

## You Cannot Serve God and Mammon – So What is Mammon?

*“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.”*(MAT6:24) Mammon is defined as materialism and worldly gain. It is material wealth regarded as having an evil influence. More importantly it is personified as a false god. Mammon in the New Testament is commonly thought to mean money, material wealth, or any entity that promises wealth, associated with the greedy pursuit of gain. So, to rephrase the verse, it could say “you cannot serve God and false god of money, materialism and worldly gain. A master is anything that enslaves us.(ROM 6:16) Alcohol, lust, and money are all masters of some people, and in opposition to God. Jesus’ warning that we cannot serve two masters.

We cannot serve two masters because, we end up hating one and loving the other. Opposing masters demand different things and lead down different paths. The Lord is headed in one direction, and our flesh and the world are headed in the other. A choice must be made. When we follow Christ, we must die to everything else, or we won’t make it. We will be like some of the seeds in Jesus’ parable.(LUK8:5–15)—only a portion of those seeds actually bore fruit. Some sprouted at first but then withered and died. They were not deeply rooted in good soil. If we attempt to serve two masters, we will have divided loyalties, and, when the difficulties of discipleship clash with the lure of fleshly pleasure, the magnetic pull of wealth and worldly success or loved this world, will draw us away from Christ.(2TI4:10) The call to godliness goes against our sinful nature. Only with the help of the Holy Spirit can we remain devoted to one Master.

How do we know if we are serving this false god? There are symptoms of mammon’s influence in our lives. See if any of this ring true in your life: Worry and anxiety over money, Money mismanagement, Consistent Financial Lack (I don’t ever have enough), I can’t afford it mentality, Impulse buying, Stinginess – which is often exemplified by lack of tithing, Greed. An inordinate desire to acquire or possess, Discontentment, Bondage to debt, Exaggerated emphasis on money – including an overestimate of it’s true power or overstating the benefits of having it. Most of us would have succumbed to at least one of these at some stage in our lives. The question is how much do we succumb to these on a regular basis. Are we serving God or mammon? Think if we’re honest, often we are serving mammon.

How many idolatries do we have around us? Examine Yourselves! the shopping malls are “the house of mammon”. Do you find yourself going to the shopping centre just to hang out or to get some “retail therapy?” maybe you need to reconsider this habit. If shopping centre is the “house of mammon” in your life then staying away from temptations as much as you can might be your best action. If you have found that in your life you have been serving mammon rather than God, then we suggest that you repent, seek forgiveness and put God back into the right place in your life.

Jesus actually has our best interests in mind when tell us to get our priorities right in the area of money. He is not asking us to live in poverty; rather He is asking us to live a life that maximizes our eternal rewards. Jesus spoke these words as part of His Sermon on the Mount in which He had said it was foolish to store up treasures on earth where “moths and vermin destroy and where thieves break in and steal” (MAT6:19–21); rather, He urged us to store up treasure in heaven where it will last forever. So, do not be materialistic or selfish (for yourself) to lay up treasures for ourselves on earth. The obstacle that prevents us from wise investment is the heart. *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* We follow what has captivated our hearts. Jesus knows that money is round and rolls away. He knows that moths can eat the curtains and thieves can break in and steal the silverware. Money is a temporary good whereas grace is a permanent good. Money may be useful but grace is essential. Money is a means and not an end, we do not seek money for its own sake but for what it can do to provide for our families and help others. Once money becomes an end, becomes something we want for its own sake then it becomes an idol and can ruin spiritual life.

Lord is righteously jealous for our affections because we were created to know and love Him. When we serve another master mammon, we rob ourselves of all we were created to be, and we rob God of His rightful adoration. Jesus’ claim to us is exclusive. He bought us with His own blood and delivered us from our former master, sin. During Jesus’ time, some people followed Him for ways, but their devotion was shallow.(LUK9:57–62) They wanted something Jesus offered, but they weren’t committed.(MAR10:17–22) Worldly things were more important. They wanted to serve two masters.

Jesus’ call to follow Him is a call to abandon all other masters. He called Matthew from the tax collector’s booth (MAT9:9) Matthew obeyed and walked away from extravagant wealth and dirty deals. Jesus called Peter, James, and John from the fishing docks.(MAR1:16–18) To obey Jesus’ call meant that they had to leave behind everything they knew, everything they’d worked for. Jesus called Paul, a Pharisee, with the words, “I will show him how much he must suffer for my name”(ACT9:16) We must forsake everything else, no matter the cost to follow Jesus.(MAT10:34–39)

Luke 12:15-21, Watch and keep yourselves from covetousness. For a man’s life is not in the abundance of the things which he possesses. Materialism that leads to covetousness or greed. Money seems to create the material world in which we live. Most of us find our place on economic scale, based on amount of money we have or don’t have. No matter how we try to get around it, our possessions come from God’s hand. God is still the owner as well as the giver of those possessions. We are merely entrusted with their care. How do we accept role of steward in a way that glorifies God.