

Fatal Worldly-Mindedness

by Wayne Goff

Matthew Henry, in his commentary on the Bible, referred to Matthew 6:19-24 as Jesus' warning against "worldly-mindedness" as a fatal symptom of hypocrisy. Indeed, Jesus is teaching us about priorities in this passage. Observe His points:

Earthly Treasure?

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on the earth..." (Matthew 6:19). Why not lay up earthly treasures? They can be destroyed by time and decay. They can be stolen by other men. There is no security in earthly wealth. The irony is that men still hope for security in this realm.

By way of contrast, heavenly treasures are certain, sure and eternal, because they are safe-guarded by Jehovah God Himself! (Matthew 6:20. There is no greater security anywhere!

But **most importantly** Jesus states: *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also,"* Matthew 6:21. A man's heart can be seen in that which he treasures most, in that which he puts his first priority. Sadly, most people trust in themselves, in their earthly treasure, and in their longed-for retirement — to the neglect of spiritual things. And it shows up in their absence from spiritual duties.

Supposed "Light"?

Jesus continues His teaching by explaining that once **the heart is wrong**, anything that follows will be wrong also, even it is called "light"! Matthew 6:22-23. Most people miss this point! God requires single-mindedness in our service to Him. Matthew Henry's comments here are worth considering: "The worldly man is wrong in his first principle; therefore all his reasonings and actions therefrom must be wrong. It is equally applied to false religion; that which is deemed light is thick darkness. This is an awful, but a common case; we should therefore carefully examine our leading principles by the word of God,..." Undoubtedly this is why Solomon wrote: *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, ..."* (Proverbs 1:7). We either have God as our life's foundation, or we stand on the quicksand of ever-changing human wisdom.

The Real Problem

Jesus finally explains why the above truths are so. It is impossible to serve two masters, and man will most often choose the "master" of **covetousness** (trusting in earthly treasure) because he trusts in wealth over God! Keep in mind that I did not explain the problem! Jesus is the One telling us these things. ***"You cannot serve God and mammon"*** (Matthew 6:24). **If you serve God, you may very well trade what you cannot keep for that which you cannot lose!** But only the man of faith believes that.

Again quoting Matthew Henry: "When two masters oppose each other, no man can serve both. He who holds to the world and loves it, must despise God; he who loves God, must give up the friendship of the world."

To those who would think that *any earthly possessions are forbidden*, one needs only to look at Matthew 6:25-34. Jesus is talking about what our heart **loves**, about our **priorities**, about that in which we **trust**! You must have food and clothing in this life, but remember that it is God who provides these things (vv. 26-30)! It is the one *"of little faith"* that worries about the things his heart loves so much! The one of strong faith enjoys life's blessings but does not put them above his God and does not fail to trust that God will provide.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you," Matthew 6:33. So . . . *where are your priorities? Where is your heart? Do you truly love God?*