

WEEK 4: TREASURE IN HEAVEN

“Giving is the only antidote to materialism” Randy Alcorn, The Treasure Principle

Fighting materialism takes more than staying out of debt. The world offers us all kinds of treasure if we will simply give up heavenly treasure. As disciples, we hunted for treasure and we found God! Now we store up treasure in heaven through giving this treasure to every soul in every way... “Abundance isn’t God’s provision for me to live in luxury. It is God’s provision for me to help others” – Randy Alcorn

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 9:11 *You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*

Day 22: Treasure Hunt

Treasure. The very word entices us to seek, to hunt for treasure. Maybe, just maybe, we will find the fortune that will solve all of our financial problems. Treasure describes something everyone seeks. It doesn’t have to be money. It could be the secret to the “good life” or the solution to life’s problems. Jesus knew we were looking for treasure. He also knew that most would incorrectly think that wealth was the same as treasure. Webster defines treasure as: “something of great worth or value; a person esteemed as rare or precious; or a collection of precious things.”

Read Matthew 6:19-21

- Jesus includes this correction in the Sermon on the Mount – correctly interpreting “treasure” is central to understanding what it means to follow him.
- Jesus corrects the notion that treasure equals wealth. Don’t be too quick to assume that you get this concept, which is not only foreign to our unspiritual minds, but is counter-cultural. The most unlikely people to correctly interpret Jesus’ teaching on wealth are the wealthy (“how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God” Mt 19:23). The best things in life aren’t things!
- We can also misread this scripture to teach that “where your heart (intention) is, there your treasure will be” – because we tend to (subjectively) evaluate our intentions (assuming that they are good) rather than looking at the facts about our life as the basis for our need to change.
- Jesus actually teaches a more powerful principle – where you give your heart is where it will go. You invest your effort, time, and money in either earthly or heavenly treasure; your heart follows.
- Jesus provides an antidote to the materialism of treasuring earthly stuff: treasure heavenly stuff.

What does Jesus define as storing up treasure/reward in heaven?

1. **Acts of righteousness done in secret.** Matt 6:1 *Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.*
2. **Sell your possessions and give to the poor.** Matt 19:21, Luke 12:33 and 18:22 *If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.*
3. What do you think you can do to hunt for and store up Treasure in Heaven?

Day 23: The Treasure Giver

John 3:16 *God is the ultimate giver!* Describe God as a giver.

Genesis 1:26 If we are made in his image, then we are made to be givers. How does this help you understand that to share God’s treasure we must be generous givers?

What other verses remind you that God is a giver?

2 Cor 9:10-11 *Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*

- God gives us his treasure. We share out of the overflow of the kingdom wealth God provides.
- For what purpose does Paul say that God “enriched us”?
- How will *our* generosity result in people giving thanks to *God*?

Day 24: Treasure Found!

Matt 13:44 *The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.*

- How do you know that this treasure seeker understood what he was looking for and what he found?
- Describe the true treasure you have found in God’s kingdom.

Consider how these verses link treasure giving our possessions!

- Luke 3 John the Baptist Share clothes/food, don’t cheat, be content with pay!
- Matt 19:21 Rich Ruler Sell your possessions and give to the poor... find treasure
- Luke 19:1-10 Zacchaeus After he gives ½ his possessions, Jesus says “salvation has come”
- Acts 2/4 First Converts Sold possessions to give to the needy... found the kingdom treasure
- Acts 19:19 Ephesians Burned \$1M in magic scrolls... found greater treasure

Why do you think that God so closely links giving and sacrifice with receiving treasure?

Day 25: Old Testament Giving – Describe what these OT characters gave

1. Genesis 14:20 Abraham gave _____
2. Genesis 28:22 Jacob gave _____
3. Leviticus 27:30-32 Israelites were instructed to give _____
4. Numbers 18:26 (Neh 10:38 also) Levites gave _____
5. Numbers 28-29 Looking at the NIV headings, describe the sacrifices and offerings the Israelites gave _____
6. Deut 14:22-29 Describe three tithes the Israelites were to give:
7. 2 Samuel 24:24 *But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."* Describe David’s heart to give.
8. Malachi 1 Describe ways Malachi challenged the Israelites and how that can apply to us today.
9. Malachi 3 How did Malachi challenge their giving?

Day 26: New Testament Giving – Describe how these New Testament characters gave

1. Mark 12:41-44 The widow gave _____
2. Luke 7:36-50 The sinful woman gave _____
3. Acts 4:36-37 Barnabas _____
4. 2 Corinthians 8:1-4 The Macedonians _____
5. 2 Corinthians 8:9 Jesus _____

Day 27: Abundance!

The dictionary defines abundance as “overflowing fullness”! God fills us up to overflow into generosity.

Luke 6:38 *Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

- How does our giving influence or limit how God gives to us?

John 10:10 *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.* Describe the life that God intends for us.

2 Corinthians 9:8 *And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.* Describe New Testament abundance.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 How does Paul command rich Christians to **lay up treasure for themselves**?

Day 27: Reward!

1. Matthew 6:20 *But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...*

- Does God want us to seek a reward?
- 2. Hebrews 11:6 *Anyone who comes to him must believe... that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.* Do you believe that God has a reward in store for you?
- 3. John 14:1 *Don't let this throw you. You trust God, don't you? Trust me. There is plenty of room for you in my Father's home. If that weren't so, would I have told you that I'm on my way to get a room ready for you? And if I'm on my way to get your room ready, I'll come back and get you so you can live where I live. And you already know the road I'm taking. [Message]*
- Think about Jesus "getting your room ready" – How does that inspire you?

4. Genesis 15:1 God is our "very great reward." What does that mean to you?

Heaven Described: What will our treasure look like?

Revelation 21:18-26 *The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.*

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.

- Describe the treasure of heaven...

Recap

- Treasure is central to Jesus' message
- God wants us to seek true treasure rather than being tricked into pursuing worldly treasure
- We were created to be like the ultimate giver
- Giving is the secret to receiving treasure in heaven and the cure for materialism
- God gives abundance... and plans a life of abundance for us through giving!
- God's reward is eternal, indescribable, something he has been getting ready for us, and something he wants us to seek and to find...
- Our treasure in heaven is... HIM!