Big Lies of the Devil

(Lie # 5 – You need to get as much stuff as possible
The lie of MATERIALISM)

Matthew 6:19-24, 1 Timothy 6:6-10 & Selected Scriptures
9/5/2010



INTRODUCTION: Since the Fall, "human beings are naturally thing-oriented. We are strongly inclined to be wrapped up in seeking, acquiring, enjoying, and protecting material possessions" (John MacArthur)

Now, more than any time in human history, there are more distractions to capture the attention of God's people so as to divert them and render them unfruitful for God.

Are You Materialistic?

4 Questions to ask yourself:

I. Where are your INVESTMENTS? (Matthew 6:19-20)

SEE: I Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19
Money is:
1) Temporary - We can't bring it with us (v. 7)
2) Enticing - A trap (v. 9)
3) Destructive (v. 10)
4) Uncertain (v. 17)

How do I lay up treasures in Heaven?
1. *Be a Giver (Mt. 19:21; Luke 12:33)*
2. *Be a soulwinner (Dan. 12:3)*
3. *Be a worker (for Christ) (I Cor. 3:8-15)*

II. Where is your HEART? (v. 21)

III. What is your FOCUS? (v. 22-23)

IV. Who is your MASTER? (v. 24)

CONCLUSION: Hebrews 13:5

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INTRODUCTION: Ill. The Rich Young Ruler (Matthew 19:16-24)

What is Materialism?
In philosophy the theory of materialism holds that the only thing that exists is matter; that all things are composed of material and all phenomena (including consciousness) are the result of material interactions. In other words, matter is the only substance.
wikipedia.org/wiki/Materialism

The view that the material world is all that there is; there is no existence beyond the present life.
creationwiki.org/Worldview

Constant concern over material possessions and wealth; a great or excessive regard for worldly concerns; The philosophical belief that nothing exists beyond what is physical (also called physicalism)
en.wiktionary.org/wiki/materialism

The Result of Materialism: a desire for wealth and material possessions with little interest in ethical or spiritual matters

There exists a natural progression from one lie to another.

If there is NO "God" to whom you are accountable – The lie of EVOLUTION; then you will seek another "god" to fill that void and live for. This paves the way for the lie of HUMANISM which basically allows the adherent to put himself first and to live for self. This then leads to the lie of HEDONISM which is to live for maximum pleasure. How do you attain this pleasure? You need to get as much earthly stuff as possible – The lie of MATERIALISM

Since the Fall, "human beings are naturally thing-oriented. We are strongly inclined to be wrapped up in seeking, acquiring, enjoying, and protecting material possessions" (MacArthur, MATTHEW, p. 407).

Material Things have a way of distracting people:

Now, more than any time in human history, there are more distractions to capture the attention of God's people so as to divert them and render them unfruitful for God.

Since the industrial revolution and picking up steam every day, today there exist more

- gadgets,
- consumer products (computers, electronic gismos for all ages)
- entertainments, amusements, & sports
- communication devises, such as telephones, cell phones, email, instant messaging,
- toys for all ages,
- recreational opportunities,
- motion pictures (movies, videos, DVD's),
- audio devises (radios, CD players),
- printed materials (newspapers, magazines, & books),
- mind altering substances (drugs & various forms of alcohol),
- various mediums for pornography,
- hobbies galore
- Transportation devises (the time spent on the Car)
- Home improvement resources
- Financial opportunities (more places to earn it, spend it, invest it etc.)

(not all of which are necessarily sinful, but can be weights

Today there is more to catch the eye
more to pull on the heart
more to tease the lust
more to take up our brief time on earth
than ever before in human history

Basically the pursuit of other things, pleasures, & relationships take the heart away from God; Not to mention the maintenance of the "stuff"

We are BUSY, BUSY, BUSY with no time for God!

No wonder John the Baptist chose a simple life (both in clothing & dining)
No wonder Jesus traveled light (without even a pillow to lay his head)
No wonder Paul said it is advantageous to remain single (if one was so gifted)
No wonder the Monks chose the secluded monasteries
No wonder the Amish chose the isolated lifestyle (though they often lack the true knowledge of God, Grace and basically have zero impact on the World at large)

Who got distracted in the Bible?

- Samson with his lust for pleasure & women
- Judas with his lust for money
- Demas with his appetite for the world

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4 Questions to ask yourself:

I. Where are your INVESTMENTS? (v. 19-20)

V. 19
EX: People who buy "The Wall Street Journal" to gain wisdom in investments.

Who is really the wise investor?

The words ***"lay up"*** (thesaurizo) and ***"treasures"*** (thesauros) come from the same Greek root. Our English word "thesaurus" refers to a treasury of words.

"Lay not up" - Don't treasure up; don't stock up; don't live for the vain accumulation of riches.

Present imperative - indicates that Jesus is not against your having a bank account; indeed, Scripture commands this (Proverbs).

He means: Don't have a lifestyle of hoarding treasure (Heb. 13:5 - *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*). Don't make it your life's ambition. If wealth comes your way, praise God for it and use it for God's glory, but don't give yourself greedily to acquiring it and don't glory in the money (Jer. 9:23 - *"Let not the rich man glory in his riches"*).

We are stewards of our earthly "treasures" (money) -- not owners. All we have ultimately belongs to Him, We simply manage what He has entrusted to us.

Perhaps one reason why many people continually struggle to "make ends meet," is that they are not faithful stewards of what God gave them. He gives you little because He cannot trust you with much (Luke 16:10-11 - *"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?")*

It's not wrong to have possessions; it's wrong when those possessions have you!

"The foundational truth that underlies the commandments not to steal or covet is the right of personal property" (MacArthur, p. 410).

To honestly earn and save is wise and good, but it is wrong when earning and saving become the preoccupation of our lives!

"Moths" - attack rich clothing

"Rust" - attacks precious metals, cars

Thieves" - attack jewelry, amusements products (Ex: TV, Stereos, Computers & iPods etc.)

The point: Nothing material in this life is permanent! It will either be eaten, corrupted, or stolen. (or if you die, left behind). SEE: I Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19

Reasons to "flee" from covetousness and to be content (satisfied) with what we have: Money is:

1) Temporary - We can't bring it with us (v. 7)

2) Enticing - A trap (v. 9)

3) Destructive (v. 10)

4) Uncertain (v. 17)

--Trust God, not money (v. 17b)
--Give it, don't hoard it (v. 18)

The world's motto: "Get it fast, keep it long, and enjoy it all.

EX: The man who stored up wealth with the goal of an early, lazy retirement (Luke 12:16-21)

Col. 3:1-2 - *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*

V. 20

The best investment is eternal. The smartest investor is the one who gives his life (his time, talents, and treasure) for the cause of Jesus Christ.

The dividends you earn can't be ripped off, nor can they be taxed by the IRS!

Chrysostom, the ancient Church Father, was a beautiful example of true Christian courage. When he stood before the Roman Emperor, he was threatened with banishment if he still remained a Christian. Chrysostom replied, "You cannot, for the world is my Father's house; you cannot banish me."
"But I will slay you," said the Emperor.
"No, but you cannot," said the noble champion of the faith again, "for my life is hid with Christ in God."
"I will take away thy treasures." "No, but you cannot," was the retort; "in the first place, I have nothing you know anything about. My treasure is in heaven, and my heart is there."
"But I will drive you away from man, and you shall have no friend left." "No, and that you cannot," once more said the faithful witness, "for I have a Friend in heaven from whom you shall not separate me. I defy you; there is nothing you can do to hurt me."

"Many millionaires will be heavenly paupers, and many paupers will be heavenly millionaires" (MacArthur, p. 411). The church of Smyrna was poor (in poverty) but Jesus called them rich" (Rev. 2:9).
One day God's people will rest from their labors, but their works will follow them (right into Heaven). (Rev. 14:13).

How do I lay up treasures in Heaven?

1. Be a Giver (Mt. 19:21 - *"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me."*)

   (Luke 12:33 - "*See that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth")*

2. Be a soulwinner (Dan. 12:3)

3. Be a worker (for Christ) (I Cor. 3:8-15)

--Support your Lord's work!
--Help a brother in need!
--Invest in the Gospel ministry!
--Realize that there is a cause that is greater than your own.

When we get to Heaven and look back over our lives,s I'm sure we will grieve over what could have been. What we could have done!

HYMN: "Must I go and empty-handed? Must I meet my Savior so??

I have found that a person who unselfishly invests in God's work, not only has the guaranteed assurance of rewards in Heaven but the rewards are also received in this life!

Prov. 3:9-10 - *"Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."*

Luke 6:38 - *"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."*

II Cor. 9:6 - *"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."*

II. Where is your HEART? (v. 21)

A person's values reveal the person's heart.

The quality of one's values (priorities) reveals the quality of one's heart.

How we handle our treasure is a sure barometer of our spiritual condition!

One's treasure cannot be separated from one's heart. Some are wealthy, but their wealth is not what they treasure (their heart is right). Some are poor, but they wish they were rich (their heart is wrong).

How do we determine what our treasure is? Your treasure is whatever you spend the most time thinking about. Whatever preoccupies your thoughts is your treasure and reveals the location of your heart. Whatever you spend the most time thinking about is actually--to you-- your "god." *"Covetousness is idolatry"*

Some spend most of their time thinking about:

1) Career advancement - this is their treasure and idol
2) Financial investment - this is their treasure and idol
3) Sexual involvement - this is their treasure and idol
4) House construction or improvement - this is their treasure and idol
5) Fame and fortune - this is their treasure and idol

We should not abuse (through mismanagement, neglect, deliberate destruction) the material things we have, but we shouldn't idolize them either.

III. What is your FOCUS? (v. 22-23)

V. 22

Much that comes into the heart (v. 21), must first come through the gate of our eyes.

"If. . . thine eye be single" - meaning not double-visioned, at one point focusing on the world and its splendor and wealth, and then looking at our Heavenly Master (v. 24). Just as we can't serve two masters, so we can't focus both on the world and Christ. *"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways"*

V. 23

"Worldly ambition has a strong fascination for us. The spell of materialism is very hard to break" (Stott, cited by MacArthur, p. 409).

Our eyes are like windows. When clear, the radiance of Christ comes beaming through. But when our eyes become evil (symbolizing dirt and filth of the blinding effect of materialism), our whole inner self is darkened; the joy is gone; Christ seems distant, and our life is miserable! Keep your focus! Don't let money impair your vision.

IV. Who is your MASTER? (v. 24)

Just as we can't lay up treasure both on earth and heaven (v. 19-20), just as our heart can't be both wrong and right at the same time (v. 21); and just as we can't have clean single vision and blurring double vision at the same time (v. 22-23), we can't serve two masters at the same time (v. 24).

No man can serve two masters (lords). Reason: A master or lord demands total allegiance.

The illustration is of a slave or servant. He cannot be a slave to 2 owners at the same time (ILLUS: of a worker who has 2 bosses, both asking him to do different things. It doesn't work.)

"Serve" - doulos. To be a committed slave. We were once servants of sin (our old master), but not are servants of God (our new master) (Rom. 6:16-22)

Money can't reign as king on our hearts if God is there, and vice versa. There can be only one throne sitter on our hearts. Split allegiance will not be acceptable (James 4:4).

Since there is only one true Lord (Eph. 4:5; I Cor. 8:5-6), there can be only one true loyalty, devotion, commitment.

Just as a marriage is one man being committed to one woman, so the Christian life involves the Bride of Christ being sold out or committed to only one groom - Jesus Christ (cp. Eph. 5).

Because we are each only one person, none of us can (at the same time) be living for money and God.

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon" - (materialism)

You will have to choose whom you are going to serve! Be a Joshua, who said, *"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Josh. 24:15).

Even Christians need to be aware of this temptation:

The Lord Jesus warned in Matthew 13:22 that the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of richest "choke the word (the seed)" making the Christian unfruitful.

This soil characterizes the easily distracted man (one who is preoccupied, other things are more important).

The thorns rob the water and minerals in the ground and choke out the sunlight from reaching the crop.

V. 22

"The care of this world" = The pre-occupations and anxieties of this present age.

--More worried about your career (job)
--More worried about your fame (status)
--More worried about paying your bills (Mt. 6:33)
--More worried about your marriage, world events, etc.

"Worry" will keep you from reading Bible and benefitting from it.

"The deceitfulness of riches" -

--Money is a deceiver (Mt. 19:23; I Tim. 6:9, 10, 17)
--Things preoccupy
(The pursuit of money is like "salt water" – The more you drink, the more you need to drink)

The happy man is the one who has enough to live, but not enough to fall in love with it.

Something new (novel) and exciting can easily distract the half-hearted.

Why? Because they have one foot in the world while attempting to keep one foot in the Word (you can't do it - I Jn. 2:15-17).

You can't grow anything in GARBAGE!

Read "Better than Money Tract"

CONCLUSION:

Hebrews 13:5

What affection do you have toward money and material things?)

"Conversation" - way of life; character and conduct; lifestyle.

"Coveteousness" = lit. without an affection for money; no love for money (cp. I Tim. 6:6-10, 17)

"Content" - satisfied; view what you have as enough (food and clothing are all you need!) (I Tim. 6:8)

J. H. Jowett has an illustration that probably hits too close to home for most of us. His subject is that of materialism, and its effect on Christianity:
"The really good things, the big things, are inside and not outside the man. The big thing is not luxury, but contentment; not a big house, but a big satisfaction; not accumulated art treasures, but a fine, artistic appreciation; not a big library, but a serene studiousness; not a big estate, but a large vision. The big things are not 'the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen' (2 Cor. 4:18). 'Seek peace and ensue it' (1 Pet. 3:11). 'Seek the things that are above' (Col. 3:1). 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness' (Matt. 6:33). Such are the goodly pearls."

A greed for money reveals insecurity in a person's life; people treasure wealth because it offers them a false sense of comfort and security for their future.

However, our trust ought to be in God; in the Giver rather than the gifts; in the Supplier rather than the supply; in the Provider rather than the provision!

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" - A clause often taken out of context; its specific application is to provide a substantial reason why we can be content and free from a love for money.

The reason we don't need to worry about money is because the Provider is never going to leave us! Our security is in Him! He is not a Savior who is "here today and gone tomorrow"! He will never abandon or desert us!

Dt. 31:6 - *"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee."*

Psalm 37:28 - *For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."*

Psalm 118:6 - *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"*

"The Lord is my helper" - One who comes to the rescue in time of need.

Saying "the Lord is my helper" is to say:

--the Lord is my provider
--the Lord is my guide
--the Lord is my protector
--the Lord is my preserver
--the Lord is my job security
--the Lord is my mortgage payer
--the Lord is my bank account etc.

"I will not fear" - Faith in His abiding presence (v. 5) expels all fear (v. 6)
Some questions to ask:

Will it matter in Eternity? (v. 19-20)

Is it worthy of my heart? (v. 21)

Will it cause me to lose my focus?

Will it interfere with my Master's will for me? (v. 24)

Illustrations:

A Frenchman who came to the U.S. from Paris met with a very sad mishap. He brought with him to this country 10,000 francs, which was all his fortune. He met a seemingly friendly Spaniard at his boarding-house, and the Frenchman trusted the Spaniard enough to loan him his money. The Frenchman accepted from the Spaniard five gold bricks as collateral for the loan, but when the Spaniard went away, and the Frenchman took his bricks to a jeweler to assess their monetary value, he was sadly informed that they were composed of copper, tin, and zinc, without one particle of gold. The despair of the poor Frenchman when he discovered that he had been swindled out of all his little fortune was very sad to behold. But how many are deceived in a similar manner. Men and women invest all their time and talent in glittering and delusive treasures which promise happiness and peace, but one needs to realize that they are only a base alloy. Many who are deceived in this fashion are crying out that life is not worth the living, and we see stories in the news media every day of those who have wickedly put an end to their lives because they had not the courage to rise out of their defeats. But those who live genuine lives, doing the will of God with honest hearts, and seeking always to please him, do not find life a cheat. These people find life worth the living, and have heaven added as a crown of glory which never fades away.

William Randolph Hearst was a very wealthy newspaper publisher who had an incredible collection of art. The Hearst mansion in northern California is a testament to his insatiable desire for artistic treasures. On one occasion he learned of some artwork he was determined to obtain. He sent his agent abroad to search for the treasure. After months of investigating, the agent reported that the treasure had been found. To further sweeten the find, Hearst learned that the relic wouldn't cost him a dime. He already owned it. The rediscovered piece was in Hearst's warehouse with many other treasures that had likewise never been uncrated. The desire for acquiring more can sometimes blind us from what we already possess.

- Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, Michael Green, editor, 1989, p. 394

Certs, Breath Savers, chewing gum are all big sellers. Americans are conscious about "bad breath," and they spend millions of dollars to hide or change it. The problem is that the remedies do not last long.

There is a bizarre new breath mint on the market now which lasts for two hours. It is a time released pill that sits between your upper gum and cheek and slowly puts out a minty taste for hours. You do not have to chew it, or even suck on it.

The price for a bottle of 200 mints is $30. It seems high, but the selling point is that it is really more economical.

Everybody is interested in things that last. Our cars wear out, so do clothes, shoes, and everything about us. The faces on Mount Rushmore have to be continually repaired. Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:19 that all earthly treasures are beset by risks and finally end in total loss.

The real treasure of wealth is to be found in heaven. We can store truth, love, and faith. Our emphasis must always be on the values that last.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my word;" says Jesus, "shall not pass away" (Mark 13:31).

J. H. Jowett has an illustration that probably hits too close to home for most of us. His subject is that of materialism, and its effect on Christianity:
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A man lost his life in a New York City fire through his own foolishness. He lived with his wife on the fourth floor of an apartment building. The fire started in the kitchen of the apartment occupied by him. A woman living on the same floor first saw the flames, and her cries of terror awakened the tenants. The fire was then crackling fiercely near an airshaft and filled the halls with smoke. An officer came to the man and his wife, and was astonished to see that the man was determined to go back while the wife was trying to drag him to safety. The officer went to her assistance, and they soon pulled the man out of the house. A little later, some firemen who were hauling a line of hose through the scuttle in the roof found the foolish fellow near his flat with his clothing almost burned from his body. He had gone back into his room for some papers, which he had secured, only to have them burn in his hands. He got the papers, but lost his life. There are many that are holding on to worldly treasures at the expense of everything that can make life precious. They are losing their souls to obtain gain that must soon be loss.

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See: I Tim. 6:9, 10, 17

Material Things have a way of distracting people:

***What treasures do you value?**



I. The TREASURES You Value Reveal HOW WISE YOU ARE (v. 19-20)



II. The TREASURES You Value Reveal WHERE YOUR HEART IS (v. 21)

III. The TREASURES You Value Reveal WHAT YOUR FOCUS IS (v. 22-23)



IV. The TREASURES You Value Reveal WHO YOUR MASTER IS (v. 24)

