Rich Toward God

1. Read Luke 12:13-21. After warning against hypocrisy—and how hypocrisy can lead a person to denying Jesus and harden their heart against the Holy Spirit—Jesus now turns to another serious danger: covetousness. What is covetousness and how does it drive us away from God?

   Covetousness is wanting more of something even when we already have enough. It can slowly pull us away from God because it shifts our focus onto what we own, what we want, or what we think we're missing. Instead of being grateful and trusting God, we can become consumed with getting more. Over time, God gets pushed to the side. But when we learn to be content with what we have, our focus turns back to Him, and we grow in trust, gratitude, and dependence on God.

2. In the parable, what specifically would you say is the rich man's sin?

   This is a trick question, because Jesus doesn't spell it out. He's just a fool. What matters is that on the night he died, his heart trusted more in his barns full of stuff than in the Lord. Although, we might wonder why he was hording so much and not using any of it to help his neighbors. In fact, it's interesting that when he survey's his barns, he speaks not to God but to his soul and says, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years...". Why is he not thanking God and praying to Him about the future? Count how many times the man refers to himself in these two verses (look for words like "I", "my", "myself"). The man refers to himself about 8 times.

3. What are some signs that consumerism is influencing our identity more than our faith is? How do we know when something we want has started to take God's place in our hearts?

   Consumerism influences our identity more than our faith when what we own, want, or project becomes the main way we define our worth. If I feel more secure because of my money, appearance, status, or possessions than because I belong to God, that's a warning sign. Another sign is when comparison starts controlling me—when I constantly look at what others have and feel envy, insecurity, or pressure to keep up. Consumerism also shapes us when we assume happiness, meaning, or peace can be bought, upgraded, or achieved through having "just a little more."

   Something we want may be taking God's place in our hearts when it begins to rule our thoughts, decisions, and emotions. If I am willing to compromise my values, neglect my relationships, or let anxiety and frustration consume me because I might not get it, that desire has probably become too important. A good test is to ask: What *If God said no to this, would I still try to have it?*

4. If this man is deemed a fool, what would a wise man have done in this situation?

Open to interpretation, but Jesus makes it clear that we need to be rich toward God. Praise God that He has made us rich toward Him by giving us His Son.

Philippians 3:8
Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

5. Matthew 14:22-34. After pointing out the fool who trusted in his wealth for the future, Jesus goes on to address all worry about tomorrow. Why does Jesus use ravens, lilies, and grass as examples? What do these images teach about God's care?

God's concerns are not always the world's concerns. This is part of the upside-down nature of the kingdom of heaven: even ravens—mere birds, and unclean ones at that—and grass are not beneath the Father's care. So why should we ever fear that God does not see or care about the troubles we face, whether great or small?

Job 38:41
"Who provides food for the raven when its young wander about to God and cry out for lack of food?"

6. 1 Kings 10:4-7 details the glory of Solomon with these words: "*When the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the Lord, there was no more breath in her. And she said to the king, "The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came, and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard.*

What does it say of human achievement, wealth and ambition that Jesus ranks Solomon beneath a simple wildflower?

It says that even the very best of what human beings can build, accumulate, display, and accomplish is limited, fragile, and finally unable to rival the beauty and glory that God gives so freely to the least of His creation. Solomon's splendor was real, but it was still borrowed splendor—dependent on wealth, status, effort, and a kingdom that would one day fade. The wildflower, by contrast, possesses a beauty it did not strive for, earn, or manufacture. God simply clothes it.

Jesus' point is not that achievement or excellence are worthless, but that they are poor foundations for our security, identity, or worth. If Solomon, the great king whose wisdom and prosperity took the queen of Sheba's breath away, is nevertheless outshone by a flower that blooms briefly and is gone, then human ambition must be humbled. Wealth cannot secure us. Accomplishment cannot sustain us. Glory that comes from man is always temporary. But what comes from the hand of God is fuller, truer, and more enduring.

I have lived in Central Texas most of my life, and I have seen years when the wildflowers and grasses seemed to shrivel away under the relentless heat and drought. The fearful side of me sometimes thinks it is hard to be a lily of the field in Texas. And yet, even after the harshest seasons, spring comes again, and the wildflowers return in abundance. It feels like a quiet miracle, a gentle reminder of God's faithful care.

The Texas bluebonnet is a beautiful example. Some years bring a more brilliant display than others, but no matter how severe the drought or how fierce the weather is, enough bluebonnets remain to bloom again. Their Creator designed them with this resilience. Each seed has a coat of different thickness, so only a small portion germinates in any one year. Some wait patiently through seasons of hardship, and others need fire or bitter cold before they spring to life. In this way, there are always seeds held in reserve, ready to bloom when the time is right.

It is hard not to see in this the wisdom and kindness of God. He has woven into creation a pattern of trust, provision, and renewal. Even when the fields look barren, He has not forgotten them. And if He is so faithful to clothe the bluebonnets of Texas year after year despite drought, fire or hardship, surely, He will also be faithful to care for us.

7. Why is "don't worry" often hard to hear? But what makes Jesus' words different from shallow advice? And consider that the Greek word for worry refers to a "divided mind." What does that image suggest about the spiritual effect of anxiety?

"Do not worry" can be hard to hear because, when we are anxious, our fears often feel more immediate and more real than God's power and care. Anxiety is real, but it distorts our perspective. It narrows our vision until we can see only what is close at hand—the problem, the threat, the feared outcome—while the larger reality of God's presence and sovereignty fades from view.

In that sense, anxiety makes us spiritually myopic. We lose sight of the bigger picture and begin to interpret everything through the lens of our fear. Every problem feels final, every setback feels like the end of the road, and worry takes hold because we cannot see beyond what seems immediately threatening.

In those moments, God can seem small in our minds—not the Lord of all creation, but merely the god of my anxiety, responsible only for managing the one crisis I fear He may not handle well. That is part of the deception of worry: it does not just magnify our troubles; it also shrinks our vision of God.

What makes Jesus' words different from shallow advice is that He does not offer empty optimism or tell us simply to ignore our problems. Instead, He redirects our attention to the Father whose wisdom, power, and care govern all things. Jesus reminds us that God's purposes are far greater than we can imagine, and that our lives are held within those purposes. So His command not to worry is really a call to faith: to trust that when things go wrong or troubles arise, they are not the end of the story, because God is still at work and His will is bigger than our fears.

The answer to a divided mind is single-hearted trust. Anxiety pulls the soul in many directions. Jesus calls us back to unified trust in the Father who knows, cares, and gives. Thus, Jesus' command is not cruel; it is pastoral. He is not scolding anxious people with detached advice. He speaks as the

compassionate Savior who knows human weakness. Consider the ways He struggled in the Garden of Gethsemane and also Hebrews 4:15. Jesus understands distress from the inside. When Jesus says, “Do not worry,” He speaks not as a critic but as a Shepherd.

Hebrews 4:15
For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

8. How does Jesus’ description of us as His “little flock” and God as a Father who delights to “give us the kingdom” challenge the way we respond to anxiety, and in what ways do Christian community and seeking God’s kingdom help reorder our fears, priorities, and sense of security?

Jesus’ words, “Fear not, little flock,” are the emotional and theological center of this passage. He speaks with tenderness and assurance: “little flock” reminds us of our identity as those who belong to Him and depend on Him, “your Father” points to God’s personal care and relationship with His children, “good pleasure” shows that God is not reluctant or stingy, and “give you the kingdom” reveals the staggering generosity of His heart. This means the real cure for anxiety is not greater self-confidence, but deeper confidence in the Father’s character. At the same time, anxiety often drives us into isolation, when what we most need is the presence and perspective of God’s people. The church helps us remember the bigger picture of God’s faithfulness when fear narrows our vision. And when Jesus says to seek His kingdom, He is not telling us to stop caring, but to reorder our concerns — moving from survival to trust, from grasping to generosity, and from earthly security to heavenly treasure, as we center our lives on God’s reign, God’s promises, and God’s mission.

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