

One truth shared: Focused living helps us put worldly wealth into the proper perspective.

Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” 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.”

And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’

“Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’

“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?’

“This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

Luke 12:13-21

Focused Living Properly Values Earthly Wealth

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” Every young kid hears that question endless times, and most respond with the biggest dreams for wildly successful lives—“An astronaut . . . an Olympic gymnast . . . a doctor . . . a NFL star *and* famous rapper . . . a magic unicorn trainer!” Oh the dreams of young children!

The question becomes much more real, and more difficult, as a teenager, doesn’t it? “What are you going to do *after high school?*”

Ouch! That one is tough! Some have clear visions for where they want to go and what they want to do. Others not so much. But whatever it is that you want to do or be in the future, whether that’s college, trade, military, or just working, how much is your decision going to be influenced by *money*?

Very often, money influences teen thinking so much when it comes to future plans. Which career makes the most money? Which job will give me the best and easiest life? What’s the best or most affordable path to get that job? How many scholarship dollars can I get? And so on and so forth.

Money can be good. Success can be good. Receiving blessings from God can be good. The problem is when the blessings of money and possessions become the main focus of our lives. And how quickly that can happen!

Just look at the verses for this devotion. First, we hear of two brothers who were arguing about their inheritance and tried to get Jesus to settle their financial dispute. Of all the things they could have cried out to Jesus for help with when the Lord was standing right in front of them (like mercy, forgiveness, stronger faith, and all that good stuff) they decided instead to selfishly fight over who gets more of daddy’s dollars.

Then Jesus tells a story about a man who was greatly blessed with earthly success and got caught up in thinking about the good life. He died that night and ended up enjoying none of his blessings. “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God,” Jesus warns the crowd.

Graciously God forgives our greed and worldly focus. Jesus set aside his riches and glory to come to this world and become poor—a humble servant who would suffer and die for sinners. Because he did, we receive true riches through Jesus—forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Don't be burdened by the chase after worldly things, especially money! Ask yourself bigger and better questions about the future like, "How will I serve God when I grow up? What career can I choose that lets my gifts from God flourish? How can I help others with my talents and treasures? What can I do to make sure I'm focused on the Lord and spiritual things?"

A few verses after this story Jesus says, "Seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well." Focus on the true riches of God first, and all the other things will fall into place. How rich you will then be!

Prayer: Gracious God, you give so many earthly blessings to me. I have more than most people in the world. And beyond these things, you gave us your one and only Son! How can I ever thank you enough? Help me to set my heart on your heavenly riches, so that I can thank and serve you properly with my worldly riches. Amen.

Foundations Teen Facilitators Guide

Year C – Proper 13

Focused

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Starting the Discussion: *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

- If you had a million dollars, what would you do with it?
- How much does money influence your thinking about and plans for the future?

Connecting: *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

Why do you think greed has been a universal temptation for all people of all time?

Digging In: *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- *Agree/Disagree:* It was wrong for the rich man to be successful and to want to enjoy his success. Explain your answer.
- Can you think of examples of people in the Bible who let greed get the best of them?
- Can you think of examples of people in the Bible who responded to Jesus in faith by giving generously?

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

- What role should money play in a Christian's future decisions?
- Describe ways that you can honor God with money and possessions in the future when you are grown up and have a full-time job