

Fix Your Eyes on Jesus' Warnings About Money: "Jesus said to him, 'you fool!'"

Focus Passage: Luke 12:13–21

Larger Context: Luke 12:1–34

Other Passages Referenced: Deut. 8:17–18; John 3:16; 1 Timothy 6:10

Sermon Recap

The sermon began with a discussion of how marketing feeds into fallen humanity's insatiable desire for more. Luke 12:15 translates this unhealthy desire as "covetousness" in the ESV. Some translations used the word "greediness." The Greek word is *pleonexia*. Jesus warned, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness (*pleonexia*), **for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.**" Jesus proceeded to tell the parable of the rich fool—a rich man who chose to build even bigger barns to store all of his bumper crop and possessions. The man thought he was guaranteeing his security for many years to come. However, instead of calling the wealthy man wise for his planning, in the parable, God called him a fool for "laying up treasure for himself without being rich toward God" (Luke 12:20–21) and took the man's life.

Jesus' warning to "take care and be on your guard against all *pleonexia* indicates that we may be falling into this sin without seeing it. We may declare, "I don't have a problem with covetousness or greed" when in reality our problem has deadly consequences to our relationship with God and others. We find 3 attitudes that indicate *pleonexia* in the passage: (1) thinking that our possessions belong to us and are the fruit of our own efforts; (2) thinking that if we just can acquire "enough" we will be safe and secure; (3) thinking we always need more.

Continuing on in Luke 12:22–34, we find two treatments to overcome off *pleonexia*: (1) receive God's radical generosity. God not only knows what we need (Luke 12:30), but "It is the Father's good please to give [his children] the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). He has already given His "one and only begotten Son" (John 3:16). (2) A second cure for *pleonexia* is to give with radical generosity as God has given to us. If we treasure God's kingdom, His kingdom will have our hearts also. If we treasure our possessions, our possessions will own our hearts also (Luke 12:34).

Spend time considering, "What will it take for me to think that I have enough and that enough is enough"? What does it look like for me to give generously? (Examples: Giving big tips, opening my home in hospitality, giving more time or resources to charity).

If we receive God's radical generosity and live it out among those around us, we'll find that greed/*pleonexia* is less present in our lives.

Interpretive Helps

- In the context of the larger gospel, Luke 12 describes Jesus warning his disciples that they are not to repeat two sins of the overtly religious Pharisees: hypocrisy (12:1–12) and greed (12:13–34). Read Luke 11:39 about the greed of the Pharisees in the previous chapter to confirm the context of Jesus' teaching here.

- Note that Jesus' warning came in the context of a man asking Jesus to act as a judge by commanding his brother to share an inheritance with him. Instead of giving the man a legal ruling that he requested, Jesus gave a spiritual judgment about the unhealthy desire for material things.
- Jesus seemed to be going beyond money and material possessions in his warning against "all" or all forms of pleonexia.

Group Gathering

Group Check-in — Care, Celebration, Encouragement (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Informal conversation to allow individuals to catch up with one another.
2. Discuss how things went with everyone over the holidays—highlights and lowlights.

Allow the Word to Speak — Be Hearers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

READ Luke 12:13–34

1. What from the passage or sermon was most impactful to you?
2. Were you left with any questions or confusion about the passage or sermon?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 and Ephesians 5:3–5. How do these verses describe the seriousness of *pleonexia* in relation to other sins?
4. Read Deuteronomy 8:17–18 for a similar warning given in the Old Testament. How does this passage affirm or confront our cultural understanding of possessions?

Put the Word into Practice — Be Doers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. When you think of greed and covetousness, what lifestyles, traits, or actions first come to mind?
2. How do you think God would assess your spending and giving over 2020? Would He counsel you to make adjustments in the coming year?
3. Write down two or three items you treasure most in the following categories:
 - Possessions you most treasure
 - Relationships you most treasure
 - Ideals you most treasure
 - What you most treasure doing with your time

How do these "treasures" affect the way you treasure or do not treasure the Kingdom of God?

4. Jerry Bridges wrote a book titled, *Respectable Sins* to highlight sins that contemporary Christians tend to minimize or ignore. How do you think we may be guilty of treating pleonexia a respectable sin?
5. What does "be rich toward God" mean to you, personally?
6. Have you been the recipient of another person's radical generosity? Be ready to share your experience with your group or someone else.

The Big Question: What do you sense God's Spirit saying to you and what concrete action will you take in response? Share your answer with the group or another trusted Christian and ask them to pray for you.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES:

- The Chapel will host the Community of Faith Mission's homeless shelter from January 10 – 17. You may find more information and a sign-up [here](#).

Further Resources – Illustrations and quotes from the sermon can be found on the "Sermon Slides" link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org