

From Materialism to Devotion

Luke 12: 13-21, 29-31

Focal Outline:

Luke 12: 13-15

Luke 12: 16-21

Luke 12: 29-31

Take care!

Poverty in Riches

Do not keep striving

Summary Statements: (To help you get a handle on the lesson truths.)

1. Jesus had a lot to say about money. Some of what He said should challenge us.
2. Material possessions can harm relationships when priorities fall out of line.
3. Greed can factor into our lives in a lot of ways. Be on your guard against all kinds of greed.
4. All our striving and worry after “things” can distract us away from God.

Questions for Thought: (To help you think of some questions to challenge with a “So What?”)

1. Did Jesus want us to all live in poverty? If not, how do I understand his teachings about money and things?
2. What is worth so much that a dispute with family members or close friends would be worthwhile?
3. What more could we do with our disposable income to help others?
4. What causes you to worry in life? What causes you to strive?

Points to Ponder

[NOTE: These suggestions are to help your class be more interactive and discussion oriented. Using 3-5 different ideas will enhance your preferred teaching style and involve class participants. Build excitement and intimacy in your learners!]

Letting Go, Moving On is a great new unit of study. This month, we journey with Jesus. We'll not only watch Him move from location to location, but the journey will also be one of His spiritual guidance. Our Lord had some urgent values to leave with us. Convictions and teachings we would be expected to live by. Precepts that should set and shape our healthy living. Back in Luke 9, Jesus “...turned his face toward Jerusalem.” Not coincidentally, we'll be studying in Luke as He makes His way to that showdown. So, let's buckle up and get ready for the trip to start.

This first lesson in the unit is from a little-studied encounter between Jesus and a questioner in a crowd. The person tried to involve Jesus in a family dispute, one over an inheritance. Jesus declined, but He began his teaching on the subject even in his response. “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” How would you like to be that guy in the crowd? I'm fairly certain the answer he got was not the kind he was hoping for. Come to think of it, why does Jesus get away with being that blunt and instructive, but if I answer someone similarly I'm just insensitive? Oh well...

Does Jesus want us all to sell our possessions, give away everything and live in poverty? Is that what we are to hear? We can think of biblical times and places as being somehow simplistic and mostly barren compared with the riches and consumer options of a more modern age. However, in all times there has been greed. There have been disputes over food, land, animals, humans and whatever sufficed for currency. What is your greed?

Introductory Thoughts (5-15 minutes - These are for discussion to introduce this week's Lesson Ideas.)

1. *Jesus' teaching about money can make us uneasy. (p112)* That is the observation our lesson writer will make this week. Before studying this lesson with the group, discuss why that might be so?
2. What is the worst dispute you have ever been involved in, or witness to, that was over money or possessions? Share your stories within your group. Why does our stuff lead to so much strife and worry in life?
3. Henry David Thoreau is quoted as saying, “The true cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call ‘life’ that we give up, now or in the long term, to have it.” Discuss this quote as a group. Do you agree/disagree? Why so?
4. Take a look at “Beginning the Lesson” on p100 in your *Connections Teaching Guide*. What are some of Jesus' words that you have listened to-- convinced that they were meant for others and not you?

Studying & Discussing the Passage (20-25 minutes - See Brian Harbour's Commentary for added insights and explanations.)

1. Share an overview of the Lesson from "Scripture Context" (*Teaching Guide*) and then examine the focal passage using a variety of teaching methods...

Luke 12: 13-15

Take care!

Where were they when the story in v13 starts? What did the person seem to be asking for? In 14-15, how would you sum up Jesus' response? Why did Jesus respond so?

Luke 12: 16-21

Poverty in Riches

Have someone read the parable in v16-21 aloud for the group. What seems to be the rich person's error? What do you make of the response (from God) characterized in v20? How does v21 clarify one of the central teachings?

Luke 12: 29-31

Do not keep striving

What does v29 caution against? (striving, worry) What should we "strive" for instead? What does this mean? What promise does v31 seem to make to us? What could this mean? Why?

2. On p109 our lesson writer says "Relationships remain broken when neither side is willing to acknowledge that the relationship is more important than the issue that caused the break." Think of the 3 most important relationships in your life. What would be important enough to fracture the relationship over?

3. How does Mk 10: 17-22 relate to our lesson? How about Prov 22:9?

4. On ps113, our lesson writer says, "Anxiety about security and greed for riches will lead us down the path of the man who wanted Jesus to intervene in his inheritance dispute. We'll follow the path of the rich man whose self-centeredness led him to pointless hoarding." How might this summary be true? Is this under/over-stated? Why?

5. In the *Connections Commentary*, Brian Harbour will begin with his own proverb based on our text today. (p69) See p69 for story background, and a word about what the Torah said about inheritance law. On p69-70, why did Jesus refuse to intervene as requested? On p70-1, what 2 options or voices speak to the farmer? Instead of a focus on stuff, what are we to model a focus on? (p71-2) See p72...for the meaning of the instruction to "strive."

Applying the Lesson (10-20 minutes - Choose one or two questions to encourage action plans for the coming week!)

Discuss any of the following questions...

1. A. What are we to do with our disposable income?
B. Ask God to show you how you can best use your resources this week, in order to make a difference!
2. Do you have relationships that need to be repaired? Take time this week to pray about them. Pray for the other persons or people. Pray for God's strength to ask for and to offer forgiveness that leads to healing.
3. See "Applying the Lesson" on p104 in the *Uniform Teaching Guide*. This activity will involve supplies, preparation and the use of fire! Take a look at it, in case you think this would be effective with your group.

People go where they know they've been prepared for and are cared for!

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