

“God or Greed?” (Matthew 6:19–24)

When I was a teenager I was into lifting weights. Over the years, I accumulated a lot of muscle books and magazines. These resources were not cheap, but I got my monies’ worth because I read them over and over again. I had a great collection and continually added new editions. After getting married when I was 22, I no longer had the same intense desire to become “buff.” (That tells you a bit about my motivation, doesn’t it?) We ended up keeping a lot of my personal belongings in our basement storage shed. The box that contained all these books was designated to this storage area. One day as I was preparing for my final semester of seminary, I decided I needed to sell my bodybuilding books because Lori’s birthday was a few days away and I needed some cash to buy her a gift. After calling various bookstores in the yellow pages, I decided to take my prized collection to Powell’s—the largest used bookstore in the world. After walking into Powell’s and placing my box on the counter for evaluation, I went to find Lori a good book on quilting. I found one that I liked for \$10.00. As I went to purchase the book, I found out that my collection amounted to either \$6.00 cash or \$7.25 credit. I couldn’t believe it. Every single one of my books cost more than this, and my box was filled to overflowing. Even a professional bodybuilder would have had trouble carrying this box. On two occasions, before signing for my money, I longingly peeked into my box of books. This collection was a part of me, and yet a pittance was all that I could get for it! Needless to say, I humbly took the cash, bought my book, and disappointedly walked out of the store.

On a larger scale, have you purchased a new car, driven it off the lot, and discovered that it depreciated by 33%? Worse yet, have you had someone “key” or rear-end your new car, damaging the showroom appearance? Are you in a situation where you recently purchased a home and now need to move, but you can’t get what you paid for your house? Have you diligently put money away for retirement and now you need to draw upon your earnings, but you’ve lost half of what you invested? Undoubtedly, you’ve experienced that sick feeling in your stomach on account of money and possessions. Do you ever feel that your possessions possess you?¹ Most likely, if you’re honest, you’re nodding in agreement. One of God’s goals is for you to realize that your money and possessions are not *owned*, they are *loaned*.² Perhaps you have seen the classic bumper sticker, “You can’t take it with you.” The point of this expression is: There’s no afterlife so live like a pagan, spend everything you have, and go out with a bang! Surprisingly, Jesus agrees with the slogan, “You can’t take it with you.” However, Jesus tacks on an expression: “*You can’t take it with you, but you can send it ahead.*”³ In Matthew 6:19–24, Jesus shares three directives that will help you send your wealth ahead.

1. Transfer your treasure to heaven (6:19–21).⁴ Jesus commands you to prioritize heavenly treasures over earthly trinkets. I know what you’re thinking: “Oh no, this is a message about money! Ugh! I’m going to stop reading now.” Please don’t do this. Sermons on giving are a lot like root canals—they are painful but they are necessary and even helpful.⁵ In 6:19, Jesus begins with a negative command: “**Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.**” This verse is better rendered, “Stop storing up treasures for yourselves!”⁶ The words translated “store up” (*thesaurizo*)⁷ and “treasures” (*thesaurous*) have the same root.⁸ So Jesus is literally saying, “Do not *treasure* for yourselves *treasures*.” What does He mean? Should we not bother with a savings account? Is He saying don’t invest in Wall Street? Don’t have any money put aside for tough times that may come? This can’t be what Jesus is saying because the Bible applauds saving⁹ and caring for our family members.¹⁰ The apostle Paul even indicates that you can enjoy what God has given you.¹¹ What Jesus prohibits here is the *selfish* accumulation of goods.¹² Notice the phrase “on earth.” Jesus’ concern is stockpiling on earth rather than stockpiling in heaven. He doesn’t want you to have a wonderful earthly bank account while your spiritual bank account is bouncing checks because what you have stored up is solely for yourself. This is a poor investment. Jesus is clear: *You can’t take it with you, but you can send it ahead.*

Jesus commands you not to store up treasures on earth because they are temporal. In Jesus' day banks did not exist, so people saved their wealth in three ways. First, they collected clothes. A nice wardrobe of fine garments was as good as money in the bank.¹³ These clothes could be sold in the future.¹⁴ The only problem was that these garments were very susceptible to moths. And since they didn't have mothballs and cedar-lined closets, moths would eat holes in the garments.

A second way of accumulating wealth was to store grain in barns.¹⁵ Famine was an ever-present reality in the ancient Near East because of the undependable rains. If a man could store his grain until a famine came and prices soared, he could become fabulously wealthy. Most of our English versions indicate that what will destroy the second standard of wealth is rust.¹⁶ However, the word "rust" (*broxis*) conveys the act of eating.¹⁷ As a consequence, it is most likely that Jesus is talking about rats, mice, roaches, and termites that eat away the grain.¹⁸ Wealth will be destroyed, obliterated, made to vanish.

The third method of saving was to exchange assets for gold. The people in Jesus' day generally buried their gold under their house floors.¹⁹ Palestinian houses were made of baked clay, so a burglar broke in by digging a hole in a wall.²⁰ In fact, thieves in the first-century were called "diggers."²¹ Thieves can carry off just about anything, in one way or another. In essence, if moths and vermin don't destroy your wealth, thieves will break in and rob you blind. No matter what kind of wealth you have and no matter what you do to protect it, eventually it will be gone. Earthly treasures are perishable and vulnerable.²² When you invest heavily in the treasures of this world it is the equivalent of buying a company's stock the day after they've declared bankruptcy. Not a very good deal!²³

So why do you and I seek to accumulate "treasure" on earth?²⁴ (1) *Security*. We want to know that we are taken care of, so what brings us the greatest security of life and soul is to have material security. (2) *Personal worth, esteem, and value*. Material possessions and wealth often indicate that people are successful in what they have done with their lives. We feel good about ourselves if we dress, drive, dine, and decorate well. (3) *Power*. With wealth and material success, we believe that we can have and get and be what we want. Wealth gives us control over our own fate and over other people. (4) *Independence*. With wealth I can be my own "god" and not rely on anyone else. (5) *Pleasure*. With wealth we can indulge our every fantasy, whether it is the exotic vacation, the luxurious wedding, the finest dining, or the most decadent home.

As tempting as these benefits are, the echo resounds: *You can't take it with you, but you can send it ahead*. Again, Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal." He is not speculating...He's speaking of *sure* things. When He warns you not to store up treasures on earth, it's not just because wealth might be lost. It's that wealth will definitely be lost. Either it leaves you while you live, or you leave it when you die.²⁵

If storing up treasures on earth is the wrong priority, what's the right one? After giving a prohibition, Jesus moves to a positive command. In 6:20 He says, **"But store up for yourselves treasures²⁶ in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal."** Matt 6:20 is one of the clearest verses in the Bible supporting eternal rewards. Now I realize that some people think it's selfish to seek rewards. While I can appreciate these sentiments, there are some problems with this notion: First, Jesus commands believers to seek eternal rewards. The Greek verb translated "store up" is a command! The verb is also in the present tense and refers to that which is to be the constant pattern and objective of your life. Second, Jesus never rewards selfishness, only selflessness. If Jesus thought that the motivation of rewards was selfish, He would have never commanded this pursuit. We dare not attempt to be more spiritual than Jesus.²⁷ Finally, Jesus is all about treasure—your heavenly treasure—because it glorifies Him! He wants you to keep and enjoy your treasures forever. Since heaven is the only place your treasure will be safe, He commands you to store it up for your good and His glory! *You can't take it with you, but you can send it ahead*.

Suppose I offer you \$1,000 to spend today however you want. Not a bad deal. But suppose I give you a choice—you can either have that \$1,000 today, or you can have \$10 million if you'll wait one year—then \$10 million more every year thereafter. Only a fool would take the \$1,000 today. Yet that's what we do whenever we grab on to what will last for only a moment, foregoing something far more valuable we could enjoy later for much longer. A year may seem a long time to wait. But after it's done—as when our lives here are done—it will seem like it passed quickly.²⁸ A few years ago, a group of world-class athletes were asked the following question: "If you could take a drug that would cause you to win a gold medal, but it would kill you in ten years, would you take it?" Amazingly, the majority said yes. They'd sacrifice fifty or more years of life for a gold medal.²⁹

What would you give up to have treasure in heaven? Would you be thriftier with your family food budget? Would you occasionally split a meal with your spouse when you eat out? Would you forgo your Starbucks addiction? Would you spend less money on Christmas gifts? Would you let go of cable TV? Would you drive a lesser car than you could otherwise afford? Perhaps you would be willing to drive used cars? Would you have a less expensive wardrobe? Maybe you could shop after-holiday sales? Would you sell your large home and downsize to a more modest home? Perhaps you could refinance your mortgage? Maybe you could choose to enjoy simpler or fewer vacations or possibly turn your next family vacation into a mission trip? Or perhaps you could cash in a retirement fund so you can support yourself and serve others? Would you use your work skills to benefit God's work in a more direct way? Would you negotiate a four-tens workweek so you can devote one full day a week to ministry?³⁰ These are ways that treasures in heaven can be accumulated. Be creative, come up with your own ideas, and let the Holy Spirit direct you. But reflect on these words from Andrew Murray (1794–1866): "We ask how much a man gives; Christ asks how much he keeps."³¹ *You can't take it with you, but you can send it ahead.*

In 6:21, Jesus provides the reason for His command to "store up treasures in heaven:" **"For where your³² treasure is, there your heart will be also."** If I had been preaching the Sermon on the Mount, I would have reversed these words. I would have said: "For where your heart is, there your treasure will be also." Yet, Jesus is smarter than I am. What He's saying is this: "I want to capture your heart.³³ I want you not only to do what is right, but to want to do what is right. And here is my prescription for you: Invest your money in the right things, and your affections will follow your investments." We have a tendency to turn this principle on its head. We think that the important thing is to feel good about something before we do it. We want our emotions to lead us. If and only *if* we feel good about doing what is right, then we will do it. Jesus says that life works in the opposite way. Emotions follow motions. Motions create emotions. Investment creates interest. The first step in godly living is to do something that we don't want—at least emotionally—to do. We take the first step by faith and write a check for something that we really don't want to write it for. It is only after we do that that we enjoy a sense that God has changed our heart about it.³⁴ Don't wait for your heart to move on its own, because it might never happen. Instead, begin to move your treasure today to what matters in heaven...and your heart will follow.³⁵ Jesus said what you spend money on or invest money in, you will come to love. Your heart always follows your money. The reason God doesn't have some people's wallets is because He doesn't have their hearts.³⁶

How do you know what has your heart? Let me ask you a few quick questions: (1) What occupies your thoughts when you have nothing else to do? What occupies your daydreams? Is it your investments, your position? If so, those are the things you treasure, and that is where your heart really is. (2) Similarly, what is it that you fret about most? Is it your home or perhaps your clothing? If so, then you know where your treasure lies. (3) Apart from your loved ones, what or whom do you most dread losing? (4) What are the things that you measure others by? Do you measure others by their clothing? By their education? By their homes? By their athletic prowess? Do you measure others by their success in the business world? If so, you know where your treasure lies, for these questions are a very revealing mirror because we measure other people by that which we treasure. (5) Lastly, what is it that you know you cannot be happy without?³⁷

[Jesus directs you to transfer your treasure to heaven because He wants to richly reward you. Now in His second directive, He says...]

2. Recognize your responsibility to be generous (6:22–23).³⁸ Generosity breeds light while stinginess breeds darkness. In 6:22–23 Jesus says, “**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 this context, the eye is used metaphorically.³⁹ Many English versions imply that Jesus is concerned about the health or clarity of the eye. But these translations are somewhat misleading. The KJV is more accurate with its literal rendering, “If your eye is single...if your eye is evil.” (This is where we get the expression “evil eye.”⁴⁰) But what does it mean to have a “single” eye or an “evil” eye? In our culture, we have various expressions about the eye. Sometimes the eye can describe a person’s physical condition. Someone who is red-eyed or bleary-eyed is tired. Sometimes we refer to the eyes to describe a person’s feelings or character. Someone who is dreamy-eyed is in love. Someone who is sharp-eyed is crafty. Someone who is cock-eyed has a distorted view of reality. Someone who is bug-eyed is excited or surprised. In the Old Testament, we find references to people being single-eyed. A single-eyed person is someone who is generous.⁴¹ The New Testament also uses forms of the word to refer to those who are generous.⁴² When Jesus refers to someone having a single eye, He means that person is someone who gives to others with open-hearted generosity. The warm heart shines through warm eyes. The opposite of the single eye is the evil eye. It refers to a stingy or begrudging spirit.⁴³ The same expression occurs in Jesus’ parable of the generous vineyard owner who paid all his laborers the same wages regardless of the hours they worked. When the workers who had put in a full day’s labor bitterly complained, the owner asked them: “Is your eye evil because I am good?” (Matt 20:15) This crew wanted to have more for themselves, or for the others to have less.⁴⁴ The evil eye is a stingy spirit. If one’s eye (ethical perception) becomes clouded by greed the result is darkness (selfishness) in the whole self.⁴⁵ Jesus is saying, “If you look upon the things of this earth with a generous perspective, your life will be useful. If, however, you look upon the things of this earth with greed in mind, then your life will be wasted.”⁴⁶ Remember, *you can’t take it with you, but you can send it ahead.* Generous people give of themselves and their money to those who have need.⁴⁷ As a result, they will experience joy in this life and in the life to come.

A man in New York City had a wife who had a cat. Actually, the cat had her. She loved the cat. She stroked it, combed its fur, fed it, and pampered it. The man detested the cat. He was allergic to cat hair; he hated the smell of the litter box; he couldn’t stand the scratching on the furniture; and he couldn’t get a good night’s sleep because the cat kept jumping on the bed. When his wife was out of town for the weekend, he put the cat in a bag with some rocks, dumped it in the Hudson River, and uttered a joyful goodbye to the cat. When his wife returned and could not find her cat, she was overwhelmed with grief. Her husband said, “Look, honey, I know how much that cat meant to you. I’m going to put an ad in the paper and give a reward of \$500 to anyone who finds the cat.” No cat showed up, so a few days later he said, “Honey, you mean more to me than anything on earth. If that cat is precious to you, it is precious to me. I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll buy another ad and up the ante. We’ll increase the reward to \$1000.” A friend saw the ad and exclaimed, “You must be nuts; there isn’t a cat on earth that is worth \$1000.” The man replied, “Well, when you know what I know, you can afford to be generous.”⁴⁸

If you have an understanding of heavenly treasures and how God’s kingdom works, you can afford to be generous. You can establish priorities by the way you give and live.⁴⁹ Generosity is possible because you realize that life is short and your money and possessions will fly away like an eagle (Prov 23:5). *You can’t take it with you, but you can send it ahead.*

[Jesus has urged you to choose between two treasures (6:19–21) and two eyes (6:22–23). Now He prepares for the climax by discussing two masters. He says...]

3. Choose your master wisely (6:24).⁵⁰ In this final verse, Jesus explains that you cannot serve God and wealth. He puts it like this: “**No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate⁵¹ the one and love⁵² the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.**” In Jesus’ day, a slave owner could actually rent out one of his servants to another taskmaster.⁵³ Such an arrangement always put the servant in a bind. What if the two men gave conflicting orders? How was he supposed to respond? Who was he supposed to listen to? Perhaps you’ve been in a situation like this at work, with two supervisors telling you to do two different things, disagreeing about how you should do your job. Frustrating, isn’t it?⁵⁴ You might be able to have two jobs, but your relationship with God is an exclusive relationship. There’s a throne in your life only big enough for one. Christ may be on the throne or money may be on the throne. But both cannot occupy that throne.⁵⁵ The reason is simple: God and money are not employers, they are slave owners. Each demands single-minded devotion. You cannot be a full-time slave to two masters. If you serve God with your whole heart, the seductive love of money will be squeezed out.⁵⁶ Notice, Jesus didn’t say you couldn’t have money; He said you can’t serve it. What does serving money mean? Serving money means that you are consumed with money: you think about it all the time, you bring it up in nearly every conversation, and you are scared to death of losing it. Serving money means that money determines what you do. It calls the shots. Does God tell you what to do with the things you have, or do you go ahead and make those decisions independently of Him? Does God direct your life, or do you do it yourself? That’s His concern. His concern is about priorities. Money is a good servant but a poor master.

In his book, *I Talk Back to the Devil*, A.W. Tozer writes, “Money often comes between men and God. Someone has said that you can take two small ten-cent pieces, just two dimes, and shut out the view of a panoramic landscape. Go to the mountains and just hold two coins in front of your eyes—the mountains are still there, but you cannot see them at all because there is a dime shutting off the vision of each eye.” Just as we cannot follow a road that forks, we cannot serve God and wealth at the same time. God requires a single eye and single service.⁵⁷

In the game of Monopoly, players buy land and collect money. When one player has enough money and at least one monopoly of properties, he or she can buy houses and hotels and collect rent on them. Eventually, one player receives enough rental money through land and building holdings to bankrupt the other players, thus ending the game. Parker Brothers, the makers of Monopoly, take for granted one final instruction—when the game is over, put all the pieces back in the box. People who live for the present, who spend their strength on what cannot last, are like children who play Monopoly as though it were reality. In the end, we all get put in the box and we are gone. What matters is what remains when the game on earth is over.⁵⁸

One day in the not so distant future, Jesus Christ will return and He will bring the treasures that you have stored up with Him. In the final chapter of the Bible, Jesus’ declares: “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done” (Rev 22:12). He is bringing back what you have invested with Him from the one place in the universe that it can never be lost. Only heavenly treasure can provide genuine security and permanence.⁵⁹ *You can’t take it with you, but you can send it ahead.*

“I value all things only by the price they shall gain in eternity.”

John Wesley (1703–1791)

“I place no value on anything I possess, except in relation to the kingdom of God.”

David Livingstone (1813–1873)

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”⁶⁰

Jim Elliot (1927–1956)

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Scripture References

Matthew 6:19–24

Luke 12:31–21

James 5:1–4

1 Corinthians 7:29–31

1 Corinthians 15:41–42

2 Timothy 4:1–10

1 Timothy 6:17–19

Study Questions

1. How am I presently storing up for myself earthly treasures (6:19)? What are my most valuable possessions? In what specific ways have I witnessed the decay and destruction of my belongings? Have I ever been robbed? If so, what did this do to my sense of security and permanence? When and how have I learned about the temporal nature of earthly goods? Do I live in light of Proverbs 23:5? How would I explain this verse to my children?
2. Over the course of my Christian life, how have I stored up treasures in heaven (6:20)? What specific treasures have I sent ahead? How am I going to store up for myself treasures in heaven?
3. Where have I invested my earthly treasures (6:21)? How have my passions followed my financial investments? Where is the Lord asking me to give? Will I obey? If not, why the hesitation? Do I still think that the more things I possess the happier I will be? How can I become more content with what God has entrusted to me?
4. Would others describe me as a generous person (6:22–23)? Why or why not? Andrew Murray (1794–1866) once said, “We ask how much a man gives; Christ asks how much he keeps.” When it comes to the money that God has entrusted to me, how much do I keep for myself and my family? How can I make additional sacrifices to bless others? How can I strive to increase my standard of giving instead of my standard of living?
5. Can I honestly say that God is my only master (6:24)? What person or pursuit competes for first-place in my life? How can I put the Lord back on His rightful throne? Who can hold me accountable in this commitment? Whom do I admire for the way he or she handles money? What does that person do that I would like to emulate or do better?

Notes

¹ Read Paul's words in 1 Cor 7:29–31.

² Erwin Lutzer, *Your Eternal Reward* (Chicago: Moody, 1998), 104.

³ Randy Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, revised and updated (Wheaton: Tyndale, 2003), 97.

⁴ See the parallel in Luke 12:33–34.

⁵ Robert Jeffress, *Guilt-Free Living* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1995), 107.

⁶ France points out, “A present imperative in the negative often implies that the act prohibited is already occurring, as against an aorist subjunctive, used to prevent something contemplated but not yet actual.” R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*. New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 258.

⁷ For other NT uses of the verb see Luke 12:21; Rom 2:5; 1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 12:14; Jas 5:3; and 2 Pet. 3:7.

⁸ The English word thesaurus is drawn from these Greek words.

⁹ Prov 6:6–11.

¹⁰ 1 Thess 4:11–12; 2 Thess 3:6–15; 1 Tim 5:8.

¹¹ 1 Tim 4:3–4; 6:17.

¹² Luke 12:15; Jas 5:2–3.

¹³ See Gen 37:3; 2 Kgs 5:23.

¹⁴ The average person in the first-century might have only three or four garments in his or her lifetime.

¹⁵ See esp. Luke 12:18.

¹⁶ The Greek language, however, has another word for rust (*ios*) that destroys metal (see Jas 5:3). Nevertheless, if the translation “rust” is correct this term may refer to idols (Neh 9:18; Isa 41:7; Dan 11:8), since the possession of idols was a form of wealth in ancient times (Gen 31:19, 34; Hos 8:4).

¹⁷ *Brosis* is translated “food, meat” everywhere but here (see John 4:32; 6:27, 55; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 8:4; 2 Cor 9:10; Col 2:16; Heb 12:16).

¹⁸ David L. Turner, *Matthew*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 196. It is likely that Matt 6:19–20 alludes to Isa 51:8.

¹⁹ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*. Word Biblical Commentary series (Dallas: Word, 1993), 157.

²⁰ Haddon W. Robinson, *What Jesus Said About Successful Living* (Grand Rapids: RBC, 1991), 211–12.

²¹ The verb used in connection with the thief (*diorusso*) literally means to “dig.” Archaeological discoveries have found that people during Jesus' time often placed their valuables in the ground under their house. This functioned like a safe. Stealing someone's wealth would therefore require digging directly where the wealth was located or channeling through the mud bricks of the house walls at an angle and coming to the safe from the side.

²² Charles H. Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount: Character Formation and Ethical Decision Making in Matthew 5-7* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 121.

²³ This is why Jesus called the man who never stored up treasure for himself a “fool” (Luke 12:13–21).

²⁴ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*. NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 303.

²⁵ Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, 97.

²⁶ Paul uses similar language in 1 Tim 6:19.

²⁷ Michael Eaton, *The Way that Leads to Life* (Great Britain: Christian Focus, 1999), 142.

²⁸ Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, 104.

²⁹ Robert N. Wilkin, *The Road to Reward: Living Today in Light of Tomorrow* (Irving, TX: GES, 2003), 83.

³⁰ See also Bruce Wilkinson, *A Life God Rewards Devotional* (Sisters: Multnomah, 2002), 104–105.

³¹ Bruce Wilkinson with David Kopp, *A Life God Rewards Devotional* (Sisters: Multnomah, 2002), 101.

³² It is worth noting that the pronouns in this verse are singular while the pronouns in 6:19–20 are plural. The change to singular emphasizes personal responsibility as opposed to corporate responsibility; even if others do not listen, the one who hears Jesus' commands should obey.

³³ Your heart is your intellectual and volitional core, the source of your deeds (Matt 15:17–20).

³⁴ Doug McIntosh, “A Rationale for Living” (Matt 6:19–21):

<http://www.cornerstonebibch.org/html/Sermons/Matthew/Matt21.pdf>.

³⁵ Wilkinson, *A Life God Rewards*, 89.

³⁶ Tony Evans, *Time to Get Serious* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1995), 104.

³⁷ R. Kent Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom*. Preaching the Word Series (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), Electronic ed.

³⁸ See the parallel in Luke 11:34–36.

³⁹ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 158; Talbert, *Matthew*, 122.

⁴⁰ Turner, *Matthew*, 197.

⁴¹ Prov 22:9.

⁴² Paul uses the noun form of the word “single” to refer to those who are generous (Rom 12:8; 2 Cor 8:2; 9:11, 13). James uses the adverb to refer to God who gives generously (Jas 1:5).

⁴³ Prov 23:6; 28:22; Deut 15:9.

⁴⁴ David S. Dockery & David E. Garland, *Seeking the Kingdom* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1992), 90–91.

⁴⁵ Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount*, 122.

⁴⁶ Ed Glasscock, *Matthew*. Moody Gospel Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 1997), 154.

⁴⁷ We are responsible to help those who are in need, especially the family of faith (Prov 19:17; Acts 11:27–30; Rom 15:25–27; 2 Cor 8:1–15; Gal 6:7–10; Eph 4:28; 1 Tim 5:3–7). We are also called to encourage and support God’s work in spreading the gospel of the kingdom both at home and around the world (1 Cor 9:3–14; Phil 4:14–19; 1 Tim 5:17–18). Wilkins, *Matthew*.

⁴⁸ Robinson, *What Jesus Said About Successful Living*, 213–14.

⁴⁹ Tragically, Christians now give less than 2% of their income to Christian or charitable causes. Yet, giving was 3% during the Great Depression.

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⁵⁰ See the parallel in Luke 16:13.

⁵¹ The verb “hate” (*miseo*) is a Hebrew idiom that meant “to love less” or “to be indifferent toward” (see Gen 29:30, 31, 33; Deut 21:15; Mal 1:2–3; Matt 21:15; Luke 14:26; John 12:25; Rom 9:13).

⁵² Jer 8:2 indicates that “to love” means “to serve” (to be devoted to).

⁵³ An example of this may be the slave-girl in Acts 16:16.

⁵⁴ Ken Hemphill, *Empowering Kingdom Growth* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 240.

⁵⁵ Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, 105.

⁵⁶ Lutzer, *Your Eternal Reward*, 110.

⁵⁷ Dockery & Garland, *Seeking the Kingdom*, 93.

⁵⁸ Robinson, *What Jesus Said About Successful Living*, 217–18.

⁵⁹ Turner, *Matthew*, 196.

⁶⁰ Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, 94.