

## :: summary

Jesus often taught his followers through parables that connected everyday life with profound spiritual truths. In the parable of the rich fool, Jesus addresses material abundance that is typical of First World, American life, to provide us a right understanding of the meaning and purpose of wealth in the context of eternity. Jesus' teaching is not an assault on the rich or a claim that material wealth is inherently evil – Jesus' concern is our attitude and heart posture toward wealth, which motivates how we steward what God has given us.

## :: explore and discuss it

Jesus' teaching mentions money and things more than almost anything else, because he knew that all of us struggle with knowing what to strive for, with knowing what is truly valuable, with the temptations of greed and hoarding, and with serving the wrong master.

Can you identify an area of your life in the past or present in which you have struggled with being consumed by consumption? What motivation was behind that behavior?

Read Luke 12:13-15

In the time of Jesus, it would have been normal for someone to approach Jesus as their *rabbi* or religious teacher to seek judgment in a dispute over an inheritance. In this case, there is a conflict between two brothers in which one brother is attempting to get his share of an inheritance his brother is trying to keep for himself, to which Jesus gives what would have been a surprising response.

What does Jesus' response indicate about what the real problem is for the two parties involved?

Read Luke 12:16-2; Isaiah 22:11

In the absence of modern technology, storing grain was a common practice among households and city-states in the ancient Near East. Grain was both food and currency, and access to significant resources was also a source of power as it is today. In God's economy, power and wealth have both social and spiritual significance.

Considering Jesus' audience and the clue provided in the prophet Isaiah's words, what is the problem with the worldview he critiques through this parable?

What makes the rich man a "fool" or "mindless," as the word is also sometimes translated?

## :: make it personal

Whether you have a lot or a little, all of us have the same potential to be foolish in hoarding what we have and all of us receive the same invitation to be rich toward God by expressing the generosity He has shown us. Our treasure is not the issue – *what* we treasure is the issue.

As you look inside yourself, can you identify where you might be "mindless" toward God in the way you think about and handle the amount of material wealth He has given you?

What does your use of material wealth suggest about your love toward God and others? Is your treasure stored in a warehouse or in heaven?

If everything but your life was taken from you today, would Jesus be enough for you?

## :: pray it

Invite God to stir up a heart of generosity in you, as one who has been given eternal treasure by Him.

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