



Matthew 6:19-21

(19) Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: (20) But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: (21) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

King James Version

Perhaps among the most underappreciated gifts [God](#) gives when He calls us is the time to amass treasure in heaven. Jesus' focus on treasure is important to His progress through the sermon at this point because He chose to illustrate first what we choose to do with our available time. At the outset, we must make sure of our aim in life. Overall, He is most interested that we make the best use of our [faith](#), but in this section of His sermon, His concern is our use of time. What we choose to do with our time reflects on what we consider most important to achieve. Our use of time determines how much we will accomplish.

“Treasure” represents what we deem to be valuable enough to spend one of our most valuable resources—time—to obtain. It is what we hold dear, maybe even believe costly enough to give our life to obtaining or defending once we have it. Perhaps our treasure is something we do not yet hold but what we are searching for or working to achieve.

[Jesus](#) used “treasure” to represent something we consider more important than something “common.” It is something we would eagerly work for if we knew it is available and achievable. Due to the nature of what the term represents, treasure can, with no effort, motivate a person to decide to use his time in its pursuit, unlike an ordinary or common thing. Because of a person's perception of its value, treasure can move him to action almost as soon as he notices its availability.

In the Western world, treasure often means wealth—money, riches. It, however, may not connote money per se, but what money can buy: an impressive home in an exclusive section of town, a specific make of automobile, a prime section of land, or fine clothing. What a person strongly desires is an indicator of his or her treasure. In our thinking, we must not limit “treasure” to wealth. For some, treasure might be becoming an elite athlete, entertainer, or artist. In other cultures, people treasure different possessions, but they are almost always things a person feels will bring him the respect, admiration, and esteem of others within his culture.

The treasure motivates the use of its seeker's time, and if he uses his time pursuing that treasure, due to the way God has arranged His creation, that time is forever lost. It is totally consumed, never to return. This fact is a stark reality to which we must give serious thought in view of what we hold valuable. Everything we do uses time, and events and circumstances will never return.

We do not have to think of this as a matter of life and death, but we must afford it thoughtful attention. We must deal with it as an unalterable reality because God's calling is that valuable. We cannot avoid it if we wish to be in God's Kingdom. We must not let life simply “fly by” as if time is of no consequence.

Jesus is not declaring that every earthly thing we desire is inherently evil. He is admonishing us that we must judiciously evaluate the use of our time and efforts against His way and purposes for our lives. Because of our calling, His will and directives are now our highest priorities. Material, earthly desires come far down the list. He is most concerned with how we use our faith because salvation is “by grace . . . through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” ([Ephesians 2:8](#)).

Right here, we face one of Jesus' greater concerns about the possible effects of desiring a wrong treasure. At this point in the [Sermon on the Mount](#), He does not speak much about this concern, but it is nonetheless a danger that He warns about elsewhere, so we must be aware and cautious. He says in

[Matthew 6:21](#), “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also,” a powerful cause-and-effect statement. If it is not carefully monitored, a person's treasure has enough influence to alter his heart for good or evil.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Why Hebrews Was Written \(Part Five\)](#)

Related Topics:

[Earthly and Heavenly Treasure](#)

[Money](#)

[Riches](#)

[Spiritual Gifts](#)

[Treasure](#)

[Wealth](#)

[Where Our Treasure Is](#)