

have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:9,10).

Consider Judas, a member of the greatest evangelistic team ever organized but what was his greatest problem? Was it not self? Could Judas have changed and “set” his affection on things above: laying up treasures in Heaven instead of the meagerly things of this world? Yes, absolutely! Judas lived his life, he made his eternal record and brethren, it is our turn now! What eternal record are we making???

Evangelism starts first and foremost by living the Christian life. Anyone can “set” his affection on things above and lay up treasures in Heaven. It is a matter of making up our minds. On the other hand, anyone can buy and buy and buy things (laying up treasures on earth) to the point that he cannot give to God as he ought to and be able to pay his bills. Where is our affection?

Evangelization is certainly among the greatest works on earth if not THE GREATEST! And the beauty is: anyone can do it anywhere there is a lost soul. Too many have the attitude “I can’t do it! Yes, you can! If you are physically able, you can door knock even if you are the silent partner. If nothing else, give as you ought to and make sure the church is involved in evangelism. But surely anyone can invite people to services and pass out tracts. Get in the inviting mode. Carry a supply of church brochures with you and use them. Can you imagine what would happen if every member of the church would start inviting people? Inviting people should become a part of our lives.

We are cautioned: “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17).

Which record do we want when we leave this world: (1) having laid up treasures on earth, or (2) having laid up treasures in Heaven? Only when we truly set our affection on things above and lay up treasures in Heaven can we have “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, [and it] shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). ♥



“Hold fast the form of sound words”

SW

(II Tim. 1:13 cp. Tit. 1:9; Jude 3)

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Church of Christ (Rom. 16:16) Mission USA

Perry Sexton 1763 Highway 166 N. Mt. Pleasant, TN 38474

Email: jpsexton@peoplepc.com

Website: www.mission-usa.org

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Evangelism: Converting Self (Part 1)

by Perry Sexton

Jesus said: “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” (Matt. 6:24). Often times the greatest hindrance to evangelism is **self** with pure ole **selfishness**, or else pure ole **unbelief** at the core of failures to evangelize as we should.

In fact, is not self our greatest object to overcome in living the Christian life? In the above verse “mammon” is “riches (where it is personified and opposed to God)” [Thayer]. Remember the words of our Lord: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: ²⁰But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: ²¹For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matt. 6:19-21).

Where is our treasure? Is it not obvious by how we live? Is it not an open book to others to a great extent? Let us look at the rich farmer: “And he [Jesus] spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: ¹⁷And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? ¹⁸And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. ²⁰But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast

provided? ²¹So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:16-21).

Now suppose this rich farmer lived in our day and was a member of the church of Christ. Where do you think his treasure is? What is wrong with him? Now suppose this same farmer was planning to build for his own good pleasure (not business) a pond which would cost him about \$40,000. And there arose an opportunity to help in an evangelistic work; say donate to help buy material for door knocking. And this rich farmer gives \$15 to that good work. Where do you think his treasure is? Where is his heart? What is wrong with his self? At present cost, \$15 will buy about 30 packets of material to pass out. Well, that is good, 30 households can receive good sound material to help guide them (their souls) in the right direction.

Now suppose this same rich farmer mastered self and determined to lay up treasures in Heaven and gave \$40,000 to buy good sound material to pass out (or some other good sound evangelistic work). That means 80,000 households can have a real good opportunity to learn and obey the saving truth from God. Where do you think his treasure is now? Where is his heart now?

The night is coming when no man can work and we all shall give account of our deeds! What would you want on your eternal record: (1) \$40,000 spent on selfish pleasures, or (2) \$40,000 spent on the number one work of the church? What would you want to leave behind: (1) corruption from moth and rust, or (2) the legacy of doing the work of God? By which example will you yet speak, even when you are dead and gone? You know, your influence will live on and affect other people (**cp. Heb. 11:4**). I have never understood how Christians (let’s put that in quotation marks), “Christians” in their wills can leave all their money to ungodly children and relatives and none to the church. Personally, I would be afraid to do that! And if I know my heart, I would not leave ungodly people much, if anything, at all. I would want to continue to speak righteously even though I am dead.

Make no mistake about it, we all have the choice to make! People who are laying up treasures in Heaven could have those worldly things instead, but have chosen the good thing. What will we say to our souls? “Soul, I will pursue worldly things ‘for to morrow we die’” (cp. 1 Cor. 15:32). Or will it be, “Soul, I will pursue

heavenly things ‘for to morrow we die’” (ibid.), knowing the gravity of it all!

Life is short (James 4:14), eternity is immeasurable, our souls are extremely valuable; worth much more than the whole world (Matt. 16:26), God loves us so much that He gave His only begotten Son to die for us on the cruel cross (John 3:16), Jesus loves us so much that He willing suffered the terrible pain, shame, and bore our sins on the cross (Rom. 5:8), and we all shall give account of ourselves to Him who died for us (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10), but the choice is ours: “But choose you this day whom ye will serve; God or mammon” (cp. Josh. 24:15).

Paul admonishes: “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2). Strong’s has this to say in part concerning “set” – “intensively to *interest oneself* in (with concern or obedience).” Does this not remind one of what our Lord taught: “Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6). Thayer says of “set” – “to have understanding, be wise ...to direct one’s mind to a thing, to seek, to strive for.” Note: (1) “understanding” – “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, ¹⁶Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15,17 cp. 1 Cor. 14:20); (2) “to seek, to strive for” – “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Luke 13:24); “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:” (2 Peter 1:10).

Let us have the mind of the Psalmist: “Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness” (Psa. 119:36), realizing that covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5). Why should we “set [our] eyes upon that which is not? for *riches* certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven” (Prov. 23:5). As Paul said: “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace” (Rom. 8:5,6). And finally: “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they