

Session #10: Singleness of Heart (Part 2)

Watch!

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/Tdz3XB71f00>

Review!

In the previous lesson, we looked at the singleness of heart and how it relates to discipleship. We must not carry two loves in a single heart. We pursue only one treasure, one purpose and one Lord. This is done by having a single treasure, single eye and 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)

Study!

There are three kinds of Christians in life. There are the **Carnal Christians** who are still in love with the world and live fleshly lives. They call themselves Christians but their values and lifestyles are no different to those who belong to the world. Then, there are the **Committed Christians**. Outwardly, they behave like spiritual people. They attend church, give generously and may even serve in church leadership. Inwardly, they have no real heart for God. They still desire a worldly life and are never truly satisfied with God. Lastly, there are the **Consecrated Christians**. These are the ones who love God both inwardly and outwardly. They are single-minded.

"If Christ is not Lord of All, He is not Lord at all."
- Hudson Taylor

In Matthew 6:19–21, Jesus says two things about earthly treasures. Firstly, they are **perishable**. Earthly treasures do not last; they are only temporal and not eternal. Secondly, earthly treasures are **precarious**. They are uncertain and can be taken away, but we treat them as though they will last forever and they will guarantee security. Take for instance, wealth, which has such a strong allure. People spend so much of their waking hours thinking about how to make and store money. Some put their wealth in banks, but banks can collapse. Some people put their money into stocks, but the stock market can crash. Some buy properties; property can devalue. Nothing in the world is certain. If we build treasures on earth, we build on a shaky foundation. That's why Jesus asks us to build treasures in heaven.

There are three types of wealth theology preached in churches. The first, and most popular theology, is the **prosperity theology**. This theology asserts that God wants us to be rich and God will bless us with wealth so we can attain a certain worldly status. Our wealth is an indication of God's favour and His blessings. This is wrong theology.

The next is **poverty theology**, which asserts that it is good and holy to be poor. The poorer you are, the holier you are, so God wants you to be poor. This theology is also wrong.

The right theology is **provision theology**. It is a theology of stewardship, and says that God is the owner and controller of all things. What we possess as Christians is a privilege, rather than a right. We are simply stewards entrusted with resources and the responsibility to manage all resources faithfully and wisely, according to the will of the Master. Our ultimate goal is to be able to give an account for all that He has given to us. In the end, the true measure of godly success is not based on the amount of wealth we accumulate, but how faithfully we have ministered with wisdom what God has given us, be it little or much.

The **acid test for discipleship** is found in the five questions below:

1. What do you consider to be your treasure?
2. Where are you storing up treasures?
3. How are you spending your earthly treasures?
4. What is your heart longing and yearning for, searching after and pursuing?
5. Who is truly the Master of your life?

The true acid test for discipleship is not in our aspirations in life, but in our anxieties of life.

- Rev. Paul Jeyachandran

In Matthew 6:25–34, Jesus asks four probing questions that lead us to examine our values and identity, as well as our issues with control and trust. Three times, He tells us not to be anxious!

1. Do not be anxious about your life (Matthew 6:25)
2. Do not be anxious about what you eat, drink or wear (Matthew 6:31)
3. Do not be anxious about tomorrow (Matthew 6:34)

In essence, Jesus addresses the issue of our aspirations and anxieties. The true acid test for discipleship is not in our aspirations in life, but in our anxieties of life. Our anxieties reveal our allegiances. They indicate who our true master is, and what the treasure in our heart is. Often, the areas which most concern us are also the areas we have not surrendered to God.

We all aspire to love God wholeheartedly. We all aspire to live a life of absolute surrender to God. Many aspire, but only a few attain. Why? There are anxieties in our soul that have not been weeded out.

Four Questions that Reveal Your Inner Life Issues

1. Is not life more than food? (Matthew 6:25)

Jesus spoke about our **values**. Isn't our life of more value than food? Jesus is not saying that food isn't important but He asks us to question what is of ultimate value. At the time these verses were written, there was no refrigeration or freezers. Putting food on the table was a daily need and hence, a constant worry. But what the world worries about is not what Kingdom people should worry about. What the world values is not the same as what we value. Our food doesn't come from our work. It comes from God. So, rather than spend our lives worrying about food, we should pursue things that really matter—the Kingdom of God. This is a call to re-examine our values. Our values cannot be on the temporal. They must be on the eternal.

2. Are you not of more value than they? (Matthew 6:26)

Here, Jesus spoke about **identity**. Our identity is tied up in God. And He will provide for us. Jesus says if the Father feeds even the birds, how much more will He feed us. Birds don't worry about their provisions. But how is it that we, as Kingdom people—ininitely more valuable to God than birds—worry that He won't provide for us? It's because we don't realise who we are and whose we are. We are made in the image of God and we belong to Him. So why are we so concerned about earthly things? Are we not more valuable to God than the birds?

3. And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? (Matthew 6:27)

Jesus tells us not to worry—specifically about earthly things. It's an issue of **control**. We tend to want to control our lives. But Jesus says we can't control our lives. We can't add a single hour to our lives. We can only focus on Him. Don't live with anxiety; instead have faith in God. He knows fully what He is doing.

The reason we don't obey God is that we think we can control our lives. We want control. He asks, "Can you add a single hour to your life?" It's a rhetorical question that needs answering. The answer is an emphatic "NO!" But strangely, we all live as though we believe we can. Hand the steering wheel of our lives back to Him who will navigate us through life, according to His perfect will.

4. Will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (Matthew 6:30)

Then Jesus asks the final question: “Will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” See how Jesus ends with “little faith?” This is an issue of **trust**. He compares us to the lilies and the grasses of the field—things that are so fleeting, yet so beautiful. If God is able to take care of all these things, why do we still have little faith? Faith means we can trust Him. He can be trusted. We must trust Him.

These questions surface inner life issues. We live carelessly and without focus because our value system is upside down. We live thoughtlessly because we fail to understand the significance of who we are—our identity in God. We fail to live abundantly for the Kingdom because we want to control our lives when in reality, God is fully in control.

Reflect!

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

Go through the 5 acid test questions previously listed in this Session. Reflect on each question and note down your responses in your journal.

Discuss!

Jesus is relentless in His call to a wartime lifestyle and in His call against hazardous consumerism. What is a wartime lifestyle? During a war, we are in survival mode. Our focus is on obtaining the basic necessities of life—shelter, clothing and food on the table. We won’t be agonising about retirement plans, where to send the kids to school or investment portfolios. Those are things we think about in peacetime. But on earth, we’re at war. We are in a battle. And the battle is to win souls for the Kingdom of God.

Queen Mary, a luxury ocean liner, carried 3,000 high-end passengers in its heyday. During the Second World War, it was used to carry 15,000 troops. The retired vessel is now docked in Long Beach, California as a museum. It is divided into two sections. One section, to show what the vessel looked like during the war and the other, to show its opulence as a luxury liner. As a luxury liner, we see the dining hall set up with 15 plates and saucers of the finest quality for one single diner. As a war vessel, we see aluminium trays with dents and aluminium cutlery. As a luxury liner, the staterooms for guests were massive and well-appointed. As a war vessel, 80 bunk beds were cramped into each room.

During wartime, people are concerned about survival. They are concerned about fighting well, and winning the war. Accumulating possessions and comforts do not come into the picture. The predominant thoughts are, “I need to accomplish the mission, as any day could be my last.” We think about life and what truly matters—our spouses, children and parents. In peacetime, these things are forgotten and we live carelessly. In wartime we live purposefully. This is what Jesus highlighted. We are Christian soldiers on the battlefield.

Q1: Why is it difficult for Christians to embrace a wartime lifestyle? If they did, how would their life change?

Q2: In Matthew 6, Jesus says two things about earthly treasures. They are both **perishable** and **precarious**. Why is it so tempting for believers to put their trust in riches? And what are the inevitable problems with doing so?

Q3: What are the differences between poverty theology, prosperity theology and provision theology?

Q4: How do Christians best steward the possessions that they own? Give some examples.

Q5: Out of the four inner life issues, which one do you struggle with and why?

Q6: What changes to your lifestyle is God asking you to make as a result of truly understanding the message of Jesus in Matthew 6?

Q7: What are some things you'd like to be accountable for over the next two weeks?

Between Sessions

Challenge!

By now, you would have accumulated quite a number of entries in your journal. It's good practice to regularly go back and read your old entries and review your spiritual walk with God since the start of this course. You will be reminded of the challenges you've faced, the commitments you've made, and the changes you've implemented along the way. You may also notice how you've grown over time.

Set aside some time to go over your past journal entries and reflect on how God has worked in your life since Session 1. Start a new journal entry, but this time, summarise your spiritual journey. You can include areas where you have made progress, areas you still struggle with, and anything you are thankful to God for. Also, take note of any common themes or repeating thoughts you may see in your entries. These areas are most likely the predominant areas where God is working within you. Include all these in your summary and ask God to challenge you on how to keep growing. Conclude by re-surrendering your life in prayer, and come to the next session prepared to share your experience with the rest of the group.

Memorise!

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