



SERMON ON THE MOUNT DISCUSSION GUIDE

Matthew 6:19-24

INTRODUCTION

A major theme in the Sermon on the Mount is how different Jesus' followers are to be from the rest of the world and what role our distinctiveness plays in God's mission. In 6:1-18, Jesus illustrated the Christian's distinctiveness in terms of his devotional life. Now he addresses our perspective and values. As citizens of the kingdom, the things we value (vv. 19-24) and the things we worry about (vv. 25-34) will be unmistakably different from the things the rest of the world values and worries about.

MAIN POINT

Christians are to value and be motivated by heavenly rewards, not earthly ones.

REFLECT

What do you treasure more than anything? Ask ten different people this question and you're likely to get ten different answers! For Jesus, there are only two different types of treasure: earthly and heavenly. And it's crucial, he says, for his followers to treasure the right thing.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth." The treasures in Jesus' mind here include ornate clothing and precious metals, things which moths and rust could easily rob a person of. Even if you took meticulous care of these, they could still be stolen. Houses in Jesus' day were made with mud brick and could be dug through by any thief with a sharp utensil. Nothing is safe, and so it makes no sense for the things that we most value to be things which could be lost. And even if our treasures *don't* get stolen or rot away, we'll waste away our lives worrying that they might.

By contrast, heavenly treasure can't be lost, and it is this type of treasure that kingdom citizens are to pursue. Jesus does not specify what these treasures are, but they are the treasures we will earn through faithful service to God in this life (see Matt. 5:12; 10:42; Heb. 11:6). It only makes sense to pursue treasure that can't be lost.

The importance of laying up our treasure in heaven is given in v. 21 – "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Jesus is saying that there is an unbreakable link between how *we're* doing and how our *treasure* is doing. "What we value tugs at our

minds and emotions; it consumes our time with planning, day-dreaming, and effort to achieve...We think about our treasures, we are drawn toward our treasures, we fret about treasures, we measure other things (and other people) by our treasures.”¹

Jesus isn't forbidding possessions or telling us not to enjoy the good things he has created (see 1 Tim. 4:3; 5:8). He's telling us to make the *Creator*, rather than the *creation*, our ultimate treasure. He further illustrates this in verses 22-23, where the “eye” is synonymous with the “heart”. Our perspective dictates how we experience life in this world. If we see rightly by living with an eternal perspective (heavenly treasures), our lives will be healthy. If our sight is clouded by distorted, selfish priorities (earthly treasures), every aspect of our lives (“your whole body”) will become disordered, unable to function the way God meant for us to.

In his final analogy, Jesus contrasts two masters: God and money. A slave can't have two masters, and the same applies here. When push comes to shove, we will always choose one over the other. Our confidence is either in God or it's not.

- What is your greatest treasure? What is most important to you? What do you day-dream about? What goal or person in your life has the power to direct your emotional state?
- Today our clothes are protected from moths, and locked doors and security systems make burglary much more difficult than in Jesus' day. What are some modern equivalents of ways that treasure can be lost?
- In the words of a famous hymn, “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.” What does it look like to “turn your eyes upon Jesus” this week? Who can you help do the same?

MEMORIZE

Matthew 6:21 – *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

¹ D.A. Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount*, pp. 77, 78