

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:21)

There are many things that pull us away and distract us from having a fruitful relationship with God. We are challenged by many temptations in this day and age. In our day, just like in Jesus' time there are people who do good religious things, not because they are devoted to God, but because they are interested in looking good in front of others. This leads to one of the temptations that man faces: doing good works in order to receive praise, instead of doing them in secret. Jesus says that if we seek the praise of men, we have our reward, but if we seek to glorify God, the Father will reward us openly. Are we seeking to be noticed, to be put on a high pedestal in order to gain the praise of men? The second temptation we face is seeking physical treasures on this earth. So often, we look at things and say to ourselves, "If only I had that, then I would be all set." How many times have we listed all of the things we would do if we won the lottery. This is perfectly normal and it is okay to dream big. But the difference is, are we seeking to find security and sole satisfaction in these temporary things instead of realizing what we already have in our relationship with God. We need to appreciate all the treasures that He has given to us. Therefore, we must guard the treasures of our heart and soul. When we do, we become less distracted by the things of this world. Where is your treasure and where is your heart? Just as Matthew states in the title: *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* Who, or what, are you serving? Jesus was surrounded by the Sadducees and Pharisees, to whom who looked very religious on the outside, but in their hearts were serving money and themselves rather than God. Jesus is asking us to change our minds about these things and to serve the one true God. I am reminded of the movie, *The Mummy*, and a character called Beni. Toward the end of the movie, when they find the great treasure room in Hamunaptra, Egypt. Beni has lost all sense of reality and is controlled by the riches and wealth that is in front of him. Something happens in the temple, and the money room begins to fill up with sand, and the door closes so they cannot escape. Beni has the opportunity to get out, but is overcome by the power of wealth. He attempts to fill his pockets and drag out bags filled with gold, which are too heavy. Eventually the door closes, and Beni is trapped amongst all those jewels and riches, never to see the light of day again and never able to use the riches he perceived to be so valuable. The power of those riches controlled him, and they were the cause of his death. Jesus asks the all-important question, "Who are you serving?" People often think they can have the best of both worlds. While here on earth, they desire to live it up and have the riches of the world, as well as, in Heaven. Of course, it is no sin to be wealthy. There are many good people out there that are very wealthy. But the difference is how they use their treasure. In this passage, Jesus states: *"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"* Matthew 6:24. Jesus tells us that we cannot serve two masters. We cannot serve money and God nor popularity or ourselves. So make sure your treasure bags that you carry are light but yet overflowing with the treasures that God gives to you. And get rid of those heavy earthly treasure bags that only weigh you down, before the door closes and the sunlight never shows again.

-Sherrie Clutts DRE