

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – May 5, 2024

Theme: Strengthening our Faith. Topic: Victory over Mammon

Main Texts: Mathew 6:19-24, 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19

Key verse: 1 Timothy 6:17 – “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.” (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: We live in a materialistic society where many people serve money. Their desire for money and what it can buy far outweighs their commitment to God and spiritual matters. Whatever you store up, you will spend much of your time thinking about. The Bible does not forbid private property. The ant is commended for storing in summer the food it will need in the winter; the believer who makes no provision for his family is worse than an unbeliever (1 Ti 5:8). We are to enjoy the good things that our Creator has given us richly to enjoy (1 Ti 4:3,4; 6:17). What Jesus forbids for his followers is the selfish accumulation of goods, extravagant and luxurious living; the hardheartedness that does not feel the need of the world’s underprivileged people; the fantasy that a person’s life consists of his possessions; and the materialism which tethers our hearts to the world. In the Bible, the “eye” is often equivalent to the heart (e.g., see Psalm 119:10 and 19). Just as a seeing eye gives light to the body, a single-minded ambition to serve God adds meaning to life, throws light on everything we do, and helps us avoid the pitfalls of a materialistic lifestyle.

1. (a) Why is it foolish to “lay up for yourselves treasures on earth”? (b) Discuss what it means to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven”. In what practical ways can we do that? (c) Is it wrong for a Christian to have ambition? Give reasons for your answer.

“Mammon” is a transliteration of the Aramaic/Semitic word for wealth and riches. It was also the name of a pagan god of wealth and prosperity. Most modern Bible translations use “money” for mammon. The Bible has much to say about money (or mammon). Jesus spoke a lot about money, its power, deceitfulness, and proper place in our lives. The Bible does not teach that we (believers) should not have money. There are examples of rich people in the Bible who used riches in godly way: Job, Abraham, Joseph, Boaz, David, Solomon, and Barnabas. The Early Church had both rich and poor people and everyone in between. The Bible teaches us principles on managing the money given to us so that our hearts remain pure, our family’s needs are met and God’s Kingdom is advanced. Money has a seductive property to it and, if we aren’t careful, it can take the place of God in our lives. The Bible is very clear on the spiritual dimension of money that drives the desire for it. Jesus was emphatic, you CANNOT serve God and Mammon. There is no room for compromise when it comes to whom we choose to center our desires upon.

2. (a) Read Mathew 6:24 and 22:21 Compare Jesus’ statement about Caesar and Mammon. Why do you think they are different? (b) Read Mathew 19:21 -26 Discuss whether being wealthy disqualifies a person from the kingdom of God. (c) Read Mark 4:18-19; Luke 12:13-15 and Hebrews 13:5. In what ways can we resist the power of mammon in our lives?

Godliness with contentment is the key to spiritual growth and personal fulfilment. We should honor God and center our desires on Him (Mt 6:33) and we should be content with what God is doing in our lives (Phi 4:11-13). Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, most people still believe that money brings happiness. Rich people craving greater riches can be caught in an endless cycle that only ends in ruin and destruction. In Jesus’ time on earth, there was a commonly held notion that earthly riches signified divine blessing. Rich people were therefore regarded as God’s favourites. Similar beliefs hold today. While not condemning wealth per se, Christ denounced both love of wealth and devotion to mammon. Paul, like Jesus before him stressed that the deceitfulness of riches and desire for wealth chokes spiritual life. We must be vigilant to ensure we are not ensnared by the acquisitive spirit of our age.

(a) Read Philippians 4:11-12 and 1 Timothy 6:6 Discuss the meaning of “contentment” (b) Read 1 Timothy 6:9-10 Is it only the rich that need to worry about the love of money? Explain your response

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for creating a world with so many things for us to enjoy and thank you for giving us your Word and your Spirit to show us how to do so. Show us where we have fallen short and succumbed to the spirit of materialism. Bring us to repentance and help us to serve you as our master with joy and gladness of heart. Open our eyes to see the vast treasure we have in You. Amen.