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“The Economics of Enough”

Luke 12

Small Group Plan

*Wealth is a good servant,
but a very bad mistress.*

-- Francis Bacon

On May 18, 1986 Ivan Boesky gave the commencement address at the University of California at Berkeley's business school. "I think greed is healthy," he told an enthusiastic audience. "You can be greedy and still feel good about yourself." At the time Boesky was practicing what he preached by manipulating illegal stock based on insider information. A few months later he was caught, sentenced to prison, barred from dealing in securities, and ordered to pay \$100 million in penalties.

Greed doesn't always lead to prison, but it does want control, so give control to God.

*Make all you can,
save all you can,
give all you can.*

-- John Wesley

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- What was your personal ambition when you were 18?
- Describe the criteria that our society uses to measure the value of a person?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— **COMPETING <VS> COOPERATING** —

Luke 12:13-15

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” ¹⁴ Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” ¹⁵ Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

- How would you describe the relationship between these two brothers?
- What is Jesus warning about when he says, “Watch out!” (v. 15)?

- How does greed feed unhealthy competition?
- How can generosity built unity?
- How can it lead to joy?

— NO PURPOSE <VS> ETERNAL PURPOSE —

Luke 12:16-19

¹⁶ And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ ¹⁸ “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.””

- Count the personal pronouns (“he” “I” “my”) in this man’s thought process. What conclusions can you draw?
- Look carefully at verse 16. What actually produced the successful harvest? Why is this difficult for the rich man to see?
- How does greed take away purpose and meaning?
- How can generosity provide an eternal sense of meaning and purpose?

FREEDOM LOST <VS> FREE TO TRUST

Luke 12:20-21

²⁰ “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?’ ²¹ “This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”

- How can knowing that we will leave everything when we die, change the way we manage those same things while we are alive?
- How can greed lead to personal slavery?
- How can generosity provide true freedom?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- Consider the different kinds of greed:
 - Scared Greed** – I don’t trust that God will take care of me.
 - Scoreboard Greed** – My value as a person is based on what I have.
 - Selfish Greed** – I’m in it for myself.

Which kind of greed do you encounter the most? Which is the most dangerous? Explain.
- How did your ambition of 18, evolve and change as you got older?
- How would answer someone who asks how to be “rich toward God” (v. 21)?
- Close by asking God to help us see the difference between the “barn” and the “Kingdom.”