

## Single Eye or Evil Eye?

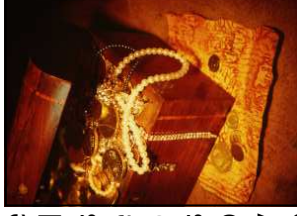
There has been a popular air-freshener commercial on TV that shows blindfolded individuals sitting on ratty, old furniture in a room piled high with garbage. Because of the pleasant smell they sit quietly, but their contentment abruptly changes when they remove the blindfold to see their filthy surroundings. Much of our perceptions of life come from what we "see". Christianity "sees" things in a new heavenly way.

We have been called out of darkness (1 Peter 2:9) and are now filled with a powerful heavenly light (2 Corinthians 4:6,7). However we need to align our spiritual eyes with that light in our souls like an astronomer adjusts the lens of his telescope to see the faraway galaxies clearly. God wants us to have "divine viewpoint" or to see things as He does. Having a "single" eye is when our perception of life is aligned with God's. Things make more sense because we are considering God's eternal plan and mission for this world and not just our own personal circumstances and difficulties.

Have you ever attempted to help a Christian brother or sister "see" God's bigger picture for their circumstances when all they can perceive is darkness and negativity? That is what Jesus refers to as having an "evil" eye; one that is dysfunctional and unable to see anything from "divine viewpoint". David referred to God as his "high tower" because it was from that vantage point that he could better assess his daily battles (Psalm 18:2). We need to break free from the limitations of human viewpoint and embrace the heavenly.

## Choosing our Master

Jesus also spoke about the importance of choosing a master - **one** master for your life. He reminded His disciples that humans are not capable of serving or giving devotion to two masters at one time. One of them will be neglected and abandoned over time in favor of the other. Jesus suggested that "mammon"



or money, riches and all the stuff that goes with them will always compete in our hearts with serving God. Try as we may, when we attempt to remain "friends" with this world's stuff, we will end up treating God like an enemy (James 4:4). The one who embraces worldly riches always struggles with his/her spiritual journey (Check out Matthew 19:23-24 and Luke 18:22-23). It is an issue of **devotion**.

Once we have determined who we will serve life becomes amazingly simplified. Each day begins with choosing "*first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*" (Matthew 6:33). All the other business in our life moves to second place on the list. Our devotion is not to "stuff" but to being actively involved in the fulfillment of God's mission on earth: "*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*" (Matthew 6:10). We live each day experiencing the most radical **paradigm shift** of all - **Christianity!**

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# Choosing Who You Will Serve: "A Paradigm Shift in Christian Thinking"

*By Pastor Curt Carter*

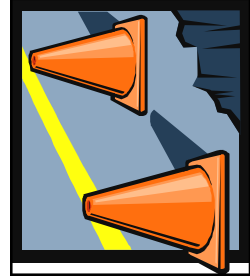
## Choosing Who You Will Serve

***"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good [single], your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad [evil], 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 [money, riches]."***

- Matthew 6:19-24 New King James Version  
[Words in brackets were added by author]

**Paradigm Shift: A radical change in somebody's basic assumptions about or approach to something.**

On a Galilean hillside, Jesus taught a great company of people to change how they had always thought



about some common, everyday concepts like treasure, perception of the world around them, loyalty and devotion. He was teaching them the new way of how things operate within the kingdom of God - "a paradigm shift".

## A Paradigm Shift

The highways in our local area are undergoing major renovations so quite often you will encounter a sign with arrows pointing left or right and the word "SHIFT". It is telling you that you need to leave the roadway that you are familiar with to travel on the shoulder or a detour especially designed by the Department of Transportation for us to use. It causes you to move from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Often a young person finds entering college a "paradigm shift" because of the much greater demands for personal responsibility for their education. Ask anyone who has joined the military how much of a complete shift they encountered in how they viewed "everyday" life. Their lives became one of absolute obedience, moving in unison with the platoon, and perhaps putting their lives on the line for their fellow soldiers/sailors. I think everyone can imagine how going to prison is a tremendous paradigm shift. Moving from a free society to a place where you can't even open a door, choose what you will eat or wear, or get an aspirin out of the medicine cabinet when needed.

Jesus wanted the crowd in Galilee, and all believers, to realize that becoming a Christian is the *ultimate* paradigm shift. Quite literally **everything** in our lives begins to change as we learn about Jesus' kingdom. Paul said, "*Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated [placed] us into the kingdom of his dear Son*" (Colossians 1:13). Kingdom living causes us to use new vocabulary, a new dictionary for our words, and new attitudes that lead to counter-cultural behaviors.

## Heavenly Treasure

Jesus encouraged His followers to think of "treasure" not as something they could hide, bury or hoard but as heavenly rewards given for the demonstration of godly character. But what is heavenly treasure? He gives us some help:



- ◆ Receiving insults, persecution, and untrue, evil accusations because we speak up and represent the things important to the Lord (Matthew 5:11,12)
- ◆ Demonstrate Christ's love that reaches outside our circle of friends and family to include the neighbor in need and even our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48)
- ◆ To consistently invest our time, skills, and finances in God's mission as well as spending time privately communicating with our heavenly Father (Matthew 6:4-6)
- ◆ Practicing forgiveness to others to maintain a forgiven and cleansed relationship with our God (Matthew 6:15)
- ◆ [And from the Apostle Paul] To maintain our Christian conversation, behavior and thought-life even when we encounter difficult circumstances in life (2 Cor. 4:17)

Many of these verses speak specifically of heavenly "reward" or "eternal weight in glory" but they represent a major change in what we consider valuable. Are we willing to "invest" our lives in these heavenly behaviors that seem so foreign to our earthly assessment of treasure? Didn't Christ invest His life for the heavenly mission (Hebrews 12:1-2)?