

Spiritual Values

by Dick Woodward

Jesus teaches that spiritual values should be based on eternal things, not earthly things that depreciate, and that a single-minded commitment to God is necessary for happiness and following Jesus.

Duration: 19:48

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-30, Matthew 5:38-42, Matthew 6:1 - 7:5, Matthew 7:7-27

Topics: "Attitudes"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of examining our values by looking at how we have spent our time and money. He suggests that Jesus would ask us to reflect on our past actions to reveal our true values and where our hearts lie. The sermon is part of a verse-by-verse study of the Sermon on the Mount, specifically focusing on Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7. The speaker explains that in Matthew 5, Jesus challenges us to develop beautiful attitudes within ourselves and apply them in our relationships. In Matthew 6, Jesus teaches about the importance of looking upward to receive grace from God and maintaining disciplined spiritual practices such as giving, praying, and fasting. The second half of Matthew 6 focuses on the values we should have as we navigate relationships and interact with the world. The sermon aims to guide disciples in understanding and embodying these values.

Transcript

Welcome to the Mini Bible College. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is teaching His disciples how to be a part of His solution to the problems of this world. In today's lesson, our teacher will help us understand more of Jesus' teaching of the values that we who are striving to be faithful disciples need to have.

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.

This is the way the second half of Matthew chapter 6 begins. Again, let me review that we are doing a verse-by-verse study of the Sermon on the Mount as found in Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7. In Matthew 5, the challenge was to look inward and consider the beautiful attitudes that will be developed in the heart of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. And then, after the opening verses of chapter 5 challenged us to look inward in that way, the rest of that long chapter told us to look around now and apply these attitudes in our relationships.

By the time Jesus finished telling us about what we should find when we look inward and when we look around, we were ready to begin chapter 6. It begins by saying, now look upward, because you will never find those attitudes within yourself. You will never have the relationships that you are supposed to have unless you look upward and receive grace from God. The first half of Matthew 6 cited three spiritual disciplines that give us a structured and disciplined upward look.

Our Lord cited the discipline of giving, the discipline of praying, and the discipline of fasting. Now, in the second half of Matthew 6, Jesus teaches about values, the values you have when you look upward. When you look upward and then go down off that mountaintop and maintain that disciplined upward look, as you work out relationships not only with people, but with the things of this world, what do you discover? You discover spiritual values, the values held by the person who looks upward are really the teaching of Matthew 6, verses 19-34.

As Jesus gets into this teaching about values, the opening paragraph tells us that our values should not be entirely on earth where moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal. In other words, our values should not be based upon things that depreciate or that can be taken away from us. We should store up for ourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy, where there is no depreciation, and where we have treasures that can never be taken away from us.

In giving us this great teaching, I believe Jesus is telling us that it is possible to have earthly values and it is possible to have heavenly values. He is exhorting us to have heavenly values, not because it is a rule of the religious order he is establishing, but because he loves us. He does not want all of our values to be wrapped up in things that can be taken away from us or things that depreciate.

In connection with that opening teaching about values in verse 21, he gives us one of his great statements, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The question here in this opening passage is really not only where is your treasure, but also where is your heart? Wherever your values are, wherever your treasures are, that is where your heart will be. As a disciple of Jesus Christ, with your inward look and with your look around and your upward look, where should your heart be? Your heart should not be given to things that depreciate, things that will be taken away from you, material things that eventually come to nothing.

Here is a great teaching about values. It is a great index into what our values are. Wherever your treasure is, that is where your heart will be.

This is a great truth. As Jesus begins to give us a teaching about spiritual values, he begins in a very direct way. You see what he is doing is challenging us with this question, what are your values and where is your heart? I believe if Jesus were here today and he wanted to teach about values, and he had a question and an answer session, and you ask him, how do I know what my values are? I believe Jesus would be as practical as he is here in these passages.

He would say something like, let's sit down for a couple of hours and let's go over how you've spent your money for the past five years, or bring me your old calendars for the last five years. Show me how you've spent your time for the last five years. Show me how you've spent your money for the last five years, and I will show you what your values really are.

I will show you where your heart is. Then we can talk about where your values ought to be and where your heart ought to be. In this opening paragraph, he seems to be teaching us about values by raising this

question, what do you do all day with your time, with your energy, and with your money? That shows you where your values are.

Your values and your activities that represent your values should not all be wrapped up in earthly things that depreciate and that will eventually be taken away. There are no pockets in grave clothes, and we're not going to take a treasure with us. So eventually what we have is going to be taken away from us.

Ask yourself, why would your values be based solely on things that depreciate, things that are not eternal? Because they're not spiritual. In the next paragraph, Jesus raises another question. Here's another great teaching of Jesus in verse 22 and 23.

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 that darkness. In the scripture, the eye very often represents the mind. And so if you view the eye here as the mind, the mindset, the outlook, then what Jesus is saying is that in this life you can have a body filled with light or a body filled with darkness.

In other words, you can have a life that is as happy as it can be, or your life can be as dark and depressing as it can be. The difference depends upon this one thing. How do you see things? What is your outlook on life? What is your mindset? Or again, if you will, what are your values? He's saying that another great fact of life is if your outlook is what it ought to be, if you see things the way you should, you can have a happy life.

But if the way you look at things is defective, your life can be filled with darkness. When your outlook is wrong, your life is dark. How great that darkness can be.

The unhappiness, the potential unhappiness of people is indescribable when their outlook is not right. That is a great fact of life. People do what they do and they spend their time and money and energy the way they do because of the way they see things.

That's a great truth about values. This is such a commentary upon believers. So many believers have a problem.

A pastor probably confronts this problem more than any other one. I call it spiritual schizophrenia. Believers do not have a single eye.

They do not look at things only one way. Instead, they have spiritual double vision. There was a popular song years ago that said, accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, and don't mess with Mr. In-between.

The scripture tells us in so many places and in so many ways that Mr. In-between is a very unhappy man. In Revelation 3, the risen Christ says to the church in Laodicea, I would rather you would be hot, but if you're not going to be hot, then go ahead and be cold. What I cannot stomach is you to be lukewarm.

You make me want to throw up with your lukewarmness. So either be hot or cold, but don't be lukewarm. Revelation 3, verses 15 through 16.

That's another way of saying that you should not be Mr. In-between, neither hot nor cold. When Elijah was on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18, he challenged the people of God, many of whom were worshipping Baal

and Asherah. In front of the prophets of these false gods that the people were worshipping, Elijah gave them that great challenge where he said, let these false prophets put a sacrifice on the altar, and I will put a sacrifice on an altar, and then we will pray for our God to bring down fire and supernaturally cremate that sacrifice.

Now let them pray to their gods, and I will pray to my God, and then let us see whose God is really God. Do you remember that great experience on Mount Carmel? Have you ever noticed the question that Elijah put to the people of God as he put on that great demonstration of the reality of the true and living God? His question to them, the people of God, was, how long will you be torn between two opinions? What he is saying is, how long are you going to be limping between two convictions? Or how long are you going to stay on the fence? He went on to say, if the Lord is God, then follow him, and if Baal is God, then follow him. Once a powerful man, a very great preacher, preached a great sermon on that story.

He finished the sermon by saying, if the Lord is God, then follow him, and if Baal is God, then follow him and go to hell. That's some dynamic preaching, and I believe that's exactly what Elijah was saying on Mount Carmel. Again, it is this same truth.

Do not be spiritually schizophrenic. If the Lord is God, then commit to him and follow him. That should be your outlook.

That should be your mindset. Be single-minded, not double-minded. In James chapter 1, James said, the double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

He says, purify your hearts, you double-minded. Purify does not mean clean up your heart, but turn a double-minded heart into a single-minded heart. That's what he meant by that.

Here's a great truth, and this truth is raising this question, what are your attitudes? Here again, we are coming back to the way the Sermon on the Mount began. What are your attitudes? How do you see things? What do you think about all day? That will give you an index into your value system. Then as you go on to the next verse, verse 24, Jesus raises another question about values.

No one can serve two masters, for he either 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. This raises this question, who or what do you serve all day? Or what are your allegiances? This connects with the previous passage, verses 22 and 23, where this fact is laid out for us.

If you have a single mind, you will be happy and following Jesus. But if you want the best of both worlds, all this and heaven too, if you believe but you doubt, if you are spiritually schizophrenic, you are attempting something that is ultimately impossible. Jesus asked people for a total commitment.

Anything less than a total commitment leads to a lot of unhappiness. I remember hearing a psychology professor who was not a believer teach what he called logic type compartments. He said that all of us have things in our minds that are in conflict.

If one is true, the other cannot be. But we don't think about the fact that we try to believe both. For instance, he said some religious people will say, the Lord is my shepherd and I'm not running scared.

And then they have ulcers, colitis, migraines, and the doctors tell them that they are really running scared. They have a lot of anxiety. Now he said, what are people like this going to do? Let me tell you what they

do.

For illustrative purposes, it's as if they build a wall down the middle of their mind and they create two logic type compartments in their mind. In one of these logic type compartments, they say they believe the Lord is my shepherd. But while they are thinking that thought, they do not allow themselves to think about their colitis, their ulcers, their migraine headaches, and other things that indicate that they are running scared.

Or they pull up a chair and worry. And while they are worrying, they do not let themselves think about the fact they are supposed to be trusting this good shepherd. They keep that thought in the other logic type compartment.

And then he said, all of these conflicting thoughts go into their memory bank because everybody has a perfect memory. The ability to recall varies from person to person, but everybody remembers everything they have ever thought. So these people are putting all of these conflicting thoughts into their subconscious mind or their memory bank.

And the subconscious mind is like a cup. It only has a certain capacity before it gets filled up. When the subconscious mind of their memory bank gets filled up with these conflicting thoughts, then the subconscious mind cries out to the conscious mind and says, hey, you better get your thoughts right.

This is driving us crazy. And he said, this can even lead to a mental breakdown. What really happens is that one side of the subconscious mind takes over and then the other side does.

For a time, you could observe these people in a mental hospital and they look like they are as happy and content and serene as they could be. But then it's as if somebody throws a switch and the other side of the mind takes over. They become terribly anxious and troubled.

He was describing what he called schizophrenia and one of the ways it gets started. Jesus was teaching this principle 2,000 years ago. There on the mountaintop, he was warning these disciples whom he was calling to become apostles to be his answer.

He was saying, now listen, if you're going to follow me, you had better follow me with a single mind, not a double mind. Do not have spiritual double vision. Don't be spiritually schizophrenic.

You cannot serve two masters. You cannot serve God in money. You could put anything else in there.

You cannot serve God in yourself. You cannot serve God in your wife. You cannot serve God in your husband.

You cannot serve God in your job. There is a sense in which you cannot serve God with this total commitment of allegiance and have a commitment of allegiance to anybody else. Not a total commitment.

No one can serve two masters. He can either serve the one or he can serve the other, but he cannot serve both. Here's a probing question.

As we get into the subject of values, who or what do you serve all day? Do you see how direct this teaching of Jesus on values is? Questions are being raised here. Who or what do you serve all day? What do you think about all day? What do you do all day? What are your allegiances? What are your attitudes? What are your activities? These things will give you an index into what your values are. Then we have this great section in which he raises the question, what do you worry about all day? Let's think now about your

anxieties.

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.

They neither toil nor spin, and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all of his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you? Oh, you of little faith! Therefore don't worry, saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear? For after all these things the Gentiles seek, for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Jesus is asking what we worry about all day, how much mental energy do you burn up by worrying? Let us think about your anxieties, that is what he's saying.

If we discuss what you worry about all day, we will learn something about your values, will we not? After focusing on these things that we worry about so much, Jesus gives us the great teaching about priorities. He says first, let me talk to you about your ambitions, what you want all day. This should be what you want if you're a disciple of mine.

This should be what you seek if you're a disciple of mine. Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things you worry about will be given to you as well. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, that means God's rule over your life, as when you prayed the disciples' prayer, thy kingdom come.

God's rule over your heart and what God shows you to be right on a day-by-day basis, let that be first. Think of your priorities as if they were a target with a bullseye, with about 10 concentric circles surrounding that bullseye. Do you know what a bullseye is? It's the center of a target, like what people practice shooting a firearm or a bow and arrow at.

It has a number of circles painted on it, and the goal is to hit the innermost circle. The innermost circle is called the bullseye. What should be the bullseye of your priority target? In light of that bullseye, what should circle one be? What should circle two be? What should circle three be? Jesus tells us here that the bullseye of your priority target should be the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and then after that you can work out to circle number one, circle number two, and circle number three, all the way out to the outermost circle.

This is the teaching of Jesus about spiritual values. If we learn to put God first and at the center of our lives, the other values will fall into place. He has taught us about the spiritual disciplines of disciples, and now in the second half of Matthew chapter 6, he is teaching us about the spiritual values of a disciple.

Be sure to join us next time when we continue our studying together about the kingdom values that God, as our King, wants his disciples to have. God bless you until then. Our prayer here at the Mini Bible College is that these lessons are helping you to grow in your faith and commitment to value those things

that Jesus valued, and if you have not already, that you will begin even today to lay up for yourself treasures in heaven.

Now until we meet again next time, may our God, who gives encouragement and peace, give you his spirit of courage as you follow Christ Jesus, so that all you say and do will glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28306.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/dick-woodward/spiritual-values/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net