

“Laying Up Treasures In Heaven”

Part Two of “The Treasure Principle” (Based on six principles from “The Treasure Principle,” by Randy Alcorn.

“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 moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21)

Today we will study three of “The Treasure Principles.” These three deal with the location of our **SPIRITUAL INVESTMENT**. Here are the three principles:

- *I should live for the dot, not the line*
- *Heaven, Not Earth is my home*
- *My heart always goes where I put God’s Money*

While we are talking about money, it is important to remember that the subject was important to Jesus. He spoke about frequently about finances. 1/4 of Jesus parables deal with money. In His earthly ministry, Jesus spoke about investment, saving, indebtedness, hiring procedures, wage structure, leasing, banking, interest, building of barns, finding lost money, paying taxes, bad financial management, rich men, poor men, tithing. **Jesus spoke more about money than He did about heaven!** (Gene Getz)

It has been observed that there are 500 verses in the Bible that address prayer. 500 verses in the Bible address Faith. But 5,000 verses in the Bible address money or possessions! (David Giuliano, "Clergy Journal." Sep 2006).

Let’s begin our study of MATTHEW 6:19-21

The first part is Matthew **6:19**. It is a negative command. Essentially, Jesus tells us **“Don’t Just Collect Stuff.”**

Randy Alcorn calls this principle *I should live for the dot, not the line*

Have you ever thought “How much will my STUFF be worth someday?” The answer is ZERO ! *It’s all gonna burn!* (2 Peter 3:10) *“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.”*

No matter how precious your possessions are today, they are part of this world and will eventually have no value. They will not continue to eternity. Possessions are insecure, whether from within (moths destroy things). And what doesn’t rot, always has the potential of being stolen (thieves break in and steal).

Jesus is NOT forbidding, Owning and possessing material things, savings, investments,

or insurance. Scripture addresses some of these areas. He is not forbidding the ownership of nice things or a limited amount of enjoyment from things of this world. Paul sums up this principle well in 1 Timothy 6:17. *"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment."* From this verse we receive instruction that those with material wealth are not to put their confidence in their wealth. But the verse also tells us that God allows us the enjoyment of things when our focus is placed on him.

The second part of Christ's instructions is phrased in a **Positive Command. Store Up Treasures in Heaven. (Matthew 6:20)**

Alcorn calls this Principle *Heaven, Not Earth is My Home*

It is important to remember this principle! We are citizens of heaven. The Bible describes us as *aliens* and *strangers* of this earth.

(Ephesians 2:19) *"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,"*

(Philippians 3:20) *"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,"*

There is an old gospel song that goes like this,

This World Is Not My Home

This world is not my home I'm just passing through
my treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue
the angels beckon me from Heaven's open door
and I can't feel at home in this world anymore

How then, do you store up treasures in heaven? By spending your money on **things that will last!** and there are *Only two things from this world will last into eternity.....* The **WORD of GOD.** (Matthew 24:35) *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.* And **PEOPLE.**

I encourage you to study Psalm 49. It speaks about the brevity of life and the importance of trusting in God and not material possessions. In the middle of this psalm we find one of the few clear OT reference to the physical resurrection. (Psalm 49:15) *"But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself."*

In the middle of a Psalm about possessions, we are reminded that this life is not all that there is! I should be more concerned with building for heaven than accumulating things here on earth!

QUESTION: *How Much Should I give?*

TITHING is a “Biblical Benchmark” We often think about tithing as something that was an Old Testament Law but is not required in the NT. That statement is true, but we sometimes that tithing is the place from which our giving should *begin*.

Did you know that the first example of tithing occurs before the Law was given? We find it in Genesis 14. The story is re-told for us in Hebrews 7:1-10.

After his victory over the forces that had captured his nephew Lot, Abraham passes through the city that would eventually become Jerusalem and presents an offering to Melchizedek. This OT personality is an OT apperacnace of Jesus himself. Abraham showed his honor to God by tithing long before the Law!

Tithing continues on in the Mosaic Law. **Leviticus 27:30-34. Note that there is more than one tithe:**

- A. Priestly tithe - 1/10 of all yearly produce and 1/10 of all of the flocks and cattle. Supported the Levites. The Levites then tithed off of this and supported the ministry of the priests. (Leviticus 27:30-33; Numbers 18:24)
- B. Festival Tithe - 1/10 of the 90% left. Taken with them yearly to Jerusalem. (Deuteronomy 12:5-7; 14:22-27)
- C. Charity Tithe - Given every 3rd year. Designated for Levites, strangers, fatherless and widows. (Deuteronomy 26:12; 14:28-29)

Finally, the closing book of the Old Testament contains perhaps the strongest exhortation for the OT saints to remember to tithe. It is contained in **Malachi 3:8-12**

In the New Testament, we are not commanded directly to tithe. We are to give as God’s Spirit leads us. We are to give regularly, privately and generously.

Note what Gene Getz writes about tithing in his book, “A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions:

“God’s plan for Israel in the Old Testament serves as a foundational model regarding the way Christians should view and use their material possessions today... To be “God-fearing Jews” simply meant that these people were committed to doing everything they could to keep the Old Testament Laws. We can certainly assume that most of them, before they became Christians, practiced the Old Testament regulations regarding tithing...

When these Jews became Christians, they would have naturally transferred their economic loyalty from Judaism to Christianity. It is no wonder that we see such generous

people among these Christians in Jerusalem. They were in the habit of giving regularly and systematically. It was a part of their religious training and commitment. Furthermore, when they understood the grace of God, it appears that they not only calculated tenths, but on occasion they generously gave their total profits from the sale of certain properties.

Though the tithe system is never mentioned in the New Testament, it certainly influenced these Jewish Christians. In turn, church history reveals that these Old Testament giving patterns influenced the Gentile community as pagans also became Christians. Though the tithe laws were never perpetuated in Christianity as they were in the Old Testament, they have served as a model to Christians for regular and systematic giving. We cannot ignore this model when we evaluate Paul's instruction to the Corinthians: "On the first day of every week each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income." (I Cor. 16:1) Today's Christians should consider this Old Testament model when determining their own giving patterns. (pp. 111-113)

So you can see why I call tithing the "Biblical Benchmark"

Finally, the third Treasure Principle is found in Matthew 6:21. Alcorn labels this principle, **My Heart Always Goes Where I Put God's Money**
"Where your treasure is"

We are to lay up treasures in heaven. Lay up means to send it ahead. In other words, as foreign citizens in this world, we are to send our treasure to heaven instead of using it for ourselves here on earth.

When we live this way, there will be a great reward. Now exactly how much do you want to be blessed in heaven? It is based on how much you "send ahead." Perhaps you're thinking that in heaven it won't matter. We will all have our mansion and be eternally happy. You're correct in one sense, but wrong in another. John Edwards explained it this way, "In Heaven there will be joy. Each one of us will be eternally filled, but some will have bigger cups than others."

"The issue is not whether we will store up wealth... The only question is where we will do our banking" Ray Pritchard. Nov 1991.