

## STUDY GUIDE

### WHAT ABOUT: The Economy (Week 2)

A MESSAGE SERIES AT NEW CITY CHURCH (Fall 2011)

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BRIAN KRUCKENBERG

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### The American Way.

*Greed, for lack of a better word, is good. Greed is right. Greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures, the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed, in all of its forms; greed for life, for money, for love, knowledge, has marked the upward surge of mankind and greed, you mark my words, will not only save Teldar Paper, but that other malfunctioning corporation called the U.S.A. - Character Gordon Gekko in the 1987 film, Wall Street.*

#### Questions for Reflection

1. What are your initial responses to this statement?

### Luke 12.

*13 Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me."14 But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?"15 Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive.17 "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?'18 "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry."20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you*

*have prepared?'21 "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*

Not unlike many in American culture in 2011, this man thought he was entitled to something. I am owed and I want it now! He felt so strongly about this that he interrupts Jesus to ask him about it. His desire was to get what he could so he could relax and enjoy life. Sound familiar? Today, according to a recent survey done by the National Endowment for Financial Education ([www.nefe.org](http://www.nefe.org)), 65% of Americans list retirement and home ownership as their top 2 financial goals. So, while some claim the American Dream is dead, it appears that it is still be sought after by most.

#### Questions for Reflection

2. Define the American Dream in your own words?
3. Does your life reflect that the American Dream is your main pursuit? Be honest. :)

### Desire.

St. Augustine said that **"the most fundamental way we engage the world is through love."** What Augustine meant is that what we DESIRE is what fuels how we spend our time and money and what relationships we value. Remember your first crush?

#### Questions for Reflection

4. What does your day-to-day life tell others about what you desire the most?

### Mark 10

*17 And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'"20 And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from*

*my youth."21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

Unlike the person we met in Luke 12, the Rich Young Ruler ("RYR") realizes there is something missing in his life. He "has it all" but yet he is seeking something more so he asks Jesus what he is missing. When Jesus answers, the RYR ... "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." Why? If we look closely, we will see four reasons for this.

First, he went away grieving because he **met the real Jesus**. When you come up against His real message you are always shocked because Jesus demands more than you thought (your entire life) and offers more than you ever dreamed (a life of meaning, purpose, joy and fulfillment FOR ETERNITY).

Second, he went away sad because **Jesus smashed his religious views**. He tells the man that **NO ONE is good**. That is a tough message. The man seems to think that Christianity is something you can **add and something you can do**. But, Jesus teaches that Christianity totally changes everything! Jesus smashes our religious beliefs and makes it clear that no one gets God by their own goodness but rather you come to God on the basis of Jesus alone.

He also went away grieving because **Jesus got personal**. Instead of an academic answer to the RYR's question, Jesus tells him to sell it all and he will find life. This answer isn't universal but rather personal to the RYR. For Abraham, it was his son. For the woman at the well it was men. When you come to Jesus, expect Him to get personal.

Finally, he went away grieving because **he lacked treasure in heaven**. Jesus said **sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven**. Jesus is saying, in me,

nothing rusts; in me, there is no bad investment; in me, you get guaranteed return. Jesus is our treasure in heaven and we are HIS treasure in heaven.

### Questions for Reflection

5. What be your response if Jesus challenged you directly like he did the RYR?
6. Perhaps your money and material wealth IS what you put first. If so, Jesus may likely be saying to you exactly what He said to the RYR.
7. Imagine yourself on your death bed. (pleasant thought, huh!) Seriously, though, what do you think you'll be reflecting on as you experience your last moments on this earth?