e. materialism). But we live in a culture that

believes exactly that, and retailers spend millions of \$ to convince you and I that life is about the next new thing (think smart phones).

Bumper sticker: “He who dies with the most toys wins.” (Boomer mantra) (Millennials seek experiences.)

B. The Foolishness of Materialism (v. 16-20)

The farmer asks himself the right question, but he reaches the wrong conclusion (v. 16-19). He reaches the wrong conclusion because he has a faulty worldview: he thinks the purpose of life is materialism. His perspective about life is completely temporal and focused on himself.

It never occurs to him that God has prospered him so that he might share his abundance with the needy.

In all his calculations and planning, he left out one very significant fact: one day he will have to stand before the Living God and give an account for his life. He did not consider that his life was on loan from God. Therefore, Jesus calls him a “fool.”

The man thought he had a storage problem, but he really had a spiritual problem! He did not know and love God.

This is the very first principle of a wise life: we owe our very lives to God, and we will give an accounting to Him for our management of our time, talent and His money.

Materialism is a competing worldview and religion (means of finding meaning and security in life).

C. Jesus Presents Two Choices

We can either live fundamentally to acquire things/experiences for ourselves or we can live “rich toward God” (v. 21).

Question: What does it mean to live “rich toward God”?

It means that we live with the same joyful generosity to Him and others that He extends to us in Christ (2 Corinthians 8:9).

We live with the primary purpose of our lives not to acquire more money and stuff for pleasure or security, but we live to extend His Kingdom on the earth (Matthew 6:33).

We see everything we have as a trust from the Lord to be managed for His purposes. We give sacrificially to see others have their spiritual and physical needs met in the name of Jesus. We decide to live without something we could otherwise afford so that we can give the money away.

“God has given us two hands – one to receive with and the other to give with. We are not cisterns for hoarding; we are

channels made for sharing. If we fail to fulfill this divine duty and privilege, we have missed the meaning of Christianity.” – Billy Graham

III. Application: The Four P’s

1. Priority giving = of all the items in your monthly budget, the Lord’s share comes first. We give to Him before we pay bills, save, or spend money on ourselves (1 Corinthians 16:2; Proverbs 3:9-10).
2. Percentage giving = you decide on a percentage of your income you will give regularly regardless of your emotions or circumstances (1 Corinthians 16:2; Deuteronomy 16:10, 16-17). Most people have considered the tithe (10%) the starting blocks. How much can you give cheerfully and not reluctantly (2 Corinthians 9:7)?
3. Progressive giving = can you decide you want to grow in generosity and increase your giving over time? Perhaps you can slowly increase the percentage you give. Perhaps you determine to live at a set standard of living and give everything over that amount. What is a percentage that would be sacrificial for you?
4. Prompted giving = you are sensitive to the Lord’s promptings to give to special occasions (1 John 3:17). This is over and above your regular giving.

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, so that through his poverty you might become rich.” 2 Corinthians 8:9

See “A Theology of Kingdom Generosity” by the Greenwood Pastoral Counsel from the Elders:

<https://greenwoodcc.com/2021/03/03/a-theology-of-kingdom-generosity/>

Discussion Questions:

1. What has been your experience with Biblical teaching on money? Have you read the Greenwood elders’ counsel of generosity (see greenwoodcc.com/resources/papers). If so, do you find it helpful?
2. What do you find most challenging about Jesus’ teaching on greed in Luke 12:13-21? What do you see we are taught in our culture?
3. What is your response to the four P’s in the application section?