

## WHO/WHAT IS YOUR MASTER?

### Matthew 6:24 (NKJV)

**24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.**

Jesus made this an either/or matter. You can't have it both ways, which people consistently try to do. The word “*master*” here is the Greek word “*kurios*” which is consistently translated as “*Lord*”. It means “*Lord*” or “*Owner*” and consistently denotes one who has authority over you. It is the idea of one who owns you and thereby has authority over you.

You can't serve two competing “lords”. Something has to give here.

In the Roman Empire, about half of the population was made up of slaves. They understood well that a slave could only have one master. The slave/master relationship was that the master owned the slave, and therefore the allegiance of the slave was ONLY to the master who owned him.

“There is no passage or command anywhere in the New Testament asking the believer to make Christ “Lord of his life” after salvation. The very experience of receiving Christ as Savior is looked upon throughout the Scriptures as an acknowledgement of lordship or ownership. If perfect obedience were required in order to make Christ our Lord, He would be Lord of no one! It's the fact that He is already Lord that makes our disobedience so serious. As Lord and Master, He has the right to demand complete obedience.”– *Liberty Bible Commentary*

Single ownership and singular allegiance defined the essence of slavery in the Roman Empire. And as a matter of principle, Jesus says that one cannot serve two masters/lords.

A person will either hate one and love the other or else be loyal to the one and despise the other. You can't be loyal to two contrasting masters at the same time. You have to be on one side or the other. It's like being married – you can't be faithful to TWO at the same time. It's one or the other!

“Necessarily, a choice must be made, and they must either regard a master with love and obedience or with hate and disobedience.” - *John Walvoord*

All this to say, “**You cannot serve God and mammon.**” It's one or the other, but it can't be both.

The term “*mammon*” is an Aramaic word that is personified as wealth or materialism. To serve wealth or materialism is to live for it. The sense here is to serve it as a slave – to serve it as if it owns you.

Mammon is here presented as a rival to God. Serving mammon and serving God are mutually exclusive. Therefore, to be a slave of mammon is really to be an idolator. In that case, Mammon has become an object of worship that takes precedence over God.

But one cannot have it both ways. You are either going to be sold out to serving God or sold out to serving wealth. It’s one or the other!

Either God will be served with single-eyed devotion, or He won’t be served at all. Divided loyalty when it comes to God is really betrayal. God demands allegiance to Him as Master, be to Him alone! This alone is acceptable service.

“While a servant may serve more than one master, a slave cannot (note the verbs in v. 24); divided allegiance between God and money is impossible.”  
– *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*

Who owns you? Who is your Master?

### **1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NKJV)**

**19** Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

**20** For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

You can only have ONE Lord – one Master. It is either going to be God or money! It’s fine to have money as long as it is not your “lord.” We have to decide which we are going to serve – will it be loyal allegiance to God as Lord, or will money be our lord? Talk is cheap, but God knows our hearts – He knows the reality beyond the rhetoric.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones told this story:

A farmer ... one day reported to his wife with great joy that his best cow had given birth to twin calves, one red and one white. He said, “You know, I have been led of the Lord to dedicate one of the calves to him. We will raise them together. Then, when the time comes to sell them, we will keep

the proceeds that come from one calf, and we will give the proceeds that come from the other to the Lord's work." His wife asked which calf he was going to dedicate to the Lord, but he answered that there was no need to decide that then. "We will treat them both in the same way," he said, "and when that time comes, we will sell them as I have said." Several months later, the man entered the kitchen looking very sad and miserable. When his wife asked what was troubling him, he said, "I have bad news for you. The Lord's calf is dead." "But," his wife remonstrated, "you had not yet decided which was to be the Lord's calf." "Oh, yes," he said. "I had always determined that it was to be the white one, and it is the white calf that has died."

As someone commented, "It is always the Lord's calf that dies." That is certainly always the case if someone is serving mammon.

Let me pose three questions...

- 1) Where is your treasure? Show me where your HEART is at, and I will show you where your treasure is at.
- 2) How is your focus? Do you have single-eyed devotion for the things of God?
- 3) Who or what is your Master? Is Jesus Lord or is it your money?

Jim Elliot well said: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

The story is told of a man who was sitting all alone one day when suddenly a genie appeared and offered to grant him any one wish. This man loved great wealth and riches, so instantly he said that he'd like to be provided with the stock market report one year in advance. In a split second, he had it in hand – a newspaper dated exactly one year into the future. Sitting down, he began to read, convinced that with this inside information, he would be able to quickly amass a fortune. But just as he began to scan the stock report, his eye fell on something across the page, about halfway down the third column. It was his own obituary. (As told by Daryl E. Witmer)

Jesus said, "*You cannot serve God and mammon... Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*"

Where is our treasure?

Where is our heart?

Choose wisely, choose to focus on the TREASURE that will last for all eternity!