

**Week Two - *Gaining by Losing***  
***Luke 12:13-21; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11***

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. When you think about your overall financial situation, how do you feel: peaceful, satisfied, anxious, or something else?
2. What are the factors that inform your attitudes about your financial situation?
3. Read Luke 12:13-21. Judging by the words of the man in verse 13, how would you describe the man's attitudes about money?
4. To gain some insight, scan the passages preceding this section in Luke 12:1-12. What had Jesus been talking about when the man asked his question? What does this add to our picture of this man?
5. Do you ever find yourself so focused on what you want to talk about that you don't hear what someone else is saying? How about when God is speaking to you?
6. How does it feel when you realize that you have done this?
7. Close your FIFTEEN by asking God to help you stay focused on what matters, whether that is listening to a friend talk, listening to God, or simply staying focused on the task in front of you.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. Look again at Luke 12:13-21. Where was the man's focus in verse 13?
9. In Jesus' day, the oldest son usually received a double portion of his father's estate, compared to his younger brothers. Does this tradition seem fair to you? Can you think of a reason why this might be a good idea?
10. Look again at how the man phrased his question. Did the man seem concerned about the fairness of the law?
11. Judging by Jesus' response, it's pretty safe for us to assume that this man was a younger brother and felt he was being treated unfairly. This man was not focused on what he was inheriting, but what his brother was. Describe a time when you have allowed feelings like this to creep into your thoughts.

12. How did this affect how you felt emotionally, physically, and spiritually?
  
13. Another interesting thing about Hebrew inheritance laws is that while the oldest son received a double portion of the inheritance, his sisters would typically have received nothing at all. How might this man's attitude have been different if he had not been focusing on how much more his brother received but instead how little his sister received?
  
14. Does focusing on others who have less than you instead of those who have more help you feel more grateful? Why or why not?
  
15. How does giving to those who have less help you stay focused on their needs instead of your own?
  
16. End your FIFTEEN by asking God to give you eyes to see those in need instead of focusing on those who have more.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

17. Look again at Luke 12:13-21. How did Jesus answer the man's seemingly out-of-left-field question?
  
18. How would you describe the attitude of the man building barns in the story?
  
19. Yesterday we looked at how giving to others helps you feel grateful for what you have. How does gratitude affect how tightly you hold on to things?
  
20. This is true in everything — money, relationships, etc. How does gratitude for the relationships in your life affect how you feel about them?
  
21. Are you the kind of person that is jealous when your friends make other friends, or are you happy that your friend has made relationships that add fullness to his or her life?
  
22. Just like the man building the barn, the tighter we hold on to people or things, the more they will elude us. What steps can you take to hold on to people more loosely?
  
23. Finish your FIFTEEN by asking God to give you the courage to hold on to people and things more loosely.

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

24. How often would you say you worry about money? Daily? Weekly? Maybe you do an annual review or only think about money when a disaster strikes?
  
25. Do your attitudes towards money affect your peace of mind? In what way?
  
26. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6. What is the antidote to letting money control you? In other words, how can you control your money?
  
27. The fool who built bigger barns represents a kind of thinking that plagues all of us. His folly is demonstrated in Jesus' parable and in 2 Corinthians 9:6, where Paul elaborates the key to real abundance. How easy is it for you to embrace this kind of thinking?
  
28. What steps can you take to trust God at his word that it is in letting go that you will receive?
  
29. Finish your FIFTEEN by confessing those times when you have doubted God's provision for you. Ask him to give you the courage to fully trust him in every way.

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

30. Missionary Jim Elliot said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." What comes to mind when you think of these things? What things can you lose? What things can't you lose?
  
31. Read Luke 12:33-34. How does the Bible answer this same question — what can't you lose?
  
32. Just like we looked at yesterday, God actually gives us a way to gain control over our hearts. How does verse 34 say we do that?
  
33. We can free our hearts and minds from the grips of things that we hold too tightly, whether that's people or possessions. Read Acts 20:35. How did Jesus describe the effect of living generously?
  
34. Holding on loosely lessens our need to hold on. It's so counterintuitive to the way most of us live. Brainstorm a list of the things and people to which you have been holding on too tightly. (Ex. your kids, control, etc.)
  
35. Spend the rest of your final FIFTEEN this week committing those things to God in prayer.