**Materialism**

*Ecclesiastes 5:10*

**Introduction**

1. Materialism is the preoccupation with material objects, whether it be money, or the things money can buy, to the neglect of or indifference toward spiritual matters.
2. Materialism can affect anyone. Especially Christians who live in a land as affluent as America.
3. **We must beware of materialism. It is a ploy of Satan.**
4. We must ultimately understand that materialism is vain, and the accumulation of such will never satisfy, but only lead to disappointment (**cf. Ecclesiastes 5:10).**
5. Materialism from Two Angles
6. Desire to Obtain **(cf. Luke 12:13-21)**
   1. **The pull of materialism to acquire wealth.**
   2. **(vv. 13-14)** – His focus is already seen to be in the wrong place.
      1. **Teacher** – ***“master” (KJV)*** – one who instructed, especially in spiritual matters. (Especially one with authority.)
      2. **Rabbis often assumed the position of judge and arbitrator in such instances.**
         1. The man assumed Jesus would use His authority in this way.
         2. *This was not Jesus’ purpose* – ***“My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36a*** – His purpose is spiritual).
   3. **(v. 15)** – The primary reason for Jesus’ refusal to comply was the man’s motive behind the request – **materialism**.
      1. **Covetousness** – a desire to have more (VINE) (Used usually in a bad sense.)
      2. **(v. 15b)** – In what does one’s life consist? – **NOT in abundance of MATERIAL POSSESSIONS**.
   4. **The object (possessions) of his immense desire, along the irony in who he approached to fulfill that desire (Jesus – Focus on SPIRITUAL) showed his true focus in life.** *This folly is expressed further by Jesus in the following parable* ***(vv. 16-21)*:**
      1. **(vv. 16-19)** – The abundance of things possessed was not the problem.
         1. **(vv. 16-18)** – These good things come from God, and to take care of them is wise.
         2. **(v. 19)** – The problem was his mindset – FOUND SECURITY IN HIS POSSESSIONS.
         3. **He thought he had taken care of himself, but in reality HE NEGLECTED THE MOST IMPORTANT THING 🡪**
      2. **(v. 20)** – What he did may seem wise, but God called him a “fool.”
         1. He had provided for his physical future, and that was the end all be all for him.
         2. **He did not provide for his eternal future. (His abundance of possessions did not take care of himself after all.)**
   5. **(v. 21)** – The man who made the request to Jesus had opportunity to grow spiritually at Jesus’ feet. To request something longer lasting, and of utmost importance. **But he showed his FOOLISHENSS by trusting in material possessions.**
   6. ***I do not have, so my life lacks. So, I will attain, and I will be fulfilled.***
7. Desire to Maintain **(cf. Luke 18:18-23)**
   1. **The pull of materialism to maintain wealth.**
   2. **(v. 18)** – His riches by themselves did not make him a bad person. He had some interest in spiritual things.
   3. **(vv. 19-21)** – He was a spiritual person to some degree.
   4. **(v. 22)** – Jesus’ answer indicates Jesus, as usual, knew ultimately what was in the man’s heart.
      1. **It is possible that the ruler asked Jesus the question (v. 18) in the first place because he perceived Jesus thought He needed to do more.**
      2. ***“Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him…” (Mark 10:21).***
         1. Jesus’ response was not unreasonable, **but was an expression of Jesus’ utmost concern for his soul. 🡪**
         2. The man had his priorities mixed up, **and Jesus knew that taking this action would allow him to truly straighten them out.**
         3. No doubt this was a test 🡪
   5. **(vv. 23-25)** – Despite what was likely a sincerity in his question concerning his interest in ***“eternal life,”*** **his reaction showed that *“eternal life”* was not quite enough.**
      1. **(vv. 24-25)** – It is difficult because the ***riches fog out perception. They are before us, but they are not what is truly substantive.***
      2. **(vv. 26-27)** – It is not impossible, but you have to put your trust in God.
      3. **This man’s trust was not in God despite how it may have seemed before. His riches blinded him, and MAINTAINING THEM WAS HIS GREATEST CONCERN.**
   6. ***I have, so I feel fulfilled. So, I will seek to maintain to continue to be fulfilled.***
8. Materialism is…
9. Misplaced Trust
   1. **1 Timothy 6:17-19** – Do NOT trust in riches, but in God.
      1. **(v. 17)** – Trust is not to be in material possessions, but in the origin of such things.
         1. Being rich is not sinful.
         2. **These GOOD things come from God, but our trust should not be in them, but in the LIVING God who gave them.**
            1. **It is folly to trust in inanimate objects, instead of the ALL POWERFUL LIVING GOD who gave them.**
      2. **(vv. 18-19**) – The focus should be spiritual.
         1. An abundance of riches won’t get you to heaven.
         2. **Laying up treasures in heaven by doing as God says will.**
   2. ***“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (Hebrews 13:5).***
      1. The one who is not content, and covets has misplaced his trust – desiring and working endlessly toward more things will not help.
      2. **We are to put all our well-being into Jesus’ care.**
10. Enslavement (of self)
    1. **Ecclesiastes 5:18-20** – Material possessions are not inherently wrong.
       1. **These things are a GIFT FROM GOD.**
       2. **(v. 20)** – Living in the consciousness of God’s favor helps us! This is by design.
       3. **The material blessings in life are given to us by God for OUR benefit – THEY SERVE US!**
       4. *However, if we do not keep our priorities straight, what is good can become bad for us 🡪*
    2. ***“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Corinthians 6:12).***
       1. The problem is not enjoying things in their proper place.
       2. **The problem is becoming OVER POWERED by the material possessions – *becoming their servant, instead of the possessions being your servant.* 🡪**
11. Idolatry
    1. ***“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth:…covetousness, which is idolatry” (Colossians 3:5).***
       1. Covetousness is not simply a desire for something, **but a CONSUMING DESIRE – it overwhelms EVERYTHING ELSE.**
       2. **Why is it idolatry?** – *Any desire we have that is so strong it supersedes our desire for God has itself become our god.*
       3. *What should be our desire?* – ***“Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (Psalm 73:25-26).***
    2. **Matthew 6:19-24** – Such conflicting STRONG desires cannot coexist.
       1. **Ultimately, the desire which is the strongest will gain ascendency.**
       2. **Where is your heart? Who do you truly desire to serve?**
12. Vain
    1. **Materialism is the idea that there is fulfilment in an abundance of possessions. That materials actually have substance.**
    2. *However, that which seems to have substance has no substance at all! 🡪*
    3. **Ecclesiastes 5:13-17** – It does not matter how much is amassed, when a person dies he possesses none of it anymore.
    4. **1 Timothy 6:6-12** – In vain men seek to amass wealth in search for contentment, for all that they gain they cannot take with them.
       1. Those who ***“desire to be rich”*** and have ***“the love of money”*** cause great sorrow to come upon them.
       2. **It will NEVER be enough, and in the end there is no amount which lasts.**
       3. **(vv. 11-12)** – Instead, our overwhelming desire should be ETERNAL LIFE.

**Conclusion**

1. We are all subject to the lure of materialism.
   1. **Those who DON’T have** – are lured to the desire to have.
   2. **Those who DO have** – are lured to the desire for more, and to maintain what they have at all costs.
2. **Our focus should be on the spiritual things, on GOD. These things are lasting, and truly substantive.**
3. Where is your focus?