

Carbon Footprint: The measure of the impact human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced, measured in carbon dioxide.

In Luke 12, we find Jesus in conversation with people about their footprint. He wasn't having an environmental discussion with them, per se, but Jesus was talking about consumerism. He wasn't talking about the environmental focus, but the spiritual focus of our lives.

There are lessons we can learn today about our "footprints" that speak not only to fathers, but to all of us about faith.

Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." —Luke 12:13-21

Life Summarized

Life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.

"For a man's real life in no way depends upon the number of his possessions." —Luke 12:15 (Phillips)

This is one of the most counter-cultural statements that can be made in the context of our world today. Life is all about getting, gaining, gathering, owning and having. We live consumed with our own consumption—the accumulation of possessions. Yet, Jesus made it very simple. If our lives are about possessions, we will end up with a footprint that is faint, futile and ultimately unfulfilling.

Life Projected

In this parable, we see a man who projected his future. Here are some pitfalls that can come from projecting an uncertain future:

• The Issue of Prosperity

My self-worth is gained through the accumulation of the things I possess.

"We are, by nature, scorekeepers... Our behavior is inevitably aimed at achieving a higher point total... upward comparison incites envy... lateral comparison incites competition... downward comparison incites arrogance." —John Ortberg, It All Goes Back in the Box

• The Issue of Passivity

The man in the parable wanted to disengage, to "relax, eat, drink, be merry."

• The Issue of Purity

The pitfall for men is often impurity—the temptation to compromise the primary commitments of your life to God, your mate and your children for the indulgence of lustful desire. Although the Bible doesn't mention this man was an immoral man, I know he was a man. And if this man indulged in what this world had to offer, he probably was not going to exclude from himself the indulgence of lustful pleasure that comes from the eye.

• The Issue of Priority

It is easy to live life off balance. The problem in this man's life was ultimately a problem of priorities.

"This is our predicament. Over and over again, we lose sight of what is important and what isn't."

—Epictetus

Life Interrupted

"But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you...'" —Luke 12:20

"Someone has altered the script. My lines have been changed... I thought I was writing this play."

—Madeleine L'Engle

In the midst of calculation, he lost sight of what was beyond his control.

"We all want God, but left to our own devices, we seek all the worldly things—possessions, money, looks, and power—because we think they will bring us fulfillment. But this turns out to be a joke because they are just props, and when we check out of this life, we have to give them back to the 'Great Prop Master in the Sky.' They're just on loan. They're not ours." —Anne Lamott

Mr. & Mrs. Thing

MR. & MRS. THING are a very successful couple. There he is, sitting on a very expensive THING, almost hidden by a large number of other THINGS... THINGS to sit on, THINGS to sit at, THINGS to own, THINGS to eat from... all shinning and new.

... THINGS, THINGS, THINGS.

THINGS to clean and
 THINGS to wash and
 THINGS to amuse,
 THINGS to give pleasure and
 THINGS to watch,
 THINGS to play,
 THINGS for the long hot summer and
 THINGS for the short cold winter,
 THINGS for the big THING in which they live and
 THINGS for the garden and
 THINGS for the lounge and
 THINGS for the kitchen and
 THINGS for the bedroom and
 THINGS on four wheels and
 THINGS on two wheels and
 THINGS to put on top of the four wheels and
 THINGS to pull behind the four wheels and
 THINGS to add to the interior of the THING on four wheels.

... THINGS, THINGS, THINGS.

AND...

There in the middle are MR. and MRS. THING smiling and pleased pink with THINGS. Thinking of more THINGS to add to their THINGS, secure in their castle of THINGS.

WELL...

MR. THING, I have bad news for you. You say you can't hear me because your THINGS are making noise? Well, I just want you to know that your THINGS can't last. They are going to pass. There is going to be an end to them. Oh, maybe an error in judgment, OR maybe you will pass them off to a second hand THING dealer, OR maybe they will wind up in a mass of tangled metal being towed off to the THING yard. And what about all the THINGS in the THING you live in? Well, it's time for bed, put out the cat, lock the door and hope some THING taker doesn't come and take your THINGS. And that's the way life goes, isn't it?

AND...

Someday when you die, they only put one THING in the box... YOU!!!

—Author Unknown

Life Analyzed

"So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." —Luke 12:21

What about your footprint toward God? Has your footprint been measured as to whether or not your life has been rich toward God? The Bible tells us to live any other way is to live like a fool.

We are fools when...

- we act like our time on earth is unlimited.
- we ignore the consequence of miscalculation and misjudgment.
- we think our accomplishments matter more than our relationships.
- we measure ourselves by others and not toward God.

Walk a Little Slower

Walk a little slower, Daddy,
 Said a little child so small.
 I'm following in your footsteps,
 And I do not want to fall.

Sometimes your steps are very fast,
 Sometimes they're hard to see.
 So, walk a little slower, Daddy,
 For you are leading me.

Someday when I am all grown up,
 You're what I want to be.
 Then I will have a little child,
 Who'll want to follow me.

And, I would want to lead just right,
 And, I'd know that I was true.
 So, walk a little slower, Daddy,
 For I must follow you.

—Author Unknown