

I. Review SOTM

A. Beatitudes - Jesus starts this Sermon by exhorting us to cultivate eight heart conditions that He carries. These are given as the purpose and context of the rest of the sermon. (Ex. 34:6-8; Matt. 11:29; 1 Cor. 2:6-16)

1. Poor In Spirit
2. Mourning for the Kingdom
3. Meekness
4. Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness
5. Merciful
6. Pure in Heart
7. Peacemakers
8. Enduring Persecution

“Encountering God” is when the Holy Spirit reveals truth about God to your spirit. In turn, this truth must be understood or comprehended by you through the work of the Holy Spirit to the level that it moves and transforms your heart in love. (Jhn. 16:14-15, 17:20-26; 1 Cor. 2:9-14)

If you position your heart, God will release His presence – Mike Bickle

II. Positioning to Encounter Jesus through Righteous Financial Stewardship

A. The fourth positioning activity deals with our heart position and activity of financial stewardship. In my opinion, the stewardship of money, out of the four positioners (Charitable Deeds, Prayer, Fasting, Giving), is currently the most rooted in a religious spirit. The issue of financial stewardship for most is guided by biblical principles rather than an ongoing conversation with Jesus. There is nothing wrong with biblical principles of financial stewardship, but if our finances are not part of our relational conversation and walk with Jesus, then it produces no life in the heart.

We use our money to express love to God. Money is a relational subject to Jesus. He taught us how to express the first commandment, to love Him, in our finances. He linked money to pursuing God with love (Mt. 6:24). There are emotional dynamics related to giving our money. Jesus teaches that the size of the sacrifice in loving God through giving is more important than the size of the gift (Lk. 21:1-4). The widow who gave her last two mites showed much more love for God than those who gave more money but with less sacrifice. - Mike Bickle

B. “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up treasures in heaven” -

Jesus starts on this subject by giving us an exhortation which is to be the one guiding principle of financial stewardship and framework for our relational conversation with Him concerning the activity of stewardship. Then, knowing that the arena of money holds multiple pitfalls and that we will question His leadership in it, he gives us three pointed reasons or arguments. These arguments are the foundation we establish our hearts upon, and guide us to an overarching principle.

1. **Treasures** - It is very important to observe that Jesus does not say “money or finances” but rather uses an all-encompassing word that describes how we feel about our finances and possessions gained through finances: “treasure”.
2. **For where your treasure is there your heart will be also** - The reason why Jesus uses the word, “treasure”, is because what we treasure reveals where our heart or love is at. It is clear through the revelation of the scriptures that we are treasure in Jesus’s eyes and His desire is for His love to be returned. What must be clearly understood in our desire to walk this principle out is that it’s all about the position of the heart. Wealth and possessions are not what Jesus warn us about, but rather where your heart is concerning these things.

It needs to be clear that Jesus is not primarily giving an exhortation to use finances to gain eternal rewards. He is primarily exhorting us to overcome the seduction and evil that comes from giving your heart (mind, will, and emotions) to wealth and possessions. (Mk 10:17-27)

- a. Rewards - Jesus commonly used the reality and promise of eternal rewards to motivate his disciples to pursue transformational attitudes and actions of divine love because those carry eternal weight. These rewards are rewards of relational intimacy and will very much be desired in the age to come. (Over 50 references in the NT alone; Matt. 5:3-12, 46, 6:1-6, 16-18; 2 Cor. 5:1-11)

C. The Lamp of the Body is the Eye (Matt. 6:22-23) - Jesus calls us to examine our vision or longing of our eyes and desires to see us free of a divided vision. Jesus desires to cultivate in us a “good” eye and rid us of a “bad” eye. It's my opinion that Jesus is revealing to us how we are controlled by how we perceive things. The good eye sees things for what they truly are with clarity and thus the whole person is controlled by goodness and righteousness. However, if the eye is bad or unhealthy, it cannot see clearly and perceives that evil things are good. That person becomes controlled to a degree by darkness and evil. (Matt. 13:22; Demas - Col. 4:14; Phm 1:24; 2 Tim. 4:10)

D. No One Can Serve Two Masters (Matt. 6:24) - The key word here is “serve”. This word invokes the desire or will that proceeds action. What we do is the result of what we think. Jesus says you cannot will to serve two opposing masters. The masters represent two different ways of thinking, which in turn dictate action and ambition. The seriousness of this principle is that Jesus ties it to relational love and devotion. Jesus reveals that the nature of desiring wealth and possessions demands our total love and devotion. (Lk. 16:1-13)

E. Do not Worry about your Physical Needs (6:25-34) - Jesus now reveals how this love for wealth and possessions creeps to catch our eye and compels us to serve it. It enters through the base desire of all men to preserve their life and avoid discomfort at all costs, for as long as possible. The physical body will die without food and clothes, but Jesus tells us that our priority in life should never be preserving our physical body, because our life is not about that or even consists of that. Therefore, if we begin to view the priority of our life as our health and comforts, we open the door to worrying about preserving it. The only outlet that can pacify the worry of preserving our health and comforts is wealth and possessions. Jesus asks a very important question that we all need to take into consideration, “So why do you worry?”

- a. **Antidote to Worrying is Knowing who the Father Is** - Jesus reveals that people who don't know and have confidence in their Heavenly Father seek wealth and possessions in their desire to preserve their comforts and physical life. There is a strong correlation between your revelation and understanding of your Father and His care and leadership over your life and your level of worry. It's no coincidence that Jesus exhorted us to give time every day to meditating upon, “Our Father in Heaven”, to build our faith in our Father.
- b. **Seek First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness** - This must be the rule of our life when ordering our priorities. Yet it is wrong to think that this is just another priority to fit onto our list of priorities – and to put at the top. Instead, in everything we do we seek first the kingdom of God. Jesus didn't just tell them to stop worrying; He told them to *replace* the concern for preservation of life with a concern for the kingdom of God through the means of growing in your intimate relationship with your Heavenly Father.

A habit or a passion can only be given up for a greater habit or passion. - David Guzik