

Weekly Message Study Guide

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Speaker _____

THE DEADLY VIRUS: Living Gratefully in a Grasping World | November 22

Luke 12:13-21; Psalm 24:1; Mark 12:30-31; Luke 3:11; John 10:10

These study guides are designed for individual or group study but highly encouraged to be experienced in community with a small group or other friends on the journey with Jesus.

CONTEXT | Remember sharing toys or food as a kid? What were you like? What was one of your favorite things to share? Did you share well with others? How has that translated into adulthood? Be very honest in your sharing and yes pun intended.

Getting his FAIR share | Read Luke 12:13. The opening of the parable does not give us much background.

- In what context would this question be appropriate?
- Why would the man be asking Jesus? What did he want from Jesus?
- Read Luke 12:11-12. Is that what prompted the comment?

Be on your Guard | Jesus pinpoints an attitude underlying the question and begins to tell a story. Read vs 15.

- What is the "attack" we must Guard against? Where does greed come from?
- How would you define abundance? Together as a group make a list of the kinds of things that make an abundant life from a Kingdom of Christ perspective.
- How do greed and abundance relate to each other?

With the **Four Symptoms of a Problem with Greed** in mind, respond to the following:

1. **Unexamined "Me-ism"** - Tendency to look at life from an "all about me" perspective.
2. **"Storage Stress"** - Worry and anxiety over how to store, care for all my stuff.
3. **"Tear-Down-itis"** - Expending our resources mainly to create larger capacity to serve ourselves or to house all the material we bought
4. **"Affluenza"** - It's the feverish pursuit of MORE because the virus has killed our ability to really taste, smell and enjoy what we already have.

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Read vs. 16-19. Jesus is telling a story to describe a focus on life. How many times in these three verses do the words “himself,” “me,” “my,” “I,” “myself” and “you” (referring to himself) occur?

- How do you respond to this idea about focus? Aren’t we supposed to be responsible and provide? What is the difference?
- Compare that to Psalm 24:1. What is the difference? What is Jesus getting at?

Read vs 17-18. In the US there are whole industries built around making space for extra stuff—new barns to store my surplus crops. And there are ubiquitous orange fences marking the sites where we expand, upgrade, modernize.

- How does this cultural perspective make you feel? What comes up in you as you consider this?
- What is the critical word in verse 18? Read Luke 3:11.
- How can we move toward a healthier, more abundant balance? Share with the group ways you have found helpful.
- “Increasingly, orange fences surround not just our too-small homes, but also our too-confining marriages, our too-antiquated values, our now too-narrow beliefs. But is it true that bigger, broader, and bolder are always better? What do you think?”
- Which one of these signs do you find yourself being the biggest fool for?

Looking at the **Four Symptoms of a Problem with Greed**, share what the contrasting way of life looks like living in the way of Jesus.

- Now take those contrasts and share how each one enables you to have a rich relationship with God.

PRACTICE OF THE WEEK | Take a look at your “calendar” and your “checkbook.” Do you see any patterns? Does anything come up for you as you look at the way you use these resources? Write down any opportunity for change—increase or decrease—that comes to mind. Ask God to speak to you about changes the Spirit would have you live into. Pray that the Spirit of God would guide you towards a rich relationship with Jesus.