

## Satisfaction

On Sunday, we explored some of Jesus key teachings on money and contentment in life.

1. Warm-up question: Who's the wealthiest person you've ever personally known? How did they get their money? Did they seem happier than you?
2. Proverbs 13:7 says, "There are some who make themselves rich, yet have nothing. There are some who make themselves poor, yet have great riches." What do you think that verse means? Do you buy it?
3. Read Luke 12:13-14.
  - a. These verses don't tell us much about what was going on with the guy who asks Jesus to tell his brother to divide the inheritance with him, but let's try to imagine. What would you guess was going on? How do you think this guy felt about it?
  - b. It's not unusual for people to do what the guy in our story does – to seek God primarily because they hope God will bless them with prosperity and all kinds of good things. There's a big religious market for that kind of preaching. It's sometimes called "The Prosperity Gospel." Do you think Jesus wants us to be prosperous? Do you think God cares about our finances? Why or why not?
  - c. Why do you think Jesus refused to help solve the man's financial problem?
4. Now read Luke 12:15-21. In this story, the rich man faces a dilemma. His farm was producing so heavily, it was outstripping the storage capacity of his barns. So he had a choice: either produce less or launch a major project to expand his barns to keep up with the growth in production.
  - a. Was the farmer wrong to want to expand the production capacity of his farm? Why or why not? What was the farmer's great mistake here?
  - b. Can you think of an instance in your life, or a time period in your life, when you have been tempted to make the same mistake as the farmer? Tell us about it.
  - c. What does verse 21 mean?
5. Now read Luke 12:22-34. Jeff suggested that, throughout this Gospel passage, Jesus is trying to teach us two key principles. **Principle No. 1 – Instead of assuming we can wait till later to live well, we must learn to live now with "mindfulness," relishing the simple gifts of each day.** Jeff said, "I tend to get so preoccupied with what's wrong with the moment, what needs to change, what needs to be accomplished, that I seldom appreciate what's beautiful in the moment."

- a. How 'bout you? Think about how you've lived your day today. Do you feel like you savored the good of the day or were you more focused on what was wrong with the day? Tell us how this played out for you today.
  - b. When you eat, are you mindful enough to savor your food? Why or why not?
  - c. When you come to church, are you usually mindful enough to savor the experience? Why or why not?
  - d. In his book "Hope Is Contagious," Ken Hutcherson tells how one day, while battling cancer, he was in great pain and feeling exhausted, even as he was surrounded by family who were going through the normal motions of the day and friends who stopped by to visit. In that mixed moment, Ken found himself able to celebrate all the blessings of the moment, instead of focusing on what was wrong. On a practical level, how can we get better at doing that? What helps you savor the blessings of the day instead of obsessing over the problems?
  - e. Look back at verses 22 -27. What are the primary points Jesus is trying to make?
6. **Principle No. 2 – Instead of assuming happiness is found in material prosperity, realize that true abundance is found in receiving and sharing the love of God.**
- a. In verse 15, Jesus says, "Your life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." Think of the person you've known who seemed to enjoy life the most, someone who had a lot of love and passion for life and others. Who was that person? What made him or her so happy? How would you compare the happiness of that person to that of the wealthiest person you've ever known?
  - b. In verse 22, Jesus says, "Do not be afraid little flock, for it is God's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven. . . ." Should we really sell everything? If not, what's Jesus trying to get across here?
  - c. Jeff suggested several possible steps toward "renouncing our wealth," so we can live with truly free spirit. Which of these steps most speaks to you – and why?
    - Instead of viewing money and possessions as my own, I will view them as a sacred trust from God.
    - I will live a simple life, with only a few splurges here and there, so as to maximize my ability to share with God and others.
    - I will carefully consult with God on financial decisions, giving God final say.
    - I will keep taking the next step toward further simplifying the financial and material side of my life.
  - d. What's your next step toward greater financial and material simplicity?