



REFLECTIONS

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'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." '

Luke 12:18-19

An Idol God

Today we may have counted the number of cars in his garage, the size of the planes he owned, or his ranking among the world's wealthiest people. Such was the status he enjoyed back when wealth was measured by barns of grain. He was the rich man in a parable Jesus told.

We don't know his name or much of his background. He may have grown up in wealth or in poverty, but he was a driven man. He was driven to gather wealth and he was successful at it—too successful. He couldn't give it up. He was serving an idol god. Yet the wealth of the rich man might be our envy today.

There was nothing wrong with owning multiple barns of grain—nothing wrong unless the provision is without a greater purpose. When wealth is pursued without a greater purpose for it, we have fallen into the hands of an idol god. It's not so hard to do.

It is easy to imagine that the rich man once had a dream and the dream called for a large supply of grain to be stored. Perhaps his dream was to feed the world during periods of famine as Joseph did so many years ago. Perhaps grain was a medium of exchange that would fund higher education for some deserving students. Maybe it was to advance of a new mode of travel or for innovations that would bring world peace. But it is also easy to imagine that along the way the rich man lost sight of his dream. It's easy to see how he might have become so immersed in creating wealth that he forgot the dream it was intended to serve. It happens. But it didn't happen to my friend JJ.

"I have enough money," he said. "I have seen people with all they need and when they continue to chase after it, they never seem to have enough. So I want to use what I have to do what I was called to do." And that is what Jesus' parable is all about.

When it serves no greater purpose, wealth becomes an idol god. Our greater purpose in life is to serve God's purpose for it. That's what earthly wealth is for. We may never become rich on earth; but we will never serve an idol god.

We will serve the Living One.

"You are the light of the world."

Richard +

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