

Week 2: Living Counter-Culturally

Materialism

Welcome: Living Counterculture (What, Why, How)

- Theme Verse Rom 12:1-2 ... RENEWING MIND, HEART AND LIVES.
- “Living Counterculturally”.
 - Judy and I will be team teaching/leading.
 - Topics include Self-glorification, materialism, relativism and Judgmentalism
- What we want to do over the next four weeks is explore
 - How we are **effected by** and how we **respond to** the **secular culture** around us,
 - while at the same time **reflect the character of God** as we **live as salt & light**.
- Specifically, we want to explore the following questions
 - (1) What are the secular messages we receive?
 - (2) How do these secular messages influence us?
 - (3) How do these messages contrast with the teaching of Scripture?
 - (4) How does the believer live in a way that provides a countercultural alternative to the pervasive world view?
- Basic Life Principle:
 - **ENGAGE** (engage with God, engage with people)
 - **LOVE** (love God, love people - actually esteem others more highly than ourselves)
 - **REFLECT** the character of God (direct attentions to the God).
 - Only God’s truth can change lives.
 - We are called to be bearers of God’s truth.
 - When we exhibit God’s truth, people see the truth of who they really are.
 - God does the drawing.

Introduction: Materialism

Suffix: ism—belief: a belief (or system of beliefs) accepted as authoritative by some group or school

- Materialism: Dictionary definition: a tendency to consider material possessions and physical comfort as more important than spiritual values.
- The overriding quest for personal gratification. The belief that having money and possessions is the most important thing in life.

(What we’re not talking about is the philosophy, the theory that physical matter is the only reality and that everything, including thought feeling mind and will can be explained in terms of matter and physical phenomena.)

Identify the secular messages we receive? – Interactive with class

What are some of the messages we receive daily that seem to say that the one who dies with the most stuff wins? Where do these show up? (social media, advertising, workplace...) Define neutral words. Acknowledge that sometimes these topics/issues are not negative in and of themselves.

How do you recognize secular messages? Are you able to discern the messages that are counter to Biblical teaching? Do you find yourself not being on guard? Rhetorical questions: Should we isolate? Do we realize how

helpless secular culture is to discern? Can we separate the messages from the person? Fear? Our tendency may be to isolate, retreat, avoid people who are different from us, disagree with us. Disengage vs engage. How do we engage with people who matter to God? In the world/not of the world: John 17:16; John 8:23; 1 John 4:5; Romans 12:1-2

Messages we hear: Materialism (These are subtle and insidious)

- Happiness/contentment is to be found outside of yourself. Buy this product, look like this, have these credentials, know the right people, live in the right neighborhood, drive the right car, go to the right schools, find the right mate. “Buy me, wear me, put me in your hair.”
- It is someone else’s, something else’s job to make me happy.
- I can buy contentment, status, worth, value.
- Things are more important than people.
- the goal is to acquire stuff (He who dies with the most toys, wins) You need this...this will satisfy you

Worldly Messages	Negative	Scripture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy this product, have these credentials, live in the right neighborhood, drive the right car...(Convincing you of a need...Happiness/contentment come from, you are incomplete until you have this product) • Instant gratification, you don’t have to wait. • Xyz will bring you security, pleasure, status • You deserve it. • Things are more important than people • Xyz will make you feel adequate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possessions may buy temporary happiness, but not lasting. • ME-FIRST Generation, Selfishness • It’s the lure of trying to meet a deeper need (love, truth, God) with something shallow/material • Isolationism, loneliness, emptiness • Living lavishly way above our needs. • The need we try to satisfy with possessions is often deeper. And the acquiring of possessions distracts us from looking honestly at the real need. • Never enough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solomon Eccl. 5:10 • Luke 12:15 • Philippians 2:5-8 “Jesus emptied himself” • Mark 8:34-38, Matthew 20:28, John 13:14-16 “servanthood” • Acts 20:35 “more blessed to give” • Luke 16:13 “can’t serve God and money” • Mark 12:31 • Philippians 2:3 • Romans 12:10 (NIV)

How have these secular messages of self-glorification influenced you?

- Even though we don’t believe these statements, we sometimes act as if they were true. One of the insidious tactics of cultural messages is that they can wear us down, i.e., the more we hear them repeated, the easier they can become accepted as true.

- How have these messages affected the way you think about yourself, others? Where do you see them showing up in your thought processes?
- Have we bought into acting as if these were true? Are we aware of the power of repetition?

It tempts us to meet spiritual needs with material stuff. Most of us don't need more possessions. But the lure is that stuff can satisfy longings that go deeper. The lie is also that we can avoid looking deeper by staying distracted by pursuing things.

It displaces God. Instead of giving our very best energies to God, we can spend all our physical and mental energy thinking about and acquiring stuff. *"Materialism isn't first a money problem. Materialism is an awe problem. If I am not in awe of God, it is very, very possible for me to be in awe of physical things and spend myself into debt as a result."* John Piper (Feb 3, 2016, *The Single Aim of all Ministry*)

We live in a world that breeds discontent. We are bombarded with the message that in order to be happy we need more things, less wrinkles, better vacations, and fewer troubles. But, ultimately, the problem is the sinful human heart. It becomes a problem of what the heart craves.

Spiritually, excessive craving for material possessions amounts to having a false god. Building our lives around the quest for material things, having our values determined by the marketplace, putting our trust in our wealth—these do constitute a religion. God wants us to build our lives around Him, to have our values determined by His Word, and to put our trust in Jesus Christ. Nothing less will ever satisfy.

The consumer mindset is conducive to idolatry, not Christianity. Man-made products, whether appliances cars, toys, or religions, simply do not last. The treasures we lay up for ourselves on earth will all corrode; only the treasures in Heaven are eternal. Tabletalk

Think about it this way,...Does consumerism both create and exploit a perpetual emptiness? Yes, **It creates and exploits dissatisfaction. But God longs for us, His people, to be satisfied, not by cars, homes, and designer fashions, but by Himself.**

One of our central temptations, according to Scripture, is to forget God and develop an undue fondness for stuff—"then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.' And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers." Deut 8:17-18

The human heart is an idol factory that takes good things like a successful career, love, material possessions, even family, and turns them into ultimate things. Our hearts deify them as the center of our lives, because, we think, they can give us significance and security, safety and fulfillment, if we attain them.

[Timothy Keller](#) Counterfeit Gods

How does it contrast with the teaching of Scripture?

- Materialism often stems from a need for **security, pleasure** or **status**.
- Very **subtle**, it starts **small** things then builds to **larger** things. Toys to trophy wives/husbands
- Succumb to the **power of possessions**.

Warning of **Love of Money**

¹⁰ *He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. Ecclesiastes 5:10*

*Jesus said, “**Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions**” (Luke 12:15) (NIV)*

*⁹ But those who **desire to be rich** fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that **plunge** people into **ruin and destruction**. ¹⁰ For the **love of money** is a **root** of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. 1 Tim 6:9-10*

*¹³ No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and money.**” Luke 16:13*

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- Money is **dangerous** not evil, like an electric wire, **mishandling** it leads to spiritual death
 - Insatiable desire for more / next best. **Viscous cycle** of always being **disappointed**.
 - Greed and covetousness **undermine** contentment and calls into question God’s **trustworthiness**.
 - It’s about **mastering** one’s possessions vs. being **mastered** by one’s possessions.
 - “**Be on your guard**”: Speaks to inevitability, diagnostic questions, building spiritual muscle (practices)

Warning of **Worry** and **Call to Faith**

*²² And he said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, **do not be anxious about your life**, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. ²³ For **life is more than food, and the body more than clothing**. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁶ If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸ But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little **faith**! ²⁹ **And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried.** ³⁰ **For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.** ³¹ **Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.** ³² “**Fear not**, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom Luke 12:22-32*

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- What are you anxious about?
 - (v22,29,32) Verses address the need for **security: worry, fear**.
 - (v23) Often the desire for **basic** needs **distract** us from our **deeper** needs (v31).
 - Seeking after **basic** needs (v30) or the **Kingdom** (v31)
 - God proves himself throughout our lives by providing.
 - Great benefit of the lifelong “practice of faith”. HS confirms.
 - So why do we lack faith?

*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is **unseen**, since what is seen is temporary, but what is **unseen** is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:18 NIV*

*Speaking of Moses: ²⁷ It was by faith that Moses left the land of Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger. He kept right on going because he kept his eyes on **the one who is invisible**. Hebrews 11:27*

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- As human beings, we constantly seek after **material evidence** (tangibles) with our five senses.
 - We **fail to trust** what we cannot touch and see (intangibles)
 - E.g. golden calf, why Israelites demanded a king, hard assets gold

- For believers **invisible** but not **unknown**, we learn to **see** and **know** God by looking around at what he's doing
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- ⁵ *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."* ⁶ *So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"* Hebrews 13:5-6
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Call to Stewardship

The Parable of the Talents – Context of the Kingdom teachings

¹⁴ *"For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and **entrusted to them his property**. ...*

¹⁹ *Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ...*

²⁴ *He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and **hid** your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.'*

Matthew 25: 14-30

- **EVERYTHING** is God's, we are just **stewards** (managers).
- God commands us to be **prosperous** with what we've been given. No for **our gain**, but **God's gain**.
- Notice, the Kingdom is context for parable.
- God **entrusts us** with his resources so that we put them "**in-play**" for his kingdom. It's our **privilege**.
- Practice of **releasing**, "**putting things on altar**".
- Is there something you're not willing to release?
- John Ortberg illustrates this in a message entitled "It all goes back in the box", he likens the accumulation of possessions to winning a game of monopoly. We want to leave the board up for days to reveal at our success only to realize it all goes back in the box.

Call to Generosity

*Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴ **For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*** Luke 12:33-34

¹⁷ *As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ¹⁸ They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be **generous and ready to share**, ¹⁹ thus **storing up treasure** for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.* 1 Tim 6:17-19

³⁶ ***For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?*** Mark 8: 36

³⁵ ***'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*** Acts 20:35b

Final Comments:

- As we reflect the character of God, we exhibit **contentment** in God and God's **trustworthiness**.
- The world is in awe of us!

Conclusion

Material things in and of themselves are not bad. God has given us all things to enjoy (1 Tim 6:17 *“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in **God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.**”*)

“God doesn’t mind his people having money. He minds money having his people.”

We are called to be different, and the more our culture rebels against God, the more different we are going to look. A culture inundated with materialism puts pressure on people to conform. We can be authentically counter-cultural by the way we handle material things. They can manage us, or we can manage them.

We can’t talk about materialism without talking about **distraction and the role that acquiring, chasing after, material things can play in keeping us distracted from what is important, what is eternal, what the Holy Spirit might want to be saying to us.**

Take stock of how you see your possessions. Do you see your wealth (even if it is not as great as others) as a temporary gift from God for His glory.

Luke 12: Jesus’ words warn us that it is so easy to get caught up in stuff and in self that stuff and self become the meaning of our lives. In writing about the materialism of our culture in his excellent book *A Hunger for More*, Laurence Shames writes, “A certain line gets crossed. **People look to their goods not just for pleasure but for meaning. They want their stuff to tell them who they are.**” We buy luxury pens or watches because we want those accessories to describe who we are to the world. We want everything from our cars to our vacations to define us.”

The point is not to demonize or personify material things, but rather to be discriminating and careful in the awareness of material things to **distract** us from the realities of life and from the important issues of life (who am I, from where do I derive my value, what is my purpose). At the extreme, we would rather spend time and money on things that keep us busy and entertained than spend a single moment thinking about where our lives are really heading.

Pleasure and fun and material things can be enjoyed, but not **at the expense of** becoming means of keeping us from facing the truth.

In the days ahead: What guard rails can I put in place to help me tame the materialism monster?

The life-giving pause: This is a helpful corrective to impulsive spending, acquiring stuff...Put time in between...take a step back to ask a few diagnostic questions. “Do I really need this? Can I wait a few days, weeks to step back from acquiring it to determine if it is just an impulsive purchase? What is driving this? Is there a deeper issue that I’m afraid to face that I’m trying to fix with another acquisition? Do I own my stuff or does my stuff own me? Is there a false message that I’m believing? How much time do I spend thinking about stuff? Am I getting better at recognizing the pull that certain things have on me? Do I see the trap of idolatry? How much do I depend on my stuff to give me value?

What voices speak the loudest in your life? Does God’s voice and His Word have the final word, or is His truth drowned out by competing voices to look to material things to prop up our self-esteem and value.

How badly do we want to fit in? Is there anything that you are not willing to release?

Therefore, the question that we need to engage with is, not only what we do with our technologies, but what we are becoming through our technologies. Technology and gadgets alter our perception of ourselves, of others, and of the world in more ways than we can imagine. A familiar script can be seen in the common commercials constantly flashing on our television screens: The average, ordinary man or woman instantly transformed into the most desirable, the most sought-after, airbrushed by the high-end car that they drive, or the Rado watch that they sport, fooled into thinking that they have become more than what they are, simply because of the things they owned, or more ironically, that owned them (and us!). There is, thus, a dialectical relationship between the tools we use, our conception of the world and our self-consciousness. As Neil Postman puts it aptly, "To the man with a hammer, everything is a nail." In this gadget-crazy generation, we need to pause awhile and reflect on whether the gadgets that we use are just tools to serve our needs? Or have they completely taken over, making us believe that unless we have these gadgets we don't fit in or are not worth anything?

In such a culture, the biblical worldview increasingly stands out, declaring that human beings have an intrinsic worth apart from anything external, because we are specially created in the image of the living God. Our value does not come from what we possess or what we do not possess, but from what we are—our humanness. Worldviews that tell us otherwise, that equate humans with automatons, or that dismiss man as a mere illusion, will simply not help in addressing the issues that this generation faces, a generation bombarded every moment with the message: "You are what you possess!" (Slice of Infinity, You are what you possess)

Key ideas for all four weeks:

Engage:

It begins with loving people. It begins with intentionally interacting with people who are far from God because they matter to God. How do we fulfill the Great Commission if we stay safe, comfortable, and isolated?

We can't expect those who are far from God to believe the same things we do about God. The problem: We tend to avoid the person, instead of trying to understand them. We let the issues polarize us. How do we stand for what we believe in a way that respect others? How do we love people who are different from us and are diametrically opposed to what we stand for?

What we can experience is that people respond to honest care and concern for them.

They can experience God's love for them as we interact with them and God loves them through us.

He is continually bringing opportunities into our lives to engage with people, often people who we have no affinity for, who we are very different from. Good works bring about good will which opens people to the Good News. **So, for you, what might it look like to up your engagement quotient?**

Alistair Begg "Living in a world that has made sin look normal and righteousness look weird, we will be inevitably branded as trouble makers. The plan and purpose of God is clearly not our isolation from the world, but the reality of our protection from the evil one while in the world. (John 17:14-15) "I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."

Love: Over and over in the NT we read that it is real love that speaks volumes to people. Jesus said people even far from God recognize real love. It has hands and feet and expresses itself in action. (John 3:16, **God so loved the world that he gave...**) As followers of Jesus, our marching orders are extraordinarily clear. (John 13:34, **A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.**) We are to love

others in the same way as He loves us. *Let your light so shine (Matt 5:16) before men that they see (they connect the dots) and glorify your father in heaven.*

Primacy of love: As I have loved you, love each other. 600+ laws to 2 to one, Love others as I have loved you. There go all my excuses to leverage my influence, my power, my success. Yes, there is a time to take a stand, yes, there is a time to speak out, but only after I have looked into the mirror and realized my need and how much I have been forgiven.

The church is to be the place where we love one another to the point that the watching world says, wow, I don't know if I believe what you believe, but I'd sure like to be part of a community that loves each other the way you do.

You don't need to make a huge statement to be heard. Impact and influence happen quietly, over time. A life well-lived may have greater impact than a showy, public platform. People may be more likely to be confronted with the gospel by a quiet humble spirit rather than being argued with, patronized or judged. Engaging in dialogue with people is more effective than shouting at them from the sidelines. Be the change you wish to see, we are changed to bring change.

We honestly have no idea the impact real love has on people when we engage with people with a gentle and humble spirit. God knows the specific needs of every human being and he places us in places where He can work through us to draw them to himself. The drawing is God's work. **My life speaks the loudest and is effective when my life is a living model of my message. My words are then set on fire with the Holy Spirit's power to bring change. I want my everyday life and actions and thoughts to be proof of, evidence of, the reality of God's power working in me continually. Then, my life "speaks" with a message of the purposes of God.**

Reflect God's character: God "in you" (Col 1:27) is the hope of the world. What does it look like in your life to reflect the character of God?

The true Christian steward understands that everything he is and has belongs to God. God is the owner of his body, his time, children, his relationships. The mind of the steward is to reflect the mind of the Master. The heart of the steward is to reflect the heart of the Master. The generosity of the steward is to reflect the generosity of the Master. Our God is a generous God and God loves generosity. You cannot out give God. With the measure that you give, it will be measured to you. (Luke 6:38) Material possessions don't love you. Material possessions didn't die on a cross for you. Possessions can't save you.

John 17:14-18

"I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by ^[d] the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."

Matthew 6:19-21 *Where our treasure is, there our hearts will be also.*

Colossians 3:5 *"Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world."*

1 Timothy 6:9-10 ⁶ *But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹ Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and*

destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

1 Corinthians 6:12

Paul said he didn't want to be enslaved or mastered by anything.

Christianity and the Material World *by John Sartelle*

"And he said to them, 'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions'" ([Luke 12:15](#)). "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." The story Jesus told of the rich man (vv. 10–21) is ageless and simple. A man of immense wealth invested a portion of his money and substantially increased his worth. Then, just as he was set to enjoy his incredible prosperity, he suddenly and unexpectedly died. Jesus told the parable to warn against covetousness, greed, or avarice.

Greed hides itself so easily behind the mask of virtue and good reasoning. Our first inclination as we read this parable is to agree with Jesus and say, "The man was daft. He was greedy and Jesus was right in calling him a fool because he made plans to live luxuriously without any provision for dying." Most of us don't read that parable and say, "I am like that man. I am greedy." However, I would venture to say that in our culture there are more of us who are like that man than unlike him.

He was hardworking and successful in his business. He had not made his money by taking advantage of people. His profit was lawful gain. He had not been lazy. He had done well for himself and his family. This was the American dream come true.

Notice that Jesus said to His listeners, "Take care ... be on your guard." What should put us on our guard? Covetousness. The actual Greek word used by Jesus for this sin meant "a greedy desire for more." Jesus was saying it can sneak up on you. It can be there and you don't even know it.

How do we know that the man was truly greedy and not just making wise business decisions?

True greed misinterprets the meaning of life. Jesus prefaced the parable by saying, "One's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Greed says that life is about having more. Covetousness says that life is about having all you can get. We must be careful as we approach the subject of money or wealth. Many folks have misunderstood Christianity at this point. God did say that we should enjoy His creation. We should enjoy food, beauty, friends, and work. He said we should enjoy the sexual relationship inside of marriage. He said we should enjoy our material blessings. So let's be sure that we are not saying that Christians must drive twenty-year-old

cars, wear hair shirts, live in hovels, and have furniture with holes in the upholstery. That was not the message of this parable.

Jesus' words warn us that it is so easy to get caught up in stuff and in self that stuff and self become the meaning of our lives. In writing about the materialism of our culture in his excellent book *A Hunger for More*, Laurence Shames writes, "A certain line gets crossed. **People look to their goods not just for pleasure but for meaning. They want their stuff to tell them who they are.**" We buy luxury pens or watches because we want those accessories to describe who we are to the world. We want everything from our cars to our vacations to define us.

Greed always wants more. In the opening scene of the story, the man was already very wealthy (v. 16). But he was not satisfied. He already had many barns (notice the plural), but they were not enough. He wanted more. Greed always does — it is insatiable. During a political revolution in the Philippines that drove Ferdinand Marcos from power, he and his wife Imelda fled the country. She left behind 1,200 pairs of shoes and seventy-one pairs of sunglasses. The truth is that she would not have stopped at two thousand pairs of shoes or two hundred pairs of sunglasses.

Greed fails to see the true source of our possessions. The wealthy land owner considered himself to be a **self made man**. Six times in speaking to himself he used the personal pronoun "I." He also spoke of "**my crops; my barns; my grain; my goods.**" **He did not see himself as God's steward. He saw himself as the owner. He was his own creator and sustainer. Now, that is the point of the parable.** The parable does not end with his sudden death. The parable ends with the question God asked the man on the night he died: "Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" (v. 20). As the man left this world, God forced him to realize for the first time that he had been only a steward. Everything he had in life had been given to him by the true Owner, and the steward's use of it had just come to an end. God would turn it over to another caretaker, and the former steward would give an accounting.

Christian stewardship far exceeds giving ten percent to the Lord. **The true Christian steward understands that everything he is and has belongs to God. God is the owner of his body, his time, the buttons on his shirt, and his children.** To claim God's possessions as your own is not only arrogant, it is inane. The mind of the steward is to reflect the mind of the Master. The heart of the steward is to reflect the heart of the Master. The generosity of the steward is to reflect the generosity of the Master.

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