

Pa232 Counseling

Lesson Pa232-9 Personal Growth: Seeking God First

In our last lesson we learned that one of the most common personal growth issues people must deal with is overcoming sin in their lives. The story of Cain taught us that God holds people accountable for their choices, but he has mercy on those who come to him in repentance. This lesson is the second in the group of lessons addressing people's personal growth issues. Someone may come to you asking advice about not being satisfied with their lives. Our role as pastors, counselors, and fellow Christians is to give people hope for the future. We must encourage them that God knows all their needs. He will supply as they put him first.

A very rich man had millions of dollars and many homes filled with furniture and fine clothes. He had more money than he or his family would ever spend in his lifetime or in the lifetimes of their children. This rich man was asked the question, "How much do you need?"

He answered, "Well, I need more!"

Have you ever heard anyone with a lot of possessions say how their *things* make them feel? Have they ever asked you how you can manage so well and remain unafraid with what little you have? Many people have not found the joy of having God in their lives. They feel an emptiness, a longing inside that they cannot identify. Nothing seems to satisfy or make them happy. They are still searching, looking, buying material things, and being miserable. Often they try alcohol, drugs, or sex, but still they need more—of something! They don't know what. These people need a counselor to explain that their hunger is really for God. Their desire for God is often hidden by what they have and are trying to hang onto.

Jesus told the story of a rich man who thought he had it all. He was fooled into believing he finally had enough. Jesus said, "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'" Then the rich man said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

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?"

Jesus was teaching the crowd and he concluded the parable by saying, "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21). The foolish man had all he needed in life and more, but he did not live to enjoy what he had gathered.

A lot of misguided people in the world have become foolish like the rich man Jesus spoke about. Jesus explained that a person's life "does not consist in an abundance of possessions" (John 12:15). As you minister the truths of God, he will lead foolish people your way. You will hear their boasting of wealth and the need they feel to gather more. They boast,

yet they feel foolish and empty. The man in Jesus' story had a hidden hunger that he thought material things would fulfill. As you share your faith you demonstrate the spiritual riches of God. You can help someone find the peace of God that is meant for everyone. The peace of God is needed in addition to what earthly things we may have.

When you encounter someone who is concerned about not having enough, use the following scriptures to reassure them. God will supply all their needs and, best of all; he will fulfill their hidden hunger. Jesus told the people of his day:

Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ...

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ... But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Matt 6:25-33).

Instruct those who come to you for counsel to put God first in their lives. Assure them that they will have all their needs met, according to his promises. That desire to 'always have more' will be satisfied as they experience God's presence in their lives. They will realize that what they have is enough. Christians should seek the spiritual benefits of the Kingdom rather than the material goods of the world.

This story is **important** because by the testimony of your life you are showing others in your care that satisfaction can come from faith in God. The need to gather and increase beyond what is needed in life will be put aside. Riches in this world can never bring true joy and peace.

The **main truth** this story teaches is that as we put God first in our lives, the 'need to have more' will be satisfied by the promises of God. He will meet people's daily needs as well as providing the spiritual blessings of walking with him.

To **review** this lesson, answer these questions:

1. How can we be sure that as Christians we will have enough to meet our needs? [Pause]
A. If you said, "God's word promises he will supply all our needs," you are correct.
2. When can a person be satisfied with the things they do have? [Pause]
A. If you said, "If we seek the kingdom of God first for our lives, God will bring joy and satisfaction to our hearts," you are correct.
3. What is the biggest help we can give others who are in need? [Pause]

A. If you said, “The biggest help we can give others is to share with them the promises in God’s Word,” you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to the story at least three times or until you can memorize the story of the foolish man. Learn the promises Jesus taught the crowds on the mountainside. Then share with someone your testimony about how God has provided for you and your family in times of need. Pray with that person about their needs.