**Small Group Study Guide:**

When God’s Story Becomes Yours Story: (5) You Give Generously

**2/5/11 A.M.** Luke 12:13-21, Luke 12:32-34

1) *Give to the poor… provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, A treasure in heaven that*

*will not be exhausted…where your treasure is there Will your* ***heart*** *be also. Luke 12:33b*

Giving often feels foolish. But Jesus says it is eternally sensible.

Ben Witherington speaks of three kinds of givers: flint givers, sponge givers, and

Honey-comb givers (See quote sheet, *Honey-Comb Givers*).

Have you ever met a honey-comb giver? What were they like?

What do you think is the secret to that sweetness which flows from their heart?

2) *Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed Luke 12:15*

John Ortberg cites a study that 89% of Americans think Americans are greedy.

The same study said that 89% of Americans think they need more to live happily.

These results suggest that most Americans operate on the philosophy:

*Everybody else is greedy but me, I just need more.*

Why do you think Jesus warns us against greed? (See “*Money Blindness”* quote)

What makes greed hard to detect?

3) *He thought to himself… I’ll say to myself Luke 12:17-19*

What is this man missing in his life? Explain. (See *Deciding at the Gate With Friends* quote)

4) *Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom Luke 12:32*

Read Psalm 23. What has David learned about God’s shepherding care?

Read Romans 8:31-32. What does Paul teach about God’s gracious heart toward you?

5)  *Rich toward God Luke 12:21*

Read John Ortberg’s quote *What It Means To Be Rich Toward God*

After reviewing Ortberg’s description of a generous life, to what extent have you been

seeking to live a life that is rich in God’s eyes?

How might you want to change this in the future?

Suggestion: Select one maxim from Ortbergs’ list and prayerfully seek to apply

That principle next week.

***Quote Sheet***

***Honey-Comb Givers***

After a discussion of how he tries to imitate his favorite songwriter Witherington says,

“In the same way, God’s generous virtuosity is meant to call forth the highest compliment we can give: to try to be like him, to give him glory and be glorified ourselves in the imitation. There are three kinds of givers. Some are like **flint**: they must be hammered to give anything, and then all that comes forth is sparks and chips. Some are like **sponges**: they must be squeezed to give anything, but the moment the squeezing stops, the water goes right back in. Some are like honeycomb: they ooze sweetness because of what they have become on the inside.”

--Ben Patterson, ***He Has Made Me Glad,*** 141

***Money Blindness***

Some years ago I was doing a seven-part series of talks on the Seven Deadly Sins at a men’s breakfast. My wife, Kathy, told me, “I’ll bet that the week you deal with greed you will have your lowest attendance.” She was right. People packed it out for “Lust” and “Wrath” and even for “Pride.” But nobody thinks they are greedy. As a pastor… I cannot recall anyone ever coming to me and saying, “I spend too much money on myself. I think my greedy lust for money is harming my family, my soul, and people around me.” Greed hides itself from the victim. The money god’s modus operandi includes blindness to your own heart….

Jesus warns people far more often about greed than sex, yet almost no one thinks they are guilty of it. Therefore we should all begin with a working hypothesis that “This could easily be a problem for me.”

--Timothy Keller, ***Counterfeit Gods,*** 52, 53

***Deciding at the Gate With Friends***

Kenneth Bailey is a Christian Bible teacher who has spent over 40 years living in the Middle East studying life in the kinds of villages which Jesus first taught these parables.

“One of the striking features of the traditional Middle Easterner is his gregarious, outgoing nature. Life is lived in tightly knit communities. The leading men of the village stil “sit at the gate” and spend literally years talking to one another. The slightest transaction is worthy of hours of discussion. They enjoy it. The elder always makes up his mind in community. For the Middle Eastern peasants reading this story it is obvious that if this man is talking to himself than he has no friends with whom he can exchange ideas. He wealth has created a solitary prison for him. The thinks that the total needs of the total person can be met by material possessions.

--Kenneth Bailey, ***Through Peasant Eyes,*** *64-65*

***What it Means to Be Rich Toward God***

* Being rich toward God means growing a soul that is increasingly healthy and good
* Being rich toward God means loving and enjoying the people around you
* Being rich toward God means learning about your gifts and passions and doing good work to help improve the world.
* Being rich toward God means becoming generous with your stuff.
* Being rich toward God means that which is *temporary* becomes the servant of that which is *eternal.*
* Being rich toward God means savoring (life) every roll of the dice and every trip around the board.

--John Ortberg, ***When the Game Is Over It All Goes Back in the Box,*** 27