

# **JESUS & MONEY**

*A study of Luke 12:1-48*

## **LESSON ONE:**

*Guard Against Greed*

## **LESSON TWO:**

*Worry About Nothing*

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# LESSON ONE

## *Guard Against Greed*

Read through **Luke 12:1-48** several times before proceeding on in these lessons. Take note of those ideas and teachings that stand out as important.

Thousands had gathered to listen to Jesus teach, yet Jesus speaks to his disciples first, with the intent that those closely surrounding will also hear and thus the teaching will spread to all. He begins in **verses 1-12** dealing with issues of caution and fear, making it clear that God is the one to be feared, not others or life circumstances. He then tells a parable about a rich man (**verses 13-21**) followed by commentary and teaching coming out of the parable (**verses 22-40**). Now, Peter asks whether the parable was meant for everyone or just the disciples, which leads Jesus to important identity issues.

### **Who are you? (Luke 12:42-44)**

Jesus identifies his listeners, and now us, as managers or stewards.

“The Steward is one who holds a position of responsibility. He can be in charge of people as well as possessions . . . he occupies a position of authority, but he also remains under authority.” (David W. Bennett, *Metaphors of Ministry*, 1993, page 44)

A steward had authority without superiority. He was not the owner of the people or possessions but carried out the owner’s wishes in regard to the estate.

Read **Job 41:11**, **Psalm 24:1**, and **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**. Whose estate do we manage and what makes up the estate?

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## A Personal Response to Worry (Luke 12:33-34)

### Worry erodes trust and squelches generosity.

1. Should you literally sell all you have and give it to the poor or is this a symbol for something else? How does worry affect this?

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2. What kind of purses don't wear out? What do we put in such purses?

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3. Where do you sense your heart is? What does this tell you about the handling of your treasure?

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4. What have you been worrying about lately? What should you be doing with it? Check out **Philippians 4:4-8** in responding.

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We can easily become border-line money-worshippers thinking that our possessions and the people in our lives are just for us rather than belonging to God to be managed for his glory. Will you seriously involve yourself in a self-examination to determine what your level of greediness might be?

1. How long is your "things to acquire" list? When does "a lot" become too much? How close are you to that point?

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2. Jesus offers two ways to counter the potential of greed in our lives: guarding against all kinds of greed (**verse 15**) and being rich toward God (**verse 21**). Where has greed invaded your life? What makes us rich toward God? What can you do to diminish and defeat the greed you experience? What can you do to increase your riches toward God?

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# LESSON TWO

## Worry About Nothing

The second barrier to being a good steward/manager of what God has entrusted us is misplaced fear. Jesus makes it clear that fear must be invested in the right direction. We are to fear God and trust him, not people or situations that might threaten us.

### Some Teaching About Worry (Luke 12:22-32)

Marva Dawn is a theologian, teacher and writer of many books. She also in her life has dealt with and continues to deal with multiple serious chronic illnesses.

“Worry, of course, is the most useless thing we do. We don’t accomplish anything with it except put ourselves in a deeper stew . . . We know that worry doesn’t do any good, yet we can’t help it.. Our lives are full of trouble, and we worry that we won’t be able to handle it if we develop any more problems. Enough bad things have happened to us already, so we expect that they will keep on happening. Our fretting and fears have historical precedent. What can we do to keep ourselves from drowning in our trepidations?” (*Being Well When We’re Ill*, 2008, page 143)

Read and think through the following arguments Christ offers against worry. Jot down your thoughts as you think about each point.

1. Life is about more than basic needs (23).

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2. You are valued by God (24, 27-28).

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3. You have little control in life (25-26).

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4. Kingdom needs trump physical needs (29-31).

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5. Trust God (32).

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Respond to the following quotes. How do they clarify Jesus’ arguments?

**From Alister McGrath.**

“Faith is not just a willingness and ability to trust in God – it is the channel through which God’s grace flows to us . . . Faith is not belief without proof but trust without reservations – trust in a God who has shown himself worthy of that trust.” (*Doubting*, 2006, pages 18, 25)

**From Martin Luther.**

“Faith is a free surrender and a joyous wager on the unseen, untried and unknown goodness of God.” (McGrath, Page 26)

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