



# Brown Community Group

## Discussion Guide

### The Parables of Jesus: Rich Fool - Luke 12:13-21

#### I. Scene Setting and Starter Questions:

How do we tend to measure or gauge success in the world today, both for yourself and others? If we are “successful” in our lives, have we been assessing that based on our presumed wealth or possessions? Do we correlate or feel that “wealth or money” bring us comfort or peace?

Would God allow us to fail financially if we are in “His” Will? Do our lives and money decisions reflect or mirror what God says in the Bible concerning money? Would it be a surprise to you to learn that the #1 subject mentioned in the Bible is Money?

How we manage, direct, save and spend our money is one of the most surefire ways to see directly through a window into someone’s heart and overall Godly condition.

#### II. Discussion of Scripture:

##### Luke 12:13-21

*<sup>13</sup>Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” <sup>14</sup>But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?” <sup>15</sup>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.” <sup>16</sup>And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, <sup>17</sup>and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ <sup>18</sup>And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. <sup>19</sup>And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’ <sup>20</sup>But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ <sup>21</sup>So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”*

Of all the subjects that the Bible speaks about, one of the most uncomfortable is with respect to money, wealth and our possessions. In today’s study, Jesus addresses the matter head on. We need to approach this with an open and reception heart to allow God’s Word to sink deeply into our very being. We should not be defensive, aggressive to a different opinion from our own or start making excuses to justify our current behaviors.

##### What is God’s View of Success?

A look into God’s Word quickly reveals that material blessings were given because God loved His people, not because they deserved or earned it. The blessings were withdrawn from those who used them foolishly and transferred to a more faithful steward. To be a success from a biblical perspective, some prerequisites must be met.

*“You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures” (James 4:3)*

- **Surrender**—Every successful servant of the Lord who was entrusted with material and spiritual rewards first demonstrated an acceptance of God’s Lordship. The list extends throughout the Scripture: Abraham, Noah, Nehemiah, David, Paul, even Solomon (who later strayed because of material riches) first demonstrated a surrender to God’s authority.
- **Obedience**—Those who are truly being blessed by God have demonstrated a willingness

to use their material resources for God. Literally, the more they trust God the more God is able to glorify Himself through them. An unwavering dedication to God's way is the mark of a true steward.

*"Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all" (2 Corinthians 9:13).*

**Persistency**—One attribute of a successful person is persistency in the face of problems. God wants Christians who don't give up easily. Too often today Christians who live by the "open door" doctrine give up whenever an obstacle is encountered. If all the doors were to be open and waiting, there would not be so many Scriptures directing us to "knock" (see Luke 11:10, 18:5). If God's people give up easily when faced with difficulties, the world will consider us losers. Nothing and nobody can shake a true believer from doing God's will once it is understood. The evidence of this can be observed in the lives of every servant who was ever used by God (see Esther 4:16; Nehemiah 6:11; Acts 21:13).

**Recognizing God's Will** - It seems evident that many Christians fall victim to worldly success motivation. They have a lot of drive and ambition, but they fail to recognize God's will for them and thus submit to the world's will. Often they spend too much time asking someone else about God's will for their lives, when it is God they should be asking. Many times others helped to point them in the right direction, but just as many tried to talk them out of doing God's will. God will reveal His plan to those who seek Him diligently. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight"* (Proverbs 3:5-6).

The difficulty is that although Christians sense God's will it might not agree with what they had in mind, particularly in regard to income and ego, and they rationalize out of it. For a while there is a feeling of loss, but with time it passes. The next time the direction is not quite as strong and it is easier to ignore. Eventually, God's call just fades away and the thorns choke out any further direction. *"The one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful"* (Matthew 13:22).

Once a Christian examines his or her life and discovers that the fruitfulness is gone (regardless of the income), it is certain that God's will has been bypassed, and another master has become Lord. *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hold the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth"* (Matthew 6:24). There are no quick, simple solutions to resolve this condition. Only earnest, honest prayer and petition will restore that sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's guidance.

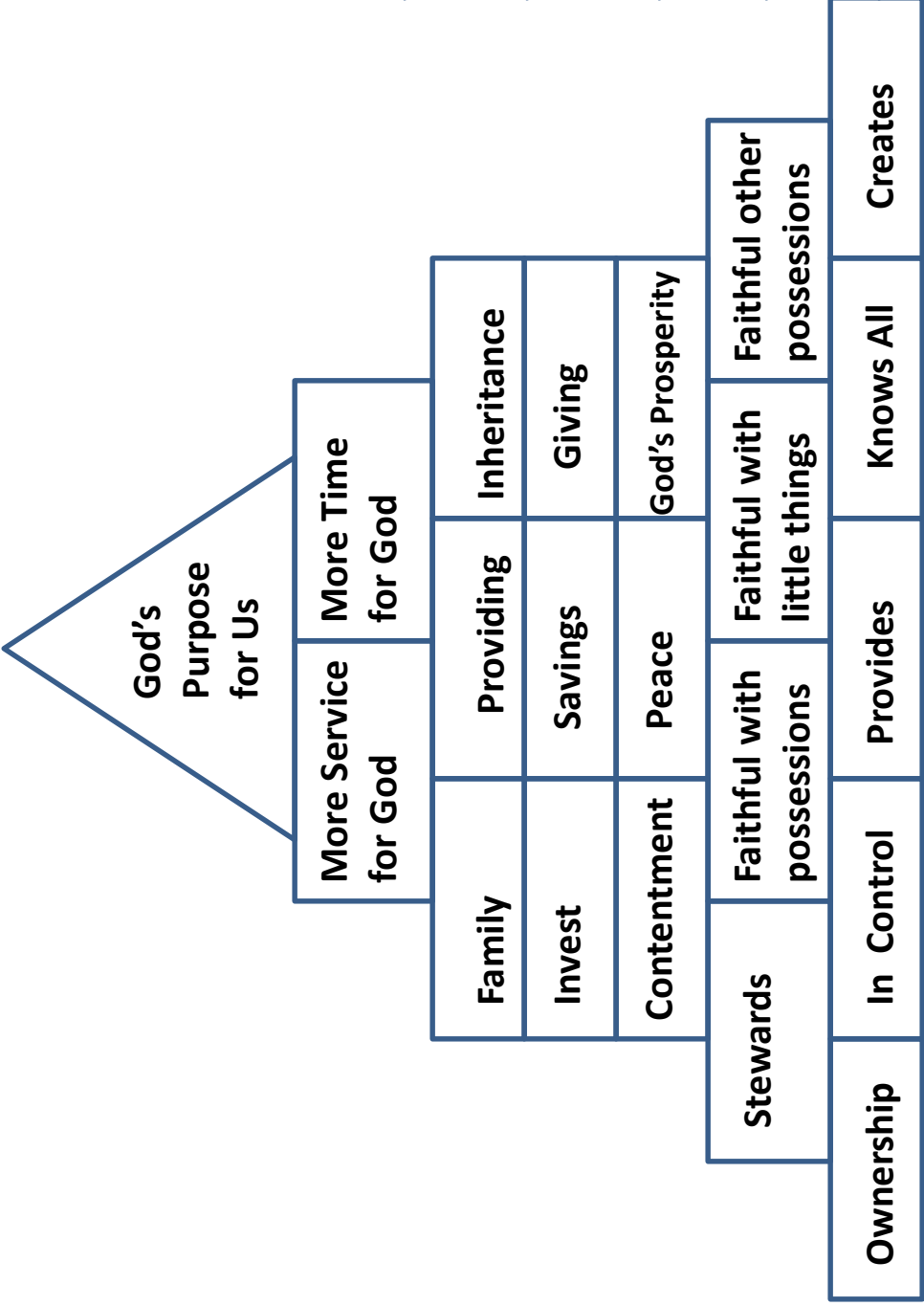
**Balance** - Even with the best discernment it's possible, and even probable, that we will do things that are out of God's will. Paul said that now we see dimly, as through a mirror, and therefore our spiritual vision will be imperfect. The key is not to let pride get in the way and say, "Well, it's just God's will." That imbalance is usually a rationalization for slothfulness or an inner doubt about God. Our attitude should be to thank God for showing us what doesn't work and get back to the task of discovering what does.

On the other side, a sure way to step out of God's path is to compromise His Word or His will for us and justify it by the obvious success it brings. Satan is quite willing and able to bless any plan that serves his purpose rather than God's. Only by staying in God's Word and seeking strong godly counsel can you avoid these traps. If you find yourself outside of God's will and are experiencing a lack of peace (spiritual deadness), you must be willing to abandon everything and seek God's path again.

# God's Foundation For Our Finances

God's Spending Priority

1. God
2. Save
3. Invest
4. Spend



Obeying God's Priority for Spending in Our Lives

## **Gods' Priority for Your Money Diagram**

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the primary warning from Jesus to his followers?
2. What key spiritual point was delivered from the parable told by Jesus?
3. Why is money or possessions so dangerous to our spiritual relationship with God? Why does this happen?
4. Does this or any other scripture say anything wrong with being rich or having possessions?
5. What is God's Spending Priority and Order? Why does the world and even Christians have the order totally inverted?
6. What is God's role in our finances, list 5 of them?
7. What is our role in our finances, list 4 of them?
8. What is God's promise to us if we obey and follow his word with respect to finances?
9. What items should we focus on to build the correct priorities with our money?

### **III. Responding in Prayer:**

Pray that we will take to heart that Jesus calls us to love, obey and hold fast to him and to love our neighbor as ourselves and that that attitude will flow into how we deal with our pursuits and possessions. Pray that we will continue to be a church that looks to assist those in need both corporately and individually. Pray that God will help meet financial needs in our congregation and community and that He will get the glory and that more people will be added to the body of Christ as a result.