

Stewardship: Motives of the Heart *The Influence of Materialism #1*

Memory Verse Get Scriptures to read

Romans 12:2 (NKJV) *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

According to the book “Affluenza,” Americans spend more annually on shoes, jewelry, and watches than we do on higher education. Even the phrase “the American Dream” alludes to owning a house, a car, vacations, retirement rather than freedom and pursuing your dream and potential.

The God of This World

Ecclesiastes 5:10 (NKJV) *He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity.*

1 John 2:16–17 (NKJV) *For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

Luke 14:26–33 (NKJV) *“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹ Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*

***Mark 8:36** (NKJV) *For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*

Philippians 3:7–8 *But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*

“When Christ came to the earth, humanity seemed to be fast reaching its lowest point. The very foundations of society were undermined. Life had become false and artificial. . . . Throughout the world all systems of religion were losing their hold on mind and soul. Disgusted with fable and falsehood, seeking to drown thought, men turned to infidelity and materialism. Leaving eternity out of their reckoning, they lived for the present.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, pp. 74, 75.

Do we own our stuff or does our stuff own us?

Filling the Barns

When it comes to materialism, has any nation ever surpassed what we are seeing in the United States right now? We define our lives by how much stuff we have, social status by how much money we make, what we own and wear and where we live.

Luke 12:15–21 (NKJV) *And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” ¹⁶ Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. ¹⁷ And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ ¹⁸ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”’ ²⁰ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ ²¹ “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

Deuteronomy 8:10–14 (NKJV) *When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you. “Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, ¹² lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; ¹³ and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; ¹⁴ when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;*

Luke 16:19 (NKJV) *“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.*

The Allure of Materialism

The advertising world is powerful. Companies spend billions putting images of their products before us. They almost always use beautiful and appealing people to promote what they are selling.

We have become a materialistic nation and we know it. According to American Mythos, a national survey showed that 82% of Americans thought they were materialistic and 77% said they are self-indulgent. What exactly is materialism? It is "a preoccupation with possessions and believing that owning products bring happiness and success."

Matthew 6:22–24 (NKJV) *"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

Gal. 5:16, NKJV *"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh".*

Love of Self

Romans 12:3 (NKJV) *For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*

Narcissism, "inordinate fascination with oneself; self-love, vanity."

James 4:1–3 (NKJV) *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? ² You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*

Ezekiel 28:17 (NKJV) *"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor"*

Isaiah 14:14 (NKJV) *"I will be like the Most High"*

***Daniel 4:30** (NKJV) *The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"*

1 Timothy 6:10 (NKJV) *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

The Ultimate Futility of Materialism

Joshua 7:21 (NKJV) *When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it."*

Job 1:20–21 (NKJV) ²⁰ *Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. ²¹ And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord."*

Ecclesiastes 5:14–15 (NKJV) *But those riches perish through misfortune; When he begets a son, there is nothing in his hand. ¹⁵ As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, To go as he came; And he shall take nothing from his labor Which he may carry away in his hand.*

Job 31:24–28 (NKJV) *"If I have made gold my hope, Or said to fine gold, 'You are my confidence'; If I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, And because my hand had gained much; ...²⁸ This also would be an iniquity deserving of judgment, For I would have denied God who is above.*

Deuteronomy 7:6 (NKJV) *"For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.*

***1 Peter 2:9** (NKJV) *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

John 15:5 (NKJV) *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*

Galatians 2:20 (NKJV) *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

"All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses."—
Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.