

Best Investments for 2007

(Selected Scriptures)
12/31/06

Introduction: The best investment is the investment in the best thing.

**** In our new year, let's invest our lives in what really matters!***

4 Imperishables:

I. Invest in <u>GOD</u>
Psalms 90:1-2; Colossians 3:1-2

II. Invest in <u>HEAVEN</u>
Matthew 6:19-20

Isn't your Life worth more than this?



The Roman tribute-money which the Pharisees and Herodians produced (Mark 12:13-17) was the silver denarius, bearing the ´image and superscription´ of Tiberius Caesar.

III. Invest in <u>PEOPLE</u>
Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19; Luke 18:16; Romans 10:14

IV. Invest in <u>TRUTH</u>
Matthew 24:35; John 17:17; *John 8:31-32*

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Introduction:

- For the new year many will resolve to improve their health; A good investment, just not the best one. 1 Timothy 4:8 - For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

- For the new year others will resolve to improve their income; Perhaps an increase in finances is needed by some; But is financial security really security?
  Luke 12:20-21
  But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

- For others, the new year is motivation to add on a needed character trait or to get rid of some bad habit. A good choice, but why? What is the motivation? And how do you expect to get it done? By what power or ability will it be accomplished?
  John 15:5
  I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

In the new year, we will all make investments of time, talent, energy, finances etc. so as to accomplish some goal. Is the goal a worthy one?

The best investment is the investment in the best thing.

Psalms 90:12
So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom.

V. 12

"So" - in light of what was previously said (v. 1-11)

"Teach us" - only God can place within man an accurate value of each minute of time.

"To number" - to truly consider that life's days are few.

God likens the swiftness of our lives unto:

1) A weaver's shuttle (Job 7:6)
2) A breath of air (Job 7:6)
3) A runner (Job 9:25)
4) Swift ships (Job 9:26)
5) A flower (Job 14:1)

6) A shadow (Job 14:2)
7) As evaporating water (Job 14:11-12)
8) A shepherd's tent (Is. 38:12)
9) A vapor (Ja. 4:14)

The reason given for numbering our days is not so that we can miserably lament the brevity of life, but so that we will both learn and experience the art of skillful living.

"Wisdom" - is truth put into life. it is applied knowledge. Our heart (the core of our being) needs to know God's truth, then live it in order to make the most of our lives.

Sawyer's paraphrase: "So teach us to understand the shortness of life, so that we may live for what really matters."

Grasping for things that don't matter in comparison.

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.

1 Timothy 6:7 -
For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out.

Nothing material will leave the earth with us. What will leave with us? Can we carry anything into eternity? Yes; there are imperishables that we can take with us.

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
- David with his spare time (leading to an adulterous affair)
- Solomon with his multiple marriages
- Judas with his lust for money
- Peter (momentarily) with his return to his former Career (Fishing)
- Demas with his appetite for the world
- Martha with her business with good things

**** In our new year, let's invest our lives in what really matters!***
4 Imperishables:

I. Invest in <u>GOD</u>

God is Imperishable because He is Eternal.
Psalms 90:1-2
Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.

Any investment in anything relating to God is a wise investment!

It's not that God has any lack or anything in His nature or character that needs investment. He is complete! The investment is for our benefit.

To the one who invests his soul into God's care reaps the benefit of eternal life!

> 1 Peter 4:19 - Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.
>
> 2 Timothy 1:12 - For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

See: *Colossians 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.

"If ye then be risen with Christ" -

Paul, writing to Christians at Colosse, speaks of them as being <u>already</u> resurrected with Christ.

"Risen with Christ" = co-raised; jointly resurrected.

How is it possible that believers are already risen?

Answer: Our future resurrection is so guaranteed; so sure to happen, that God speaks of it in the past tense.

How is the believer's resurrection so certain?

Answer: Because of our <u>oneness</u> with Jesus Christ. Because of our <u>union</u> with Him.

Christ and the believer have been married (Rom. 7:1ff) or merged.

ILLUS: Marriage united a man and woman together in such a way that <u>what one has now belongs to the other</u>.

Her bills are my bills; my checkbook is her checkbook (and vice-versa). The same is true for the house, car, food, property, talents, etc. We wear the same last name, share the same burdens, joys, and victories, etc.

**So it is with Christ and His bride. This mysterious union described in Ephesians 5:30-32 reveals the incomprehensible truth that the believer and Christ hold all things common.

God views Christ and the believer as being together; one; "joint heirs" (Rom. 8:16-17).

Your oneness with the risen Christ is the greatest incentive to live a different lifestyle (cp. Rom. 7:6; I Cor. 15:45; II Cor. 3:6).

"Seek" - to live zealously for something. (present tense - to keep seeking, every day).

"Above" = the Heavenly, the spiritual, the eternal

"To seek those things which are above" means to center your life on your ascended (Eph. 4:10), glorified (Jn. 17:5; Phil. 2:9) Christ! (SEE: Walvoord, Bible Knowledge Commentary, Vol. II, p. 680)

"Things above" - our # 1 priority affection is to be toward God! (SEE: mark 12:29-30)

"Where Christ sitteth" - the fact that Christ is sitting (at the right hand of the Father) proves two things:

1)He is alive
2)His work is complete (cp. Heb. 1:3, 10:10-12)

The "right hand" is a position of power and authority (what the Father does, He does by the power of His "right hand" - Ex. 15:6, 23; Ps. 89:13, 118:16; Is. 48:13); and this is where Jesus is seated (Ps. 110:1; Mk. 16:19; Lk. 22:69; Acts 7:55; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2; I Pet. 3:22).

The point is: If you are one with Jesus and if you share His life (v. 4), then you should live for Him and seek to please Him.

We need to look at our values in light of our oneness with Christ.

What is important to us and what should be important are not always the same.

"We seek those things which are above when in heart and spirit we are truly sojourners in this world and are not bound to it" (Calvin, cited by Vaughan, p. 90).

V. 2

The first word ("seek") suggested striving; the second word ("set affections") suggests concentrating (Walvoord, p. 680).

"Set your affection" - lit. Focus your thoughts; put your mind.

What you spend your time thinking about reveals where your priorities are.

"The sure safeguard against seeking things below, is not to set the mind upon them" (Eadie, Colossians, p. 91).

To set our thoughts on things above does not mean that we are to withdraw ourselves from all of the activities of this world and do nothing but contemplate eternity and heaven . . . But as Barclay explains, "There will be this difference-- from now on the Christian will see everything in the light and against the background of eternity. He will no longer live as if this world was all that mattered; he will see this world against the background of the larger world of eternity" (Vaughan, citing Barclay, p. 91).

--What people talk about reveals what they think about (where their affection is).

--Where people go reveals what they think about.

--What people do reveals what they think about.

What are some things that are upon the earth? (SEE: v. 5)

We are so united to Christ, that where we go, He goes; what we do, we in a spiritual sense bring Christ into the practice (I Cor. 6:15-17); when it is a sinful practice, we grieve the Spirit of God (Eph. 4:30).

"Not on things on the earth" -

SEE: Matthew 6:19-21, 33

Our # 1 goal in life is to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and the temporal necessities will be added to us (Mt. 6:33).

SEE: I Tim. 6:6-12, 17-18.

Eternal vs. Temporal -

II Cor. 4:18 - "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

When we keep in mind our oneness with Christ, we will have this attitude: "What is important to Jesus is important to me. What is on His heart is on mine. Where His focus is, there do I want mine to be."

When your affection is on things above, you will have time for God.

You will have time to read His Word; you will have time to do His work; You will have time to seek His face in prayer; you will have time to assemble with His people, etc.

II. Invest in HEAVEN

Matthew 6:19-20
Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

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!

Some people have so much, they don't even know what they possess.

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

"Moths" - attack rich clothing

"Rust" - attacks precious metals, cars

Thieves" - attack jewelry, amusements products (Ex: TV, VCR, boom boxes, 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!

"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."*

III. Invest in <u>PEOPLE</u>

*Realize the incredible value of a human soul!

1. **Every person has been made in the <u>image</u> and <u>likeness</u> of God** (Gen. 1:27; 9:6).

2. **Every person has a soul-spirit which is of more value than all the <u>wealth</u> of the <u>world</u>** (Mt. 16:26; Mk. 8:36, 37).

3. **Every person's soul will live on for <u>eternity</u>**

   a. The souls of the saved are <u>with the Lord</u> (Gen.35:18; II Cor.5:8; Acts 7:59)

   b. The souls of the lost are experiencing <u>eternal anguish & suffering</u> (Mt. 10:28; Rev. 14:11; 20:14,15)

People will live forever (from conception through eternity)

People need the Gospel to have any chance of meeting God's requirement of faith.

You can make a difference in people's lives for time and for eternity!

Illustration: The blessing of reaching Guy Recupero (Grace Lorini's brother in law) on his death bed.

Believers have a responsibility to share the Gospel.

Mark 16:15
And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Matthew 28:19
Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

We have a responsibility to reach children for Christ:

Luke 18:16 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Invest in your children's spiritual life!

Romans 10:14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

IV. Invest in TRUTH

God's Word has much to say on the topic of "truth." The word occurs **342** times in the KJV translation of the Holy Bible. (truth = 224; true = 77; truly = 41).

Definition of "Truth": Truth describes that which conforms to fact or reality. Truth is fact and reality. A "Truth" then is a fundamental law, statement, object, or event or action that matches with ultimate reality. Truth describes actuality; realness; authenticity; & genuineness.

Truth is embodied in God

All truth must be tested by a standard, and there is no standard beyond God. He is the perfect and ultimate source and standard of truth.

--Truth is not invented by man.

--Truth does not evolve from society's mores (customs, traditions, or way of life).

God not only tells the truth, He is the truth. Truth is part of the essence of God.

God has revealed the truth (He has made it known and knowable)

The Lord Jesus Christ said: John 17:17
Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Accept the Bible as God's Word and you will know the truth

John 8:31-32 - Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

What is Truth?
John 17:17
Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

All things will pass away except for God's Eternal Word.
Matthew 24:35
Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

The Importance of the Bible:

Job considered God's Word more important than his necessary Food

Job 23:12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Jesus said God's Word was vitally important for a person to sustain his life:

Matthew 4:4 - But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Jeremiah testified that God's Word was a food that brought joy to his heart:

Jer 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart:

Joshua discovered that God's Word was the key to his life's success:

Jos 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

The Psalmist testified that God had elevated the importance of His Word even above the importance of His Name!

Ps 138:2 I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

David considered God's Word sweeter than honey and of more value than Gold

Psalm 119:103 - How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Psalm 119:72 - The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

Col. 3:16 says, however, that you should *"let the word of Christ dwell in you <u>richly</u> in all wisdom"*

What happens when I neglect God's Word?

My Faith Weakens

Since the Bible teaches that one's faith comes by means of God's Word, when God's Word is neglected, one's faith will be diminished (Rom.10:17).

And since one's faith is the bottom line foundation for the Christian life, Satan knows that if he can be successful in attacking your faith, he will be successful in ruining every other part of your Christian walk.

My Conscience Quiets

Since the conscience functions based on the information fed into it, one who does not read God's Word will not have a sensitive conscience to sin.

The things that once bothered you no longer do.

Your conscience can become dull (Acts 28:27)

My Fellowship with God becomes Distant

We speak to God through Prayer, but He speaks to us through His Word (not visions, dreams, etc.) If you do not read your Bible, you limit the conversations God wants to have with you.

John 14:23-24: Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

The purpose for which you were saved was so that you might know intimate fellowship with your God

My Growth Stops

Spiritual growth comes via the consumption of the "milk of the Word"
1Pe 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

You can measure your spiritual growth by the quantity of the Word you are drinking in daily:
much milk - much growth
little milk - little growth
no milk - no growth

My Flesh Yields to Temptation

How did Jesus fight the Devil? With God's Word (Mt.4 – "It is written")

How strong is your appetite for God's Word? You answer is "an index of your Christian health" (Hiebert, p. 124).

Do you want to know why you feel "weak" spiritually? Why you have no power over your fleshly impulses? Why you struggle to do what is right? etc. The reason is because you have neglected God's Word!

There are a lot of spiritually malnourished, dehydrated, weak Christians struggling with their walk with the Lord. The reason: they are not consuming God's Nutritional Word.

My Service Diminishes

If my faith is weak, and my fellowship with God is distant, it stands to reason that my service for Him will also be limited or non-existent.

CONCLUSION:

Some questions to ask:

Will it matter to God?

Will it matter in Eternity?

Will it matter to Someone's Eternity?

Will it last Forever?