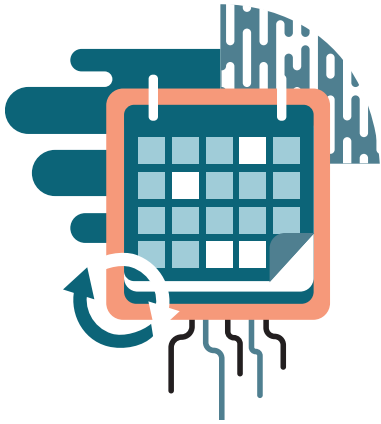


Daily Devotions



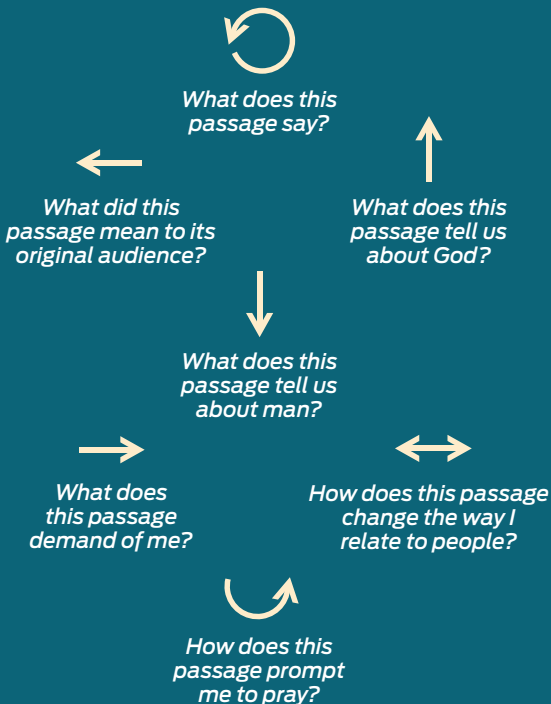
Day 1

Luke 12:13-21

In this passage, a young man, acting more like a little kid, asks a question regarding a dispute between siblings. In short, he wants Jesus to tell his brother to share his inheritance. No doubt, if you had asked this young man what kind of person his brother was, he would have described him as incredibly greedy. Of course the irony here is that Jesus can see right through this young man and knows that greed is what motivates his own request.

We are usually very good at seeing the greed in others, but less accurate when judging the greed in our own hearts. Here, Jesus asks us an important question: Are we giving everything to build for today or do we have our eyes on eternity?

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



How can we be sure we are storing up heavenly treasures instead of earthly ones?

Luke 12:22-30

Money can buy us a lot of things, but contrary to popular belief, it cannot buy us freedom from worry. No matter how much material wealth we have, we are still susceptible to concern about our futures. We worry about acquiring money and keeping money, about spending it wisely and treating ourselves, and about how much treasure we have or how little.

Jesus' words here remind us that our concerns over what we will eat and what we will wear are misplaced. He is not encouraging us toward idleness, but, rather, reminding us that He is the one who blesses the very labors we are prone to fret over. The birds Jesus speaks of don't know the meaning of worry; they work in the way that God has made them to work, toiling without concern for their future, because they don't know anything but to trust the processes that God has set up for their good. The same goes for the lilies of the field.

What does our worry say about where our trust truly lies?

Luke 12:31-34

In this passage, Jesus reminds us that God is our Father, not an austere miser in the sky waiting to withhold good things from us. We can trust Him to do right by us and by our earthly treasure because He has stored up eternal treasures for us.

In fact, the greatest treasure is the person speaking to us in this passage. Jesus, the Son of God, is the most precious gift that God has ever given His children. There was no amount of toil we could have given to earn Him, no amount of money we could have paid to profit from Him. He has been given to us completely free of charge. He is the one who paid for us, by laying down His invaluable life on the cross.

It is because of this gift that we can view our own treasure as an added blessing, and not as the source of our value. We can give of it freely because the gift of the greatest worth has already been given to us in Jesus.

What is the treasure that can never be destroyed and why does it deserve our highest affection?

Matthew 6:1-4

Jesus' words about earthly treasure don't just extend to the monetary. We can treasure so many other things on earth, particularly the praise of others. Even in giving of our monetary treasure, we can fill ourselves with pride.

Thus, Jesus warns us in Matthew that when we give to the poor, we should not be giving to our own overblown sense of self-importance at the same time. If need be, we should give completely in secret, skirting the praise of others in an effort to give completely for the glory of God, and not for the glory that we can garner from our fellow man.

God cares that we give, but more than that, He cares about the heart behind our giving.

How can we ensure that our hearts are right before God when we give?

Mark 12:41-44

Jesus teaches us here that our giving isn't measured in mere sums. A rich man can give to God in amounts that would make most of us faint just to think about, but his gift might not come from a generous heart. A poor widow can give just a penny, and her gift might come from a place of full reliance on God.

Through her offering, this widow showed that God was truly her treasure; she gave out of her lack in complete trust that He would supply her earthly needs. When we give, God is not concerned with an exact percentage of our wealth so much as He is concerned with the heart behind our giving. Are we giving out of abundance, keeping back a heart of submission to God, or are we giving out of our lack, realizing that we should entrust ourselves to God just as the widow did in this passage?

How can we be sure that our giving is rightly motivated?