



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V25 N44 November 5, 2023

OPENHANDED

“Simplicity: More is Less”

Luke 12:13-21

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Generosity

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”
2 Corinthians 9:6-7



Generosity, is it too costly?

Generosity defined as giving away my resources is an expense. However, generosity defined as giving away my resources “to fulfill God’s purposes” is an investment. Both are expenditures, but the latter comes with the expectation of a return. Wise stewardship isn’t simply a matter of giving money away; it’s a matter of putting money to work with a view to a *heavenly* return on an *earthly* investment. Wise stewardship involves doing something that matters to God with money; it involves using money in a way that pleases him. The Core Competency’s creed makes up for what’s missing in the statement, “I gladly give my resources” by adding the *purpose* statement “to fulfill God’s purposes.” Besides, stewardship involves more than cold hard cash. It involves everything I am or own. Therefore, wise stewardship involves doing something that matters to God with everything I am or own; it involves using everything I am or own in a way that pleases him.

Seeing generosity/stewardship as investing can help. Giving money away is one thing; investing it is another. Giving money away often leaves nothing lasting to show for it; investing money wisely always leaves something lasting to show for it. The difference between the two is reflected in the adage, “Give a man a fish and he eats for a day; teach a man to fish and he eats for a lifetime.” Give a man a fish and once he eats it, it’s gone forever; teach a man to fish, and once he learns how, he can feed himself forever. Which would you rather do, give fish away or teach others to fish? You might do both, but you’d probably rather teach fishing. In fact, if you had your way, you’d probably rather teach others to teach fishing because investing yields lasting returns!

Most everyone has investments of one kind or another: a simple savings account, a home, an IRA, a 401k, etc. And most people add to their investments from time to time. For example, Bill has a 401k. He contributes to it through payroll deductions that are matched by an employer. He has built a portfolio of investments in mutual funds,

bond funds, and cash. He knows how many shares of each fund he has, and he keeps a close eye on market fluctuations in their value. He hasn’t given his money away; it isn’t gone. He’s invested his money and has something valuable to show for it.

What if Bill saw the Core Competency Generosity as an investment rather than an expense? He might open a *spiritual* portfolio, that is, a strategic ministry portfolio, to which he might make regular contributions. Given the analogy, he might choose to diversify this portfolio by “purchasing shares” in the ministry of his church, in “high quality” missionaries or mission agencies, and in “AAA rated” compassion ministries. He might even keep track of how many shares of each he “owned” with a view to calculating the “capital gains” on his investments – which, of course, would only be fully revealed in eternity. The point is simple enough: lay up treasure in heaven by investing on earth not only for yourself but also for God.

Jesus told a parable to warn against greed by teaching that “life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Lk 12:15). Given the analogy, let’s call it “The Parable of the Foolish Retiree.”

“The business of a certain well to do entrepreneur took off and returned huge profits for its owner. The fellow thought to himself, ‘What should I do? I have no idea where to put all the money I’ve made.’

“Then he said, ‘This is what I’m going to do. It’s time to retire. I’ll sell the business and take all that money and invest it. With the help of a financial advisor, I’m sure I can put together a portfolio that will pay me a guaranteed return for the rest of my life. Then I’ll sit back and relax knowing that I’m financially secure. I’m going to get out of the rat race, travel, play golf, spend time with my wife and the grandkids.’

“But God said to him, ‘You fool! Tonight you die. What’s going to happen to all your money tomorrow?’



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Luke 12:13-15, the setting

13 *Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."*

14 *Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"* 15 *Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."*

Luke 12:16-21, the parable

16 *And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. 17 He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'*

18 *"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. 19 And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."'*

20 *"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'*

21 *"This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."*

Cf., another translation

16 *Then he told them a story: "A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. 17 He said to himself, 'What should I do? I don't have room for all my crops.' 18 Then he said, 'I know! I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. 19 And I'll sit back and say to myself, "My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!"'*

20 *"But God said to him, 'You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?'*

21 *"Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God." (NLT)*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Highlight vv. 15, 21.
- Circle "parable" in v. 16.
- Underline "rich man" in v. 16.
- Circle "I," "I'll," "my" and "myself" in vv. 17-19.
- Bracket the rich fool's words to himself in v. 19.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 20, 21.
- Bracket God's words to him in v. 20.
- Circle "fool" in v. 20.
- Bracket "will be demanded" in v. 20.
- Bracket "rich toward God" in v. 21.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Explain what prompted Jesus to tell the parable of the rich fool in Luke 12:16-21.
 2. The parable illustrates Jesus' warning against greed. How so?
 3. Paraphrase Jesus' statement, "life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."
 4. Did the rich man give himself good investment advice? Explain.
 5. The rich man uses "I" and "my" eight times in two verses. What do you infer from that?
 6. What does the little word "very" contribute to the sense of verse 20?
 7. State the implied answer to and the point of God's rhetorical question in verse 20.
 8. What does "rich toward God" mean?
 9. Is this an "anti-wealth" or anti-retirement" parable? Explain.
 10. **Discussion:** Talk about the influence of contemporary attitudes toward money and possessions on Christians.
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Commentary On The Text

Jesus told the ultimate “you can’t take it with you” parable, only found in Luke 12, to warn against all kinds of greed and to teach that “a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (v. 15). “The warning against greed provides the perfect backdrop for the parable and reinforces the ideas that it is not the man’s wealth that is condemned but the accumulation of wealth solely for his own enjoyment” (Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 2nd ed., 361).

The lesson taught by the Parable of the Rich Fool is impossible to miss. Jesus makes it clear at the end. Foolish is anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God (v. 21). One commentator suggests that two complementary, contemporary inferences may be drawn from the actions of the fool and of God. He writes: “(1) *A purely selfish accumulation of possessions is incompatible with true discipleship.* (2) *This incompatibility stems from the transience of earthly riches and the coming reckoning which all will face before God*” (Blomberg, 361).

The parable belongs to Jesus’ roundabout reply to a request from an unnamed man in the crowd who said, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me” (v. 13). Obviously, the two were quarrelling over their father’s estate, but we are not told why. The only thing we know for sure is that both of them were greedy for a greater share of the proceeds than the other thought fair. Looking for an authority figure to use as leverage, one brother asked Rabbi Jesus to resolve the dispute by commanding the other to rightly divide the inheritance. Instead of addressing their dispute, Jesus addressed their bigger problem—greed. “Watch out,” he warned them, “Be on your guard against all kinds of greed.” Then he told the parable.

This parable unfolds in two movements. Luke 12:16-19 describes the actions of the fool, and verse 20 describes God’s response. In a nutshell, the parable goes like this. An already rich man’s ground yielded a bumper crop. He did his part preparing the soil, planting the seed, and reaping the harvest. His ground did its part and surprised him by producing more grain than expected. Victimized by his own success, he had to decide what to do with his windfall.

So far so good. After giving it much thought, he decided it was time to retire so he tore down his old barns, built larger ones, and filled them to overflowing. Convinced he was set for life, he said to himself, “Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.” He thought the time had come for him to enjoy the fruit of a lifetime of labor. He thought he couldn’t outlive his money, and tragically, he was right. The value of his assets plummeted the moment he heard God say, “This very night your life will be demanded from you.” Put differently, “Tonight you die; no time left to enjoy your wealth.” Possessions have no value to one no longer around to possess them. As the Teacher of Ecclesiastes testifies, “I have seen another evil under the sun, and it weighs heavily on men: God gives a man wealth, possessions and honor, so that he lacks nothing his heart desires, but God does not enable him to enjoy them, and a stranger enjoys them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil” (6:1, 2).

The man in Jesus’ parable wasn’t called a fool because he was rich. He was called a fool because of the way he chose to use his riches. One writer counsels, “Note that Jesus is not condemning wealth as such, but its use. How do we use what God has given us? Do we seek to pile up treasure for ourselves? Is generosity our habit? Or does compassion take a back seat to our personal desires . . . The rich fool’s error was his desire to provide only for himself. Jesus does not condemn the use of our resources for the benefit of family and for others. While we need not always provide the ‘best’ or most expensive item, we should not ignore making wise and responsible provisions for our children. The fundamental test for the use of resources is whether they become tools of service that benefit others and enable them to be in a position to serve God better” (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 345). The fool’s focus was on preparing things for himself (vv. 20b-21). Foolishness consists in thinking that responsibilities end with securing one’s own economic future. But life should not be focused exclusively on oneself, but on God and his purpose also.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 16 **them** Probably the crowd including the disciples and not just the two brothers. "Jesus now uses the avarice of the crowd to introduce teaching for the disciples on trust in God and freedom from greed for material possessions (12:22-34)" (I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC, 521). "The disciples also must learn not to be diverted from their commitment to Jesus by greed for wealth and material possessions, a theme that is important to the evangelist Luke" (Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, NIBC, 196).

v. 16 **parable** The basic meaning of parable is *comparison*. Parables usually illustrate abstract ideas like stewardship, faithfulness, fruitfulness, etc., from common, everyday experiences and observations.

v. 16 **rich man** It seems the man was already rich before his land produced a bumper crop.

v. 18 **my** "He considered that he had the full command over his life and over all his possessions and thus spoke about 'my barns, my fruits, my goods, and my soul' (verses 18, 19). He did not regard his possessions as thing *lent* to him by God's grace and to be used by him in the service of the Lord (for instance, in helping the needy). On the contrary, he considered that everything belonged exclusively to *him*, and that he had the full monopoly of it to use it for his own pleasure and enjoyments" (Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, NICNT, 355).

v. 19 **say** "'Then I will say to myself, Lucky man! You have all the good things you need for many years. Take life easy, eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!'" (TEV)

v. 20 **you fool** The word "you" is implied. The expression is harsh and emphatic, "Fool!" The plural form of the same word occurs in Luke 11:40 and is translated "Fools!" in TEV. "Jesus calls the man a 'fool' (v. 20), an Old Testament term that describes someone who either acts without God or acts without wisdom in a self-destructive way (Ps. 14:1; 53:1). His approach to his stumbling on wealth is to become self-centered and therefore self-destructive. He uses his resources in a way that displeases

God" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 344).

v. 20 **will be demanded** Lit., "They are demanding your soul from you." "The rabbis used 'they' [3rd per. pl.] to avoid saying 'God'" (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 2:176). So God or perhaps his angel of death will demand the rich man's life that night.

v. 20 **who will get** "One should not introduce at this point a concern for children and family, for this is not a real story but a parable. In light of 12:19 the possessions were to be thought of as totally lost (cf. Ps 39:6). Thus like the millionaire's accountant when asked how much his employer left when he died, replied succinctly, 'All'" (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, 352).

v. 21 **stores up** Rather than give away his surplus and thereby lay up treasure in heaven, the rich man selfishly and greedily hoarded his worldly goods, yet in the end, failed to benefit from them.

v. 21 **rich toward God** The exact meaning of the phrase is obscure. It does not refer to giving to God; instead it probably refers to giving to the poor, which amounts to storing up treasure in heaven (cf. v. 33). The rich man had to decide whether he wanted treasure on earth or treasure in heaven.

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APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Foolish are those whose lives revolve around accumulating wealth for themselves,
while taking no thought whatsoever for God.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

In Luke 12:15 Jesus says, "life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." Well, that's the ultimate mic drop. How many times have you said, "We don't need more stuff to be happy, we need to be happy with our stuff"? I've mentioned we live in a small house in a wonderful neighborhood that we absolutely love. But every once in a while, I hear a tiny voice whispering, "we need more room; we've outgrown this space; we *deserve* more!" I quickly remind myself that our tiny house is someone else's grand palace. In this day of immediate satisfaction, the buy now/pay later mentality, and social media marketing, one of the best teaching moments we have is the opportunity to say "no" to our kids. Those little darlings try to convince us that they are the only third grader without an Apple watch or Nintendo Switch. They might wheedle, whine, complain, or even throw down the cute look, but stand firm, parents! A wise friend once said, "We're raising adults, not children." Let's train them how to do without more stuff but instead appreciate and enjoy all the Lord has blessed us with. Let's train them to be wise with money, spending, giving, and saving to God's glory. Let's train them their worth is not in the clothes they wear or latest gaming system, but in Jesus Christ alone. I'm praying you and your kids fully realize you are special because you're a child of God.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Luke 12:13-21

1. What did the person in the crowd ask Jesus to do? What did Jesus do instead?
2. Why did the man in Jesus' parable want to build bigger barns?
3. What did God say would happen to the man?

What Do You Think?

What do you think mattered most to the man in Jesus' parable? How can you tell?

What Do You Do?

Do you have more toys than you can play with? Go through your room and donate gently used toys to Mission Arlington or 6 Stones this week.

CORE COMPETENCY: Generosity

I give away my faith, life, money and time to help with God's work.

MEMORY VERSE: Isaiah 41:10

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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