

Mammon Is Our Major Obstacle

“You cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).

THOSE WHO ARE SERIOUSLY REACHING FORWARD IN LIFE WILL RUN INTO NO BIGGER OBSTACLE THAN “MAMMON.” Money and material possessions, while not wrong in themselves, tend to draw our hearts and our hopes away from God, and their temptation is so powerful that none of us can say we’ve mastered the difficulty. This is a problem that no human being can afford to ignore.

The problem of mammon affects every individual. When Jesus said, *“You cannot serve God and mammon,”* He was speaking to an audience that probably included more poor people than rich. The difficult decision about whom to serve, whether God or mammon, is universal. It’s the fundamental choice that every person who lives in the world must make, whether rich or poor.

Mammon has to do with THIS world. And all we have to do to “worship” it is to make it our top priority or our main interest. Some of the man-made things in the world are evil, of course, and these should be avoided completely. But even if we’re talking about the things that God has made, all of which are good, we have to make a choice whether to worship the CREATION or the CREATOR. When we worship God, He gives us many gifts to enjoy (and then let go of) as we make our way to heaven, but if we have such a fixation on God’s gifts that He, the Giver, gets only what’s left over of our love, then we’ve become worshipers of mammon.

The most foolish thing we can do is assume that we’ve got it all under control. We are never in more danger than when we underestimate the power that mammon has to attract our OWN hearts. The fact is, it has a seductive, powerful pull on virtually every human being. And if we say we’ve got our this-worldly desires under control, almost any objective person could probably look at the way we spend our time and see that we don’t. When it comes to spiritual priorities versus worldly ones, many of us are attempting a juggling act that we’re not nearly skilled enough to pull off.

“Materialistic concerns and one-sided values are never sufficient to fill the heart and mind of a human person. A life reduced to the sole dimension of possessions, of consumer goods, of temporal concerns will never let you discover and enjoy the full richness of your humanity. It is only in God – in Jesus, God made man – that you will fully understand what you are” (John Paul II).

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