

## Session #9: Singleness of Heart (Part 1)

### Watch!

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/gbxVXrLNzj8>

### Study!

The Sermon on the Mount, perhaps Jesus' most recognisable sermon, spans from Matthew 5–7. In these three chapters, Jesus addressed a range of topics that, while diverse, are held together by one unifying theme. That theme is Kingdom living—how to live as a disciple of Christ.

In this session, we will pay particular attention to the lessons found in Matthew 6.

#### **Scripture Focus: Matthew 6:1–34**

1 “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

2 “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

5 “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

7 “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
10 Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
11 Give us this day our daily bread,  
12 and forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your  
heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do  
not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your  
Father forgive your trespasses.

16 "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites,  
for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen  
by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their  
reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your  
face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by others but by  
your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in  
secret will reward you.

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth  
and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but  
lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth  
nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.  
21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is  
healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your  
eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then  
the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the  
one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and  
despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life,  
what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body,  
what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body  
more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they  
neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your  
heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than  
they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single  
hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about  
clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they  
neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all  
his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so  
clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and  
tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe  
you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious,  
saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What  
shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these  
things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:1–34)

When we first read Matthew 6:1–18, Jesus appears to teach about **sacred concerns**: giving, praying and fasting. We also note there is one phrase that is repeated three times: “your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (verses 4, 6 and 18). To people who gave, prayed and fasted in order to be seen by others and applauded by them, Jesus said these are to be done secretly to please God and God alone.

Examining verses 25–34, it now seems that Jesus has moved on to speak about **secular concerns**: food, drink and clothing, and how the anxieties of life drive us to pursue things apart from God. Jesus taught that we are not to be anxious about these things but to trust in our heavenly Father who knows our needs.

Based on this initial, superficial reading, it is tempting to conclude that Jesus taught on two different topics: sacred versus secular concerns. But Jesus’ intent was neither to segregate the two, nor compare them to each other. He was not saying that sacred concerns differ from secular concerns. Nor was He saying that there are certain aspects of life more sacred than others.

In fact, Jesus did not convey two separate messages but one complete message; one whole picture. That is, all areas of life are to be anchored in God. All our concerns, whether it is work, food, clothing or hobbies—indeed everything—are spiritual matters. There is no secular and sacred divide. We are to surrender all areas of our lives to the sovereignty of God.

That’s why we need to cultivate a “whole-life discipleship”. *I give all of life for all of life.* (Another way of saying this is: I surrender the whole of my life, for the rest of my life.) There is no divide or compartmentalisation. My entire life, and all its components, points towards Him. This is what it means to have a “singleness” of heart. All areas of my life come together into one singular focus, which is God.

### **Structural Framework:**

In Matthew 6:19–24, Jesus used a series of illustrations involving dualities to highlight a lesson:

- 1) Two places to store treasure—earth or heaven.
- 2) Two kinds of eye—healthy or bad.
- 3) Two masters—God or money.

The point He makes here is that these "twos" must not exist concurrently. They must make way only for one. We must only store treasure in one location; we must only have a healthy eye; and we must only have a single master.

### 1. Single Treasure

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves *treasures on earth*, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves *treasures in heaven*, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19–21, emphasis mine)

### 2. Single Eye

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye *is healthy*, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye *is bad*, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! (Matthew 6:22–23, emphasis mine)

### 3. Single Master

24 "No one can *serve two masters*, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. *You cannot serve God and money.* (Matthew 6:24, emphasis mine)

## What we see affects how we live

In verses 22–23, the bible compares two different kinds of "eye". A healthy eye versus a bad eye. A healthy eye is capable of focus. It is able to see clearly. Its vision is not obstructed or blurred by many things. It is an eye with a single vision, not one hindered by double vision.

The word "body" refers to our life or human existence. "Lamp" refers to understanding, meaning and enlightenment. Put together, Jesus' point was that if your eye has a single, healthy focus, then your life will be full of meaning and purpose. In essence, your whole body will be full of life. However, if your eye is bad, your life will become meaningless and worthless. Your whole body will be full of darkness.

What application can we draw from this? We need to focus our pursuits on the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). In doing this, we will live out the life He has called us to live.

If we fail to do this, we walk in darkness. We end up ensnared by the darkness of sin, ignorance or deception. We fool ourselves into believing that we are on the right track when the reality is we live a worldly life, one with mere remnants of holiness. It is a life that has been deceptively corrupted.

How do we succumb to this deception? By carrying two loves in a single heart. When we desire to pursue the things of the world in addition to God, He is given our leftovers—of affection, time, talents and resources. We need to remove the distractions of our heart and refocus our love on Christ.

There are 3 kinds of people:

- **Worldly-Minded People** are those totally in love with the world. Their hearts have no room for God.
- **Double-Minded People** are harder to spot. Externally, they appear to be committed Christians, but inwardly, they love both God and the world.
- **Single-Minded People** are those who serve God wholeheartedly. They have a single eye, single treasure and single master.

When we become singular in vision, our lives will start to de-compartmentalise. We no longer live with a segregation between the secular and the sacred. Instead, all of our life becomes unified around seeking God and serving His Kingdom.

"Your Beloved is such that He will not accept what belongs to another. He wants your heart for Himself alone, to be enthroned therein as King in His own right. If you but knew how to free yourself entirely from all creatures, Jesus would gladly dwell within you. By two wings is man lifted above earthly things, even by simplicity and purity. Simplicity ought to be in the intention, purity in the affection."

- Thomas À Kempis

## Reflect!

What are some key insights that I can take away from today's session?

Why is it difficult for Christians to embrace a single-minded lifestyle? If they did, how would their life change?

What changes to your lifestyle is God asking you to make as a result of truly understanding Jesus' message in Matthew 6?

## Discuss!

**What is a "good eye"?**

Here is what John Piper\* had to say about this:

You have a good eye if you look on heaven and love to maximize the reward of God's fellowship there. You have a good eye if you look at Master-money and Master-God and see Master-God as infinitely more valuable. In other words, a "good eye" is a valuing eye, a discerning eye, a treasuring eye. It doesn't

just see facts about money and God. It doesn't just perceive what is true and false. It sees beauty and ugliness, it senses value and worthlessness, it discerns what is really desirable and what is undesirable. The seeing of the good eye is not neutral. When it sees God, it sees God-as-beautiful. It sees God-as-desirable.

That is why the good eye leads to the way of light: laying up treasures in heaven, and serving God not money. The good eye is a single eye. It has one Treasure. God. When that happens in your life, you are full of light.

\***John Piper** is the founder and teacher of [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org) and chancellor of Bethlehem College and Seminary.

**Reference:** Piper, J. (2003). The Eye is the Lamp of the Body: A Meditation on Matthew 6:19–24. Retrieved from [The Eye Is the Lamp of the Body | Desiring God](#)

Q1: “No one can serve two masters” (Matthew 6:24). How has this principle been reflected in your life?

Q2: Read Matthew 6:19-21. What warning did Jesus give about storing treasures on earth? What would storing treasures on earth look like versus storing treasures in heaven? How can I store up treasures in heaven?

Q3: What is your understanding of Matthew 6:22–23? What does light represent? Darkness? The eye? The body?

Q4: In the session video, Pastor Paul talked about the principle: “What we see affects how we live.” He used the example of leading abortionist Dr Bernard Nathanson.

i) How else can we change our life by changing our perspective?

ii) How will this benefit us personally? The Kingdom of God?

Q5: What makes Christians so susceptible to the darkness of deception? How can we safeguard ourselves from double-vision?

Q6: What areas of double-mindedness do you sense in your life? Share authentically with your life group.

Q7: What things can your group help you to be held accountable for over the next 2 weeks? Share these and pray for one another.

## Between Sessions

### Challenge!

Continue with your journaling over the next two weeks. Make it a challenge to do it daily, using the SOAP method discussed in Session 1. Spend some time in prayer asking God to identify areas that are “additional loves” in your heart. Summarise your entries before the next meeting and come prepared to share your experience with the rest of the group.

### Memorise!

31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:31-33)

### Before next session!

The verses below speak on treasure and possessions. Before the next session, please spend some time meditating on each verse and reflect on how they should direct your life. Write your reflections in your journal and come to the next session ready to share.

**Luke 14:33** So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

**Luke 18:25** “For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

**Luke 12:15** And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

**Matthew 6:33** But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

**Luke 12:33** Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.

**Luke 21:1-4** Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, 2 and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. 3 And he said, “Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. 4 For they all contributed out of

their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

**Luke 12:18-21** And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'" 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

**Matthew 8:19-20** And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." 20 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

**Acts 2:45** And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

**Matthew 23:23** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others."

**2 Corinthians 8:1-5** We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

**James 1:11** For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

**Matthew 13:44** "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."