

## SETTING OUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE – LESSON SIX

### COL. 3:1-3; MATTHEW 6:19-34

**“FIVE MINUTES INSIDE OF ETERNITY I BELIEVE EVERYONE OF US WILL WISH THAT WE HAD SACRIFICED MORE, PRAYED MORE, LOVED MORE, SWEATED MORE, WEPT MORE ...”**

**-LEONARD RAVENHILL**

### Review:

Over the past few weeks we have emphasized the importance of “setting our affection on things above,” on living here on this earth “in light of eternity.” We have said, over and over again that one of the great – if not the greatest – tragedy in the churches today, is our lack of an eternal perspective. The twenty-first century churches, especially those in the West (the United States, Canada and Europe) have lost the concept of eternity and the capability and desire to live in light of eternity. In his book *Whatever Happened to Heaven* Dave Hunt writes:

*Unfortunately, too many persons—even dedicated Christians—find such a topic (eternity) of only minor interest because they consider it to be largely irrelevant to the challenges of this present life. ... **Nothing is more important** in shaping how life on earth is lived and what is accomplished both for time and **eternity** than a person’s attitude about **the life to come**.*

Hunt is right, “**Nothing is more important** in shaping how life on earth is lived and what is accomplished both for time and **eternity** than a person’s attitude about **the life to come**.” Hunt continues with these words:

*What Jesus had to say about this present life and **the life to come**, and the particular promises he made about **heaven**, gave the early church a **hope** unknown to the followers of any other religion. That hope ... is so unreal to the average Christian today that it has lost its transforming power. ... One cannot read the New Testament without seeing its **heavenly** orientation. **Heaven** was continually on the heart of our Lord and was the context for everything He taught His disciples. He made it clear that He was calling them to turn their **attention** and **affection** and interest from this world to **heaven** ...*

This is what we call, “living in the light of eternity” or having an eternal perspective in life. The various commands to “*love not the world*” (**1 John 2:15**); to not be a friend of the world (James 4:4); and to “*be not conformed to this world*,” make very little sense unless we understand that this world is not our home, and in all reality is at enmity with God (**James 4:4**). Matthew Henry comments on 1 Peter 2:11, by stating: “*They are strangers and pilgrims, and should not impede their passage by giving in to the lusts of the country through which they pass.*”

Our whole approach to material things should revolve around what our Lord Jesus Christ had to say about money and possessions. In Matthew 6:19-31, we find some tremendous truth concerning prosperity and possessions. This passage is not difficult to understand if you take it at face value.

**What Jesus taught?**

- 1. We are not to lay up treasures upon this earth (Matthew 6:19)**
- 2. We are to lay up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20)**
- 3. Where we place our treasure our heart will follow (Matthew 6:21)**
- 4. We cannot serve both God and money (Matthew 6:24)**
  - *God and riches are mutually exclusive matters; we must choose one or the other.*
  - *Money can either be our servant or our master.*
- 5. We need not be anxious or worried about the future (Matthew 6:31-34)**

Someone has said, “Learning to use earthly things correctly is one of the great challenges facing Christians today.” **Why is this so?** Because “*No man that warreth entangeleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier*” (2 Timothy 2:4). Whether we like to admit it or not the seed of God’s Word is often choked out because of “*cares and riches and pleasures of this life*” (Luke 8:14). The apostle Paul made it very clear that “*they that will (or desire to) be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts*” (1 Timothy 6:9).

*We need to learn to live the lifestyle that we read about in the Bible. In Luke 14:25-35, Jesus is talking about nothing less than a radical life of sacrifice—one where we count the cost and decide that we will pay the price by turning our backs on luxury lifestyles our culture has conditioned us to expect. ... Paul wrote “No man that warreth entangeleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:4). We are already at war. The day we acknowledged Christ as our Savior we signed up for the battle, and that’s why I am calling on every Christian to start living in the light of that spiritual reality. I am calling on believers everywhere to join me in a radical, far-out life of simplicity that will seem crazy to many of your friends. You can live a greedy, self-indulgent life. Or you can choose the way of the cross, living for others as Jesus did and still calls us to imitate today.*

-K.P. Yohannan