

***Eternity—Don't Leave Earth Without Getting Prepared  
(A Study in Luke 12)***

**Prevent Attachment to Your Stuff  
Luke 12:13-21**

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**July 20, 2008**

**Text Introduction:** Last we began this series on eternal things. Using Luke 12, we are examining life from God's viewpoint—eternity. I said last week that I wanted to challenge you in regards to your preparation (last week), your perspective, your priorities, and your practices. Today, we look at our perspective—specifically our perspective about our stuff. The message of the Kingdom of God in regards to our stuff is that we should prevent “attachment to our stuff.”

I heard a story about the conversation between two men. One said to the other, “If you had two houses and I didn't have one, would you give me one of your houses?” His friend replied, “Absolutely!”

Then the first man asked, “If you had two cars and I didn't have one, would you give me one of your cars?” Again, the reply was, “Sure!”

“If you had two farms and I had none, would you let me farm one?” “Of course!”

Finally, “If you had two pigs and I had none, would you give me one of the pigs?” This time his friend answered, “Absolutely not!”

“Wait a minute,” his friend said. “You mean to tell me that you would be willing to give me a house, a car, and a farm, but unwilling to give me a pig?” “Well,” the man said, “I have two pigs.”

“It is easy to talk about what we would do if we had it. It is something else to talk about what we should do when we do have it.”<sup>1</sup>

The parable before us today helps us to focus on a right perspective about our stuff.

**Text:** <sup>13</sup> Then one from the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

<sup>14</sup> But He said to him, “Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” <sup>15</sup> And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance

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<sup>1</sup> Max Lucado, Audio Bible Study, “Rules of the Kingdom,” *Becoming Money Smart* Series.

of the things he possesses.”

<sup>16</sup> Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. <sup>17</sup> And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ <sup>18</sup> So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. <sup>19</sup> And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.”’ <sup>20</sup> But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’

<sup>21</sup> “So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

**Introduction:** In Luke 12, we read that Jesus has been teaching on eternity. We said last time that Jesus has underscored that the most important question in life is the question of your eternal destiny. We said last week that the next most important question (whatever that question is) is a distant second place. The importance of this issue of our eternal destinies does not keep one from asking a question about the here and now. We see that question in verse 13. It seems that the questioner completely ignores Jesus’ appeal. The question prompts Jesus’ telling of a story.

Now, when Jesus used a story, a parable as we call them, the story always made a point. Usually the point came before the story as it does in this text. So, it is important that we understand the point or the principle of the parable.

### **The Principle of the Parable**

Life does not consist in the abundance of things.

That’s the point. We ought to prevent attachment to our stuff here on earth, because life is not about things. Life is not about the abundance of things.

*Contradictory to Popular Belief*—Obviously this Biblical principle is contradictory to the opinions, attitudes, and practices of our world. Verse 13 underscores that this is true. Verse 30 underscores this in even a greater way. “For all these things the nations of the world seek after.” The NIV translates this verse, “For the “pagan world runs after such things...” Notice the word “pagan” and the word “runs.” That pretty much describes the attachment to material things that a lot of people have.

In Randy Alcorn’s book, *The Treasure Principle*, he quotes a PBS television program called “Affluenza.” The program, which exposed the modern-day plague of materialism claimed these facts:

- The Average American shops six hours a week but spends only 40 minutes playing with his or her children.
- By age 20, we have seen one million commercials.

- In a given year, more Americans declare bankruptcy than graduate from college.<sup>2</sup>

Steven Farrar also wrote about affluenza. He said, “People drive to the mall in cars they cannot afford to spend money that they don’t have, to buy things that they don’t need, to impress people that they don’t like.”

*Not Contradictory to God’s Provision for us!*

Still in verse 30, we read this: “And your Father knows that you need these things.” Having an eternal perspective is not contradictory to our having some needs and obligations on earth. In fact, God’s Word instructs us to use our money that He gives us to provide for our families, pay our bills, help the poor, and proclaim the Gospel. God knows that we need these things.

Even so, let us be careful of greed because life does not consist in the abundance of our possessions.

**The Parable**

To illustrate the principle, Jesus told a story. The parable illustrates what happens when we make the emphasis of our life the acquisition of stuff.

- Selfish Greed—Wealth in the first century was rare. The land owners had all the wealth. Storing in the first century was almost unheard of. The key to understanding this parable is that this man had incredible, incomprehensible wealth. But even in all this wealth, he still wanted more so that he could store more.
- Selfish Glory—There is a definite emphasis on selfish thinking in this parable. Someone remarked about this man, “He never saw beyond himself.”<sup>3</sup>
- Selfish Goal—Finally, this man had a selfish goal. His goal was to lay up his goods so that he could take his ease, eat, drink, and be merry. This is a selfish goal.

Before his death by lethal injection, Timothy McVeigh, perpetrator of the Oklahoma Federal Court bombing, quoted this poem written by William Ernest Henley:

I thank whatever gods may be  
 For my unconquerable soul.  
 In the fell clutch of circumstance  
 I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
 Under the bludgeoning of chance  
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.  
 It matters not how straight the gate,  
 How charged with punishments the scroll,

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<sup>2</sup> Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*, p. 58, Lifeway, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> John Barclay, *Daily Bible Study Series*.

I am the master of my fate  
I am the captain of my soul.

Compare that to the words from William Carey that he asked to be engraved on his tombstone:

A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On thy kind arms I fall;  
Be Thou my strength and righteousness  
My Jesus and my all.<sup>4</sup>

### **Take Home Points from the Parable**

And so some ask, “O.K., pastor, what do we do?” Jesus actually answered the question for us.

*Don't be pre-occupied with the things of this world.*

Luke 12:22 says, “Then He said to His disciples, ‘Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on.’” And Luke 12:29 says, “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind.”

But rather....

*Be Persistent in Seeking the Kingdom of God.*

Luke 12:31 says, “But seek the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added to you.”

George Washington Truett was the pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas for 47 years (1897-1944). The story is told of how he once visited a wealthy West Texas rancher to have dinner. After dinner the rancher took the preacher out on the balcony of his mansion. The man pointed to the South toward some oil rigs and said, “I own everything in that direction as far as you can see.” He pointed east toward some cotton fields and said, “And I own all of those fields.” He pointed toward the North to a huge herd of cattle. You guessed it—he bragged of how he owned all the cattle. He turned toward the west and said, “I own all in that direction except the sun.”

The story goes that Dr. Truett said to the man as he pointed to the sky, “And how much do you own in that direction?”

We ought to ask ourselves that same question today, for that is the only thing that matters.

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<sup>4</sup> From Sermon by David Dykes, Pastor, Green Acres Baptist Church, Tyler, Texas.