



YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!
Winter 2017-18 Leader Commentary

Unit 1: Everything Belongs to Him
Session 3: Greed Will Get You! (see pp. 110-113)

The Question: How much is enough?

The Point: Greed prevents us from living purposeful lives.

Background Passage: Luke 12

Focal Passage: Luke 12:13-21

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, “How much is enough?” and to drive home this one truth: Greed prevents us from living purposeful lives.

Focus on These Points

Greed Divides Us
(Luke 12:13-15a)

The thrust of today’s lesson essentially requires us to evaluate and establish a paradigm for our lives. In other words, what is the backdrop upon which all our decisions are made? Are we making decisions based upon how things will pan out here on earth? Or are we making decision based upon an eternal perspective? Luke 12 describes Christian dedication in contrast to earthly dedication. The world is dedicated to riches, personal power and influence, safety, individual rights, food and clothing, manipulation and abuse of others, parties and pleasure, and freedom from imprisonment and suffering. Christ’s kingdom is dedicated to trusting God for all needs, holding God in awe and reverence, witnessing to Christ’s salvation, forgiveness, heavenly treasures, bringing in God’s rule on earth, caring for the poor, being ready for the return of Christ, and carrying out God’s work with wisdom and faithfulness. In Luke 12, we find Jesus in the midst of His public ministry. Everywhere He went, crowds gathered, and this instance was no different. At this point someone from the crowd requested that Jesus tell the man’s brother to divide the inheritance. Jesus refused to be drawn into the matter, realizing that the man’s motivation was greed.

This request prompted Jesus to respond with a question: “Friend . . . who appointed me a judge or arbitrator over you?” (v. 14). Jesus followed this question with a warning to the crowd to guard against greed (v. 15a). It would be difficult to watch for and be on guard against something we don’t fully understand. We have to answer the question: what is greed?

A common understanding of greed is the unquenchable desire or lust for more and more worldly

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possessions, including, but not limited to, money. This potential bondage to the world draws Jesus' sharp warning against greed. He clearly stated, "one's life is not in the abundance of his possessions" (v. 15). "Things" and "stuff" should not be the overarching motivating factors in our lives. Rather, let our primary motive be to worship and obey our Lord and Savior. Only then will we ever experience life truly worth living.

Greed Deceives Us ***(Luke 12:15b-20)***

After Jesus issued His stern warning about greed, He told the crowd a parable. The parable centered on a rich man. This means Jesus was talking about a specific type of person. This person had accumulated a great deal of wealth and possessions. Further, since his land was productive, we know he had a steady stream of income. He was not wealthy merely because he was born into a family with money but because he worked hard and earned much.

The vast production of the rich man's land prompted a dilemma: what to do with the excess produce since he had no place to store it. His solution was simple. He elected to tear down his barns and build bigger ones. The bigger barns would allow him to store all his grain and goods.

Jesus told us the rich man's reason for hoarding his produce. He did this so he could take it easy—eat, drink, and enjoy himself. Within this context is it OK to hoard possessions and produce? Jesus offered a resounding NO! In fact, He noted that God said to the rich man, "You fool!" (v. 20).

A life focused on the world must be considered a lose-lose proposition. In living a life focused on worldly things, the person loses both his physical life and all the "stuff" he worked so hard to accumulate. Clearly this can't be the best way to live. This parable is about the danger of greed, measured by the abundance of possessions (see v. 15). The rich man was infatuated with hoarding his goods. In his self-centered perspective (there are at least 10 self-references in vv. 17-19), he thought this was an effective strategy for a long life of leisure and pleasure. But God views such an outlook as foolish and shortsighted. When you die—which could be at any time—you cannot take it with you.

God Enriches Us ***(Luke 12:21)***

Jesus concluded this parable with a powerful summary statement: "That's how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." The implication is self-evident. One must choose to live in light of the temporal world or in light of the everlasting kingdom of God.

Those who live for the world lose both their lives and their wealth in the end. A person who concerns himself with the things of the world more than things of God is considered a fool in the eyes of God. Since no one wants God to consider them a fool, it would be wise to ask ourselves a tough and important question: Where are my priorities?

Riches have one major weakness. They have no purchasing power after death. They cannot

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buy the currency needed to get to heaven. Do not try to be rich in regard to the bank or barn. Be rich in relationship to God. Through prayer, study, obedience, and practice of the Word, we can be sure that we are part of the kingdom of God.

Based on God's Word, know much is enough, and be aware that greed prevents us from living purposefully in His will.

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