

Title: THE GENEROUS LIFE

Text: LUKE 12:13-23

Teacher: TOM NELSON

Our Hands Tell a Story

Do we have tight fists or open hands?

We were created to live generously. (Genesis 1:27)

Jesus Speaks About the Generous life (Luke 12:13-23)

Jesus offers a wise word (vv. 13-15)

Jesus tells a sobering parable (vv. 16-20)

Jesus gives a sensible reminder (vv. 21-23)

What Are Some Obstacles to Generous Living?

- 1) Fearful anxiety
- 2) Personal indulgence
- 3) Unwise stewardship

How Do We Grow In Generous Living?

- 1) Learning to trust God more (faith)
- 2) Seeking to live with less (contentment)
- 3) Planning to live wisely (stewardship)

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35b)

CONVERSATION STARTER

- What is your most valuable possession? How did you acquire it? Have you ever lost something that was very valuable? Did you get it back?
- Read Luke 12:13-21. Why do you think Jesus responds to the man's question the way He does? What actions of the rich man showed that his life consisted in the abundance of his possessions? What do you think it means to be "rich towards God"?
- Read Luke 12:22-34. What might Jesus mean when He says "life is more than food, and the body is more than clothes"? What examples from nature does Jesus point to, and how do these examples illustrate his point? What do you think "seeking first His kingdom" entails?
- Read the excerpt below. Do you agree with Snodgrass that "possessions are one of the chief obstacles to salvation and life with God"? Why or why not? How does Snodgrass differentiate between possessions themselves and our use of them? Snodgrass says, "Few in Western society live as if possessions and security are not the most important aspects of life." In what ways do you think people demonstrate that possessions and security are the most important aspects of life?
- What things keep us from being "rich towards God"? Why do you think we are tempted to find security in our possessions? How can life within a Christian community help us find our life in God's kingdom and not in possessions?

EXCERPT FROM: *Stories with Intent*

BY: Klyne R. Snodgrass

Parables like this strike a tender nerve, especially when we admit to ourselves—as we must—that we want to be like the rich fool. We want to say to ourselves, "I have many good things (or a lot of money) laid up for many years; eat, drink, and celebrate"...We are more like Tevye in "Fiddler on the Roof" who sings "If I Were a Rich Man" or, when told that money is the world's curse, he responds "May the Lord smite me with it, and may I never recover!"

The message of this parable is as antithetical to our thinking as any Jesus told...Our primary pursuits are our own security and pleasure, both, we think, achieved by possessions. However, one could in fact say—at least as far as Jesus and Luke are concerned—that possessions are one of the chief obstacles to salvation and life with God. Certainly resources are needed for life and ministry, as, for example, the women supporting Jesus' ministry knew (Luke 8:3). Further, resources are needed to make resources grow. The fault is not in the possessions themselves, but in how tightly we cling to them or the use we make of them (or refuse to make of them). The issue is the focus of our lives and the way that focus determines the use of our possessions...

The parable underscores that life is fragile and uncertain and that one needs more than possessions. All of us know this truism, but often it has no impact on our lives. Few in Western society live as if possessions and security are not the most important aspects of life...

It is worth making explicit that parables like this are not merely for the wealthy. A person does not have to be wealthy to be like the rich fool. It may be easier for the wealthy to "treasure up for themselves," but those without resources can be just as driven by greed and just as wrongly focused on things instead of God.