

The Treasure Principle (Randy Alcorn)

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He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

Three stories:

Treasure in the Backyard

There was a story on Yahoo News a few weeks ago. A couple were digging up the back part of their lot for a renovation project when they dug up a large box. They knew there was a box buried in the back, but they thought it was just an old electrical box of some sort. So, they ignored it for many years. When they finally began to investigate it, they found out it was a buried safe. When they got the safe opened, inside was money and jewelry. They couldn't believe their find. Buried treasure in their own back yard! Most people dream of such things, but they actually found it.

Along with the money and jewels was also a note with an address written on it. It was an address in their neighborhood. They contacted the people who lived there. They had been robbed about 30 years prior. It was their money and jewels. So, the couple returned the items to the rightful owners.

Treasure in the Basement

Another couple purchased a home in the Great Lakes region. I don't remember the city. They were doing a renovation of their basement. When they tore down the ceiling, they found a suitcase had been placed in the joists. The suitcase was filled with cash, thousands of dollars of cash. Another suitcase was also discovered containing even more cash. All in all, over \$50,000 in cash was found in the house. In addition, they found a secret passageway that led to a secret room beneath the house. A briefcase was found with old videos. The house it was discovered belonged to some criminal group and the videos were turned over to the FBI who then began to re-open some cases from long ago.

Treasure in a Field

There is another story of a man who left the main road and a personal excursion. As he walked along, his walking stick made an unusual thud on something. That got his attention. He began to dig around it and discovered a buried treasure worth a lot of money. However, the treasure was on someone else's land. He would have to purchase the land if he wanted to get the treasure.

So, at once, he sold everything he had. He sold his home. He sold off his personal stuff, furniture, everything, to raise up enough cash so he can purchase the property.

I want to ask you some questions about this man.

Do you feel sorry for him? He has no home, just a field. Do you grieve for him that he has given up everything he has so he can gain a future treasure?

How do you think other people thought about him? Do you think they thought he was out of his mind? Do they think he was unwise?

Now devoid of everything, with joy he goes off to purchase the field. Once the property is his, he goes and digs up the buried treasure. In the end, the man is far more wealthy than he was when he owned his home and precious stuff.

Matthew 13:44 NIVO

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

The eternal treasure found was worth the loss of present wealth in the exchange.

A Wealthy Man

Matt. 19:21

There was a rich young man who wanted to be a follower of Jesus. He wanted to be a disciple. Jesus told him to sell everything he had and give it to the poor. Then, he would have great wealth in heaven.

Then, he could come and follow him. But the young man could not do it. He was attached to his stuff.

Jesus did not tell everyone to sell all. He did not make it a discipleship principle that you get into heaven by taking a vow of poverty. Yet, for this man, Jesus gave him such instructions. Jesus knew the man's heart. The young man would have to dethrone the idol of clinging to his stuff if he would be able to serve God. This young man could not learn the treasure principle, that what is gained in the eternal kingdom far outweighs what we lose on earth.

For the next eight weeks we are going to look at another theme from a book. We are going to look at [The Treasure Principle: The Secret to Unlocking the Joy of Giving](#) by Randy Alcorn. You can get the book at Amazon, or just purchase it on Kindle for \$9.99. I chose to purchase it on Kindle. Now I have it on my cell phone and tablet. You can get it even now. Do it. Become a participant, not merely a listener.

You have things you treasure. Your heart always goes where your treasure is.

Matthew 6:19-21 NIVO

¹⁹ **"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.**

²⁰ **But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.**

²¹ **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

1. A disciple lives for the Kingdom of heaven, not the kingdom of here and now.

Matt. 6:31-33 NIVO

³¹ **So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'**

³² **For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.**

³³ **But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

Alcorn gives a great emphasis on the exchange of wealth between heaven and earth. He seems to think of it as a material exchange. However, I don't think in heaven our values will be the same as here on earth. Glory in heaven will likely be more valuable than wealth. There is an exchange of glory.

However, the key here is that the heart choose between living for glory now versus glory then. For this, his book is well worth the read. There are too many who call themselves Christians who live for glory now, they are fully materialistic, even when they consider themselves to be spiritual people.

The evangelist and the jet

Perhaps you heard about the televangelist who says God told him to get a new \$54 million jet? He has three, but God says he needs a fourth. It makes me think of the verses earlier in Matthew chapter 6 when Jesus says, "They have their reward in full." Present glory means no future glory.

Yet, there are many who are Christians who in reality really "believers." They believe things about Jesus as the Savior, but it

never really translates into changes in how they live. James would ask the question, Is that real faith? Faith without works, without a transformed life.

There are many believers whose heads are filled with knowledge about the Bible, yet who are allowing their hearts to be conformed to heaven. Discipleship is not about come and learn, it is about obeying the teachings of Jesus. Doing what Jesus says is the difference.

Why do so few Christians give? Why is it that a small fraction of the church gives the primary support for the church? The issue of giving in The Treasure Principle is larger than merely giving to the church, but it is a real issue for discipleship. If we are really saved, then how is it that so few are being transformed to change the world in which we live?

So, when we look at The Treasure Principle, we are really looking at the Kingdom of God as disciples, followers of Jesus.

2. What are you going to do with your money, since you are going to lose it all anyway?

You are going to lose all your money! Face it. It is all going away. Either you will lose it in this life or you will lose it at death, but one way or other, you and your stuff will be separated.

Proverbs 23:5 NIVO

⁵ **Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.**

It is kind of the bottom line of the book. Money and wealth is temporary. So, are you going to use your wealth that works for God and your future, or are you just going to use it for your best life now and be robbed of a future in glory?

When Jesus warns us not to store up treasures on Earth, it's not because wealth might be lost. It is because wealth will always be lost. Either it leaves us while we live, or we leave it when we die. No exceptions.

3. As a Christian, your life should be influenced by what you know of the future.

The Christian faith is looks at past, present and future. God, who is by His name, past, present and future has given us a life that is not fixed on this earthly existence. We have knowledge of what is coming.

Jesus Christ is coming; and He is bringing a new heavens and a new earth. A new kingdom is coming. It will not be full of the greed of this world. It will not be filled with loss and decay. However, it will also not be egalitarian. It is false to believe that everyone will get the same things. Jesus said there will be rewards. There will be treasures of some kind, maybe not wealth as in gold, for the gold is going to be thrown on the streets. However, he did tell us to store up wealth in heaven, where it will last. To store up wealth for then, you must give it away now. If you hold on to it now, then it will not be there as a reward for you then.

How does your living reflect that reality? How does your giving reflect that reality?

If I were your investment fund manager and I did not produce an increase for your wealth in the future, you would fire me. Yet, here I am as your in reality, fund manager for not the next 30 years, but the next 30 billion years telling you that you must invest in heaven's stocks or you will be penniless when you get to heaven.

4. The greatest issue for your heart is joy in giving.

I don't know if God really has a financial benefit plan for your giving in this life. What I do believe is that he has a glory plan for those whose lives are changed into His nature while on earth. So, the real issue is one of finding the joy of being like God, when God is a giver.

The goal of salvation is not getting to go to Disney World in the Sky when you die, bye and bye. Salvation is being restored to the image of God, and being made into the likeness of God's character.

Go back to the story of the man who found the treasure in the field. Do not miss the point that for **joy** he went and sold all so he could buy the field. If the field is heaven, the glory of the kingdom of God, there is joy in the heart that finds that so much so, it finds no problem letting go of this sinful world. However, if you cannot discover the joy of giving, I ask, have you really ever experienced God? Jesus was saying with joy he let go of this world because he found something so much better.

Your money and your faith are inseparably bound, for where your treasure is, there is your heart too.