

# The Golden Calf and the Christian

## Introduction

1. **Moses is about God's business - concentrating on what God wants him to do.**  
**Exodus 24:12-18**

## The Golden Calf

1. **Meanwhile, A Golden Calf is being constructed!**  
**Exodus 32:1-6**
  - A. **Recognize when it comes:** *"the people saw that Moses delayed"* (v1).
    - 1) **Man has a desire for instant gratification.**
  - B. **Recognize where it comes from:** *"Moses delayed to come down from the mountain"* (v1).
    - 1) **Man's impatience.**
  - C. **Recognize who wants it:** *"he received it at their hand"* (vs 2-4).
    - 1) **Man's desire to please others.**
  - D. **Recognize what it is:** *"this is your god, O Israel"* (vs 4).
    - 1) **Man's desire for that which is visible (physical, fleshly) things.**
  - E. **Recognize how it changes your life:** *"they....offered burnt offerings, and brought peace-offerings ; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play"* (vs 6).
    - 1) **Man's desire for fun and frolic.**

## **The Financial Treasure Key**

- 1. Jesus teaches us something concerning attitude and life**  
**Matthew 6:19-21**
- 2. That passage of scripture really is a treasure!**
  - A. It has the greatest instruction that we could ever receive regarding our finances.**
    - 1) It shifts the focus from saving up treasures here on earth to saving up treasures in heaven.**
    - 2) It advises us to shift from worldly, materialistic things to the things of God!**
- 3. Money, wealth, and materialism are cancers that eat away at the character of Christians and the work of the church. Our culture is saturated with materialism.**
  - A. We are constantly bombarded with the message that more wealth and more stuff are the answers to our problems in life – these are the things which bring true happiness.**
    - 1) Materialism is a disease of the heart.**

- 4. Christians have bought into this philosophy of the need for more. The quest for more money, more property, and more stuff has gotten us into financial turmoil.**
  - A. The quest for more things and the lack of enough money is a stressor that destroys homes and families – even the homes of Christians!**
  - B. New credit card applications come in every day, everyone wanting to lend us money, wanting to help us refinance away what little equity we have in our homes, telemarketer’s try to sell us windows, gutters, vinyl siding, and dream vacations. There is pressure all around to buy more, more, more and more!**

Will Rogers said: “Too many people spend money they haven’t earned, to buy things they don’t want, to impress people they don’t like.”

- 5. Jesus has another plan for us!**
  - A. He has some important lessons for us with regard to our money, finances, and possessions.**
  - B. As we may struggle to survive our finances, let’s look to the words of Jesus found in Luke’s Gospel and see if we can understand what really matters in life.**

## **Learning About Materialism from The Rich Fool**

### **Luke 12:13-21**

- 1. In this passage, Jesus points out our fundamental problem, gives us a stern warning, and shares some great life lessons in the form of one of His parables.**

A young couple had been married for about a year. They were struggling financially and decided to do something about it. They would develop a strategy. They sat down one day to talk about their finances, and after much analysis, the young wife said to her husband, "If we miss two payments on the refrigerator and one payment on the washing machine, we'll have enough money to make a down payment on a new television set."

- A. That little story echoes the first truth that we can see in this passage.**

### **Our Problem**

- 1. We always want more than we already have.**
  - A. We become infected with the sickness of materialism and want and greed.**
    - 1) It makes sense that the first important step is for us to recognize and acknowledge our problem — the constant want for more than we already have.**
    - 2) But, even before He shares His parable, Jesus gives us.....**

## A Warning

### 1. The fight against greed is a constant, ongoing struggle.

Luke 12:15 And He said to them, *“Take heed and beware of covetousness...”*

- A. To “take heed” tells us that we must be constantly vigilant against greed. It does not go away.
  - 1) We must be ready to carry on a constant struggle within our hearts against the lure and influence of greed.

## The Truth

### 1. Who we are is so much more important than what we have!

Luke 12:15 *“...one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”*

- A. This is the lesson that most never really learn. Oh, we claim to...and we might win little battles against greed and materialism...but we never really seem to learn this ultimate truth.
  - 1) Stuff will NOT make us happy. True happiness is only found in doing what God wants you to do.
  - 2) It really is that simple.
- B. As we consider this truth .... *“who you are is much more important than what you have,”* look at how Jesus lays out the logic of this truth in His parable.

## **Application Lessons From the Parable**

### **1. We already have more than we think we do.**

Luke 12:16 ...*The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.*

**A. You see, this man did not get rich because he had a good crop. He was already a rich man! He already had plenty! He just didn't realize it.**

**B. We are rich!**

**1) We have things that hundreds of thousands of people can only dream about. We already have so much more than we think we do.**

### **2. Greed will never allow us to be satisfied.**

**A. The more we get, the more we want.**

Luke 12:17-19 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." '

**B. Did you notice all of the personal pronouns in those few verses? I, ME, MYSELF...**

**1) This guy was wrapped up in himself!**

**2) He only was looking out for old number one! He gave no thought to blessing anyone else with what he had received.**

**a) He had more, and he wanted more!**

- C. This is the cycle of greed. Once it has a grip, it is difficult to escape. Once one gets a taste of more, then they have a desire for even more.**
- D. Greed cannot be satisfied. It can never be happy and fulfilled. It can only consume and destroy.**
- A. Sadly, for Christians, this desire for more eats into our effectiveness and our passion for serving Christ!**

There was a very wealthy man who died. Shortly after the funeral a neighbor asked another neighbor, "How much did he leave?" The wise woman responded, "everything."

- 1) Christians who are determined to follow Jesus first and foremost understand where their treasure really is and as a result, they are found giving of their means back to the God who blessed them in the first place.**

**3. No matter how much we get, we really can't take it with us.**

Luke 12:20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; **then whose will those things be which you have provided?'**

- A. You know, it really should make us wonder.**
  - 1) If we cannot take the material things of this world with us when we die, why are we so totally and completely focused upon accumulating those things?**
  - 2) Why do we invest so much passion in getting stuff?**
- B. We MUST understand this final lesson from Jesus' parable.**

#### **4. God has a much better investment plan.**

Luke 12:21 So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not **rich toward God.**"

##### **A. Brethren, God has other priorities for us.**

##### **1) Replace selfishness with selflessness. Replace stuff with people. Replace investing in our own desires with investing in the kingdom of God.**

George Truett, a preacher in Texas many years ago, was invited to dinner at the home of a very wealthy Texas man. After the meal, the host led him to a place where they could get a good view of the surrounding area. Pointing to the oil wells covering the landscape, the Texan boasted, "twenty-five years ago I had nothing. Now, as far as you can see, it's all mine." Looking in the opposite direction at his sprawling fields of grain, he bragged, "They're all mine." Then he turned east toward huge herds of cattle, and bragged, "They're all mine." Then pointing to the west at a beautiful forest, he said, "That, too, is all mine."

Then he paused, expecting the preacher to compliment him on his great success. But the preacher placed one hand on the man's shoulder and pointed heavenward, toward the sky, and simply asked, "How much do you have in that direction?" Then the man hung his head and confessed. "I never thought of that."

*(Adapted From Illustrations for Youth Communicators, Burlington, North Carolina (2000), p.69)*



## Conclusion

1. Many people, even many Christians, haven't taken enough time to think of that ---- to think of things heavenward, things that really do matter.
2. I want to challenge us to seek God's will first and foremost. When we do, then I am convinced that we will be content in the things we already have.  
**1 Timothy 6:6-12**
3. When we are **contented** Christians, then ...
  - A. We will grow
  - B. Our family will grow
  - C. The church will grow
4. Don't let the Golden Calf keep us out of heaven!

## Invitation

1. There is much to be said for Godly wisdom when it comes to money matters. But what about the matters of your salvation?
2. I hope that we realize that what we do this day, counts in the bank of God.
3. We must give up spending foolishly the life God has given us.
  - A. Start by bringing your whole life to God today and offer Him your service as a brand new creation.
  - B. Begin to build your future with a solid foundation by being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.
4. I challenge you this very moment to invest your life in Jesus so that you can treasure your eternity with Him.

