

# Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

## Subject: Dealing with the Inner War: Matthew 6:24

MASTER-, NT:2962), "a lord, one who exercises power," is translated "masters" in Matthew 6:24; 15:27; Mark 13:35; Luke 16:13; Acts 16:16,19; Romans 14:4, KJV (RV, "lord"); Ephesians 6:5,9 (twice), the 2 nd time of Christ; so in Colossians 3:22; 4:1.

For several years, we have been reading and hearing a lot about peace of mind. That is a most worthy matter to consider because failing to possess that, one misses the highest joys and finds life an intolerable burden. But we do not need to read a book to find the answer. Jesus summed it up in one statement. He said "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and love the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

The principle is clear: a divided mind is fighting against itself and thus it cannot be at peace. The only way an inner war can be stopped is by a definite, wholehearted decision. 

### What is the most complete picture of restlessness to be seen?

I think it is the sea. It is never still. Ceaselessly it tosses itself upon the shore and then runs back again. Why can't the sea lie still? Because it is the victim of a divided mind. The sea is pulled by the forces of the heavens, but the world says, "Stay with me". The sea can never decide and thus never finds peace.

So with man. He is pulled by the forces of God and by the worldly nature within him. **Goethe said it was regrettable that nature made only one man him when within him there was material aplenty for both a rogue and a gentleman. But until we decide which one we will be, we are at war inside. Three steps follow each other:**

- 1. There must be commitment.** We read how our Lord "Steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51).  
There was the pull of inclination and the pull of God. Jesus definitely settle the issue as to which He would follow. We need to deal honestly, even ruthlessly, with ourselves at this point. It is so easy to drift alone without coming to a time of decision.
- 2. Courage comes as a result of commitment.** It has well being pointed out that we do not run because we are afraid, rather we are afraid because we run. Face up to life squarely, make up your mind, and you will discover courage that you never knew you possessed. We are afraid because we have not decided.
- 3. Calmness is always the results of commitment and courage.** Often when I sit down in an airplane, I begin to wonder if it will fly. I think about how big and heavy the plane is and that it might possibly crash at the end of the runway. Then the motors start. Slowly it begins to move, but if anything were wrong, the pilot could turn back. As the plane gathers speed it reaches the point of no return. It is then committed to taking off.  
When we reach that point, I always settle down because I, too, am committed. I could not stop and go back if I wanted to. There is no point in wondering further if the plane will fly. I have exercised my faith by getting on the plane in the first place; now I am compelled to stay with my

faith. So it is with life. We wonder what we should do. But once we really decide, make a start, reach the point of no return, a genuine and deep peace comes into our minds.

**Jesus** says, Stop trying to serve two masters. Fully decide for God. Then He goes on to say, therefore I say unto you, take no thought (be not anxious) for your life. You are now in the hands of God. The Psalmist says, I have not seen the righteous forsaken (Psalms 37:25).

We are accustomed to dividing life into the "spiritual" and the "material"; but Jesus made no such division. In many of His parables, He made it clear that a right attitude toward wealth is a mark of true spirituality (Luke 12:13 ff; 16:1-31). The Pharisees were covetous (Luke 16:14) and used religion to make money. If we have the true righteousness of Christ in our lives, then we will have a proper attitude toward material wealth.

Luke 12:13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

Luke 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

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Nowhere did Jesus magnify poverty or criticize the legitimate getting of wealth. God made all things, including food, clothing, and precious metals. God has declared that all things He has made are good (Genesis 1:31). God knows that we need certain things in order to live (Matthew 6:32). In fact, He has given us "richly all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17). It is not wrong to possess things, but it is wrong for things to possess us. The sin of idolatry is as dangerous as the sin of hypocrisy! There are many warnings in the Bible against covetousness (Exodus 20:17; Psalms 119:36; Mark 7:22; Luke 12:15 ff; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5).

Jesus warned against the sin of living for the things of this life. He pointed out the sad consequences of covetousness and idolatry.

**Enslavement (vv. 19-24). Materialism will enslave the heart (Matthew 6:19-21), the mind (Matthew 6:22-23), and the will (Matthew 6:24).** We can become shackled by the material things of life, but we ought to be liberated and controlled by the Spirit of God.

If the heart loves material things, and puts earthly gain above heavenly investments, then the result can only be a tragic loss. The treasures of earth may be used for God. But if we gather material things for ourselves, we will lose them; and we will lose our hearts with them. Instead of spiritual enrichment, we will experience impoverishment.

What does it mean to lay up treasures in heaven? It means to use all that we have for the glory of God. It means to "hang loose" when it comes to the material things of life. It also means measuring life by the true riches of the kingdom and not by the false riches of this world.

It not only enslaves the heart, but it also enslaves the mind (Matthew 6:22-23). God's Word often uses the eye to represent the attitudes of the mind. If the eye is properly focused on the light, the body can function properly in its movements. But if the eye is out of focus and seeing double, it results in unsteady movements. It is most difficult to make progress while trying to look in two directions at the same time.

If our aim in life is to get material gain, it will mean darkness within. But if our outlook is to serve and glorify God, there will be light within. If what should be light is really darkness, then we are being controlled by darkness; and outlook determines outcome.

**Finally, materialism can enslave the will** (Matthew 6:24). We cannot serve two masters simultaneously. Either Jesus Christ is our Lord, or money is our lord. It is a matter of the will. "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare" (1 Timothy 6:9). If God grants riches, and we use them for His glory, then riches are a blessing. But if we will to get rich, and live with that outlook, we will pay a great price for those riches.

**Devaluation** (vv. 25-30). Covetousness will not only cheapen our riches, but it will also cheapen us! We will start to become worried and anxious, and this anxiety is unnatural and unspiritual. The person who pursues money thinks that riches will solve his problems, when in reality, riches will create more problems! Material wealth gives a dangerous, false sense of security, and that feeling ends in tragedy. The birds and lilies do not fret and worry; yet they have God's wealth in ways that man cannot duplicate. All of nature depends on God, and God never fails. Only mortal man depends on money, and money always fails.

**Jesus said that worry is sinful.** We may dignify worry by calling it by some other name concern, burden, a cross to bear - but the results are still the same. Instead of helping us live longer, anxiety only makes life shorter (Matthew 6:27). The Greek word translated take no thought literally means "to be drawn in different directions." Worry pulls us apart. Until man interferes, everything in nature works together, because all of nature trusts God. Man, however, is pulled apart because he tries to live his own life by depending on material wealth.

God feeds the birds and clothes the lilies. He will feed and clothe us. It is our "little faith" that hinders Him from working as He would. He has great blessings for us if only we will yield to Him and live for the riches that last forever.

**Loss of testimony** (vv. 31-33). To worry about material things is to live like the heathen! If we put God's will and God's righteousness first in our lives, He will take care of everything else. What a testimony it is to the world when a Christian dare to practice Matthew 6:33! What a tragedy it is when so many of us fail to practice it.

**Loss of joy today** (v. 34). Worrying about tomorrow does not help either tomorrow or today. If anything, it robs us of our effectiveness today - which means we will be even less effective tomorrow. Someone has said that the average person is crucifying himself between two thieves: the regrets of yesterday and the worries about tomorrow. It is right to plan for the future and even to save for the future (2 Corinthians 12:14; 1 Timothy 5:8). But it is a sin to worry about the future and permit tomorrow to rob today of its blessings.

Three words in this section point the way to victory over worry - (1) faith (Matthew 6:30), trusting God to meet our needs; (2) Father (Matthew 6:32), knowing He cares for His children; and (3) first (Matthew 6:33), putting God% will first in our lives so that He might be glorified. If we have faith in our Father and put Him first, He will meet our needs.

Hypocrisy and anxiety are sins. If we practice the true righteousness of the kingdom, we will avoid these sins and live for God's glory.