

ACTNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Cell Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Cell Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

Concerning Serving One

Matthew 6:24

Rev Reuben Ng

SERMON SYNOPSIS

- The early church was on fire for the Lord and were generous in living, sharing and giving as a community to the growing ministry. Ananias and Sapphira sold their land and deceived the apostles that they contributed the entirety of the sale amount but instead kept a portion for themselves. They lied to the Holy Spirit and for that, they both fell dead on the spot when confronted by Peter.
- What was wrong here certainly had nothing to do with the giving, which was indeed generous of them and seemed to come from a genuine want to help. As Peter pointed out, all the while the land and proceeds was Ananias' to rightfully keep for himself rather than give to the Church. The far greater sin here was the couple's attempt at serving two masters, something Jesus warns against in Matthew 6:24.
- Judas Iscariot was another example of a man who tried to serve two masters. He was a thief and loved money (John 12:6), devoting himself to it, while watching for an opportunity to hand over the one whom he hated and despised (Matthew 26:14-16) – betraying Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.
- God has consistently warned His people to serve Him wholeheartedly – to love Him with all their heart, soul and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5) and serve no other gods (Exodus 20:3). Money itself is not evil nor bad. However, it is the love of money that is the root to evil (1 Timothy 6:10). It is how we view and what we do with money that matters. Proverbs 3:9 tells us to honour the Lord with our wealth.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Money is but one of many examples. What are some things specific to ourselves that we know can become another master that we serve instead of Christ?
[Children's Activity: Money box craft - Download this template and print on paper for children to make their own 3D box. <http://www.maggieoneills.com/cube-template/3d-paper-box-template-gallery-images-at-imagekb-vbs-crafts-intended-for-cube-template/> Provide coloured markers, coloured pencils, and various craft material for them to decorate their money box. Ask them to write on the box Proverbs 3:9 "Honour the Lord with your wealth and with the first part of your harvest." Discuss with them how they can honour God with what they have – money and possessions.]

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2. We live in a world and culture of "multi" - multitasking, multilingual, multimedia, etc. Is it possible to have multi-masters? Why or why not? What does it mean that God is a jealous God?
[Verses to help us go deeper: Exodus 20:3-6; 2 Corinthians 11:2; James 1:5-8]

3. How should we continue in Christian living, putting God alone at the focus of our lives? What in particular can you do about this specifically?
[Verses to help us go deeper: Colossians 3:1-7; 2 Corinthians 4:18; Psalm 5:1-3; 1 Timothy 6:6-10]

PRAYER POINTERS

- Thank God for all He has provided and will continue to provide for all our needs
- Pray that we never forget that all we have, material or otherwise, is from God and not through our own strength.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts, that we will not give room to other pursuits or idols in this world but fix our eyes on Jesus as the Master in all aspects of our lives.

MEMORY VERSE

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
(Deuteronomy 6:5, ESV)

PRACTICAL HANDLE

Giving to others is a practical way to "hold loosely" to the things of this world. Pledging is a form of worship and expression of love to God by giving back to Him. This July being Pledge Month, pray and consider the amount you can pledge – not out of compulsion or emotion, but to honour the Lord with your wealth and first fruits. You can put your pledge card into the pledge box in the sanctuary for the both of July or drop it into the offering bag on Sunday.