

Who Can You Trust?

In my last article I stated that the cause of anxiety is misplaced trust. We can often, and wrongly, place our ultimate trust in things and people that were never intended to bear that weight of responsibility. Keep in mind that I'm not saying that we should never trust anyone. Any lasting relationship will be built on a measure of trust. It's hard to have a genuine friendship when trust is lost. What I am saying is that we must place our ultimate trust in God alone.

In Matthew 6:19-34, we saw that Jesus is comparing and contrasting things and people that we can place an unhealthy trust in. Let's look again at verse 19: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroys and where thieves break in and steal..." Jesus is teaching us that "earthly treasures" are fleeting. We can't even know if we can hold on to them from one day to the next. Don't "treasure up" transient treasures. How, then, can we rightly enjoy all that God has given us while not placing our ultimate trust in these gifts? In 1 Timothy 6:17 we're taught that it's God who, "...richly provides us with everything to enjoy." That passage goes on to say that the rich are not to hoard up their riches, but to be "...generous and ready to share." This is the key. We're merely stewards of all the blessings that God gives us. God intends that we take a portion of our riches and possessions to meet the needs of others. Following is just a sampling of verses that teach this biblical truth:

—"It is well with the man who deals generously and lends..." (Psalm 112:5)

—"Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered."
(Proverbs 11:25)

—"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully....for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

In our passage in Matthew, Jesus is teaching us that we cannot selfishly accumulate earthly goods for ourselves as if the point of our lives is to continue to chase after the next biggest or best whatever it is. I once read an article that said that many Christians will regularly buy the next, the newest, the biggest whatever, while giving very little, if any, to their local church. This article was supported by a large number of statistics to prove its veracity. The problem is obvious. We can't find joy in earthly treasures while robbing God of his tithe!
(Malachi 3:8)

At this point it may be tempting to say, "This teaching from Jesus is not speaking to me because I'm not wealthy." The truth is that most Americans would be considered wealthy in comparison with the greatest percentage of the rest of the world. We have good jobs, retirement plans or some measure of help when needed, either from the government, our family or other Christians. Many people in this world do not know where their next meal is coming from and often have no one to help them if their family is no longer living. While I'm not questioning the struggles that many have even in this country, we're blessed more than

most. Keep in mind that I'm not speaking only of money, but any earthly possession that we prize or value in an unhealthy way. We must never place our ultimate trust in earthly treasures.

In the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon in his wisdom teaches us of the futility of self-indulgence. He gave himself all that this world had to offer including, "silver and gold and all the treasures of kings..." He came to the conclusion that, without God, it was all worthless (Ecclesiastes 12:13). When we hoard up earthly treasures while not being "rich toward God" it will end in futility. The reality is that the potential for anxiety increases even as our blessings increase. We can become anxious when our earthly treasures are threatened in any way. Are you trusting in your retirement account? In your physical health to sustain you? In your children to care for you when you can no longer care for yourself? All of these things are not wrong in and of themselves unless we're failing to place our ultimate trust in God. God gives his children all that's good and we can rightly enjoy it as long as we put him first in all things. Without placing our ultimate trust in God we will continue to be anxious.

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