

*“The True Meaning of Life!”*

## 1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. **George W. Truett**, a well-known pastor, was invited to dinner in the home of a very **wealthy man** in Texas. 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 punctuating the landscape, he 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 said, “That’s all mine.” - **Turning** east toward huge herds of cattle, he bragged, “They’re all mine.” - **Then** pointing to the west and a beautiful forest, he exclaimed, “That too is all mine.” He paused, expecting Dr. Truett to compliment him on his great success. Truett, however, placing one hand on the man’s shoulder and pointing heavenward with the other, simply said, “How much do you have in that direction?” The man hung his head and confessed, “I never thought of that.”<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2. **Q:** What is the true meaning of life?
- 1.3. **Q:** If someone gave you 10,000 this week, what would you do with it?
- 1.4. **Q:** How much do you have in that direction?
- 1.4.1. So many have learned how to **make** money but never learned how to **spend** it!
- 1.5. **Did you know:** [1] Jesus had more to say about **material possessions** than any other subject [2] Approx ½ **of the parables** deal with possessions [3] **1 out of 6** verses in Mt, Mrk, & Lk discuss **right handling** of material goods.
- 1.5.1. He emphasizes the principle of **INVESTMENT!**
- 1.5.2. “you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.” Mt.25:27

## 2. **COVETOUSNESS! (13-15)**

- 2.1. Imagine being so greedy that you would interrupt a sermon to ask for help to get more money!<sup>2</sup>
- 2.2. Breaking in on Jesus’ conversation...this brother cries **JUSTICE!**
- 2.2.1. But Jesus hears the real cry from his heart...**COVETOUSNESS!**
- 2.3. Remember the older brother’s portion was supposed to be **double** that of the younger. [but maybe his **claim** on it was **right**, but we know the **spirit** of it was **wrong!**]
- 2.4. **Isn’t Jesus going to judge?** – He was probably alluding to Exodus 2:14 where Moses appointed himself **ruler** and **judge** over his fellow Israelites.

<sup>1</sup> Our Daily Bread, October 24, 1992

<sup>2</sup> Warren Wiersbe; With The Word; pg.677.

- 2.4.1. Jesus didn't come into the world to do that kind of thing.  
 2.4.1.1. 'I am not here to deal with material substance & possessions in that way.'
- 2.4.2. Jesus rejects the role of arbitrator **in order to** probe the **attitude** motivating him. [He wants to get at **the moral issue** at hand!]
- 2.5. **Covetousness** is a combo of **greed** + **envy**.
- 2.5.1. It's the desire for **more & more**, often activated by wanting what **someone else has!**<sup>3</sup>
- 2.5.2. One day **Abraham Lincoln** was walking down the street with two small boys who were both crying loudly. A neighbor passing by inquired, "What's the matter, Abe? Why all the fuss?" Lincoln responded, "The trouble with these lads is what's wrong with the world; one has a nut and the other wants it!"
- 2.5.3. In the garden man had **all** trees, God had **one**.  
 And man wasn't content until he had **that one** also!
- 2.6. **Covetousness** comes in many forms: [2 main ones]
- 2.6.1. [1] **Holding too tightly** with what is already possessed!
- 2.6.2. [2] **Grasping for more**.
- 2.7. **Covetousness** comes with a double warning:
- 2.7.1. **Take heed & beware**.
- 2.7.2. It has a **stealthy approach**(creeps up on you), & it has a **terrible end**.  
 2.7.2.1. So, be careful **how it begins**, & **how it ends**.
- 2.8. **Covetousness** is self 1<sup>st</sup> in everything.
- 2.9. **Q: Can you think of biblical examples of covetousness that led to loss?**
- 2.9.1. Loss of innocence, loss of life; led to murder, adultery, lies ?  
 2.9.1.1. How about Achon, or David.

### 3. **INVESTMENTS! (16-21)**

- 3.1. **NO PROBLEMO!**
- 3.2. He **doesn't** criticize the man for:
- 3.3. [1] **Being Rich** – Gained it honestly. Good piece of ground. Farmed it well.  
 3.3.1. He did not gain his goods wrongly, sin came **after** the gain.
- 3.4. [2] **For Saving** – **See** Joseph example in Gen.41 [Joseph saved *for others!*]  
 3.4.1. It is not a sin to **have**, only to **hoard!**
- 3.5. [3] **For Planning** – With prospect of a good harvest he wanted to plan for it.  
 3.5.1. Still good...but it was **how** he planned!
- 3.6. **THE PROBLEMS!**
- 3.7. [1] He thought about **his** bounty, **his** barns, **his** goods.  
 3.7.1. **My crops, my barns, my crops, my goods, my soul**.  
 3.7.2. He was a little **Myopic**[lacking in foresight: showin a lack of foresight, long-term planning]

<sup>3</sup> Shepherd's Notes; pg.47.

- 3.8. [2] He didn't recognize **God** as the **real owner**.
- 3.8.1. Deut.8:18 "And you shall remember the **LORD** your **God**, for *it is He who gives you power to get wealth.*"
- 3.8.2. There is difficulty storing goods, but he consulted no one.
- 3.9. [3] He was a pleasure seeker who **lived only for** material things.
- 3.9.1. It's often asked when a wealthy man dies, "*how much did he leave behind?*" And the answer of course is always... "**Everything!**"
- 3.9.1.1. One Answered, "*he left all behind except himself...but he was worthless!*"
- 3.9.2. See, when we ask "*how much is one worth*" we should be talking about one's **character** & not one's possessions!
- 3.10. [4] He was called a **fool** because he left God out of his life. (Have U left God out?)
- 3.10.1. Like a crack of thunder *God said to him, Fool!*
- 3.10.2. **Fool** = one who is utterly devoid of mind, one who lacks good sense or judgment.
- 3.11. [5] He missed the **true meaning of life** by giving himself wholly to **getting & spending**.
- 3.11.1. Worldly goods cannot keep your soul alive.
- 3.11.1.1. In this case **abundance** is no better than mere **sufficiency**.<sup>4</sup>
- 3.11.2. A ship should be in water, not water in the ship.
- 3.11.2.1. So with possessions... **We should possess them, but not let them possess us!**
- 3.12. **SAD ENDING!**
- 3.13. With **infinite satire**, wrought with **eternal compassion** Jesus said, "*then whose will those things be?*"
- 3.13.1. He made 2 fatal errors: He assumed he had many years to live, & He assumed material goods can satisfy the soul.
- 3.13.2. Prov.27:23,24 "**Be diligent to know** the state of your flocks, And **attend** to your herds; **For riches are not forever, Nor does a crown endure to all generations.**"
- 3.14. **Rich** in earthly possessions, but entered eternity as a **pauper**.
- 3.15. Note vs.21 is for everyone of us(see "*who*" i.e. *whoever*).
- 3.15.1. **Today we need to take this caution to heart!**
- 3.15.2. The use or misuse of \$ is in our **heart attitudes**.
- 3.15.3. See, it's possible to buy many books & still be illiterate!
- 3.16. He thought of **years**, but could not reckon on **one night!**<sup>5</sup>
- 3.16.1. "**It is certain we can carry nothing out**" 1 Tim.6:7

<sup>4</sup> Griffith Thomas; pg.215

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

- 3.17. **In Jesus' day** – a person would **accumulate wealth** by: purchasing costly **garments & cloth**; **or** buy collecting **coins** & burying them or hiding them in your houses mud walls.
- 3.17.1. **The problem**: **moths** could eat the garments; coins could **rust**; & **thieves** could dig into the wall & take it.
- 3.17.2. So, one sure way to invest is to invest by **“laying up treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”**
- 3.18. If we dedicate our heart to the Lord, our \$ will follow.
- 3.18.1. **Heart** in Scripture = more than affections.
- 3.18.1.1. It encompasses our whole **“spiritual & intellectual being”**.
- 3.18.2. Thus, our heavenly treasure is **moth-proofed, rust-proofed**, & is stored in a **thief-proof** vault.
- 3.19. **Q: How is your life influenced by your earthly & heavenly treasures?**
- 3.19.1. **Earthly** – by having to make, plan, spend, & invest wisely.
- 3.19.2. **Heavenly** – in sending them ahead it gives me: peace of mind, security for the future, & knowing...it brings God pleasure!
- 3.20. **Q: What are 3 ways you can make sure you are “rich toward God”?**
- 3.20.1. Stewardship of all my **Time, Talents, & Treasures!**
- 3.21. If life is first and foremost spiritual, not what it **has** but what it **is** counts!
- 3.22. Here is where all **hope** lies...if today you recognize these distinctions & change!
- 3.22.1. **Q: Are you ready to center your life on spiritual things & no longer on material things?**
- 3.22.2. **Don't store up earthly riches and ignore a relationship with God!**
- 3.23. **Q: How much do you have in that direction?**

**Leo Tolstoy** once wrote a story about a successful peasant farmer who was not satisfied with his lot. He wanted more of everything. One day he received a novel offer. For 1000 rubles, he could buy all the land he could walk around in a day. The only catch in the deal was that he had to be back at his starting point by sundown. Early the next morning he started out walking at a fast pace. By midday he was very tired, but he kept going, covering more and more ground. Well into the afternoon he realized that his greed had taken him far from the starting point. He quickened his pace and as the sun began to sink low in the sky, he began to run, knowing that if he did not make it back by sundown the opportunity to become an even bigger landholder would be lost. As the sun began to sink below the horizon he came within sight of the finish line. Gasping for breath, his heart pounding, he called upon every bit of strength left in his body and staggered across the line just before the sun disappeared. He immediately collapsed, blood streaming from his mouth. In a few minutes he was dead. Afterwards, his servants dug a grave. It was not much over six feet long and three feet wide. The title of Tolstoy's story was: **How Much Land Does a Man Need?** Bits and Pieces, November, 1991

One family put up a hummingbird feeder with 4 feeding stations. Almost immediately it became popular with the hummingbirds that live in our area. 2, 3, or even 4 birds would feed at 1 time. We refilled the feeder at least once a day. Suddenly the usage decreased to almost nothing. The feeder needed filling only about once a week. **The reason** for the decreased usage soon became apparent. **A male bird had taken over the feeder as his property. He is now the only hummingbird who uses our feeder.** He feeds and then sits in a nearby tree, rising to attack any bird that approaches his feeder. Guard duty occupies his every waking hour. He is an effective guard. The only time another bird gets to use the feeder is when the **self-appointed owner** is momentarily gone to chase away an intruder.

By choosing to assume ownership of the feeder, he is forfeiting his freedom. He is tied to the work of guarding his feeder. He is possessed by his possession. His freedom of action is as circumscribed as if he were in a cage. He is caged by a situation he has created.

W. L. Barnes, Free As a Bird.