

Luke 12:13-21 Rich Toward God?

The wealthy farmer in Jesus' story was not immoral or dishonest—he was successful and outwardly blessed—but his fatal mistake was the orientation of his heart.

What does it mean to be rich toward God? Based on Jesus' parable it is the opposite of laying up earthly treasure and comforts for yourself. Being rich toward God is the opposite of treating yourself as though you were made for things and not for God. Being rich toward God is the opposite of acting as if life consists in the abundance of possessions and comforts.

Three Key aspects of being Rich Toward God

1. **To treasure God Himself** is to be rich toward God by valuing knowing Christ above all the gifts He gives. As Paul declares, everything else is loss compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ (Philippians 3:8-9). The rich fool trusted temporary wealth to give him rest and security, but Paul was captivated by a far greater vision: a life transformed by God's glory, caught up in his love and eternal kingdom.
2. **To be rich toward God is to love and treasure God's family**, recognizing that true spiritual wealth is found not in independence but in belonging to the household of God. Scripture teaches that we come to know Christ's love fully only *with* others, as that love is embodied through shared life marked by patience, forgiveness, burden-bearing, and truth spoken in love. While the rich fool sought security through self-sufficiency, God offers lasting security through participation in His eternal family—the church, which Christ loves and gave Himself for as part of God's eternal plan. (Eph 2:19-22, Eph 3:10-18, Eph 5:25-27).
3. **To be rich toward God is to pursue God's kingdom** by living with eternity in view rather than treating this life as the final horizon. Jesus and Paul consistently redirect our hearts from temporary, visible wealth to the unseen and lasting riches of God's kingdom, calling us to live now in light of resurrection and future glory. This kingdom focus does not lead to withdrawal, but to wiser, more purposeful living—discerning God's will, being filled with the Spirit, and becoming a worshiping, thankful, mutually submitting community of disciples. Unlike the rich fool, who used abundance to secure ease and retreat from responsibility, those who are rich toward God are drawn deeper into God's work and God's people as active citizens and ambassadors of His kingdom.

Historically believers have cultivated hearts and lives that are rich toward God by:

Treasuring God

- Practicing regular Sabbath rest
- Daily contemplative prayer (acknowledging God's presence)
- Unhurried meditation on Scripture (beholding Christ)

Loving His family

- Regular table fellowship (shared meals)
- Open sharing, conversation, and prayer around God's Word
- Sharing in the joys and challenges of everyday life by practicing hospitality and generosity

Seeking His Kingdom

- Regular intentional service to the vulnerable (poor, widows, those in need)
- Practicing diligence and simplicity using everyday work and resources to serve God's kingdom purposes
- Grace-filled storytelling about Jesus in everyday life

Questions to work through together:

1. Which one of these practices has helped you love Jesus, his family, and his kingdom more? (What has it looked like in your everyday life?)
2. Which one is hardest for you right now—or one you don't do very often—and how could you practice it more this year?
3. What would it look like for our church to lean into these practices for cultivating hearts that are rich toward God?