

It Is Written

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YOUR TREASURE AND YOUR HEART

By Clarence Johnson

In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus said, "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."

Jesus was not legislating against owning property or putting money in the bank, but He warns that these things must not become our treasure. The finest clothing is subject to deterioration. The most costly possessions are subject to rust, corrosion, tarnish, and thieves. If our hearts are centered on such, we are sure to come to disaster when these things are destroyed and gone.

But Jesus says there is a treasure that endures. In the context, He warns against a man-pleasing religion. If we pray, fast, and give just to be seen by men our reward is received in full when men see and praise us. But if our worship is directed toward God without regard to whether men are watching we will be rewarded by the God we serve. We are laying up treasure in heaven.

Another thing accomplished by focusing on the goal of acceptable service to God is that it helps build godlike character. Job reflected on material wealth thusly: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). A couple of American proverbs reflect this truth: "There are not pockets in a shroud," and "You can't take it with you." But you can build character that will be with you forever, and thus lay up treasure in heaven.

In II Corinthians 4:16-5:8, Paul calls our attention away from visible, physical, worldly things to spiritual, invisible, eternal things. He notes that our outward physical body is in the process of running down--but our spirit or inner man can be renewed daily. When your body is placed in the tomb, your spirit can be at home with God. But heaven can't be your treasure if your heart's not in it. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Detached Members

By Frank L. Smith

Perhaps the most quickly recognized illustration of a member of our body being detached is the retina, that part of the eye that receives the image and sends it through the optic nerve. When it becomes detached, that eye is unable to see.

Paul declared that we are all members of the body, if we are children of God, Christians (I Cor. 12:18-20). And he further taught that all of the members must work for the well-being of the whole body (Eph. 4:16).

But we cannot function if we become detached from the rest of the body. That part of the body that is cut off, or detached from the body, can be no benefit to the body. An arm severed from the body can do no work for the one who has lost that limb. But neither can the body continue to supply life to the part that is detached.

Even so, members of Christ can neither serve him nor can he be a blessing to them, if they become detached from Him. A close association with the Lord in the body is necessary for the grace of God to save and bless us. Those members who have detached themselves from the church or have so lived as to have the fellowship with God's people broken will die as surely as a severed limb. Jesus said, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, so neither can you, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4). We cannot miss meeting and working with other saints in the church and bear fruit for the Lord. We must stay attached to His body in all things to keep our fellowship with Him, for He is the head of the body. ARE YOU WELL ATTACHED?

Let us keep well involved in worship, in teaching others, in study, in ministering to others' needs to keep

our lifelines connected securely. Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.

Carnal Weapons

By Robert F. Turner

In a fit of anger, being highly provoked, Joe lashed out with his fist. The blow had scarcely fallen when Joe regained control of himself, was shocked that he had so reacted, and apologized for his rashness. Considering the public nature of the deed, Joe publicly acknowledged his sin at the first opportunity and asked both man and God for forgiveness. He now endeavors to live a quiet, godly life, "forgetting those things which are behind" (Phil. 3:13).

But Joe had struck with his fist, and that is a "carnal weapon"- so Bill spreads the news. The Bible says, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:4), and Bill can quote it word for word. He "uses" the incident time after time to discredit Joe. He "uses" it to cast reflections upon the church of which Joe is a member. He "uses" it in place of scriptural authority for his own faith and practice. "Just look what Joe did!"

And it never occurs to Bill that the incident has become his carnal weapon. He is blind to the fact that he wields, day after day, deliberately and maliciously, a weapon every bit as carnal as the one Joe used in an unguarded moment. If Joe was in error - and he certainly was - Bill is in error and compounds the error day by day.

Carnal weapons are not limited to guns and clubs. In fact, the "war after the flesh" which provoked Paul's statement in 2 Cor. 10 was one waged by his spiritual enemies--the false teachers who made light of Paul's bodily presence and questioned his authority (Vs. 7-18).

It is sectarian and carnal to ridicule, quarantine, or by other like methods seek to overcome those who differ with us religiously. "Party" battles may be fought with prejudice-producing labels, but one does not "fight the good fight of faith" with such weapons. And this applies as much to conservative brethren as to the more liberal. Will we never learn?

One error cannot justify another. I am not a big man, physically or spiritually, because I call - or even prove - another to be small.

FACING THE CHALLENGES

By Greg Gwin

In times of crisis, individuals can accomplish incredible things - things that ordinarily would be beyond their ability to achieve. We've all heard examples of nearly superhuman feats that were performed under extreme circumstances. For instance, men have been known to lift the weight of an automobile in order to free a person trapped underneath. Normally this would be beyond their ability, but in an emergency situation they succeed. Or, we're told of soldiers who do amazing and spectacular things in the heat of battle when their comrades are in danger.

There's a spiritual lesson to be learned here. Too often we go about our spiritual service to God without a good recognition of the crisis situation that exists around us. We are under attack--from both within and without the body of Christ. The forces of Satan are advancing against us and we hardly seem to notice. And, since we are basically unaware of the danger, we never accomplish anything terribly significant for the cause of Christ.

We need to wake up. Have a good look at the crisis situation that surrounds us. It is a time for courage and resolve. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

Christian, sense the danger! Realize the crisis! Recognize the battle facing us! Alone we would be helpless, but with God's help we can do amazing things in His service--but we have to be aware of the awesome challenges. He has promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). Let's get busy!