

The Principle of the Heart
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[INTRODUCTION]:

Matthew 6:19-24 NKJ

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 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.”

Today, as we conclude our series on *The Treasure Principle*, I want to talk with you about what I call "THE PRINCIPLE OF THE HEART".

I've always been fascinated with what the Bible calls THE HEART.

Obviously when Jesus refers to the heart He's referring to the core of who we are. He's talking about our Spirit Man – the very essence of who we are that connects with God.

Proverbs 4:23 NKJ

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.

Proverbs 4:23 NIV

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Proverbs 4:23 NLT

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

Some Things to Know About the Heart:

- **What happens in your life is determined by what happens in your heart.**
- **The enemy's number one goal is to defile your heart.**
- **The condition of your heart determines the condition of your character.**
- **What you believe in your heart determines your eternity.**
- **If you can believe God's word in your heart nothing is impossible.**
- **What you do with money shapes your heart.**

Now it makes sense to me why, as we follow the life and journey of Jesus and His encounters with people in the Bible, we see countless references that deal with money.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN:

Matthew 13:44 TLB

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure a man discovered in a field. In his excitement, he sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field—and get the treasure, too!"

[EXAMPLE]: Confederate money.

WIDOW AND TWO MITES:

Mark 12:41-44 NKJ [READ]

Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

- It's not the amount. It's the percentage.

RICH YOUNG RULER:

Matthew 19:21 NKJ

Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

ZACCHAEUS:

Luke 19:8 NKJ

Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."

- Giving is the sign of a transformed heart.

WOMAN AND ALABASTER OF OIL/JUDAS:

Matthew 26:14-15 NKJ

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.

- Money can defile even those closest to Jesus.

JESUS PARABLE OF RICH MAN:

Luke 12:13-21 NKJ [READ] and [COMMENT]

Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry."'" But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

[EXAMPLE]: John D Rockefeller – one of richest men in the world, "HOW MUCH DID HE LEAVE?"

ANSWER: "ALL OF IT!"

I THINK IT'S PRETTY CLEAR THAT GOD WANTS US TO UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLE OF THE HEART AND HOW MUCH MONEY PLAYS A PART IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM!

[TRANSITION]

"WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO."

Think about that for a moment. Why do you think Jesus made that statement?

What do you think He means when He says, "LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN"?

OBVIOUSLY HE'S TALKING ABOUT USING YOUR MONEY FOR SOMETHING THAT EFFECTS ETERNITY. **[EXPLAIN]**

What Giving Does for Your Heart:

1. Giving reveals the TRUST LEVEL of your heart.

Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJ [READ]

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Proverbs 3:9-10 NKJ [READ]

Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

3 Levels of Giving:

1. LOWEST LEVEL: asks "WHAT CAN I AFFORD?" – What can I give without giving anything up?

2. MIDDLE LEVEL: asks "WHAT CAN I SACRIFICE?" – What can I give only if I give something up?

3. HIGHEST LEVEL: asks "WHAT CAN I TRUST GOD TO DO THROUGH ME?" – What can I give only if I give something up and trust God to be my source?"

[SHARE] conversation with someone about "WHAT GOES ON INSIDE A PERSON WHEN THEY ARE PROCESSING GIVING AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL".

[SHARE] MY STORY OF GIVING TO BUILD THIS BUILDING.

2. Giving reveals the LOVE LEVEL of your heart.

1 John 2:15-17 NLT [READ]

Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

Matthew 6:24 NLT [READ]

"No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

I'm realizing more and more that one of the key errors in the PROSPERITY GOSPEL is the MOTIVATION of why to give. **[EXPLAIN]**

I REALIZE MORE AND MORE THAT THE WHOLE REASON WHY JESUS GAVE UP SO MUCH BY GOING TO THE CROSS AND DYING FOR US WAS BECAUSE HE WAS MOTIVATED BY LOVE.

John 3:16 NKJ

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Every time we give we are laying down a portion of our lives for someone else.

[EXAMPLE]: Possibly **[TELL]** story of young man in Connections Homes.

3. Giving reveals the ETERNITY LEVEL of your heart.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 TLB

Tell those who are rich not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which will soon be gone, but their pride and trust should be in the living God who always richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and should give happily to those in need, always being ready to share with others whatever God has given them. By doing this they will be storing up real treasure for themselves in heaven—it is the only safe investment for eternity! And they will be living a fruitful Christian life down here as well.

[TELL] story of William Borden – Yale Graduate (1887-1913)

He was an heir to great wealth who got radically saved and gave up a life of ease to move to Cairo, Egypt, to reach the Muslim people with the gospel. While he was there he took all of his money and used it to support the work of missionaries around the world, meanwhile, preaching the gospel in a nation where his life was in constant danger. After only 4 months he contracted spinal meningitis and died. His body was buried there in Cairo in a dusty grave off the back of a side street with this caption: "APART FROM CHRIST, THERE IS NO EXPLANATION OF SUCH A LIFE."

RIGHT DOWN THE STREET: Egyptian National Museum. King Tut buried. Tutankhamen, the boy king, was buried with solid gold chariots and thousands of gold artifacts. His gold coffin was found within gold tombs – within gold tombs – within gold tombs. The burial site was filled with tons of gold. The Egyptians believed in an afterlife where they could take earthly treasures, but the treasures remained there for 3,000 years until discovered by Howard Carter in 1922.

CONTRAST: BORDEN'S GRAVE WAS OBSCURE, DUSTY AND HIDDEN IN A BACK ALLEY LITTERED WITH GARBAGE. KING TUT'S TOMB GLITTERED WITH UNIMAGINABLE WEALTH. YET WHERE ARE THESE TWO YOUNG MEN NOW? ONE WHO LIVED AS A KING IN OPPULENCE NOW LIVING IN THE MISERY OF A CHRISTLESS ETERNITY. THE OTHER WHO LIVED A MODEST, EVEN SACRIFICIAL, LIFE ON EARTH IS NOW LIVING IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.

The Dot

The Line



Life on earth.

Life in heaven.

ARE YOU LIVING LIFE ON THE DOT OR LIVING LIFE ON THE LINE?

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." – Jim Elliott

[CLOSE]: WE ARE GETTING READY TO CELEBRATE OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY NEXT YEAR, SO I'VE BEEN THINKING A LOT ABOUT WHAT'S NEXT FOR VICTORY.

COLLEEN AND I HAVE DECIDED WE WANT TO LIVE ON THE LINE – NOT THE DOT – FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES.

THAT'S WHY WE ENJOY EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO STRETCH OUR FAITH IN GIVING TO BUILD OUR TREASURE IN HEAVEN INSTEAD OF HERE ON EARTH.

[TALK] ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TODAY AS WE PREPARE TO GIVE OUR FIRST LEGACY OFFERING TOWARD THIS NEW BUILDING.

[EXPLAIN] WHAT I CAN SEE FOR THE FUTURE AS WE EXPAND OUR FACILITIES TO REACH MORE PEOPLE.

[TALK] ABOUT PLEDGE CARDS AND **[TAKE UP OFFERING]**.