

L 7 ... How to Avoid Being a Fool

[Luke 12:13-21](#)

In America, we live in a time that has been called “the age of obsession with possessions.” On our currency is the slogan “In God We Trust.” A more accurate motto would be “In **This** God We Trust.” No parable speaks more to our “obsession with possessions” than Jesus’ parable of the rich farmer. In this parable, Jesus reveals that a person obsessed with possessions is a fool. As Jesus continues to teach about kingdom living, He tells us **how to avoid being a fool**, beginning with...

Beware of Greed (12:13-15)

As Jesus teaches a crowd of thousands ([12:1](#)), someone in the crowd says to Him, *Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me* ([12:13](#)). The Old Testament addresses most situations concerning inheritance ([Num. 26-27](#), [33:54](#), [Deut. 21:17](#)). However, sometimes a situation would arise that needed intervention and would be brought to a rabbi for a settlement.

Jesus refuses to be drawn into the dispute by saying, *Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?* ([12:14](#)). Instead, He uses the incident as an opportunity to teach his followers about the dangers of greed.

He begins with one of His most famous warnings: *Take heed, and beware of covetousness* ([12:15a](#)).

Then, what does our Lord say ([12:15b](#))?

The word translated **covetousness** can also mean “**greed**.” Greed is a consuming desire to have more of something, such as money, than is actually needed. Kingdom living has nothing to do with wealth or monetary prosperity. Greed is the essence of what is called the “prosperity gospel” that has taken our American Christian culture by storm. It spiritualizes selfishness and greed. Its “prophets for profit” use such phrases as “seed money” and “God wants you to be rich.”

How does [2 Peter 2:3a](#) warn us against such false teaching?

Jesus explains that our worth is not measured by our *possessions* ([12:15b](#)). Our value is not determined by our net worth. If we don’t understand this, we will be consumed with greed. Greed is such a wicked sin Jesus tells a parable to warn against it. Did Jesus ever tell a parable to warn about adultery? No! Did He ever tell a parable to warn against drunkenness? No! But He does tell a parable to warn us about greed. Why? Because it is such a subtle, deceptive sin! Greed has been correctly listed among “The Seven Deadly Sins.”

To avoid being a fool, **beware of greed** and...

Be Ready to Die (12:16-20)

To illustrate the dangers of greed, Jesus tells the parable of a rich farmer. The land of a rich farmer produces such a great harvest he doesn't have enough room to store his crops ([12:16-17](#)). Therefore, he says to himself, *I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods* ([12:18](#)).

There is nothing wrong with his wealth. The problem is his attitude toward it. There is nothing wrong with having a lot of possessions, as long as your possessions don't possess you. When our possessions possess us, we are like the rich farmer who thought only of how he could hoard his crops and use them exclusively for his own benefit and enjoyment. This is clear by the number of times the farmer uses the personal pronouns "I" and "my" in [verses 17-18](#). How many? Nine times!

Therefore, what does this greedy, rich farmer say to himself ([12:19](#))?

Since the rich farmer is totally focused on the here and now, he wants to live it up. God wants us to plan for the future. He wants us to invest wisely and be prepared for retirement. However, God doesn't want us to forget from whom all our blessings come.

Success and riches give the rich farmer the illusion he is in control of his life.

Therefore, what does God call him ([12:20a](#))?

The rich farmer is the only person Jesus calls a *fool*. In the Bible, people aren't called fools because of their intellectual inferiority. It is quite obvious this is a successful farmer with business savvy. Most often, the word **fool** refers to someone who disregards God, as in this parable, or who doesn't believe in Him.

For example, what does [Psalm 14:1a-b](#) declare about a *fool*?

You don't have to say *there is no God* to be an atheist; you just have to live that way. This is what the Bible calls "greed." Only a fool lives as if this life is all there is.

Then, God tells him that very night his soul will be *required* of him, which means he will die ([12:20b](#)).

The word translated **required** (**apaiteō, ap-ah-teh'-oh**) refers to a loan that has come due. God has loaned each of us a life, and at any time, as with the rich farmer, He can demand it back.

When God requires the life of the greedy, rich farmer, He asks him a penetrating question: *then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?* ([12:20c](#)). In other words, what is going to happen to all this wealth you have accumulated?

Dr. Bobby Burt, a former associate pastor, talks about a friend who, for a super price, ordered a suit through the local funeral director. There was only one problem. When the pastor got the suit, he discovered it didn't have any pockets. It was made for dead people, who don't need pockets. When you die, you won't need pockets in your burial clothes because you didn't bring anything into the world and you won't take anything out ([1 Tim. 6:7](#))

To avoid being a fool, **beware of greed, be ready to die**, and...

Be Spiritually Rich (12:21)

Jesus applies the parable by saying, *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God* ([12:21](#)). The last three words reveal **how to avoid being a fool** by being *rich toward God*, or accumulating spiritual riches. A fool spends all his time storing up *treasure for himself* and neglects becoming *rich toward God*. Being *rich toward God* includes giving back to God.

Therefore, what does [Proverbs 3:9](#) tell us?

When we give our tithes and offerings, we are showing *honor* to God. We are also reminding ourselves who gives us the ability to gain wealth ([Deut 8:18a-b](#)).

Being rich toward God is also being generous to those in need.

Referring to what believers are to be taught, what does Paul write in [1 Timothy 6:18](#)?

When we do that, the next verse says we are storing up treasure for the *time to come*, or heaven ([1 Tim. 6:19](#)).

Where we give and how much we give reveals how much we are storing up *treasure* in heaven.

Later in this chapter, Jesus expresses this fact ([Lk 12:34](#)). Personalize it, and write it below:

Our attitude toward possessions reveals the true priorities of our hearts. Kingdom living and greed are mutually exclusive.

To avoid being a fool,

BEWARE OF GREED,

BE READY TO DIE, AND

BE SPIRITUALLY RICH.