

Connect360: A Fool's Formula for Failure

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- *Lesson 6 in the Connect360 unit "Jesus Storyteller: Timeless Truths From His Parables" focuses on Luke 12:13-21.*

In Jesus' time, the economy was agriculturally based. Crops were the main source of income, and the haves and the have nots were divided along this line. If you owned land and farmed successfully, you were wealthy. If you did not own land, you often worked for the landowner instead, or you may have tended a small farm yourself.

The Jewish audience of that day would have recognized the man in the parable was rich, because he had a bumper crop with such a surplus that he had to build bigger barns. Land ownership and agriculture were much more stable investments than something as tenuous as trade. The Romans made significant developments in agriculture, but they were also religious/superstitious and often prayed to their gods to bless their harvest. If this man was around today, he would be considered a brilliant entrepreneur and named Businessman of the Year. But God named him something else—a fool.

Measuring success

In our culture, success is measured by how much money you make and how many toys, property, real estate or business interests you possess. But real success in the Bible is not attained when you have a fat bank account or a house full of gadgets. Success in God's eyes is based on a good relationship with the Lord, which produces good relationships with other people. That is

the definition of a successful life.

Listen to the way God describes success in Jeremiah 9:23-24. “This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord.”

Jesus clearly states in Luke 12:15 a person’s life is not determined by the abundance of his possessions. In this parable, Jesus taught a different definition for success than our materialistic culture teaches. According to John 10:10, true success is when you experience “life to the full.” When Jesus spoke of life, he didn’t use the word *bios*, which means physical existence; we get our word biology from that. He used the word *zoa* in John 10:10, which means a quality of living. True success is knowing God and loving God.

Based on a lesson by David O. Dykes, pastor emeritus of Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler. To learn more about GC2 Press and the Connect360 Bible study series, or to order materials, click [here](#).