

**“God and Our Stuff”**  
**Living in Light of Eternity– Part 2**

Luke 12:13-21

Pastor Jeff Burkholder

August 24, 2008

**I. Greed: What is it?**

- A. The Greek word *pleonexias* means “eager to hold more in quantity or quality.”
- B. Greed is not as much about the behavior of taking too much or giving to little—it is the thoughts, attitudes and emotions that flow from one’s heart (Matthew 23:25-26).
- C. “If greed, covetousness, and stinginess are the vices of exaggerated attachment to possessions, generosity is the proper disposition... Stinginess is not just a pattern of bad behavior, but a bad attitude, a bad state of the heart.”

“Just A Little Bit More” by Robert C. Roberts,  
*Christianity Today*, April 8, 1996, p. 30.

**II. Greed: What are the consequences of it?**

- A. “Tuberculosis was once called ‘consumption,’ because it causes people to waste away. Greed is a form of spiritual consumption. To the greedy person who is ‘successful’ in his pursuit of possessions, it may seem for a while that he is gaining a more substantial and robust life through his accumulations; in truth, as his soul becomes more and more invested in his possessions, and his heart becomes more and more identified with them, he becomes less of a person.”

“Just A Little Bit More” by Robert C. Roberts,  
*Christianity Today*, April 8, 1996, p. 32.

- B. “Greed can create the anxiety, depression, and loss of meaning that often comes in middle age after a ‘successful’ life of acquiring the ‘goods’ of this world.”

“Just A Little Bit More” by Robert C. Roberts,  
*Christianity Today*, April 8, 1996, p. 30.

### III. Greed: How do we guard against it?

- A. Don’t let your possessions define you (Luke 12:15).

Our worth and value should not come from our new car, our big house or what we wear but from being a child of God who Christ died for.

- B. Recognize life is short and uncertain (Luke 12:16-20).

“The most damaging aspect of contemporary living is short-term thinking. To make the most of your life, you must keep the vision of eternity continually in your mind and the value of it in your heart. There’s far more to life than just here and now! Today is the visible tip of the iceberg. Eternity is all the rest you don’t see underneath the surface.”

*The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren,  
Copyright © 2002 by Rick Warren, p. 38.

“Actually, it would be wiser to live each day as if it were the last day of your life. Matthew Henry said, ‘It ought to be the business of every day to prepare for our final day.’”

*The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren  
Copyright © 2002 by Rick Warren, p. 40.

C. Recognize life is not about us but our relationship with God (Luke 12:21).

“You were made *by* God and *for* God—and until you understand that, life will never make sense. It is only in God that we discover our origin, our identity, our meaning, our purpose, our significance, and our destiny. Every other path leads to a dead end.”

*The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren,  
Copyright © 2002 by Rick Warren, p. 18.

“We were made for spiritual attachments to God and neighbor, to find our life’s purpose in them. Generosity expresses such attachments. But the greedy person is out of harmony with her spiritual nature, for she tried to find the meaning of her life in possessions.

Jesus made a statement about human nature when he said, ‘One’s life does not consist in the abundance of one’s possessions’ (Luke 12:15). It should not surprise us if a being that is made to find life in God and neighbor gets messed up when she tries to find it in her possessions. It is like being created to eat vegetables and meat but trying to live on Hostess Twinkies; it is not natural and won’t work!”

“Just A Little Bit More” by Robert C Roberts,  
*Christianity Today*, April 8, 1996., p. 31-32.

IV. **Conclusion: The Gospel leads us away from greed and toward generosity.**

“The generosity of a believer is a response to Jesus Christ and never merely a ‘human’ virtue. The gospel is about the generosity of God: God owed us nothing, and yet, out of sheer enthusiasm for us and desire for our well-being, God sent Jesus Christ to dwell among us, to reconcile us to God, and to usher us into God’s fellowship... When the Holy Spirit has written this word of grace on our hearts, we become generous.”

“Just A Little Bit More” by Robert C Roberts,  
*Christianity Today*, April 8, 1996, p. 31.

V. **Practical tips from “The Outward Expressions of Simplicity” by Richard Foster, *Discipleship Journal*, Issue One Hundred Twelve 1999, p. 43.**

1. **Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status.** Cars should be bought for the utility, not their prestige. A home should be chosen for its livability rather than how much it will impress others. Stop trying to impress people with your clothes and impress them with your life.
2. **Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you.** Learn to distinguish between a real psychological need, such as cheerful surroundings, and an addiction—something you cannot do without, such as television, coffee, newspapers or chocolate. If money has a grip on your heart, give some away and feel the inner release. Simplicity is freedom, not slavery. Refuse to be a slave to anything but God.
3. **Develop a habit of giving things away.** De-accumulate. Masses of things that are not needed complicate life. They must be sorted and stored and dusted and resorted and restored *ad nauseam*. Most of us could get rid of half our possessions without any serious sacrifice.
4. **Learn to enjoy things without owning them.** Many things in life can be enjoyed without possessing or controlling them. Share things. Enjoy the beach without feeling you have to buy a piece of it. Enjoy public parks and libraries.
5. **Shun whatever would distract you from your main goal.** God give us the courage, wisdom, and strength always to hold as the number one priority of our lives to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.