

Life Group Leader Guide #18

7/23/17

Cleaning Out Barns

Our discussion this week will center on one of Jesus's parables—one that, if we are honest, speaks very pointedly to the way we handle material possessions today. The passage we want to study tonight is the parable about the rich fool, and it comes from Luke 12:13-34. The first half of the passage is the parable itself, and the second half is a really important teaching that should always accompany any discussion of the parable.

The real point of this entire passage is this: Hoarding and clamoring for wealth is completely, unequivocally, indisputably dumb. In one sense, your possessions will outlast you—you'll die one day, and your stuff will remain, much of it barely even used. Others will divide and deal with it after you're gone. So, ultimately, what good will hoarding do for you? In another sense, you will outlast your possessions. Whether you are in Christ or not, you will go on to eternity without them. In the end, whether you are in Christ is all that will matter.

Jesus makes the options plain: do you want your heart to be obsessed with wealth on earth, which will not last 100 years, or do you want your heart to dwell with your treasure that is heavenly—treasure that is found in the presence of God and that lasts for eternity? The correct answer seems obvious; however, many people seem to be voicing the question, "Why not both? Why can't we enjoy material possessions on earth? It's all about the heart, right?" It is about the heart, but a heart that is for God will do as Jesus directs by letting go of excessive possessions for the sake of others. Jesus himself said that we cannot have both—either our material possessions will be our master, or Jesus will (Matthew 6:24).

In our groups tonight, we will reflect on this parable and teaching from Jesus to see how this could/should impact our regular practice of giving and managing our stuff. What changes when, instead of building bigger barns, storage buildings, bank accounts, etc. for ourselves, we choose to tear down those barns and give what was inside them?

Discussion Guide

Bible Study:

- **Luke 12:13-21**

1. What was Jesus warning against in vs. 15 when he said, "Watch out!"?
2. When the man in the parable ran into a problem (too much stuff for his barns), his solution was to just build bigger barns. Why did this displease God?
3. Why do you suppose God's reaction to the rich man was so severe?
4. Is it wrong to have more "stuff" than one can use? Why or why not?
5. What about the attitude of "Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry" (v. 19)? How pervasive is that in our society? What do you see wrong with it?

- **Luke 12:22-34; Matthew 6:24**

1. How are these verses connected to the parable in vss. 13-21? What is Jesus trying to say?
2. In these verses what does Jesus tell his disciples NOT to do? What does he tell them TO do? Why?
3. Some see money & material possessions simply as "stuff." Others view money as "security." What problems do you see in placing one's trust and security in earthly wealth? What did Jesus say?
4. What does it look like in your life to "seek first his kingdom"?
5. What message do you believe our society teaches our young people about earthly wealth & material possessions? ... the church? ... your family?

Practice: Try to go through your house and find things that you may have been "storing up," whether intentionally or unintentionally. Clothing is an especially common type of possession that we hoard without realizing it, so this is a good place to start. You might consider marking any clothes you wear in the course of a month (or whatever time is appropriate for you) and donate whatever doesn't get worn. This will begin to teach us to separate from things that we don't need, knowing our excess will meet someone else's need.