

MID-MORNING FEATURING DR. MITCHELL KRUSE

DECEMBER 18, 2012

Do Discover Control in the Power of Christ (Matthew 6:24)

Do Discover Security in the Truth of Christ (Matthew 6:25-34)

NEXT SHOW: JANUARY 15, 2013

Do Discover Control in the Power of Christ (Matthew 6:24)

Do you desire money for the control that it brings? Control literally means “to roll against.” It is the extension of our will over another person or object. We attempt to control others, our own lives, or even God. The desire for control came from man being empowered by God to rule over the earth, and to use that control to humbly serve Him (Genesis 1:28).

The first sin was pride, man desiring control apart from God (Genesis 3:5-6). God had created Adam and Eve with humble hearts. The focal point of their control was God, who satisfied their desires. Pride made man the focal point of his own desires. Now each of us is born with and chooses a proud heart (Genesis 8:21), focusing on our giftedness rather than our godliness.

Money is pride’s measurement of our giftedness (time, talent, and treasure). Wisdom is humility’s measurement of our godliness (Christ in us). Christ is the image of God (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). He is humble in heart (Matthew 11:29), and He is the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). Humility toward Christ is the beginning of His wisdom in our lives (Proverbs 11:2).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned His disciples about attempting to satisfy their desires with money. He offered wisdom as an alternative. The third desire He addressed was control (Matthew 6:24).

Pride seeks control from serving money. “No one can serve two masters” (Matthew 6:24). Jesus knew our desire for control would be abused in a dualistic lifestyle where we would attempt to selfishly control others in an attempt to control our own lives. Bob Dylan said, “Everybody’s going to serve somebody.”

The result is a life that is out of control. “Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other” (Matthew 6:24). Serving two masters is serving one. It is an attempt to serve our selfish desires (Romans 8:5-8). At some point the two interests collide, leaving us with a choice of which master to serve. The question is “*Who or what has ultimate control of our lives, God or money?*” What controls us affects how we try to control others.

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

How have you sought control apart from God? Are you trying to serve two masters? What has been the result?

Humility seeks to serve God. “You cannot serve both God and money” (Matthew 6:24). As previously mentioned, God’s design for control was for us to serve Him. We flesh this out by humbly serving others rather than controlling them. In doing so, our unselfish desires are satisfied as well as the desires of God and the person served (Philippians 2:3-5).

The result is the power of God in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:24; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Great power resides in humbly serving others because it frees us from pride’s bondage to money and draws others to Christ in us while we grow in our intimacy with both. The more we give up control, the more we find it residing in us. Christ is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:24), and His complete power is unlocked in our lives through the key of humility (2 Corinthians 12:9). This power is the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us (Romans 8:9-11).

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

When presented with the choice of serving God or money, choose God because serving two masters is serving one. Flesh this out by humbly serving every person that you encounter with your time, talent, and treasure. You can serve the other person’s interests while at the same time serving your unselfish interests, as well as God’s. It will not merely be you who is serving; rather it will be Christ in you (1 Peter 4:10-11).

Conclusion

In our pride, we seek control apart from God, and the result is a life that is out of control. However, when life is centered in Christ, we discover that His power is greater than our desire for control.

Do Discover Security in the Truth of Christ (Matthew 6:25-34)

Would you like to achieve financial security? How much money would it take for you to have it? Security means that we don't have to worry. It means that we can trust in one resource to be true all of the time. This desire for security came from God providing man every seed-bearing plant and every fruit-bearing tree (Genesis 1:29).

The first sin was pride, man desiring security apart from God (Genesis 3:5-6). God had created Adam and Eve with humble hearts. The focal point of their security was God, who satisfied their desires. However, pride made man the focal point of his own desires. Now each person is born with and chooses a proud heart (Genesis 8:21), focusing on his giftedness rather than godliness.

Money is pride's measurement of our giftedness (time, talent, and treasures). Wisdom is humility's measurement of our godliness (Christ in us). Christ is the image of God (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). He is humble in heart (Matthew 11:29), and He is the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). Humility toward Christ is the beginning of His wisdom in our lives (Proverbs 11:2).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned His disciples about attempting to satisfy their desires with money. He offered wisdom as an alternative. The fourth desire He addressed was security (Matthew 6:25-34).

Pride seeks security from money. "Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life" (Matthew 6:25a). When our hearts are hard, we focus on our own selfish desires, seeing money as the ticket to the doorway of security. We desire to be financially secure so that our needs will always be met. This leads us to a life of worry because we fear not having enough. Deep inside our hearts, we are not merely trusting in money for security, we are trusting in ourselves—our ability to earn, keep, and grow the stockpile of cash.

The result is insecurity. "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life" (Matthew 6:27). The more we pursue the satisfaction of our desire for security apart from God, the more insecure we become. Insecurity is worrying that our resource will not remain true. Worry is literally a divided mind, or heart. We trust in God a little and in ourselves a lot. We think that by doing so we will add security to our lives.

We were created to function by trust; however, sometimes we have trust in the wrong object—that which is temporary, rather than that which is eternal. Jesus summed it up as having "little faith" (Matthew 6:30). Paul called it walking by sight—having faith in what we see around us, rather than believing in Who is in us (2 Corinthians 4:18; 5:7). When we worry, we trust in the gifts rather than the Giver, in our giftedness rather than godliness.

Our insecurity perpetuates the need to prove that our resources are true. So we find ourselves leveraging our time, talent, and treasure toward those ends. This occurs most frequently where our self-trust is highest: in tasks where we are *skilled* or in relationships where we are most *familiar*. The outcome is a never-ending cycle of trusting in our giftedness to prove our security, and the outcome is further insecurity. Jesus commanded us to stop the cycle of insecurity, saying: "Do not worry" (Matthew 6:31). Worrying is for the proud who do not trust God; the humble trust that God knows their needs (Matthew 6:32).

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

How have you sought security apart from God? Where do you go and what do you pursue in order to feel secure? What has been the result?

Humility seeks first God's kingdom and his righteousness. "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33a). God's kingdom is His divine reign, rule, and order in the hearts and lives of people on this earth now and in the future. It is the effective reach of His will. God's righteousness is what is right in His sight. The two intersect to form wisdom: God's righteousness combined with street smarts (the shrewd reach of God's will into our tasks and relationships).

Wisdom is not a principle; it is a person. Christ the wisdom of God came as the Righteous One (1 John 2:1) to inaugurate the renewal of God's kingdom (Mark 1:15). When we humble our hearts to Him, we experience the security of God's kingdom and righteousness in our lives. Solomon, the pinnacle of wisdom, said that the fear of the Lord (humility) was the ticket to the doorway of security (Proverbs 14:26). This humility seeks to prioritize God's will in our tasks and our relationships.

The result is the truth of God in Christ. "And all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:33b-34). *These things* represent our needs. God satisfies our desire for security with the truth of God in Christ (John 14:6). He is the resource of wisdom that will never run dry.

Solomon reflected: "Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor" (Ecclesiastes 7:12). That extra hour of life that we were seeking by worrying is infinitely found in wisdom. The psalmist added that the person who humbly trusts God will have no fear, and his heart will be secure (Psalm 112:7-8).

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

Do two things: (1) don't worry and (2) seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness. First, make an appointment with yourself to worry for 20 minutes. Write down everything that worries you. After you experience the silliness of this exercise, commit to not worrying again about financial security by trusting in money. Second, pray. Humbly trust God with all of your concerns by seeking first His will for your life.

Make your muscles move with your prayers by working wisely. Seek God's wisdom, allowing money to be a byproduct of relationships. Seek intimacy with your customers, vendors, employees, employers, family, or friends as you seek intimacy with God. Read a chapter in Proverbs each day corresponding to the date of the month, applying this wisdom to your tasks and relationships, including your finances. You will become secure, as you trust in godliness rather than your giftedness. It won't be you doing so; it will be Christ in you.

Conclusion

In our pride, we seek security apart from God, and the result is insecurity. However, when life is centered in Christ, we discover that His truth is greater than our desire for security.