

Sermon-Based Small Group Bible Study

World Upside Down: Matters of the Heart (Matthew 6:19–24)

Open

Select one of these “ice breakers” to get the conversation going toward the study.

- Your home is on fire! All people and pets are safe, but you’re only able to carry one thing out of the house with you as you flee. What do you take?
- Did you ever have a treasured possession that was later lost or ruined? Tell us about it.
- How’s your eyesight? If you use corrective lenses, how long have you used them and what do they correct? If not, under what conditions do you notice you see well or poorly?

Dig

After reading Matthew 6:19–24 together, discuss these questions.

1. In Jesus’ time wealth was entirely tangible, not numbers on a statement, consisting mostly of land, livestock, houses, food, clothing, and money in the form of precious metals. So it was always vulnerable to decay or theft. How is wealth today still like that? By contrast, what is God’s provision like?
2. We often read “treasure in heaven” as reward in heaven as we delay gratification now. But in Jesus’ time it would be heard mostly as having resources here and now supplied by God, who is enthroned in heaven. How do both those perspectives redirect one’s “heart”?
3. Verses 22–23 use the images of good and bad eyes to contrast perception of life grounded in God’s kingdom versus perception of life without grasping God’s kingdom. What “light” do you think a person misses in the “darkness” outside God’s kingdom?
4. Verse 24 warns about trying to serve two masters. Why does pursuing “treasure on earth” draw a person away from submission to God as king?

Summary: In God’s kingdom God supplies his people with all they need. His provision is infinitely more reliable than any other we can pursue: he supplies what he knows we need, not what we think we need, and both now and through eternity, not just for the moment. Serving God our king displaces every other loyalty, but we lose nothing and gain everything. That transformed perspective lets us see all of life differently, in the light of the gospel.

Reflect

Use any of these prompts to encourage group members to apply the text to their own experiences.

- What makes trusting in God’s provision hard for you? What provides encouragement for you to trust God’s provision?
- Some life events are hard to square with God’s provision: a death, the loss of a job, disappointments from friends and family. How do we put our trust in “treasure in heaven” under those circumstances?
- What other “masters” compete for your service? What makes them appealing? How do you deal with the competition?

Pray

Invite the group to pray together using any of these suggestions.

- What needs have you heard from others in the group that we can pray about?
- In what areas do you or people you know need God's provision right now?
- What's a competing "master" in your life? Let's pray for strength not to serve our other masters.