



Is Your *eye* CLEAR?

By Paul David Washer

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

Matthew 6:19-24



The previous is one of the most important passages in the Scriptures with regard to Christian priorities and missions. According to this Scripture, the Christian is to be on constant guard in order not to stray from eternal priorities. Two choices are always before us. One choice offers immediate rewards that are temporal and deceptive. The other is a narrow road which may cost us everything, but the rewards are eternal and beyond the ability of even Scripture to describe.

God's Treasure

If we know that which is most treasured by God, then we will know that which should be most treasured by us - God's treasure and ours should be the same. This is the very thing that made the life of Jesus so different from the life of every other man. He treasured only what His Father treasured. May God grant us the grace to do the same.

What is it that God most treasures? With only a cursory reading of the Scripture, we quickly discover that God's priority is His own Glory. He desires that every aspect of His being, attributes, and works be made known to creation and that all praise and honor be ascribed only to Him. Consider the following Scriptures:

"For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations."

Malachi 1:11

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'"

Matthew 6:9-10

It is God's great desire or treasure to see His Name held in highest esteem among the nations, and among all creatures in heaven and on earth. At first sight, this may appear self-centered, but first sights are often very deceptive. For God to seek His glory above all else is the greatest demonstration of His love.

The depth of one's love is often demonstrated by the costliness of the gift he/she gives. If someone was to give you a twig or a small fragment of gravel, it would not be an overwhelming demonstration of love. You would not rush out to alert the media, nor would you gather your friends about you to tell them of this great love that has been shown to you. It would not be something that you remembered very long, much less, that you held close to your heart all the days of your life. However, if someone gave his life that you might live, this would indeed warrant such a reaction. It would be a story worth the media's attention, and your friends would most likely want to hear all about it. You would treasure such a selfless act of love all the days of your life. So then, the measure of one's love is often manifested by the greatness of one's gift.

Now we must ask ourselves a question: "What is the greatest gift that God could ever give?" It is not prosperity, health, or even heaven. He Himself is the greatest gift. The most loving thing that God can do for His creatures is to work in such a way so as to reveal or demonstrate the fullness of His glory to them - to take center stage and call all creatures to fix their eyes and hearts upon Him. For this very reason, when God does what He does for His own glory, it is the greatest demonstration of His love toward the creature.

The adverse of this is equally true. The most destitute and pitiful of all creatures are those who do not know God, who are unaware of His glory, and cut off from His truth. The Scriptures declare that God has set eternity in the hearts of men (Ecclesiastes 3:11). This in-

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finite aspect of the heart can only be filled by the infinite. Man may pour into his heart all the fame, wealth, power, and pleasure that this world has to offer, but he will still be empty. Eternity cannot be filled up with the temporal, nor can infinity be satisfied by the finite. Man's heart was made for the full measure of God's glory. Apart from this, man is destitute, miserable, and empty.

In summary, God's treasure, His greatest desire and purpose is that His Name be great among the nations, that His Name be hallowed (highly esteemed), that His Kingdom come, and His will be done! However, we must ask ourselves, "Is this our greatest purpose and passion?"

We lay awake at night and worry about so many things. We fret and are anxious about so many things. We desire things passionately, fanatically, even to the point of obsession: houses and lands, jobs and promotions, fame and reputation, needs, and wants, and countless other things. But when was the last time that sleep escaped us because of our concern for the nations that have not heard? When was the last time that our hearts broke in two because there are places on this earth where God's Name is not hallowed, His kingdom advances ever so slowly, and His will is not foremost in the hearts of men? We fret and sweat about so many things, but do we ever give any thought to that which is most on the mind of God?

Christ's Warning

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

In this verse, Jesus is calling for a radical decision on the part of His disciples to repent of their earthly materialism and turn their hearts toward God and His kingdom. Although the Scriptures speak of wealth as neither good nor

bad, it does warn us that the love of wealth is a great evil (I Timothy 6:10) and that the seeking and hoarding of wealth will only lead to loss and shame on the day of judgment (James 5:2-3).

Regardless of the warnings that run throughout Scripture, it seems that the desire for wealth is God's greatest competitor for the hearts of men. It is ironic that although most people spend most of their time, "treasuring treasures," very few ever really "possess treasures." And those rare individuals who actually do obtain their treasures here on earth quickly grow tired of them once they are obtained. Is it not a very foolish thing to trade the glorious gifts of God for earthly treasures that we rarely do obtain, and if by chance we do obtain them, we quickly grow tired of them?

Name one thing on this earth that is highly coveted by men and we can quickly assess its true value with one simple question: "Is it eternal?" If it is, it is worthy of being obtained even at the expense of all other things. If not, its worth is equivalent to the dust into which it will turn. To seek for it is a pathetic waste of a human life and fool's errand.

Christ's Admonition

"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal."

The Scriptures do not speak against treasure or the pursuit of treasure, but it does speak against foolishly wasting the life God has given us in the vain pursuit of things that have no eternal value and can never fill the infinite desire of a heart made for eternity. In Isaiah 55:2, the Scripture shakes its head in bewilderment at men who seek for the temporal at the expense of the eternal:



“Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy?”

Nothing except the person and will of God can fill a man. The only treasure worth having is that which is eternal and comes from God. Such treasure is found only by doing His will, living for His glory, and seeking after His Kingdom. Has God not promised to care for us? Has He not promised to meet our every need? Has He not shown Himself capable and willing to fill His children with blessing and to not withhold from them one good thing? Why, then, do we put earthly pursuits ahead of the pursuit of God and God’s pursuits? Our one obligation is also our only means of truly living an abundant and satisfied life - “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). Heaven and earth shall pass away, the inferior products of this world will burn up in the fire as hay, wood, and stubble (I Corinthians 3:12-15). However, the man who does the will of God will abide forever and his works will stand throughout eternity (I John 2:17). There will be no regrets in heaven for having lived “too much” for the kingdom of God, but we can be assured that there will be great regrets for having lived “so little.”

The Undeniable Truth

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Ever so often in Scripture, we are confronted by certain statements that open our hearts and reveal the truth about our character and desires. The verse above is one of those statements. Regardless of how often or forcefully we declare that God and His Kingdom are our greatest desire, the true desire of our life can be revealed by smallest and simplest of questions: Where is our heart? What occupies our

thoughts above all other things? What do we long for? Can we say in truth that God and His Kingdom are our passion?

What if a stranger who did not know of our Christian confession watched our lives and read our thoughts? Would he be convinced that God and His Kingdom are our two greatest priorities? Would he hear almost constant conversation about the mercies of God and the advancement of His Kingdom? Would he hear us pray with passion for the unevangelized nations? Would he see us passing a sleepless night because God’s Name is not highly esteemed among all peoples, because His Kingdom has not covered the entire earth, or because His will is not obeyed or even known by the great majority of men?

If most were honest, we would be forced to admit that he would hear us speaking about houses and lands, cars and toys, recreations and hobbies. He would see us obsessed with worldly worries, wants, and pleasures. He would hear very little about God in our daily conversation, would see little activity directed toward the advancement of the Kingdom, and would think it preposterous for us to claim that our treasure is in heaven!

Clear Eyes

“The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”

In saying that the “eye is the lamp of the body,” Jesus is not giving us instructions in human physiology, but rather is teaching us about the great influence that our desires have on our lives. Our body goes where our



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eyes are focused, and our eyes focus on what our heart desires. If our heart desires worldly things, then worldly things will be our focus and the very things we pursue. However, if our heart truly desires the things of God, then our eyes will be fixed on them, and we will pursue them with a passion. The clear eye has a single vision without confusion or duplicity. A.T. Robertson writes, "If our eyes are healthy, we see clearly and with a single focus. If the eyes are diseased (bad, evil), cross-eyed or cock-eyed, we see double and confuse our vision. We keep one eye on the hoarded treasures of earth and roll the other proudly up to heaven" (Word Pictures).

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to singleness of heart and purpose. We are called to seek first the Kingdom of God and entrust all our worldly needs to the Master. He knows what we need before we ask Him and is disposed to do good things for His children.

Two Masters

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

Jesus taught a great deal about money. The reason is simple - In this fallen world, money seems to be God's greatest competitor for the hearts of men. If by grace, a man has freed himself from the love and pursuit of wealth, he has opened himself to the possibility of undivided devotion to God.

Fallen man is a slave to someone. The question is not whether or not a man is a slave, but whose slave is he? Some men are enslaved to other men, some to themselves, and others to things such as money, security, and respectability. Other men are given to vain pursuits,

deceitful pleasures, or something as "harmless" as a hobby. The list is almost endless, but Christ calls us to turn away from such slavery and turn wholeheartedly and without reservation to Him.

Although the above Scripture teaches us that it is IMPOSSIBLE to serve God and wealth, the application is far reaching. There can be no competitors in the heart of the believer. We must constantly survey our lives and search out competing loyalties. When we find them, we must be careful to deal with them severely. We must not show them even the slightest compassion. If we spare them, they will become barbs in our eyes and thorns in our side (Numbers 33:55). We can never truly serve God while such things are hanging around our hearts. Even those things most precious to us must not be excused from our censure. Jesus taught that it is better for our right hand and right eye to suffer violent mutilation than for them to become stumbling blocks to the upward call of true discipleship (Matthew 5:29-30). We must put away anything that deters us from Him and His pursuits. Our lives are on the line and eternity is at stake! The Expositor's Bible Commentary concludes:

"Both God and money are portrayed, not as employers, but as slave owners. A man may work for two employers; but since 'single ownership and full time service are the very essence of slavery' (Tasker), he cannot serve two slave owners. Either God is served with a single-eyed devotion, or he is not served at all. Attempts at divided loyalty betray, not partial commitment to discipleship, but deep-seated commitment to idolatry."