

THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

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Focus The way we think about our possessions will determine whether we have a heart of greed or a heart of gratitude.

Open What was your favorite toy when you were a kid? Why was it your favorite?

Read In Luke 12:13–21, Jesus told a parable about a rich man. This man had full barns, but that wasn't the problem; the problem was that his heart was greedy. Jesus warned us to: "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses" (v. 15).

The opposite of gratitude is greed. Gratitude is thankful; greed always wants more. God doesn't have a problem with us having stuff. Stuff is just stuff. He *does* have a problem when stuff has us. He cares about how we *think* about stuff, because it determines whether we have a heart of gratitude or a heart of greed.

Stuff—our stuff and other people's stuff— is a test of the heart that reveals who we're looking to for our provision. The Ten Commandments tell us not to covet. Coveting means "to set the heart upon" something that belongs to another person. Coveting is a root of greed. Greed expects to receive from other people, while gratitude looks to God for provision.

The spirit of pride and the spirit of poverty are enemies of the attitude of gratitude. The spirit of pride tells us that stuff comes from our own hard work or talent and we should be proud of it. The spirit of poverty tells us that stuff comes from the Devil and we should be ashamed of it. Both spirits are wrong, because they put the focus on stuff instead of God!

Both pride and poverty cause us to compare ourselves with others. Gratitude compares what *we* have done (nothing) with what *God* has done (everything). When we have an attitude of gratitude, we'll pass the "stuff test."

Talk

1. Describe a time when you saw greed in action in a ridiculously stereotypical way (e.g., a child putting down their new Christmas present to take another child's present). Have you ever done something like that?
2. Read Luke 12:13–21. What stands out the most to you in Jesus' warning and parable in this passage? Why?
3. To God, stuff is just stuff.
 - a. What does our culture communicate that stuff represents (for example, many people think stuff represents success)?
 - b. When you were growing up, what did the culture of your family say about stuff?
 - c. What does stuff mean to you personally?
4. What does coveting reveal about your heart?
5. Why does God *never* supernaturally provide for us when we're looking to others for provision?
6. Describe the key characteristics of the spirit of pride, the spirit of poverty and the attitude of gratitude. Based on your descriptions, which would you say you tend towards the most? Why?

Live

1. How does comparing ourselves with God instead of others birth an attitude of gratitude within our hearts?
2. What are five things in your life today you are thankful for that you know are a result of God's favor or provision?

Pray

If you recognize that the spirit of pride or the spirit of poverty have a foothold in your life, confess it to the Lord and ask Him to forgive you. Thank Him for His provision. Ask Him to help you remember His goodness and not forget His blessing.