



St John the Evangelist Bromley

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Bible Discussion Groups - Autumn 2021

Life Lessons from Luke

Session 4: Anxiety and priorities

Warm-up Quiz

Jesus said, "Where your *treasure* is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:34). So let's get started with a quiz about treasures!

1. Published in 1942, Enid Blyton's *Five on a Treasure Island* was the first book to feature which intrepid group of children?
2. Who in 1852 published a book of English synonyms under the title *thesaurus* (the Latin word for *treasure*)?
3. Can you complete the title of the 1948 western film directed by John Huston and starring Humphrey Bogart: *The Treasure of the S_____ M_____*.
4. The most popular exhibition in the history of the British Museum ran from March to December 1972 and drew 1.6 million visitors. It featured Egyptian antiquities and was called *Treasures of...?*
5. Which adventure story, originally serialized in 1881 and 1882 in a children's magazine, is subtitled *The Mutiny of the Hispaniola* and features the pirate Long John Silver?
6. In 1671 Colonel Thomas Blood attempted to steal part of *which* world-famous collection of treasures?

Come along to... St John's Winter Warmer!

Saturday 27th November 11am to 1pm

Hot food and drink with indoor and outdoor stalls

Passages for small group study

Luke 12:13-34 NIV

12 ¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' ¹⁴ Jesus replied, 'Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?' ¹⁵ Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.'

¹⁶ And he told them this parable: 'The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, "What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops."

¹⁸ 'Then he said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. ¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

²⁰ 'But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"

²¹ 'This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God.'

²² Then Jesus said to his disciples: 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: they do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! ²⁵ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? ²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

²⁷ 'Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you – you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

³² 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

1. At the start of the story (verses 16-17) the rich man has a problem. What is the problem and how serious is it? Do we ever have problems like this?
2. How does the man feel when the problem is solved? Is there anything wrong with his attitude? If so, what should he have done instead? What is the lesson for us?
3. How many times in verses 22-31 does Jesus use the word *worry*? Why does he condemn worrying so strongly? What does he tell us to focus on instead of worrying?
4. How does Jesus' command to *sell your possessions* (verse 33) relate to what he has already said about possessions in verse 15, and to the parable in verses 16-21? How do you think we should apply this?
5. Many people feel that Jesus' commands in this passage are very challenging, but they are designed to apply to everyday situations. Choose one or two of these scenarios and try to work out how you would respond in line with Jesus' commands:
 - a. Mr A has a high-paid City job but says he plans to give it all up, sell his possessions and live in a tent in the Kent countryside. He says he wants to take seriously Jesus' command in Luke 12:22 not to worry what he will eat or what he will wear.
 - b. Miss B is nearing retirement age and is very worried about her financial provision for the future. She has never saved any money or taken out a pension plan because as a student she heard an enthusiastic preacher condemn such things, based on the parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-21).
 - c. Mr C is proud of his unhealthy lifestyle, eating lots of fatty food and never taking exercise. He says he is applying Jesus' words in Luke 12:25 about the pointlessness of trying to extend one's lifespan.
 - d. Mrs D is de-cluttering her house, taking what she calls "my treasures" (boxes and bags of old rubbish) to the charity shop (but mainly to the dump). She says that obeying Jesus' commands has never felt better.
6. How well do you think you can obey these commands of Jesus in your daily life? Pray for God's help to follow Jesus in the week ahead.

Anxiety and priorities – some quotations (not from the Bible!)

1. Your days are numbered. Use them to throw open the windows of your soul to the sun. If you do not, the sun will soon set, and you with it.

Marcus Aurelius (121-180AD), Roman emperor and philosopher

2. Action expresses priorities.

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian independence leader

3. Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business, is only to be sustained by perpetual neglect of many other things.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94), Scottish novelist

4. Do the hard jobs first. The easy jobs will take care of themselves.

Dale Carnegie (1888-1955), American management guru

5. Most of us spend too much time on what is urgent and not enough time on what is important. Doing more things faster is no substitute for doing the right things.

Stephen R Covey (1932-2012), best-selling author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

6. What seems so necessary today may not even be desirable tomorrow.

Martin Luther King (1929-68), American civil rights leader

7. Living in light of eternity changes your priorities.

Rick Warren (1954-), California megachurch founder

8. The will of God is not something you add to your life. It's a course you choose. You either line yourself up with the Son of God... or you capitulate to the principle which governs the rest of the world.

Elisabeth Elliot (1926-2015), Christian speaker whose missionary husband Jim Elliot was murdered in 1956 in Ecuador