

## Games People Play - MONOPOLY

Today, Monopoly is the best selling board game in the world.

It was designed by an out of work heater salesman , Charles Darrow, just after the stock market crash of 1929. The game was based on the concept of a game called “The Landlord’s Game”. In 1934 Darrow presented his game to Parker Bros but they said it had “52 fundamental errors” including the games’ length and complexity.

In 1935 Parker Brothers reconsidered and agreed to mass produce the game and Darrow became the first millionaire game designer.

Here are some fun facts about monopoly

It is distributed in 26 languages and in 80 countries. Over 200 million sets have been sold. More than 5 billion little green houses have been manufactured.

The longest MONOPOLY® game ever played was 1,680 hours long. That is 70 straight days!

During WWII, people would insert escape maps, compasses, files, & real money was in Monopoly boxes to help our POWs escape.

On one occasion in 1961, a group of fraternity brothers at the University of Pittsburgh were playing Monopoly and ran out of money; Parker Brothers who claimed the bank never ran out of money were contacted and sent 1 million dollars in Monopoly money to the fraternity by plane and had it delivered to the frat house in a Brinks Armored car.

Most of us have played monopoly at some point in time. So you know the concept. The concept is to accumulate wealth, amass holdings, and run the other person into bankruptcy - wait is that monopoly or is that Wall Street?

Monopoly teaches us Greed

- Building more and more is the best thing
- ‘ It’s all about me and not about you
- Expensive is definitely better
- Accumulating is the good life

Interestingly enough there is a passage of scripture that could be the historical pattern for the game of monopoly.

## BIBLES to Luke 12

There are now over 100 varieties of the Monopoly game: Junior-Monopoly, Coca-cola Monopoly, Dale Earnhardt Monopoly, Star Wars Monopoly, Lord of the Rings Monopoly, there's even a Bibleopoly. If you want to own Caesarea Philippi, you can in Bibleopoly.

By using this passage of Scripture we can discover some more versions of monopoly that have never been marketed by Parker Bros - but they are versions that people play every day

### **SOCIAL MONOPOLY**

We play social monopoly when we let material things rule our relationships.

Our passage begins with a relational conflict.

A man comes to Jesus and says - Jesus, my brother is hoarding the inheritance - tell him to divide it with me.

Money has separated more families than probably any other cause.

It can divide parents and children, siblings, marriage partners - an aunt and uncle. Money has a way of becoming the focal point.

I still remember a statement I heard decades ago. Money is not the most important thing, but it's way ahead of whatever's in second place.

Have you ever had a mother or father pass away and then had to deal with any valuables left over? It can divide family. I remember when my mother passed away, we had to purposely be unselfish. There were issues that could have gotten contentious. The little trinkets could have divided my family.

Money is the Number one stress point in marriage.

Think about it. If money was the key to happiness then all the Hollywood celebrities wouldn't get divorced. We all stand up and say I take you for richer or poorer, but 56% of all divorces are rooted in irreconcilable financial issues.

Jesus had been talking about eternal life. He had been talking about some real important issues.

This guy has been in the crowd, but he hasn't been listening. He has a one-track mind -when there's an opening - ask Jesus to help me get my money from my brother.

What is more important to you? Relationships or money. Do you value people or possessions? How often do you try to buy friendship with money. How often is your perception of someone decided by their wealth or lack of wealth?

## **SENSELESS MONOPOLY**

We play this monopoly when we let material things and money rule our reason.

in verse 15 Jesus makes a very strong statement.

His first two words are these "Watch Out".

And then he adds - be on your guard -

These are military terms for guard duty.

A military guard post is always staffed. There is always someone keeping watch because the enemy is unpredictable. To not watch is dangerous - in fact it could be life-threatening.

That's the kind of terminology Jesus is using.

So what are we watching out for?

Against GREED.

Many of us are experiencing the effects of Greed these days.

Fanny and Freddie Mac.

85 billion dollar bale out of AIG

And Now Treasury sec Henry Paulson - 700 billion dollars to buy mostly worthless mortgage securities.

Lehman brothers - files bankruptcy

Investment banks collapsing

What we are seeing is nothing more than the effects of greed.

Recent Book - The Pirates of Manhattan - systematically plundering the American Consumer and how to protect against it.

" Instead of the worship on money being questioned as a sign of spiritual sickness, it is, in

most instances when covered by the press, trumpeted as a virtue.”

Warren Buffet commented in his 2003 Berkshire Hathaway annual report” Class warfare is being waged in America, my class is clearly winning.”

America is a greedy nation. Everyone seems consumed to get more and more and more.

The financial problems in wall street and the banking industry comes down to one word - Greed.

In 1996 the average CEO made 200 times more than what the average employee got paid. 200 to 1. IN 1973 that figure was 41 to 1.

IN Japan and Europe the figure in 1996 were less than 40 to 1.

“Everybody here is overpaid , knows they are overpaid and determined to continue to be overpaid.” Julian Robertson, Wall Street investment manager who made over \$500 million in 1997.(Quoted in Wall Street Journal . Jan 31, 1998)

Yes we know there is greed in the higher ups, but there is greed at the bottom too.

Part of our present financial crisis in America is due to sub-prime mortgages. People who had no business getting loans got them anyway - why? They just had to have that house. They just had to have that car.

Rarely are we concerned just about the essentials anymore.

My daughter wanted a pair of jeans. I said they sell those at TSC.

We have to have Gap or Aeropostale

The best gaming machines.

The fastest computer

The most up to date IPOD - the latest phone

The 5 bedroom, 3 bath. 6 garage, where we can park the 2 ferraries, the porches and the 2 hummers.

It's not the amount - it's the attitude. The man in Jesus' parable was rich, but he wasn't condemned for being rich. He was a talented farmer, but he wasn't condemned because he was good at his job. He was ambitious, but his ambition wasn't condemned.

The Bible condemns laziness but it doesn't condemn ambition.

Ecclesiastes says, “If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; if his hands are idle, the house leaks.” (10:18, NIV)

Using our God-given abilities, and talents, and opportunities honors the Lord. What got the fellow in our parable into trouble was his selfish reasoning. His greed.

Police officers in Wheeling, IL arrested a Wal-Mart cashier of purchasing things on stolen credit card numbers. When people would come through her line, she would lift their credit card numbers and then use those stolen numbers to purchase things at the Wal-Mart where she worked. How did they catch her? She signed every one of the receipts with her own name so she could get the employee discount. That's funny and that's stupid, but that's greed. That's what greed does. Greed turns us into silly, ridiculous people with no common sense.

There was a recent survey that asked Americans how much more money they would need to make each year in order to be comfortable. The average answer was twice my current income. I need to make twice what I'm making now in order to live comfortably. It's interesting that this was the most common answer, regardless of how much the person currently made. If they made \$30,000 a year or \$300,000 a year, the answer was the same. I would need to double my annual income to be comfortable.

Greed affects all of us. It is not limited to some investment banker on wall street or some CEO of a fortune 500 company.

A recent Federal Reserve Study showed that 43% of US families spent more than they earned. On Average, Americans spend \$1.22 for every dollar they earn. In 2002 Consumer credit debt was at a record \$1.6 trillion dollars and increasing at \$1000 per second.

Jesus said - watch out- be our your guard. This Greed is a serious threat to you.

Sometimes we forget how much greed is despised by the Lord.

Eph 5:3 ¶ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

Col 3:5 ¶ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Notice the end of that verse. Greed is idolatry. Greed is what happens when we serve money instead of God.

Lu 16:13 "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God

and Money."

Greed is an intoxicating drug that dulls our common sense and reason.  
Greed makes us think that it is things and money that makes us happy.

Greed comes from an "I" problem.

Notice the Rich man in our parable.

We've looked at this before. Some of you probably have the person possessive pronouns circled in your Bible.

This man uses the word "I" six times and the word "my" five times.  
He has one thing in mind - pleasing himself.

He never wonders what he can do for others. He never thanks God for his blessings. He is only concerned about himself and his own comforts.

Deuteronomy 8 spells out the attitude.

11 Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day.

12 Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down,

13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied,

14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

15 He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock.

16 He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you.

17 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."

18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

### **Spiritual Monopoly**

We play this game when we view our material wealth completely separate from

our spirituality.

The rich man in this parable thought that money was there to serve Him. He said. Here is what I will do. I will let my riches work for me.

More grain and more barns will help me eat, drink, and be merry.

The wealth was all about him. It was all about making His life better and His retirement exceptional.

This runs contrary to Scripture.

The Bible tells us that wealth is not for us - it is for others.

In fact - wealth is meant for spiritual purposes.

**A - first it is meant to be a tool for blessing.**

Lu 6:30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

Pr 19:17 ¶ He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done.

Lu 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

God never expects the wealth we have to necessarily end with us. It is to be used as a blessing tool.

**B - Wealth is meant to be funneled toward an eternal reward.**

The bible seems to say you can have it here or you can have it in eternity but you cannot do both.

Luke 6:9 ¶ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Luke 12:33

1 Tim 6:17 - 19 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly

provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Now , of course, we use money to live everyday. It is our exchange commodity. WE exchange it for goods and services.

But do we ever stop to view the giving of money as sending it ahead for a future reward.

(Treasure Principle - Randy Alcorn  
Live for the line, not the dot ) page 48

**C - Money is a tool used by God to help us wrestle with ownership.**

This is really the most spiritual part of this parable.

Spiritual issues are about ownership issues.

And money is an ownership issues.

The rich man in our parable thought he was the owner of His wealth. It was His wealth that He could use for himself to do what He wanted with it.

But God says He is a fool. He is not the one who is calling the shots, it is God. God is the owner. The Bible indicates the we are not owners, we are stewards. We are managers of God's possessions.

Ron Blue:

You can't fake stewardship. Your checkbook reveals all that you really believe about stewardship. A life story could be written from a checkbook. It reflects your goals, priorities, convictions, relationships, and even the uses of your time. A person who has been a Christian for even a short while can fake prayer, Bible study, evangelism, going to church, and so on, but he can't fake what his checkbook reveals.

This man in the parable had let his material things - his wealth monopolize his life to the point the he had little thought for the spiritual. He never cultivated His faith . He never looked for God - he only looked for his bottom line. And In the end - he really had worked for nothing.

He was rich in things but he was not rich toward God.

How we spend our money. How we give. How we save. It all speaks volumes about our

idea of ownership. Who's calling the shots? Is it God or is it us?

At the end of every game of Monopoly, everything goes back into the box. It doesn't matter if you won or lost. It doesn't matter if you wound up filthy rich or flat broke...everything goes back into the box.

At the end of our lives, everything, including us, will go back into a box. At the end of your life, your money, your riches, your possessions, your acquisitions won't mean a hill of beans.. What will matter is what you decided to do with Jesus Christ. Will you be like the man who asked Jesus to straighten out his inheritance problem? Will you be in the very presence of Jesus and miss him because you're blinded by greed? Will you be like the man in the parable and completely miss God because you are blinded by the world's view of wealth and money, Or will you accept the spiritual inheritance that he offers to all of us?

So what is money doing in your life?

Is it a source of contention in relationships? Then it has too much power.

Is it something that seems to have a hold on you? Are you greedy - wanting more and more and more? Then it has too much power?

Is money separate from your spirituality? Does money play any part in your faith?

Do you understand God's purpose for you and your money?

Surrender your finances to God

Begin to tithe

Ask God to show you where and how to give.

Take time to view scriptures about giving and finance.

An old man was on his death bed. He wanted badly to take all his money with him. He called his priest, his doctor and his lawyer to his bedside. "Here's \$30,000 cash to be held by each of you. I trust you to put this in my coffin when I die so I can take all my money with me." At the funeral, each man put an envelope in the coffin. Riding away in a limousine, the priest suddenly broke into tears and confessed that he had only put \$20,000 into the envelope because he needed \$10,000 for a new baptistry. "Well, since we're confiding in each other," said the doctor, "I only put \$10,000 in the envelope because we needed a new machine at the hospital which cost \$20,000." The lawyer was aghast. "I'm ashamed of both of you," he exclaimed. "I want it known that when I put my envelope in

that coffin, it held my personal check for the full \$30,000."