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Is Christianity a Greedy Religion?

Luke 12:15: (NASB) *Then he said to them, Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.*

Jesus loves you! This is a true, simple and potentially life changing statement. Once we accept what that three-word sentence means, it can become a steering mechanism for every day of our lives, pointing us to righteousness, godliness and self-sacrifice. Jesus loves you. Pointed and refreshing, but what does it really mean? Does Jesus' love for us guide us in our everyday experiences? Yes! Does his love for us mean that he wants the best for us? Of course! Okay, so if he wants the best for us, does that refer to comfort and abundance in our lives? Does Jesus' love for us bring us to better living conditions, more financial stability, a much better present and a brighter future? The answers to these questions will vary wildly depending on whose brand of Christianity you look at, and this just confuses the matter. Instead of asking different Christians about the role of comfort and abundance in a Christian's life, let's find the answer from Jesus' teachings and the Apostles' words.

Our Premise: Jesus wants us to live abundantly! What is Christian abundance? It is not what many people think and is very well-defined in Scripture.

We will begin by looking at a perspective we are *not* in favor of.

Introduction, *Megachurch False Pastors Living Like Rock Stars, I-Squad*

A megachurch is an American term for a Protestant Christian church with an unusually large congregation, having 2,000 or more people in average weekend attendance. We will be discussing the principles of what is behind many megachurches and the principles of Christ.

Jesus had a pointed experience with a man who had an inheritance question. This occurs right after he explained the sacredness of the Holy Spirit and a few verses later he said, *the very hairs of your head are numbered:*

Luke 12:13: (NASB) *Someone in the crowd said to him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.*

(Source: Biblical commentary by Adam Clarke) Among the Jews, the children had the inheritance of their fathers divided among them; the eldest had a double portion, but all the rest had equal parts. It is likely the person complained of in the text was the elder brother; and he wished to keep the whole to himself – a case which is far from being uncommon. The spirit of covetousness cancels all bonds and obligations, makes wrong right, and cares nothing for father or brother.

The oldest brother in a family would normally inherit a double portion. Perhaps this event is a younger brother complaining that his brother received twice as much. He possibly wanted to know if Jesus saw the injustice also.

We will be following the parable from Jesus in Luke 12 to learn what Jesus teaches about Christian abundance.

It is hard to say if there is any injustice here or simply an attempt to get more:

Luke 12:14: (NASB) *But he said to him, Man, who appointed me a judge or arbitrator (an apportioner or administrator) over you?*

(Source: Biblical commentary by James Coffman) Although no fault could be found with this man's request, Christ absolutely refused to accede to it. Jesus did not approach the problems of social injustice by an assault upon established institutions. He did not take the man's part against those who had wronged him.

Why would Jesus not get involved? Would his wise reasoning and judgment not have resolved the issue? The following Scripture is nearing the time of Jesus' crucifixion and he explains his role in the world. John 18:35-36: Jesus did not get involved because he knew it was not his place to get involved. Christians, take note!

John 14:2-3: CHRISTIAN ABUNDANCE LESSON ONE: THE SOURCE OF OUR ABUNDANCE IS ENTIRELY FROM OUR ETERNAL ZIP CODE! Our Christian abundance is a heavenly reward.



The megachurches want to grow and attract people so they teach, "Jesus wants you to have what is best for you materially." This causes confusion for many people.

His very next statement is one that begins to give context to his answer: Luke 12:15: Notice how specific this statement is: *Beware* (discern clearly), *and be on your guard* (watch) *against every form* (all, any, every) *of greed* (avarice, fraudulency, extortion). **Jesus is clear: Be painfully aware and informed of what greed is in all its forms. Why?** Luke 12:15: This is one of the most profound tests for someone who has abundance! Having a lot is not necessarily a sin. What you *do* with the abundance is the question.

Observation: The tenor of Jesus' answer perhaps leans toward the questioner having asked for Jesus' help to gain a greater share than he may have been entitled to.

Jesus is saying everything we imagine about a wealthy life *can be deceiving*, for our lives consist of much greater treasures than any earthly possessions we could ever hope for or hold.

Remember the parable of the sower? Luke 8:14: This goes back to the comment from our caller from Georgia. The true value of Christianity gets lost when looking at the wealth. The seeds that fall among the thorns take a little root but they do not have enough strength to grow. Too many other things get in the way.

CHRISTIAN ABUNDANCE LESSON TWO: THE ATTRACTIVENESS AND POWER OF EARTHLY ABUNDANCE MAY EASILY SERVE TO DISTRACT AND DESTROY THE OVERWHELMING BLESSINGS OF SPIRITUAL ABUNDANCE.

Airport and planes, Megachurch False Pastors Living Like Rock Stars, I-Squad

As is usual for Jesus, he does not stop here but now begins to tell a story that will reinforce the power and importance of his answer: Luke 12:16-17: Jesus uses a parable and the character in the story to teach a moral, spiritual and life lesson.

Observations: This rich man would presumably be wealthy through honest work and gain. The productivity of his land would presumably be a result of meticulous attention and work. His thoughts would also be the wishes of anyone who is not wealthy - "I have SO much!" It is beginning to look like it is all about him and him alone.

CHRISTIAN ABUNDANCE LESSON THREE: THE ATTRACTIVENESS AND POWER OF EARTHLY ABUNDANCE MAY EASILY BECOME A SELF-ABSORBING ENDEAVOR AND THE FOCUS TO BECOME ATTRACTIVE AND POWERFUL IN THE EYES OF MEN.

Tax free - no cure, Megachurch False Pastors Living Like Rock Stars, I-Squad

It sounds like the congregation is under a spell. The congregations are under a "good spell" of a good talker and not the gospel. **Perhaps we should find other "self-fulfilling prophecies" to focus on:** Ecclesiastes 11:1-2: Be generous! Christians are supposed to *cast their bread on the surface of the waters* and have an attitude of giving. There is a difference between giving something your attention and giving it your focus.

Luke 12:18: **Observations:** Barns and storage already exist, but this is now an opportunity bigger, better and more powerful than any before.

For those who follow Christ, where and how should we be seeking our opportunity?

Proverbs 19:20-21: The important thing for Christians is *the counsel of the LORD* - what God is teaching us through Jesus.

- Plans must be carefully laid and thought deeply upon to house this abundance.

Our time is not our own. What process should we follow to lay out and think upon plans for life? James 4:13-17: Our homework assignment is to look up this Scripture and read it again because it will help us make the right decisions when faced with the things of life. We always need to look for the Lord's will.

CHRISTIAN ABUNDANCE LESSON FOUR: THE ATTRACTIVENESS AND POWER OF EARTHLY ABUNDANCE AND THE TIME AND EFFORT IT REQUIRES ARE NATURAL DETRACTORS FROM OUR ATTENDANCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE.



Jesus did not have a place to lay his head. He went through life without earthly possessions. He started his life with a robe at baptism and ended his life with that same robe at his crucifixion.

Let's go back to the previous Luke Scripture and make another observation: Luke 12:18:

- "I" and "my" are mentioned six times in this verse alone. He is not including anyone but himself. That is what happens with the power of abundance.


Our focus and attention should absolutely be upward first: James 4:6-10: *God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.* Having riches is not the sin, it is the attitude in which you manage those riches. The true "god" in our life is determined by to who or what we pay the most attention.

- No mention of a sacrifice of thanksgiving or of giving to those in need.

James 1:17-18

CHRISTIAN ABUNDANCE LESSON FIVE: THE ATTRACTIVENESS AND POWER OF EARTHLY ABUNDANCE ARE ENABLERS OF EGO, AND THAT ENABLING DISABLES OUR TRUE FOCUS - SELFLESSNESS, SPIRITUALITY AND CHRISTLIKENESS.

When our egos are enabled, that disables our true focus. In Joshua 24:15 Joshua says, *Choose you this day whom ye will serve.* Are you going to serve God or the gods of this world?

 **Copeland interview, Megachurch False Pastors Living Like Rock Stars, I-Squad**

We disagree with that lifestyle being scriptural for a Christian! It is not the church of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the church of a "good spell" cast by a good talker!

James 1:5-6: We see a strong contrast between the gospel of prosperity and the gospel of Jesus. What are we giving to the Lord? Should you be paid for the work you do in the gospel or have a house given to you for the work you do in the gospel? Do Christianity and greed ever belong together? No! Where is your heart and what are you doing with what you have?

The same megachurch money problems exist throughout the world - this one is in Australia:

 **Eternal life - no tax, Another Greedy Megachurch Twisting Scripture**

You cannot be focused on accumulating earthly things and continue to grow spiritually. The important thing is what you do with what you have accumulated.

Luke 12:19: He is saying, "I have done a good job for me!" There is nothing wrong with doing well and supporting your family. The important point is, *where is your heart?*

Observations: The arrogance that *can* come with earthly abundance shuts out the needs of the world around us.

God knew right from Israel's beginning that He wanted to bless them *in basket and in store*. He also knew the dangers of such blessing and warned them early on: Deuteronomy 8:11-18: How easily might we forget the power of God in our lives when we have abundance?

- The imagination that *can* come out of earthly abundance creates a false sense of security.

If my church is telling me that riches are my destiny, what happens to my instinctive leaning on God?

- The ease that can come from earthly abundance creates an undisciplined and meaningless life.

Israel had dramatic history to rely upon when they needed to reassess their godliness. God took care of their needs as they wandered for 40 years. God takes care of our needs, not our wants.

CHRISTIAN ABUNDANCE LESSON SIX: THE ATTRACTIVENESS AND POWER OF EARTHLY ABUNDANCE MAY LULL OUR ENABLED EGOES INTO A CARELESS SLEEP FILLED WITH SELF-CENTERED DREAMS!

Luke 12:20: **Observations:** The reality of the foolishness of a misapplied earthly abundance focus is harsh.



God was specific and clear - He must come first in the lives of His chosen people Israel:
Deuteronomy 8:19

For the Christian, it is the same and nothing in our lives should ever obstruct our view of God: Mark 12:29-31: God must come first for Israel and for spiritual Israel (those who are following in Jesus' footsteps as closely as possible.)

- The irresponsibility that may develop from earthly abundance is embarrassing.

Think of being one who was part of the deliverance of Israel and then ignoring your deliverer: Deuteronomy 8:20: We have also been miraculously delivered - the same lesson applies!

CHRISTIAN ABUNDANCE LESSON SEVEN: THE ATTRACTIVENESS AND POWER OF EARTHLY ABUNDANCE CAN BE UTTERLY TOXIC TO A CHRISTIAN - "HOW HARDLY CAN A RICH MAN ENTER THE KINGDOM..."



Slick and self-created, Another Greedy Megachurch Twisting Scripture

Tithing is *not* scriptural. There has never been a Christian command for us to tithe. Tithing was never about money - it was for crops and animals that were needed to help others. Tithing was for Israel and not for Christianity. **Please see the CQ Rewind Full Edition Bonus Material for information on tithing.**

To understand and to handle earthly abundance we first need blessing from on high: James 3:16-18 Philippians 4:11,12 **Managing earthly abundance also requires us as Christians to not make up new rules as we go:** 1 Timothy 6:3-9: Is your church teaching you to seek after wealth? Jesus never taught us to do that. Stay on target with doctrine, look out for those who would abuse Christianity for their own gain and master the art of contentment.

How do we become rich toward God? The dominating factor in your life must be how to be like Jesus and walk in his footsteps. Luke 12:21: We must be aware of the effect of our possessions and realize they can easily derail our purpose in life. Use what you have for the glory of God. There are examples of those in Scripture who were well-off and still acceptable before God.

James 2:1-3: There is no difference in the body of Christ between wealthy and poor. They can come together on equal footing.



New way to tithe, Another Greedy Megachurch Twisting Scripture

So, what are the godly riches we ought to strive toward?

Generous giving, acceptance, service and contentment: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15: The Apostle Paul worked for a living and supported himself. He collected for the poor and he never took anything for himself. Our abundance is in what we give, not what we get! Out of that giving attitude comes the acceptance of God's supplies so we can continue our giving.

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Contribution and thanksgiving - our abundance is reflected in the glory that goes to God, not to us.



Tithing explained, Another Greedy Megachurch Twisting Scripture

Contentment: Luke 12:27-32

CHRISTIAN ABUNDANCE LESSON EIGHT: THE ATTRACTIVENESS AND POWER OF SPIRITUAL ABUNDANCE IS IMMEASURABLY DEEPER, STRONGER AND LONGER LASTING THAN ANY OTHER ABUNDANCE.

Put aside the earthly things and focus on the spiritual. Bring glory to God!

*So, is Christianity a greedy religion?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*