

Jesus vs Greed Discussion Notes

Sometimes we can be awkward when we talk about money and our faith. However, Jesus talks about money a lot. There are 500 verse on prayer and 500 verse on faith but 2000 verses on money. 1 in 10 verses in the Gospels are about money (288). 16 out of 38 parables are about money.

- Is that surprising?
- How do we feel about talking about money in church?

Read Luke 12:13-21 together.

- Is there something that stands out?
- What do you notice that you haven't seen before?

Luke 12:15: "Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.'" Jesus is telling us, 'life does not equal stuff'. And yet, we are always trying to find our value and worth in our 'stuff'; how fast our car is, how nice our clothes are, how new our phone is.

So Jesus tells a parable about a man who had an abundant harvest but his barn wasn't big enough to store his crops. He could have given the excess crops away but instead he says 'I'll build a bigger barn'. We can call this '*bigger barn thinking*': as we make more money we save more and keep it for ourselves, then we can 'eat, drink and be merry.' But the problem is, there is always a bigger barn to get and so we always want the next thing.

- What does this look like in our lives today?
- What is the 'bigger barn' that we always look for?
- How do we work out what is 'building a bigger barn' and what is just having enough to money to be secure?

Greed gets us to think that we can never have enough as we compare ourselves to the people around us.

- Do you fall into this trap of comparing what you have to those around you?
- How can we avoid this trap?

Luke 12:30 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'" Jesus is saying that we can miss the bigger picture and get wrapped up in our own lives. The barn owner thought his wealth was all for him, but now it is going to go to someone else.

- How does it affect our view of money when we consider that we can't take it with us to heaven?

Jesus wants to move us out of this '*bigger barn thinking*' to '*build better thinking*'. Luke 12:21: "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

- What does it mean to be 'rich toward God'?
- What stops us from being generous with our money?
- What can we do practically to stop ourselves from falling into 'bigger barn thinking'?
- What could our money do to 'build better'? What would you want to see built through your finances?

It is important that we are talking seriously about our giving to the church community. Three helpful guidelines that Paul gives us in 2 Corinthians 16.9 show that giving should be:

Predetermined. Rather than giving with what's left over, our giving is our first financial commitment. That means that we determine how much we're going to give ahead of time, then live off what is left over.

Personal. Scripture talks about giving as being a personal thing. Jesus encouraged us to give in secret, not letting the right hand know what the left was doing. It's part of our discipleship. It shouldn't be forced, it shouldn't be pressured. It should be part of our secret history with God. A willing gift out of a grateful heart.

Proportional. The New Testament tells us that rather than just tithing 10%, we should see all of our income as belonging to God. But proportional giving is definitely encouraged. So giving a tithe, or 10%, of your income to the church is a good starting point to aim for.

Determine now what your response is to this message? Make a commitment as a group to each go away and decide what your contribution to the Metro 'war effort' is going to be.

What percentage of your income do you ultimately aspire to giving? What percentage can you manage right now? What does that mean in terms of monthly giving to the work of the church?

Go to **www.woodlandsmetro.church/giving** to make this a reality.