CAPITOL COMMISSION
Reaching Capitol Communities for Christ

Kyle McDanell
457 Versailles Rd.
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 750-1490
https://capitolcom.org/state/kentucky/

Matthew 6:19-24
Investing Wisely

What is the worse financial investment anyone has ever made? In 1979, Magic Johnson was drafted by the LA Lakers after winning a national championship with Michigan State. Three shoe companies approached him: Converse, Adidas, and Nike. Growing up poor, Magic chose the company that had the best track record for basketball, had already signed Larry Bird and other superstars, and offered the most money. Nike, a new company known for their running shoes, offered less money but stock. Had Magic signed with Nike, he would have made (starting out) about $100,000 a year which was good money, but nothing compared to Converse. Nike stock sat at $.18 a share in 1979. It is now at over $105. Such an investment would have resulted in an additional $5 billion.

What you invest in matters and says a lot about who you are. Some make poor decisions; others make wise ones. If that is true with financial investments, how much more so with spiritual ones?

Jesus utilizes three metaphors for us to consider our spiritual investments. The first involves **the Heart** (vs. 19-21). Jesus warns of laying "up for yourselves treasures" on earth as opposed to treasures in heaven. In other words, what we invest in matters. We can either invest in temporary goods that are prone to decay and thievery or invest in eternal goods that remain secure.

This has been the running theme of Jesus. In Matthew 5:17-48, Jesus showed how unrighteousness stems from the heart. Similarly, in Matthew 6:1-18, Jesus showed how true righteousness stems from the heart. What motivates hypocritical piety is the pursuit of validation. We seek the approval of man over God. We treasure what depreciates.

Jesus highlights three common commodities in the first century. The first are GARMENTS. Like the modern world, fashion was a source of wealth in the ancient world (cf. Joseph and the coat of many colors). The problem with garments is they are easily destroyed by "moths." A second commodity was GRAINS. Given the agricultural context of the New Testament, the amount of grain one raised was a means of wealth. The problem with grain, however, is the danger of vermin. Although most translations use "rust," the word means "to eat" (see John 4:32, 6:27; Romans 14:17) perhaps referencing creatures who consume before it can be harvested. The final commodity was GOLD which attracts thieves. Jesus's point is clear. To invest in earthly things is risky and will disappoint in the end. We should rather invest in eternal things.

Just as living for depreciating commodities is foolish, so living for the approval of man is equally foolish. Jesus's primary concern thus far has been our heart. Sin stems from the heart as does righteousness. If your heart is in the wrong place, you are a foolish investor. Investing in worldly pleasure, power, or the approval of others is a foolish investment.

Years after Magic Johnson's foolish decision, Michael Jordan took the deal with Nike that came with stock and is now one of the wealthiest athletes in the world. When Charles Barkley signed with Nike, Jordan told Barkley to take a similar deal. Barkley has reported he has made about 10 times more money in that choice than he otherwise would have made.

Investments matter. What you do with your money matters. What you invest your heart in matters more.

The second metaphor regards **the Eye** (vs. 22-23). The themes of light and the eye are not new in the Sermon on the Mount (see Matthew 5:14-16, 29). Ultimately, however, the eye is the organ of focus. Keep your eyes on Christ.

This is the direction Jesus takes us next. Beginning in verse 25, Jesus shows how anxiety is the art of focusing on what we cannot control instead of focusing on the One who can. In Matthew 7:1-3, Jesus addresses the speck one "sees" in their brother's eye while being blind to the branch in their own. Finally, Jesus exhorts his listeners to ask, "seek," and knock (Matthew 7:7).

What matters is our focus. If our eyes are on the wrong things, we will suffer spiritually. Stay focused on Jesus and his righteousness.

Finally, Jesus explores **the Soul.** By definition, slaves have one master. Remember that in Jesus's time, slaves were everywhere. Estimates vary, but scholars guess around 10-20% of the Roman population were slaves. Of the estimated population of 50 million during the time of Jesus, that would mean 5-10 million of them were slaves. Slaves were the exclusive property of a single master. Therefore, the scenario Jesus describes is ludicrous. That's the point. Loyalty to Christ and to our idols is a fool's errand.

Imagine if it were possible to serve two masters. Does it not make sense that you will prefer one over the other? So too, stop trying to have one foot in righteousness and another foot in wickedness. Stop trying to worship the Savior while holding fast to your idols.

While Jesus specifically mentions the idol of money, other false gods can be highlighted. Like the Israelites of the Old Testament our loyalties are stretched between the True and Living God and false idols. Of all the available idols, post-Christian America has 5 prominent deities including Self, Sex, Stuff, Science, and State.

My least favorite part of working in retail was inventory. It was a stressful time everyone hated. But it was crucial to our well-being. Spiritual inventories can be just as frustrating and equally crucial. What are you investing in? Will it last into eternity? What are you focused on? Is it true righteousness? What are the deepest desires of your heart? Is it the Lord's glory?