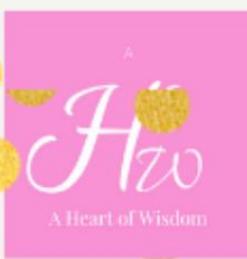




SPIRITUAL WARFARE SERIES

Laying up Treasures in Heaven



“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.’ Matthew 6:19-21

One of the key areas of distraction in our lives is gathering what the Bible calls earthly treasures, which are essentially material possessions. While there is nothing wrong with these, the Bible instructs that we don’t lose sight of storing up treasures in heaven. There is a saying that you will never see a moving van behind a hearse. Once a person crosses over to the other side of eternity, every material possession will be left behind. Armed with this understanding therefore, it would be wise for us to keep our focus on the things that will count through eternity.

In this study we will look at critical elements of storing treasures in heaven so that we can live wise and unburdened lives.

Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will help us live with eternity in mind so we use every opportunity available to credit our heavenly treasury.

Stay connected.



Day 1

Laying the Foundation

'But you shall remember [with profound respect] the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore (solemnly promised) to your fathers, as it is this day.' Deuteronomy 8:18

As we start this series on laying up treasures in heaven, let's lay the foundation for the reason it's necessary to do so in the first place. Why can't we just focus on getting material possessions here without thinking about heaven? The Bible tells us that God is the one who gives us the power to make wealth and it's for a purpose. What is that purpose?

'I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'" Genesis 12:2-3

When God called Abraham to leave his homeland, He told Abraham that in him (Abraham) all the families of the earth shall be blessed. This shows us that God's agenda is always using His people to reach others. Yes, we will be blessed, but we are to use our blessing to bless others. An analogy is for us to see ourselves as hosepipes for God's blessings. As we are blessed, these blessings flow through us to the nations we are called to reach. We are not supposed to be collecting centers for God's blessings, but conduits. The same way when water flows through a hosepipe it will still get wet, that's the same way we will be blessed as we allow God to use us as conduits.

Because the power to create the treasures/wealth we have access to comes from God, as responsible stewards we should also ask Him what He would have us do with it. And God's purposes always have eternity in mind.

Prayer: Lord thank you for arming me with the understanding that you are the one who give me the power to create wealth. Help me understand how you would have me use the resources you have made accessible to me.



Day 2

Uncertainty of Riches

'As for the rich in this present world, instruct them not to be conceited and arrogant, nor to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly and ceaselessly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.' 1 Timothy 6:17

It's important we understand that God is the source of all we have and the one that gives us the ability to enjoy what we have. Material possessions of any form are uncertain, and anything can happen to them. Economic crises, political changes, societal unrest, all these and more can affect the perceived value of our material possessions here on earth, and many have lost their peace of mind as a result.

'In the blink of an eye wealth disappears, for it will sprout wings and fly away like an eagle.' Proverbs 23:5

'The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.' Proverbs 10:22

'Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine.' Proverbs 3:9-10
NLT

God has an economic system that is untouched by whatever happens on earth. As we seek to constantly honour God with what He has given us access to, not focusing solely on meeting our own needs, but on being conduits, we will begin to see that our mindset towards material possessions will start changing. We will start looking for how to partner with God to reach the people He wants reached in whatever capacity we have.

'He who is faithful in a very little thing is also faithful in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little thing is also dishonest in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of earthly wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?' Luke 16:10-11

It has nothing to do with having all the resources in the world. What God is looking at is our faithfulness in little things before He commits larger, weightier responsibilities of eternal value to us.

Prayer: Lord help me put my trust in you alone and let me be found faithful in the little things.



Day 3

Rich Towards God

'Then he told them a story: "A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. He said to himself, 'What should I do? I don't have room for all my crops.' Then he said, 'I know! I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. And I'll sit back and say to myself, "My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!"' "But God said to him, 'You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?' "Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.'" Luke 12:16-21 NLT

In this story Jesus shared, the problem was not that the man was rich. Neither was it that he was planning to expand his business. The issue was that he had spent his energy and focus solely on expanding his material wealth and yet hadn't invested in his relationship with God. When our primary pursuit is material possessions, even our relationship with God can fall into the trap of being transactional as we approach God not for who He is, but for what we can get from Him. Jesus calls such a person a fool – very strong words, but that demonstrates the gravity of sacrificing our eternal relationships and priorities for temporal ones.

'But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.' Revelation 3:16-17

Jesus also had very strong words for the Laodicean church who though materially abundant, were poor in their relationship with Him. Does this mean Jesus has a problem with material wealth? Absolutely not! He delights in prospering His children, remember He's the one who gives us the power to create wealth and His blessings make us rich with no sorrow added (Deut 8:18, Prov 10:22). The problem is when we begin to put these things over and above our relationship with Him. It's about the posture of our heart towards Him.

Prayer: Lord, help me always put you first and not get blinded by the pursuit of acquiring material things.



Day 4

Rich Towards Brethren

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'" Matthew 25:34-36 NLT

"And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'" Matthew 25:40 NLT

Believers represent the body of Christ and this scripture helps us know that He is very interested in how believers treat one another. As far as Jesus is concerned, whatever you do to another believer, you're doing to Him. We all have different life circumstances and Jesus fully recognizes this and wants the believers to take care of one another based on the foundation of love we have for Him, which flows into love for one another.

'There were no needy people among them...' Acts of the Apostles 4:34a

In the book of Acts we see how the disciples shared all they had with one another so that no one was in need, everyone was taken care of. This gives us an idea of how Jesus would like us to treat one another, each one bearing another up so that no one is in need. But for this to happen we need to step away from ourselves and intentionally pay attention to meeting the needs of others in whatever capacity we can.

'And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.' I Corinthians 13:13

'If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.' Galatians 6:3

Tough words but this is what the Bible says. We are all a part of the body and no individual is more important than the other as far as the overall body is concerned. Every single one of us has a part to play and a way in which we can help another. When we love one another as Christ loves us, extending a helping hand however we can to another believer will become second nature to us. Because at the end of the day, we understand that everything we do, we're doing to Him.

Prayer: Lord please help me understand how important it is to you that I walk in love and use whatever you have blessed me with to bless others.



Day 5

Rich Towards Others

'But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.' Luke 14:13-14

The spirit behind what Jesus was saying here is simply this – give to those who cannot repay you. It does not necessarily mean that we are to have a physical feast but our lifestyle should be that of giving to others who aren't in a position to repay us. Too often we look at relationships from a transactional perspective, thinking about who can benefit us and what we will get in return. But Jesus is saying here that when we give with a genuine heart to those who cannot repay us, He pays attention and will repay us Himself.

'But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve.' Jeremiah 17:10

'He told me, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your gifts to the poor have been noticed by God!' Acts 10:31

'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.' Matthew 6:1

God is more interested in the motive for our good deeds than the deeds themselves. The example of Cornelius shows us that giving to others with a pure heart will be noticed by God. This is why we should not compete with anyone else in giving or charitable acts, our primary focus should be that we are motivated by a heart the genuinely wants to do well for others and give God glory in whatever capacity we can. If our focus is to be seen by others, then we may certainly get the applause and approval of men, but there won't be any reward from our Father in heaven.

Prayer: Lord help me have the right heart towards giving to others, let my desire be for your approval and not the approval of men.



Day 6

Rich with Time

'Therefore see that you walk carefully ... making the very most of your time [on earth, recognizing and taking advantage of each opportunity and using it with wisdom and diligence], because the days are [filled with] evil.' Ephesians 5:15-16

Every day we get to see is an opportunity for us to do something for the kingdom of God. Once we leave this earth, there won't be any more opportunities. This also means that the time we're given here on earth is a great opportunity to define what eternity will look like for us. Everything we do counts forever – either for or against.

'Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God.' Romans 14:12

'...He has planted eternity in the human heart...' Ecclesiastes 3:11

If we live with eternity in mind and the understanding that everything we do will count either for or against us, our priorities will definitely be altered. The things we place emphasis on will change. The way we use time will change. So often we expend a significant amount of time, and effort on things that have very little (if any) eternal impact. No matter how much money we have in our bank accounts, it will be useless to us in eternity. Regardless of how many academic, career and other accolades we may receive, if they weren't in line with God's agenda for our lives, they will not count as we give our account of time spent on earth to God.

'He will judge everyone according to what they have done.' Romans 2:6

The bible encourages believers to live wisely, numbering our days so we can use the gift of time wisely. The price Jesus paid for our salvation also gives us the opportunity to be co-labourers with Him for the sake of the kingdom of God. Time can be our great ally if we learn to use it well. Imagine waking up every day with the consciousness and willingness of doing something for Jesus that day? What if our daily prayer was: Jesus please help me to do something for You today? This isn't about engaging in un-ending activity otherwise we will miss it and also burn ourselves out. We can't know His will or do what He wants without first having a relationship with Him. But when the Holy Spirit sees our genuine desire to please Him, He will begin shaping us and guiding us to do what He wants, the way He wants it.

Prayer: Dear Lord, I want to do something for You each day. Please draw me close to You and show me what I can do each day to bring you glory

Day 7

Rich in Soul-winning

'Those who are [spiritually] wise will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead many to righteousness, [will shine] like the stars forever and ever.' Daniel 12:3

One of the awesome promises we have is that those who are spiritually wise will shine like the stars forever. Think of how stars shine and twinkle even when they appear so far away. Instead of the precious stones we may acquire and leave behind here on earth, we have the opportunity to shine even brighter forever. So the question one may ask is: what does it mean to be wise in this context?

'Now wherever you go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And teach them to faithfully follow all that I have commanded you. And never forget that I am with you every day, even to the completion of this age.'" Matthew 28:19-20 TPT

'...not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.' 2 Peter 3:9

The Lord doesn't want anyone to perish and His desire is to have as many as possible come to repentance so He's enlisted believers as those who He will empower and enable to do this. This is why Jesus gave all believers a very clear task – making disciples of nations. Nations doesn't necessarily mean geographies, but people groups. Our task really is to intentionally reach out to any people group we are part of or affiliated with – relatives, friends, neighbours and associates.

But beyond giving believer the task, Jesus has also made a promise to those who key into completing this task. We have His full assurance that those who lead many will definitely shine brightly through all eternity. Wisdom then is believing Jesus and taking Him up on the trustworthiness and dependability of His promise.

Prayer: Lord, help me dedicate myself and resources to completing this task as you enable and empower me.



Thank you for completing the study. We'll love to hear from you, so please connect with us on:

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