



SHELBY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

WEALTH THAT WORKS: REDEFINING SUCCESS

LUKE 12:12-31, 1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19, PROVERBS 11:24-25 * 1/11/2026

MAIN POINT

Success should be defined by God's standards instead of ours.

INTRODUCTION

When you are afraid you might fail at something, how do you tend to respond? Do you tend to dig your heels in and try harder? Or do you bow out?

What is success? How would you define it?

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 12:13-21

What request does someone make of Jesus in verse 13, and how does Jesus respond?

What warning does Jesus give in verse 15?

Why does Jesus emphasize that “life does not consist in an abundance of possessions”?

What is the contrast between the rich fool’s focus and God’s perspective on wealth?

How does this passage illustrate the dangers of greed and self-centered planning?

What does it mean that the rich man “was not rich toward God” (v. 21)?

Jesus warns against greed and the false security that comes from wealth. When someone asks Him to mediate a family inheritance dispute, He redirects the focus from material gain to the condition of the heart, teaching that life is not measured by possessions. He illustrates this with the parable of the rich fool, a man who hoards his abundant crops without recognizing God or considering others. The rich man’s life ends suddenly, and his wealth cannot save him. The passage emphasizes that true security comes from being “rich toward God” through generosity, dependence on Him, and prioritizing eternal values over temporary wealth.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19

What does it mean to “put their hope in God” rather than in riches?

Why does Paul link generosity and good works to laying “a firm foundation for the future”?

How does Paul redefine success and security compared to worldly perspectives?

How are these actions connected to “true life” or lasting value?

Paul instructs wealthy believers not to place their hope in riches, which are temporary, but to trust in God, the true provider. He calls them to be generous, engage in good works, and share with others, using their resources to bless and serve. By doing so, they lay up a “firm foundation” for the future—investing in eternal treasures rather than temporary wealth. The passage emphasizes that true security and significance come from God and a life lived in faithful stewardship.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PROVERBS 11:24-25

What contrast does the passage make between those who give freely and those who hold back?

What does it mean that a generous person “will be enriched,” while the one who withholds will “come to poverty”?

Why do you think generosity is connected to both personal blessing and the blessing of others?

How does this proverb illustrate the principle of sowing and reaping in a spiritual or practical sense?

What might it mean to be “refreshed” by generosity? How does this go beyond material wealth?

How does this teaching relate to God’s character and His desire for His people?

How does verse 25 describe the impact of a generous heart on others?

These verses highlight the blessings of generosity and the risks of selfishness. Those who give freely and generously are enriched and experience abundant life, while those who withhold out of greed or fear ultimately face lack. A generous person not only benefits personally but also refreshes and blesses others, illustrating that giving creates a cycle of blessing that extends beyond oneself.

APPLICATION

In what ways can people today be “rich toward themselves” rather than “rich toward God”?

How can we cultivate generosity, contentment, and dependence on God in our daily lives?

Have you ever been tempted to find security in material wealth? How do you personally struggle with putting hope in God rather than material possessions?

How can you apply the principle of being “rich toward God” in your family, church, or community?

How can your use of resources reflect eternal priorities rather than temporary gain?

How can your family, small group, or church embody the principle of generosity Paul describes?

PRAYER

COMMENTARY

Luke 12:13-21

Luke 12:13–21 records Jesus’ teaching on greed and the proper use of wealth, delivered in response to a man who asks Him to intervene in a family inheritance dispute. Jesus’ response shifts the focus from material concerns to the condition of the heart, emphasizing the spiritual dangers of greed.

vv. 13–15 Jesus begins by cautioning, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness,” teaching that life does not consist in an abundance of possessions. He reframes the man’s request from a legal or financial matter into a moral and spiritual lesson. True life—meaningful, secure, and abundant life—cannot be measured by wealth or material gain.

vv. 16–21 To illustrate His point, Jesus tells the story of a man who amasses great wealth, storing up grain and goods to secure his future. The man’s priorities are entirely self-centered; he focuses on personal comfort and security without regard for God or others. The parable ends with a sudden divine judgment: “This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?”

Greed is spiritually dangerous: Accumulating wealth for self-indulgence leads to spiritual emptiness. Life is not in possessions: Earthly security is fleeting; wealth cannot save or satisfy the soul. Be “rich toward God”: True security and value come from living in alignment with God’s purposes, being generous, and prioritizing eternal treasures over temporary gain.

This passage challenges believers to examine their priorities and attitudes toward money. It calls for stewardship, generosity, and reliance on God rather than self-centered accumulation. In a culture that often equates success with wealth, Jesus’ teaching reminds us that life’s true measure is faithfulness to God and care for others.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

Paul addresses wealthy believers, offering guidance on how they are to view and use their material resources. His instructions are both corrective and encouraging, emphasizing the proper posture toward wealth in light of God’s eternal purposes.

v. 17 Paul warns the rich not to be “conceited” or to place their hope in wealth, which is unstable and fleeting. Instead, they are to put their trust in God, who provides everything richly for our enjoyment. This aligns with broader biblical teaching that security and identity must rest in God, not in possessions (see also Luke 12:15).

v. 18 Believers are called to be “rich in good deeds,” generous, and willing to share. This is the practical outworking of a heart that trusts God: wealth becomes a tool for blessing others and advancing God’s kingdom rather than a source of pride or self-reliance. Generosity also combats the temptation toward greed, which Paul warns against elsewhere (vv. 9–10).

v. 19 By investing in others through good works and generosity, believers “lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age.” Paul emphasizes that true security and reward are eternal, not temporal. What we do with our resources now has lasting spiritual significance.

This passage challenges modern Christians to view wealth as a means to serve God and others rather than as a source of personal security or status. Trusting God, practicing generosity, and investing in eternal values are marks of a life that honors Him. It also reminds the church that spiritual maturity includes the responsible and kingdom-focused use of material blessings.

Proverbs 11:24-25

These verses offer a clear teaching on generosity and the principles of giving in both practical and spiritual terms.

v. 24 The contrast between giving and withholding: The proverb begins by contrasting two attitudes: one who gives freely and one who withholds. The generous person “will be enriched,” indicating that giving often results in blessing—materially, spiritually, or relationally. In contrast, those who hoard out of greed or fear “come to poverty,” showing that selfishness ultimately leads to lack, not security. This verse emphasizes that life is not improved by accumulation alone but by wise, generous stewardship.

v. 25 The refreshing power of generosity : Verse 25 highlights the impact of a generous heart on others: “Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.” Generosity refreshes both the giver and the recipient. This reflects a principle that giving—whether time, resources, or encouragement—creates a cycle of blessing and vitality. It is not just a material exchange but also an emotional and spiritual refreshment.

Generosity reflects trust in God’s provision, acknowledging that life is ultimately sustained by Him. Giving fosters community and strengthens relationships, demonstrating care for others. Selfishness may seem secure, but it is ultimately spiritually and relationally impoverishing.

Believers are encouraged to cultivate generosity in every area of life—financial, emotional, and relational. By giving freely, we reflect God’s heart, invest in eternal purposes, and experience the joy and blessing that come from blessing others.