

God's Economy (7)

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Matthew 6:19-24

(Continuation from 03-25-12)

The Doctrine of God's Economy

In the present passage Jesus looks at materialism—particularly in regard to luxuries—from the three perspectives of treasure, vision, and master.

A Single Treasure ([Matthew 6:19-21](#)) (Part 3)

1 Timothy 5:8

Verse 8 states negatively the truth expressed positively in verse 4.

1 Timothy 5:8 (NASB)

⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

In verse 4, Paul commanded that children take care of their parents.

1 Timothy 5:4 (NASB)

⁴ but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.

Here he states that those who fail to do so are worse than unbelievers, who naturally do so. The repetition of the principle implies there were many violations of it in the church at Ephesus. ([1 Timothy 5:8](#))

1 Timothy 5:8 (NASB)

⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

The phrase **but if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household** is a first-class conditional statement in the original. It could be translated, “**When any of you does not provide,**” or, “**Since some of you are not providing.**” **Provide** is from *pronoēō*, which means “**to plan before.**” It describes the forethought necessary to provide care for the widows in one’s family. The phrase **for his own** is purposely vague. It refers to anyone within the circle of family relationships, surely even servants or close friends. A believing man who is head of a house has a mandated responsibility to provide **for those of his household**. The latter group is more narrow than the phrase **his own**. It focuses on those in the immediate family, where his responsibility begins.

Failing to provide for those in either the narrow or the wide circle makes a believer guilty of **two things**. **First, he has denied the faith.** That does not refer to the loss of his personal salvation. Paul here is not judging the soul but the actions. Rather, it means that

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such a person has denied the principle of compassionate love that is at the heart of the Christian **faith** (cf. [John 13:35](#); [Rom. 5:5](#); [1 Thess. 4:9](#)). There must be no dichotomy between **faith** and **conduct**.

Second, his failure makes him in practice **worse than an unbeliever**. As already noted, even the pagans knew the importance of and felt the duty of providing for their parents. For believers to fail to measure up to that standard is inexcusable. They are under greater condemnation because they have the commandment of God to love, and the power of God to enable them to do so.

The supreme example of loving care for the widows in one's family can be seen in our Lord Jesus Christ. On the cross, nearing death, He nevertheless arranged the care of His widowed mother. [John 19:26-27](#) relates the story: **"When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold, your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' From that hour the disciple took her into his own household."** That shows the importance of the issue of caring for widows. Jesus spoke from the cross to only two individuals. He forgave the dying thief, and arranged for the care of His widowed mother. Nothing so clearly reveals the heart of God as that. While bearing the burden of the world's sins, Jesus' mind was concerned with the salvation of one sinner, and the care of one widow.

The care of widows begins with each believer. The church cannot do collectively what it will not do individually. It is a responsibility that cannot be avoided.

[Matthew 6:19 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁹ **"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.**

Almost any kind of wealth, of course, is subject to **thieves**, which is why many people buried their nonperishable valuables in the ground away from the house, often in a field (see [Matthew 13:44](#)).

[Matthew 13:44 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴⁴ **"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.**

[Matthew 6:19 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁹ **"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.**

Break in is literally **"dig through,"** and could refer to digging through the mud walls of a house or digging up the dirt in a field. Nothing we own is completely safe from destruction or theft. And even if we keep our possessions perfectly secure during our entire lives, we are certainly separated from them at death. Many millionaires will be heavenly paupers, and many paupers will be heavenly millionaires.

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Matthew 6:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ **"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.**

But when our **time**, **energy**, and **possessions** are used to serve others and to further the Lord's work, they build up heavenly resources that are completely free from destruction or theft. There **neither moth nor rust destroys, and... thieves do not break in or steal.** Heavenly security is the only absolute security. ([Matthew 6:19-21](#))

Jesus goes on to point out that a person's most cherished possessions and his deepest motives and desires are inseparable, **for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also** ([v.21](#)). They will either both be earthly or both be heavenly. It is impossible to have one on earth and the other in heaven (cf. [James 4:4](#)).

James 4:4 (NASB)

⁴ **You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**

As always, the heart must be right first. In fact, if the heart is right, everything else in life falls into its proper place. The person who is right with the Lord will be generous and happy in his giving to the Lord's work. By the same token, a person who is covetous, self-indulgent, and stingy has good reason to question his relationship with the Lord.

Jesus is not saying that if we put our **treasure** in the right place our **heart** will then be in the right place, but that the location of our **treasure** indicates where our **heart** already is. Spiritual problems are *always* heart problems. Sinful acts come from a sinful heart, just as righteous acts come from a righteous heart.

When the exiles that came back to Jerusalem from Babylon began turning to God's Word, a revival also began. **"Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people"** and various leaders took turns reading **"from the law of God"** ([Nehemiah 8:5-8](#)). Through hearing God's Word the people became convicted of their sin, began to praise God, and determined to begin obeying Him and to faithfully support the work of the Temple ([Nehemiah chaps. 9-10](#)).

Revival that does not affect the use of money and possessions is a questionable revival. As the Tabernacle was being built,

Exodus 35:21 (NASB)

²¹ **Everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him came *and* brought the LORD'S contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments.**

As plans were being made to build the Temple, David himself gave generously to the work, and ([1 Chronicles 29:2-6, 9](#))

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G. Campbell Morgan wrote: “You are to remember with the passion burning within you that you are not the child of today. You are not of the earth, you are more than dust; you are the child of tomorrow you are of the eternities, you are the offspring of Deity. The measurements of your lives cannot be circumscribed by the point where blue sky kisses green earth. All the fact of your life cannot be encompassed in the one small sphere upon which you live. You belong to the infinite. If you make your fortune on the earth—poor, sorry, silly soul—you have made a fortune, and stored it in a place where you cannot hold it. Make your fortune, but store it where it will greet you in the dawning of the new morning.” (*The Gospel According to Matthew* [New York: Revell, 1929], pp. 64-65)