

Experiencing Lasting Change

Matthew 6:21

One of the most frustrating things for sincere believers is to see themselves slip back into the old patterns of thinking and behaving. Change doesn't seem to last, even when great effort is put out to do so.

What does Matthew 6:21 tell us that can help us experience lasting change?

1. What we treasure determines how we live

- What does Jesus mean here by "heart"?
- What is the relationship between "treasure" and "heart"?
- As Christians we are not to treasure what the world treasures (1 John 2:15a). What are examples of false treasure?
- Give examples of "good" things that can wind up causing heart problems ("Spiritual problems are always heart problems").
- How can these misplaced treasures be corrected?

2. Misplaced treasure locks us into a vicious circle

- According to what was explained in the sermon, how do we live in circles when we allow false treasure to rule our hearts?
- What does Matthew 6:21 tell us about why we don't seem to be able to change permanently, even though we desire to do so?
- Reflect on each of the following examples of treasures that keep us going in circles:
 - What is the core issue when your marriage is full of conflict and stress? What might you be treasuring?
 - What might you be treasuring when you have little or no time for your kids?
 - What are you treasuring (holding on to) when you can't forgive someone?
 - What are you treasuring when you struggle to not use your computer for sensual purposes?

3. Right treasure leads to right living

The context of our theme verse is very important. In the previous verse Jesus says, "*Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*" (Mt. 6:20a).

- What does "treasures in heaven" refer to?
- How can you lay up treasure in heaven? The following verses are merely suggestions: Rev. 14:13; Matthew 5:12; Mark 11:25; 1 Timothy 6:19.