

# Short Stories - Epic Truths

Summer 2018

<sup>13</sup> Someone in 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 arbitrator over you?" <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Luke 12.13-15 (ESV)

“Materialism begins with our beliefs.  
Not merely what we say we  
believe—not our doctrinal  
statement—but the philosophy of life  
by which we actually live.  
Materialism is first and foremost a  
matter of the heart.”

Randy Alcorn

+ πλεονεξίας (covetousness) might be better translated “greediness” or even “lust.”

+ Greed is the desire to have more, to get one's hands on whatever one can, to acquire without reference to one's own specific needs or the situation of others.



+ πλεονεξίας

“the passion to possess”

*A life taken captive by the passion  
to possess is a life devoid of God.*

The essence of life is not in  
accumulating things, but in knowing  
God.

<sup>16</sup> And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, <sup>17</sup> and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’



<sup>18</sup> And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.<sup>19</sup> And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."

<sup>20</sup> But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' <sup>21</sup> So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Luke 12.16-21

# The Rich Fool's Problem (vs 16-17)

- + The flourishing of the harvest

- + The lack of storage for the surplus

# The Rich Fool's Solution (vs 18-19)

+ Invest in me

+ I deserve this



The hedonic treadmill

## The Rich Fool's Encounter (vs 20)

- + “Fool” would have been understood as someone who wasted all of their potential.

- + You gained what you thought was of great value, but totally missed the most important thing.

*A life taken captive by the passion  
to possess is a life devoid of God.*

This message is as antithetical to our thinking as any that Jesus told. I know of no more difficult a topic to apply and live out as modern, western Christians. Most of our life revolves around primary pursuits of security, pleasure or both - which are achieved through the accumulation of possessions. However, as Jesus taught and Luke so often argued, nothing keeps us from the reality of the Kingdom more than those very things. Again, it's not the fault of the possessions themselves, but of how tightly we cling to them, make use of them, or refuse to use them.



The issue is the focus of our lives, and that focus determines the use of our possessions. Few of us actually live as if possessions and security are not the most important aspects of life. Luke challenges the idolatry of security and urges a profound trust in God, not money. This parable is not just for those who God has given much, because all of us are plagued with self-interest and a pursuit of security in some fashion.

K.L. Snodgrass

How do we guard against a passion to possess and pursue a life rich toward God (vs 15, 21)?

1

Generosity

1

# Generosity

+ Use your resources to show how much you value God.



1

# Generosity

+ Use your resources to show how much you value God.

+ Reallocate your resources around God's passions.

1

Generosity

2

Simplicity

1

Generosity

2

Simplicity

*“There are two ways to have enough money. One is to acquire more, the other is to desire less.”*

*G.K. Chesterton*

1

Generosity

2

Simplicity

3

Compassion

1

Generosity

2

Simplicity

3

Compassion

+Cultivate a heart for those around you.

1

Generosity

2

Simplicity

3

Compassion

+Cultivate a heart for those around you.

+Love others with your resources.

One of the things that is at the core of the early church's message that I think is inspired by Jesus is that when we talk about sharing it's not just about the stuff, but it's about love, to love our neighbor as ourselves. That love comes with responsibilities. When we have brothers and sisters dying because they don't have a mosquito net that costs three dollars, it should cause us to think about our actions differently when we pay four dollars for a coffee.

What's important is that it's not about guilt. It's about love. It's pretty clear in Corinthians that if we sell everything we have and give it to the poor, but we don't have love, it's still empty. For the early Church, distribution wasn't a prescription for community, it was a description of the community. It wasn't just an anecdote, some form of socialism or communism, but a community that was radically changing the world by their love, loving brothers and sisters as themselves.

Shane Claiborne



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