

Tough Talk

Choose your master

Read Matthew 6:19-24; 13:22; 19:24; Luke 12:13-21; Tim.6:10, 17-19; Matt.13:2; Col.3:1-2.

- How contemporary is Leo Tolstoy's story *How much land does a man need?* In which way does this story speak into our society today? How does this relate to Jesus' story in Luke 12:13-21?
- Why did Jesus speak so much about money? In which ways does money promise the things that ultimately only God can supply?
- Read Matthew 6:19-24. Discuss the challenges of these verses.
 - Was Jesus condemning personal wealth? (See also 1 Tim. 6:10, 17).
 - What does it mean to "store treasures in heaven" (Mat. 6:18) and being "rich towards God" (Lk. 12:21)?
 - Where is your treasure?
 - What have eyes and light to do with treasures? What is the message of Matt. 6:22-23? How does this relate to Matt. 13:22?
- Jesus did not say 'You **should not** serve God and Money', he said, 'You **cannot...**' Is this feasible? Do we sometimes attempt to do what Jesus says is impossible?
- Read Colossians 3:1-2. In which ways does Nicky Gumbel in *Challenging Lifestyle*, suggest that mammon has all the characteristics of a pagan god? What are your thoughts about his comment regarding "human sacrifice"? He writes:

'Mammon' was the god of wealth in Carthage, the capital of Roman Africa. Mammon has all the characteristics of a pagan god. It seems to offer security, freedom, power, influence, status and prestige. It is capable of inspiring devotion and it requires a single-minded preoccupation. It demands sacrifice and ultimately, human sacrifice. Many sacrifice their health for money, through stress, long hours and no exercise or relaxation. Worse still, some sacrifice the lives of others as human relationships are destroyed. No time is reserved for spouse, children, friends or God. Drive! Push! Hustle! Scheme! Invest! Prepare! Anticipate! Work! Fourteen hour days... followed by weekends at the office, forfeited holidays and midnight oil. The result is often broken marriages and single-parent families – the latter created not only through divorce, but because one of the parents is always out at work.'