



[Matthew 6:24](#)

(24) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

New King James Version

Most people who are familiar with the Bible are aware of this statement made by [Jesus](#) during His [Sermon on the Mount](#). This teaching on the inadvisability of trying to serve two masters comes at the end of a line of comparisons between two major elements of life. Earlier, He had spoken about two different kinds of treasure, the earthly kind and the heavenly kind. Then He mentioned the good eye and the bad eye, or perhaps it would be clearer to call them the focused ("single," KJV) eye and the confused eye, which illustrate a person's outlook on his life. Obviously, Jesus is trying to help us see the dichotomy between God's way and the way of [this world](#), man's way, or Satan's way, however we may wish to look at it.

In this verse, He moves on to the human will, telling us that it is impossible to give full allegiance to more than one entity, whether it be a family member, a boss, a cause, or even football teams! As He says, one of them will always be slighted in some way. One's true loyalty will soon be revealed when circumstances conspire to force a choice between them. At the fish-or-cut-bait moment, we will choose to give our time and attention to the one that we really [love](#), and the other we will "hate" by comparison.

As a native of the Steel City, I am a Pittsburgh Steeler fan and always have been. Yet, I have lived in Charlotte since 1992 and have been a fan of the Panthers since the team's first NFL game in 1995. I know a great deal about both clubs, watch most of their games, and avidly follow their player acquisitions and moves. It is good that the Steelers are an AFC team, while the Panthers are an NFC team, so they rarely play each other. But what happens when they do? There is no question: I root for the Steelers. My choice shows that I "love" the Steelers and "hate" the Panthers; I am "loyal" to the black and gold and "despise" the black, Panther blue, silver, and white. In such a situation, I

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Matthew 6:24 (<http://www.theberean.org>) cannot cheer for both.

In the last phrase, Jesus makes it clear that the choice often comes down to [God](#) on the one hand and "Mammon"—a word that denotes wealth and possessions—on the other. True, His audience, mostly Jews, had and still have a reputation for pursuing wealth overmuch, but His true audience is everyone. We all want more things, and we sometimes go to extreme measures to get them. When faced with the decision of following God or following the money, too many pick the latter, and in doing so, reveal our true loyalties.

He desires His disciples, therefore, to take note: The true Christian puts God first in everything. If a promotion at work means that a Christian will have to work on the [Sabbath](#) or blur some of his principles, he needs to choose God and turn down the promotion. If he can avoid a heavy tax assessment if he fudges the numbers a little on his 1040, he should choose God and submit an honest return. If he finds a wallet filled with cash, he must choose God and return it to its owner. In every case in which we must decide between obedience to God and gaining for the self, God must be our constant choice.

While this may seem somewhat onerous, this kind of total devotion and commitment is what God demands. Jesus is also the one who said, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the [kingdom of God](#)" ([Luke 9:62](#)), and "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" ([Luke 14:26](#)). Even in the verse under discussion, Jesus speaks of "serving . . . masters," which is an allusion to slavery. But we can gladly choose to serve God, the most gracious and beneficent of masters.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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