

Money and Exercising Generous Wisdom – *Matt 6:19-24*

Introduction – Whether in corporate America or in our own private checking accounts, money matters can be big headaches. We are often stuck with too much month at the end of our money. Rich and poor alike can fall into covetousness, thinking far too much about treasures they have or want. But practically, we have to think about money quite a bit in our lives and so we turn to scripture to teach us how to think. The key is to think in terms of heaven and imitating the One who has come from heaven.

Investing in the Right Treasures (vv19-21) – We are supposed to lay up treasure. Jesus is not opposed to investments; He is opposed to bad investments. But how do we measure the risk of an investment in kingdom-terms? There are worldly investments that do not look risky but are about to be lost forever (Luke 12:13ff). Then there are investments that look risky but in fact will be greatly blessed by God in His time and in His way (Eccles 11:1-6).

Check Your Heart – How do you know if you are investing in worldly or heavenly treasures? Everywhere you put your money, it's still on earth. It starts with a heart attitude towards everything that the Lord has entrusted to you as a steward of His resources. As citizens of His heavenly kingdom, all of our investing here is to be for the sake of His kingdom, His name, and His glory.

Generous Wisdom over Those Treasures (vv22-23) – Jesus is not changing the subject. Our English idioms are hard to translate (climbing the walls, got cabin fever, stir crazy) as are Hebrew idioms. If your eye is good (healthy, single) meant you were generous. If your eye is bad meant you were miserly (see Prov 28:22). Your life is full of light when you are full of generosity and open-handedness with your earthly goods. If you are generous, your whole life is blessed (v22). If you are stingy, how great is that darkness (v23).

Serving the Right Master (v24) – God is your master and He is a good and generous master. Money is to be your fellow-servant and as so it is a wonderful servant. But money is a harsh master; when it becomes your god, it never satisfies, even if one gets a lot of it. God does not mind His people having money; He does mind money having His people. And as this verse makes clear, once mammon (riches, treasures) becomes your master, he is the only master you will obey.

Exercising Generous Wisdom – Applying this teaching, there are some ways we can think about our attitude and our actions with our money, our treasures, and everything God has given us.

Thinking as Stewards – Everything you have is gift; time, talent, treasures. God gave it to you so that you would use it on His behalf. Look at how God manages His creation and then imitate Him – that is how you know you are being a good steward.

Personally Generous – We cannot say we love God and hate our neighbor (1 John 4:20) and that means we must have a personal and practical interest in the needs of others around us (James 2:14-17).

Heavenly Shrewdness – We are to be careful to know the state of our flocks (Prov 17:23) but in the context of wanting to give as much as we can. “*Earn as much as you can, save as much as you can, invest as much as you can, give as much as you can.*” – John Wesley. The goal is not to come out ahead by giving (a twisted teaching of the health and wealth gospel). The goal is to give in order to get in order to give again; the goal is maximizing generosity, not personal wealth.

Kingdom Seekers – Matt 6:33 warns us against our temptation to take care our things first, our people first, and then to be generous with whatever is left over. But the mentality Jesus would teach us is to be generous first and in such a way that we are more than able to provide for those that God has given us responsibility for.

Thankful, Sharing, Enjoying Hearts – God has given us wealth so that we might enjoy it with thankful hearts, sharing with those around us (1 Tim 6:17-19). We must serve the Lord with rejoicing and celebration (Deut 12:7). If instead we are miserly, superstitious about wealth, unthankful, and refusing to share, we will be turned over to our enemies (Deut 28:47-48).