

TREASURE IN HEAVEN

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MATTHEW 6:19-34



Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

The heart is only big enough for one treasure – No one can serve two masters. We will either live for the things of this world or we will live for the God who created all things. Jesus tells us that our hearts can be filled with only one love. If we love the Lord and His kingdom, a love for money or fine things will not capture our attention. Unfortunately, the opposite is true. If our hearts are filled with a love of money or the things money can buy, there is no room for the Lord. We can't truly love both at the same time.

Our love for the Lord results in a relaxing of our hold on earthly things. We more easily give to those in need. God rewards us for these grace-motivated good works by giving us treasure in heaven.

There is no need to worry under the Father's care – Most people forget that God is behind the scenes, providing everything they need. We often think we provide for ourselves. It is true we work to receive wages, and with those wages we buy food and clothing. But God sustains our health and strength, and blesses the work of our hands. God provides our jobs, and even the rain to allow the food we eat to grow. God is in control of every detail of our lives! When we worry, we fall into unbelief. Then we feel pressure to strive for what we need. We have a heavenly Father who loves us more than all the animals He provides for. So we do not need to worry, because if He loves us more than the animals, He will give us what we need.

Seek first the kingdom of God, and the Lord will take care of you. It is kind of God to give us something to do instead of worrying. It would be much more difficult if the Lord said, "Do not worry; just be patient." We are doers by nature. Instead, God tells us to seek after His kingdom and His righteousness. We can pray as we trust God for food and ask Him for help. We can read the Bible and grow in purity and strength while we trust God to bless us with money for clothes. We can serve others while we trust that our needs will be met. When the Lord, His kingdom and His righteousness are our treasures, God our Father in heaven promises to take care of us.

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WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Although it is very true that we cannot serve God and money, it is equally true that we cannot serve God alone unless God changes our hearts. Our hearts will by nature be fixed upon earthly treasure unless Jesus gives us a new nature and a love for Himself. Jesus died so that we could find our treasure in Him rather than the treasures of this world. Jesus is the treasure God has placed in our hearts. As unbelievers we were blind to see this treasure. God allowed His light to shine in our hearts that we might believe in Jesus. Now we carry this treasure in jars of clay. Jesus is our master. All other treasure will pass away. Why would we want to unseat the Lord for earthly gain?



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ON THE ROAD TO EMMAMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: 2 Samuel 22:1-4

Connecting the passage to Christ:

David sang these words in praise to God for deliverance. David's words, though they refer to God saving him from His immediate enemies, also point forward prophetically. The truth is, apart from the future saving work of Christ, there would be only judgment for David, not salvation. In fact, every time God saves His people from harm in the Old Testament accounts, God points to the work of Jesus that will come. It is because of what Jesus was going to do that salvation was extended to Israel. And salvation was extended to David so that Jesus could come. Every time David was saved from death, his lineage was preserved so that Jesus, the descendant of David, might come!

Questions for reflection:

- When we read David's words of praise today, who should we think of? (We should think of Jesus. He is our horn of salvation, our refuge, and our Savior.)
- How does this passage complement Jesus' words in Matthew 6 about not worrying and about seeking first the kingdom of God? (David trusted the Lord, and God provided for David. Few of us have a sinful king trying to kill us. If David could trust the Lord in his grave situation, we should be able to trust God for our daily needs.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.



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ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

WE CAN ONLY HOLD ONE AT A TIME

Supplies:

two soft balls (The size of the ball is important. It should be small enough that a student in your class can pick it up with one hand but not so small that they would be able to pick two up with one hand.)

The object of this lesson is to show that we can only have one master at a time.

Label one ball "God" and one ball "Money". Challenge the class, asking for a volunteer who can pick one ball up with his or her hand and then without using their body or other objects also pick up the second ball and hold them both. (The students may try rolling one off the table and balancing it on the other or you may even volunteer to place the second ball on top of the first. If they should start to balance them both, give them a little nudge saying, "Let's see how you do if a little trouble comes into your life.")

Take note also of which ball they take first.

- How is this exercise like the Scripture in Matthew 6:24? (Just as we can only serve one master, we can only hold one ball in our hands.)
- How can we ensure that we will not serve the world over God? (Just like our choice in balls. If we held the "Money" ball there was no way we could fit God in. Conversely if we pursue the Lord and hold on to Him, there will be no room for the world.)
- Is there anyone who can serve both God and mammon? (No, there are no exceptions. No one can serve God and mammon. See the definition for mammon in the "A Little Bit More" section below.)



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AN ACTIVITY

Share your testimony – Ask the students for volunteers to share things that once worried them and tested their faith in God. At first they might not be able to think of anything. Jog their memory with the following suggestions:

How many of you were afraid of the dark and didn't believe you would be safe at night?

How many of you were afraid of going to the dentist?

How many of you were afraid of going to school?

How many of you were afraid of your parents going away?

Some of these worries may have come days before the actual event. Draw out your class. These worries are not about food and clothing. But the trust we have today (that God will provide for us at the dentist or at school) is the same trust students will later place in God for food, clothing, and shelter.

TWO MASTERS SKIT

Choose three students to act out the following mini skits. Each one depicts a person who is enticed by two loves, specifically, the love of the world and love of God. Demonstrate just how each of these loves might speak to the person and then talk about the choices.

The first scenario is, "What should you do with your free time?" The love of the world might say, "Sleep in" while the person playing the love of the Lord might say, "Get up and read your Bible." Make sure to ask the person playing the love of the world what they are going to say so that you can edit inappropriate comments should they come.

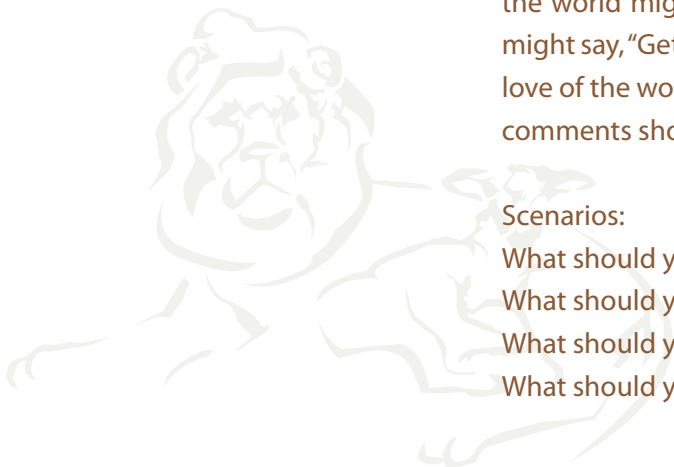
Scenarios:

What should you do with your free time Saturday morning?

What should you talk to your friends about?

What should you do at church on Sunday?

What should you do with your money?



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WHAT IS IN YOUR PICTURE FRAME?

Supplies:

(1) 5x7 black picture frame and one copy of the pictures included in this lesson

Bring in a 5x7 picture frame. Cut out a piece of pink construction paper to fit the frame. Cut out the black heart mat, the picture of the cross, and the photo of money to fit (see attached files).

Read Matthew 6:20-21 to the class and explain that our hearts are like the picture frame. You can only give your heart to one master just like only one picture can be displayed in the frame. (The frame should have the black mat followed by the pink construction paper. It will look like a pink heart to the class.)

Pull off the back of the frame and insert the photo of money so that it is visible behind the black mat. Tell the class that when money is our master it fills our heart and there is no room for God to show through. (The class should see the money in the shaper of the heart.) Then, Show the class the picture of the cross placing it behind the money.

Explain to the class that a person who's master is money might say they are a Christian but their love for money blocks God from all view.

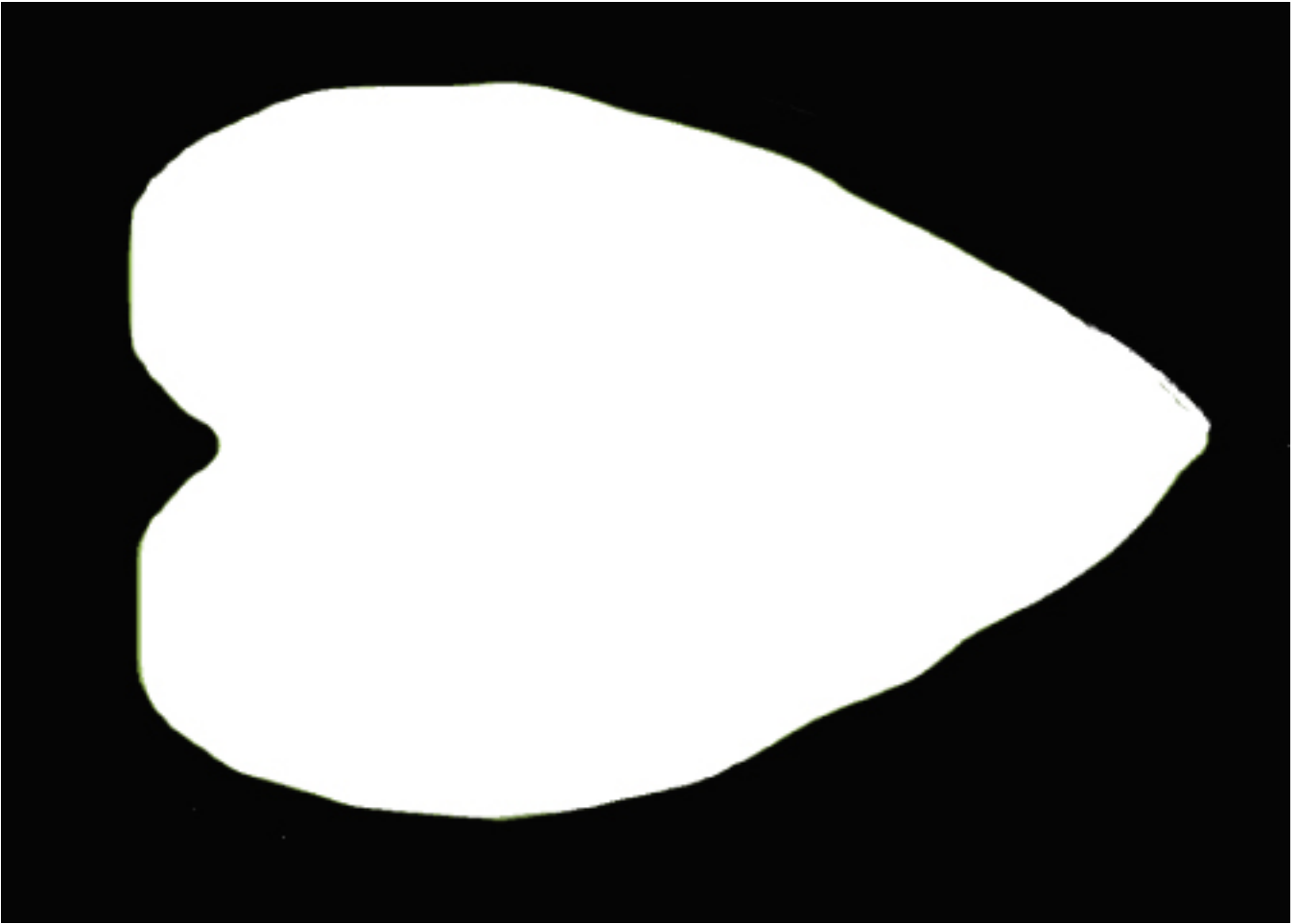
Finally take out the money and put the cross in first so that it becomes visible behind the heart mat inside the frame. Tell the class that God wants to be our master. Money is not evil and we can still have it in our lives. (Place the money behind the cross.) Tell the children it is ok to have money and to use money but it needs to always take second place behind God.

Seeing the different pictures through the frame will help them understand that you can only have one master, God or money.



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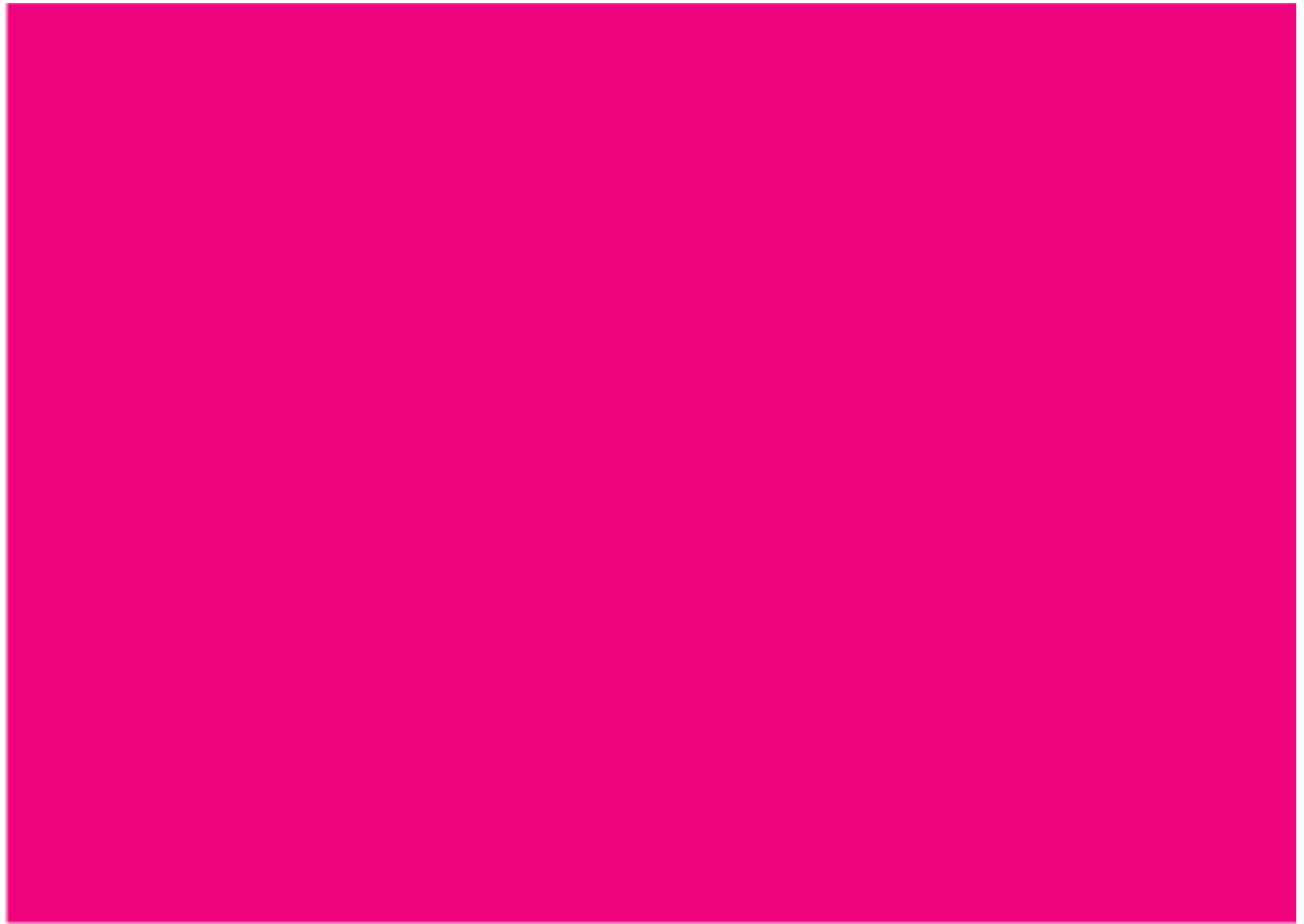


HEART TEMPLATE



TREASURE IN HEAVEN

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PINK PAPER TO SHOW "NORMAL" HEART



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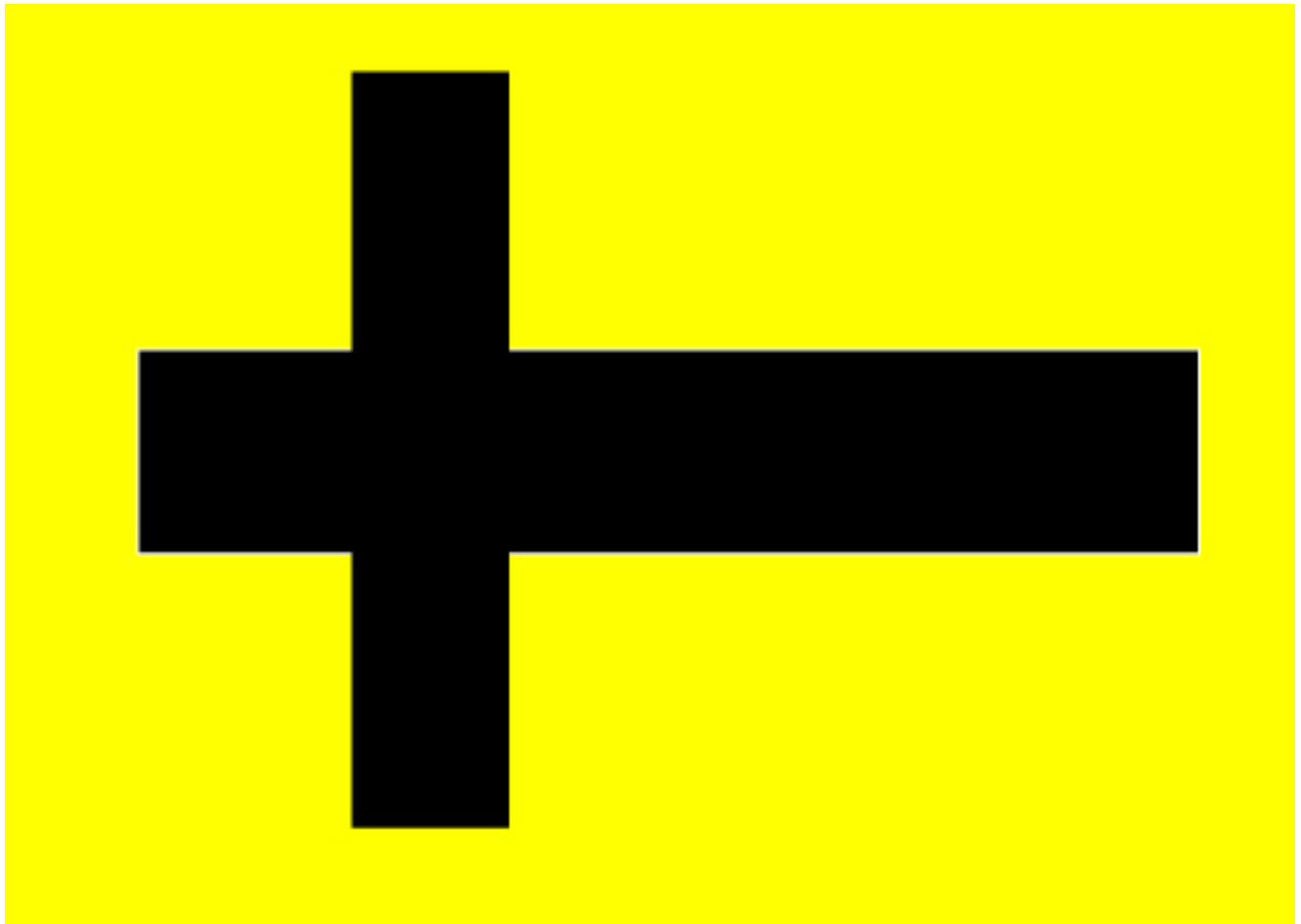


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CROSS FOR INSIDE OF HEART



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PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

AN ACTIVITY

Supplies:

pencil and paper

Draw a picture of a field full of flowers and write the words, "Are you not much more valuable?" written above the field.



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FOR THE OLDER GRADES

OPENING UP THE TREASURE OF MY HEART

Supplies:

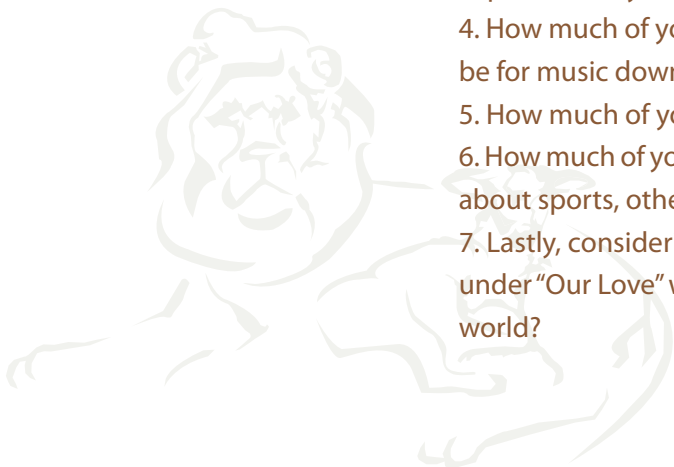
white board and markers

Opening up the treasure of my heart – It can be very easy for us to read through the verses of Matthew 6:19-24 and assume that our treasure is the Lord when in reality we run after the things of this world. Help your students examine their hearts by drawing them out and listing on the board just what it might mean to be devoted to the Lord.

Draw the following chart on the board. Have each person draw the chart on a piece of paper themselves. For the purposes of this exercise the treasure of a youth has been broken down into three categories: Time, Money, Talk. These are somewhat arbitrary but the point is, if we give more of our time, money and our talk to the things of the world, how can we say that our love is devoted to the Lord?

Ask the class the following questions.

1. How much of your time Monday-Saturday is spent in fellowship with the Lord? (This includes our devotional times with our family and personally as well as time worshipping, reading the Bible.)
2. How much of your Monday- Saturday time is spent on the world? We won't count school or work in this exercise. By time spent on the world, we mean time spent watching TV, movies, computer or video games or other non-fellowship communication such as talking with others via email, instant messaging, or surfing the web, reading worldly materials such as newspapers, magazines, etc. These things are not necessarily wrong or evil but put simply contain no reference to Christ.
3. How much of your money or possessions are given to the Lord or to others as an expression of your devotion to the Lord?
4. How much of your money is spent on your pursuit of worldly pleasure? (This can be for music downloads, games, trendy clothing, etc.)
5. How much of your talk with your friends is about the Lord?
6. How much of your talk with your friends is about the world? (This could be talking about sports, other friends non spiritual pursuits, movies, games, hobbies, etc.)
7. Lastly, considering the above answers, if you could draw a heart in only one box under "Our Love" would you draw your heart in the box across from the Lord or the world?



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| | Our Time | Our Money | Our Talk | Our Love |
|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| The Lord | | | | |
| The World | | | | |

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Mammon – Matthew 6:24 is translated to say, “You cannot serve both God and money” in many translations. The word money has a broader meaning in the Greek. The Greek word used is mammon. Mammon can mean our possessions or our treasure, riches, or money. The point of the text is to say that anything that occupies our full affections, desire and devotion leading us away from Christ is sin.

