

Dear Friend,

Most Christians are familiar with Jesus teaching that "You cannot serve God and mammon." Most of them understand that in order to serve God, you cannot spend your life being greedy and running after the "almighty dollar." But that sort of lifestyle is not really what Jesus was talking about. Greed is only one way people spend their lives serving mammon. Here is the entire verse from Matthew chapter six:

Matthew 6:24-25 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 despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (25) Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

The word **THEREFORE** in Mat 6:25 is so important to understanding the rest of Matthew chapter six. **The number one thing that causes believers to spend their lives serving mammon instead of God is not greed ... it is FEAR OF LACK.** We are not to be greedy and spend our lives in the pursuit of money. But that is not what Jesus focuses on in this teaching because for most people, it is not greed that motivates them ... it is FEAR. Specifically ... it is FEAR OF LACK. "What shall we eat? What shall we drink? How will we have clothes to wear?"

Jesus is saying ... **Therefore** ... to make sure you serve God and not mammon ... take no "thought." The Greek word translated "thought" in that verse means take no "anxious, worried" thought. That means when you spend time worrying about having enough food to eat, water to drink, clothing to wear and so forth ... **all that time you spent worrying ... you were serving mammon!** You were acting just like the world. You were acting like those who have no heavenly Father. You were acting like those who have no provider. If those kinds of anxious, worried thoughts become your lifestyle ... you will always serve mammon through fear of lack.

Remember who you are, where you are from, and why you are here. Notice Jesus says, "*Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*" The Holy Spirit drew my attention to that little word "the" years ago. I checked to make sure Jesus actually used the word "the" in the original Greek. He did. (By the way, many modern translations leave that word "the" out even though it is in the original Greek.) Jesus used that word for a purpose. He is not talking about biological life in general. He is talking about "the life" you are living as a child of God on earth. You are on temporary assignment here, just like my dad was on temporary assignment in Germany during World War Two. He was "in Germany, but he was never "of Germany." He was in Germany on a mission to be accomplished. We are on earth to accomplish our mission for the kingdom of God. That is "the life" we are living now on planet earth.

You have eternal life, but the apostle Paul says your life on this planet is "but for a moment." We are all going to give account for "the life" we lived while on assignment in the kingdom of God on planet earth. Your life "in the spirit" is what matters. The body is not you ... it is your earth suit. God gave us these "earth suits" for the same purpose NASA gave astronauts space suits. They wear them so they can live in the vacuum of outer space. Our bodies are our earth suit so our spirit can live here on planet earth. The spacesuit is only a tool to help the astronaut accomplish his "mission" in outer space. Our body is a tool to help us accomplish our mission on earth for the kingdom of God.

For the astronaut, it is "the life" inside of the spacesuit that matters ... not the spacesuit. What would you think of an astronaut who returns to earth, but while he was in outer space, he totally forgot the mission he had been assigned to accomplish? He forgot about doing those experiments, taking measurements, and photographing other planets. He didn't do any of that. When NASA asked what he did do in space he replied, *"Well, I was worried about running out of oxygen so I never did leave the spacecraft. I wanted to make sure my spacesuit looked good so I spent a lot of time cleaning it and polishing the helmet and making sure my spacesuit had everything it needed ... but I forgot all about why they sent me into space in the first place. I just focused on the needs of my spacesuit."*

When we spend our lives in anxious thought, always worrying about "what shall we eat, what shall we drink, what clothes shall we have" ... we are serving mammon by always focusing on the needs of our earth suit instead of focusing on our purpose in the kingdom of God. Our lifetime on this planet is about much more than the needs of the body.

Matthew 6:33-34 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (34) Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

The promise of Jesus is ... if you put the kingdom of God first ... and if you put living according to the righteousness nature He gave you first ... ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU.

Your friend and co-laborer,

GARY