

# What is it that you treasure? | Matthew 6:19-21 | 12/4/16

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- Introduction
  - Jesus continues His teachings on Christian living and character by bringing up the subject of possessions or more specifically what you consider to be your “treasure”.
    - As with all of Jesus’s teachings He saw the heart of those disciples He was teaching and He also knew the hearts of the millions of Christians who would read this account in Scripture.
    - Jesus divinely knew that it was important that He give us guidance on this important subject.
    - **It is not just a command about collecting material wealth, but it also opens our minds and eyes to see what in our life we truly consider to be a treasure.**
  - Possessions or material things in this world are not evil, nor is it wrong to have them.
    - Once again if we take Jesus’s teaching literally without any context we may think that to live in complete poverty is God’s desire and expectation for a Christian to live a truly holy life.
      - This thought is given more fuel when we read the passage about the rich young ruler and how Jesus told him that he must sell all his possessions.
        - Matthew 19:20-22
          - “The young man said to him, All these I have kept. What do I still lack? Jesus said to him, If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”
        - Many have taken this to mean that if you have possessions or wealth of any kind then you cannot have eternal life. Or you cannot be the Christian that God desires from us.
      - Historically Christians have thought this at various times.
        - Beginning In the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christians believed that there were two levels of Christianity, one for the average person and a higher level for one who chose a life of poverty and Chastity.
          - This was seen in the book called the Shepherd of Hermas.
        - This is what fueled monasticism.
          - This was a response to the wealth introduced by the conversion of the Christian emperor Constantine (4<sup>th</sup> century).
          - Prior to Constantine Christianity was seen as the religion of the poor, but with the Roman emperor now being Christian there was a large influx of wealth into the church.
          - Christians began to turn away from this and returned to a life of poverty that more closely related to the life Jesus led.
        - Poverty was a way of life for the Waldensians (12<sup>th</sup> century)
          - The life of poverty was even seen as a necessity for many, the Waldensians for example who formed in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century for them it was essential.
          - They lived their lives by the Sermon on the Mount and took it verbatim.
    - Possessions and material things in themselves are not wrong in fact they are a gift from God. The problem then isn’t with the “things” but **it’s the condition of our heart regarding them.**

- As with Jesus's other teachings with giving and praying in public we must look at what Jesus is speaking to. **Jesus is concerned about that which we make our "treasure"**.
  - It is not the possession that is the problem, what matters is what we make a treasure in our life.
  - What then is a "treasure"?
    - A treasure is something that one sees as having great value. **It can be either tangible or intangible.**
      - Tangible-Money, house or car.
      - Intangible- memory or a relationship.
    - A treasure is something that is perceived as having great value and is deeply cherished **in the eyes of the beholder.**
      - **Your treasure may not be a treasure to someone else.**
        - **A child's drawing.**
    - For something to be a treasure it does not have to have any worldly value, it simply something that has great value or worth to you.
    - **What are some things that you treasure that is tangible or intangible?**
    - **Why are they a treasure to you?**
- For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be. | Matthew 6:21
  - **The key from this passage of Scripture is that Jesus says whatever it is we treasure, is where our heart resides.**
    - Matthew 6:21
      - "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"
    - The heart is what Jesus is concerned about, just as He is in our giving and prayer how they must truly be from the heart.
    - **In this same way, with whatever we have in our lives that we truly treasure or cherish, then that is where our heart truly lies.**
      - **If you treasure your possessions then that is where your heart is, if you treasure your relationship with your spouse or children then that is where your heart lies.**
    - **The rich young ruler's problem was that he treasured his possessions.**
      - It wasn't that his possessions were bad, but that in his heart he had made them his treasure.
        - Matthew 19:22
          - "When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, **for he had great possessions."**
      - Jesus saw into the heart of the rich young ruler and saw that what he treasured most was his possessions. His treasure was not God.
      - **The solution then for this ruler was to remove these temporary earthly treasures so that he could instead hold God as his treasure.**
        - He may have obeyed all the commandments and lived a moral life, but he still treasured his possessions more than he treasured God.
          - Matthew 6:24
            - "No one can serve two masters, for 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 God and money."
  - One's "treasure" will be sought, protected and praised.

- Whatever it is in your life that is your “treasure” you will seek it, protect it and praise it because that is where your heart is.
  - So, if your treasure is your free time or your hobby, then those things is where your heart is.
    - You will seek it out to make time for it.
    - You will protect it regardless if it’s a physical possession or even a relationship.
    - You will praise it, the treasure will bring you great joy.
  - **There is nothing wrong with enjoying God’s gifts or the abilities He gives us for hobbies, but we must be careful that they do not turn into a treasure that we deem as more important than God.**
- We must not treasure or cherish worldly things instead of treasuring our relationship with God.
  - Matthew 6:19
    - “Don’t collect for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.
  - Everything in this world is temporary.
    - The possessions, wealth and even our health will fade away.
    - **Even the things that are gifts from God that are worldly will not last forever.**
  - Jesus does not want us putting all our efforts and making our focus building up these temporary things that fade away.
    - Luke 12:15
      - “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.**”
  - **If we spend our entire life making our treasures the things of the world, then our hearts and our priority has not been focused on what God desires from us.**
    - We must be rich TOWARDS God.
      - Luke 12:16-21
  - It is the love of worldly things that can cause us to wander from the faith.
    - 1 Timothy 6:10
      - “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. **It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith** and pierced themselves with many pangs.”
    - This passage tells us that the LOVE of money (not money itself) is the root of all kinds of evil.
    - **Because to love money is to treasure it, it is to put it above all else.**
    - And we are warned that when we do this with worldly things that it can cause us to wander away from the faith and caused us many pains.
  - **The warning for the Christian is to never let the temporary things of this world become our treasure that we hold above godly treasures that are eternal.**
  - **What might we treasure in our own life, that Jesus might ask us to get rid of? If you put yourself into the passage of the rich young ruler, what would your “treasure” be?**
- The Christian should seek to store up treasures in heaven.
  - While many things in this world are enjoyable and are gifts from God. We must always look ahead to heaven, to build up things that are eternal instead of worldly and temporary.
    - **This is where God desires our heart to be.**

- **The Bible says to use our “wealth” to be rich in good works which will give us treasure in heaven. To take hold of that which is truly life.**
  - 1 Timothy 6:17-19
    - “As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, not to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, **thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.**”
  - This passage makes it clear that our possessions and things that God gives us if we do not treasure them above Him, they are to be used to glorify Him by helping others.
  - **By doing God’s work and using the gifts that He has given us will give us treasure in heaven.**
    - It is different for everyone. Some are given a lot and some are given a little. But regardless of the amount, we must all use it obediently for God.
  - **That is truly a life that is worthy of living**, to serve and help others. Not to glory in our own accomplishments.
- **The Christian should examine their lives and make God and obedience to His commands the treasure that is valued above all else.**
  - Our heart should love God.
    - Matthew 22:37a
      - “He said to him, “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all our soul, and with all your mind...”
    - We must love God will all our heart and mind.
    - We should love Him more than we love our possessions, relationships and hobbies.
  - We should treasure His commandments.
    - Proverbs 7:1
      - “My son, keep my words and treasure up my commandments with you”
  - We should treasure the Word of God above all else.
    - Job 23:12
      - “I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.”
    - This is truly putting God’s desires for our lives above all else.
- **Does our perception of life change when we truly take Jesus’s teaching to heart? To remove the worldly desires of treasuring our possessions, to instead treasure things that effect eternity?**