



**BAPTIST  
WORLD AID  
AUSTRALIA**  
Be love. End poverty.

# End of Greed



## Week 1: Rejecting Consumerism

Have you ever noticed how our culture applauds us when we accumulate? Move into a bigger home, go on an overseas holiday, get the latest Xbox Console or the newest iPhone – people would say we’re getting ahead! But are we? Is accumulation of things and experiences a sign of success in the eyes of God or does the good life He’s planned for us lie somewhere else?

**Video:** <https://vimeo.com/72853648>

### Talk Notes

*Based on* – The Parable of the Rich Fool - Luke 12:13-34

Background facts:

The average Australian consumes **THREE** times as much as the average person born in the 1960s and 1970s when our parents were born!!

When US Billionaire John Ruckerfeller was asked in an interview “how many dollars will be enough” he replied “one dollar more”. Are we living in a culture which will never satisfy us, where nothing is ever enough?

The average Australian is in the richest 5% of the world population. If we gave 10% of our money we’d still be in the richest 7%!

Luke 12:13-21 – a man is determining how to spend his wealth yet Jesus challenges “Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions”

Our ‘stuff’ is temporary, imperfect and broken.

Luke 12:22-34 Jesus calls us to not worry about tomorrow and know the He will provide for us. We are to see after Him and His Kingdom – *not* earthly treasures!!

**Week 1 Questions:**

1. The video talked about a lot of first world problems; Erin had an old toothbrush, had to carry grocery bags to the kitchen and has a 1GB iPod. What are some first world problems you've complained about recently?
2. What makes you want the new Xbox/PS3 Console when it's released, or latest model of the iPod Touch, iPhone or Android phone? Do you throw stuff out when it's broken and old or upgrade before you get there?
3. What is the focus of the Rich Man's life (Luke 12:13-21)?
4. What does Jesus call us to seek or chase after? (Luke 12:22-24) Where are you at with your walk with Jesus and seeking His Kingdom and heavenly treasures? Do you find it easy or hard to follow Jesus' command?
5. What is the Kingdom that Jesus mentions in his parable? How do we seek this?  
  
*(The Kingdom of God is God's reordering of the world so that it reflects his purposes. It's about making right everything that has gone wrong – making right our relationships with God, within ourselves, with each other, with the earth and with animals.)*
6. Jesus says, "where our treasure is, there our heart will be also" (v34) – what does this mean? How is this reflected in your own life?
7. Share 1-2 things you're saving for at the moment – a new game console, a new bike or maybe a new phone? Jesus calls us to sell our possessions and give to the poor (vs. 33) What things have you bought lately that could be sacrificed to give money to those less fortunate than us?

## Week 2: Rejecting Greed

We are blessed with a lot of wealth in Australia, so much so that we can spend above and beyond the essentials like education, health and shelter. We're able to go on holidays, spend money on electronics and entertainment. Yet this wealth gives us great opportunity to be generous and give to those who aren't blessed with this wealth. How can we avoid greed in our society and actively and freely give to others?

**Video:** <https://vimeo.com/72860439>

### Talk Notes

*Based on* – Acts 2:42-47, 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19

Background facts:

The average Australian family spends \$98 a week on recreation, \$11 on pets and just \$4.26 on charity!

Studies have shown that generosity is synonymous to happiness. This isn't just an idea proven by psychology, but an idea rooted in the bible (Timothy 6: Godliness with contentment)

The Christian church grew rapidly in the first three centuries following Jesus' ascension and a lot of this was attributed to the generosity of the church. The disciples freely gave of their wealth, possessions and time. (v42-47)

Generosity became a practical sign of God's love and a characteristic of the Church.

Later in the bible (Timothy) we learn that money is the root of all evil (vs 10) and we are called to be generous with our riches (vs18)

## **Week 2 Questions:**

1. What struck you about generosity from the video? One lady said generosity is to give fearlessly, what do you think this means?
2. What motivates you to give and be generous? (Money, time, knowledge) When has an act of generosity had a positive impact on your life?
3. What were some of the characteristics of the early church (Acts 2:42-47)? Why do you think the church's generosity led to people wanting to have a relationship with Jesus?
4. How do we achieve godliness with contentment (i.e. happiness in living a Godly life)? What impact might this have on our life as consumers?
5. Why does Paul say that money is the root of all evil? (Timothy 6:10) How can money be evil when it helps us to live (food, shelter, education etc)
7. What's one thing I can do this week to be more generous (time, money, knowledge)? Identify one person who might need encouragement from your generosity this week. In what ways could we be generous on a global scale?

## Week 3: Exploitation

Many of the products we consume are made in developing countries, from clothes to electronics, to coffee and tea. This should be good news for the poor as it generates jobs that can lift them out of poverty. Tragically their experience is often poverty level wages, unsafe work environments, child and forced labour and workplace abuse. This study explores the dark side of global trade, God's expectations for justice and ways we can ensure our shopping habits help rather than harm workers from the developing world.

**Video:** <https://vimeo.com/47901981>

### Talk Notes

*Based on* – James 5:1-6, Proverbs 31:8-9

Background facts:

In April 2013 over 1,000 people died in a garment factory collapse in Bangladesh. The average Bangladesh family needs \$150AUD a month to live, but the average garment worker earns just \$30AUD a month.

Uzbekistani cotton exports are controlled by the government. For months every year, schools are shut down so children can work in the cotton fields, often for little or no reward.

James paints a picture of the wealthy and greedy who exploit their workers. He is passing on God's warning to them, reminding us that everything is temporary unlike His heavenly treasures.

In Proverbs 31:8-9 God gives us a clear calling to stand up for those who can't defend for themselves. As consumers of clothes and electronics in Australia, we have a responsibility to be aware of the situation of the "poor and needy" and use our voice to stand up against those who exploit them.

**Week 3 Questions:**

1. Were you shocked to hear that your clothes may be made in developing countries like Bangladesh? Why do you think your favourite clothing brand used factories in places like India and Bangladesh?
2. Do you think we should just demand the closure of these factories? Why might this be good or bad for the people who work in this factory? What could we do instead?  
  
*(No – these people need an income, yet it is our responsibility to encourage safer work conditions and fair working rights!)*
3. According to James, what is God's warning to the rich? If we know that our earthly possessions are temporary why are we tempted to continue consuming?
4. What are we called to do in Proverbs? Who can we identify as the poor and needy in our society and the world?
5. What are some ways we can be a voice for those who are defenseless?
6. Read the Ethical Fashion Guide (copies to be provided for each group). Are any of your favourite brands included in this? How did they rate? What could you do to encourage your favourite brands to adopt fairer work practices and ethical supply chains?