

# When The American Dream Becomes A Nightmare

## What the American dream can learn from:

Bigger Barns:

Luke 12:16-21

Wasted lives?

Hebrews 11:13-16, 32-40

200 Pomegranates:

1 Kings 7:13-22

## Four keys to avoiding the nightmare:

- ① Make **character** more important than **clients**.
  
- ② Make **family** more important than **finances**.
  
- ③ Make **faith** more important than **feelings**.
  
- ④ Make **the Kingdom** more important than **the company**.

# Growth Group Homework

For the week of September 23, 2012

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## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. The last few weeks, we have had some of our most humid and warmest days in history here in San Diego County. If you could deal with that heat in any of the following ways, and none would cost you more than the other, which would you prefer and why?

- a) House on the beach
- b) Pool instantly put in your backyard
- c) Air conditioning in your house
- d) Unlimited passes to a water park
- e) Unlimited movie tickets (there's AC in there)
- f) Other

2. When it comes to life, work and dreams, some of us are planners while others of us just figure it out as it comes. Which end of the spectrum would you put yourself on and why?

3. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Keeping our priorities in line, and having the right perspective on success and work can be no small challenge. How do the following verses help us build upon what we heard this weekend on how to keep the American dream from becoming a nightmare?

### **Proverbs 21:5**

The plans of the diligent lead to profit  
as surely as haste leads to poverty. [NIV]

### **Proverbs 22:1**

A good name is more desirable than great riches;  
to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. [NIV]

### **Proverbs 23:4-5**

Do not wear yourself out to get rich;  
have the wisdom to show restraint.  
[5] Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone,  
for they will surely sprout wings  
and fly off to the sky like an eagle. [NIV]

### **Jeremiah 9:23-24**

This is what the Lord says:  
"Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom  
or the strong man boast of his strength  
or the rich man boast of his riches,  
[24] but let him who boasts boast about this:  
that he understands and knows me,  
that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness,  
justice and righteousness on earth,  
for in these I delight,"  
declares the Lord. [NIV]

Is there one verse that caught your attention more than the others? If so, why?

2. Most of us have felt like we don't have what it takes to make a change in our priorities at work or at home, even though we sense God calling us to change them. How might 2 Peter 1:3-9 help us work through this?

### **2 Peter 1:3-9**

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. [4] Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

[5] For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; [6] and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; [7] and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. [8] For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9] But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. [NIV]

3. One way the American dream becomes a nightmare is when we lose sight of our work being an assignment from God where we have an opportunity to represent God to those around us through our character, the quality of our work, and the attitude we maintain. Colossians 3:17 gives a great overview of how we should approach our work. After reading the verse, assess how you're doing in your job in the areas below. Rate yourself on a 1 to 5 scale (5 being the highest).

Focus

Teamwork

Flexibility

Follow-through

Attention to detail

Honesty

Other

Looking at how you rated yourself, are there any areas you would like to improve on?

## TAKING IT HOME

Looking back at this week's "four keys to avoiding the nightmare," which one caught your attention the most and why?

Prayer Requests:

⇒

⇒

⇒

### Tips on Group Prayer

Prayer is an important part of being in Growth Group. Over the years we've found that group prayer goes better when we follow three simple guidelines.

**WE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME** - Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request either before prayer begins or during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next topic.

**PRAY MORE THAN ONCE** - Because the group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one is required to pray.

**WE KEEP OUR PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE** - Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the