

GOD'S BLESSING OF CHOOSING TO SERVE GOD RATHER THAN MONEY

LESSON 5

JOSHUA

A great conqueror with singleness of heart



DECISION REQUIRED

"...Choose you this day whom ye will serve ... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

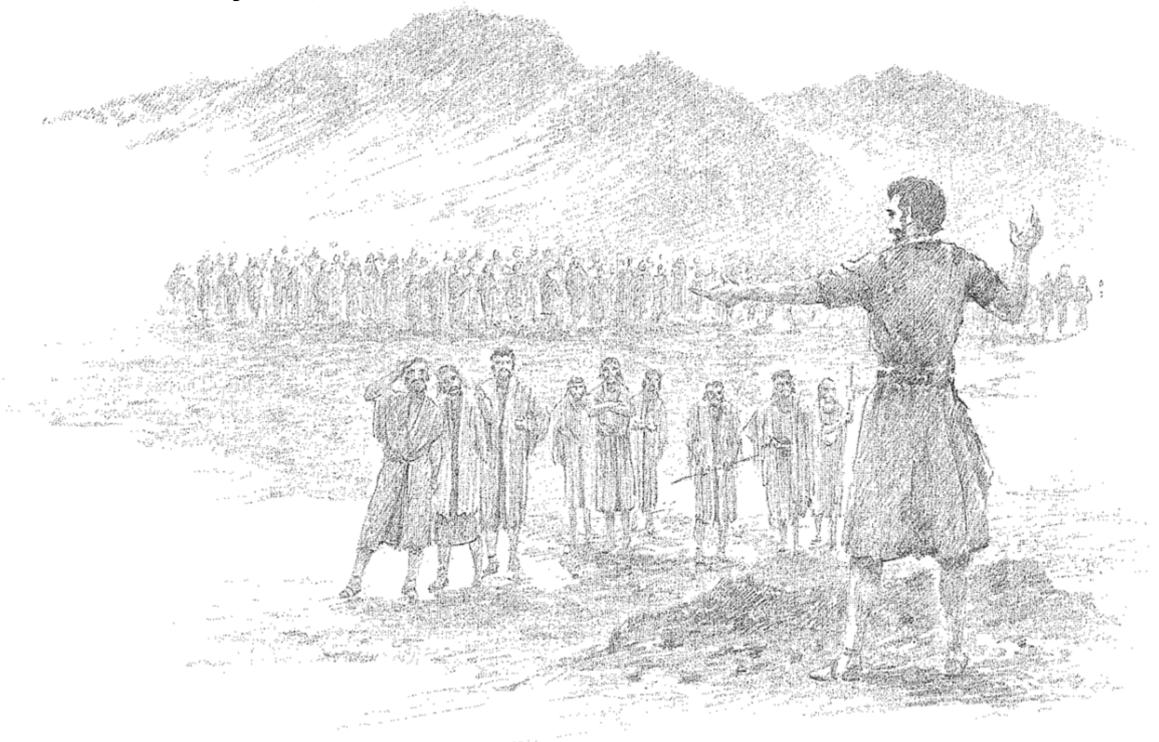
GOD'S BLESSING OF CHOOSING TO SERVE GOD RATHER THAN MONEY

LOVE GOD—with ALL your heart, soul, mind and strength

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [money]" (Matthew 6:24).

PROTECTION SECURED

"And ye have seen all that the Lord **your** God hath done unto all these nations because of **you**; for the Lord **your** God is he that hath fought for **you**" (Joshua 23:3).





TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU HAVE A LOVE OF MONEY?

PERSONAL EVALUATION:

TRUE / FALSE

1. When you need an item, is your first thought to buy it rather than to pray for it?
 2. Would you consider a person successful if he were not wealthy?
 3. Are you expecting money to give you peace of mind, influence, or happiness?
 4. Do you find more excitement in getting money than in gaining insights from the Bible?
 5. Do you allow the cares of riches to choke out a daily time in God's Word?
 6. Have you ever compromised an ethical standard in order not to lose a job or financial gain?
 7. In the last five years, have you ever sacrificed a friendship because of arguments over money?
 8. Are you content with your present salary?
 9. Do you look forward to retirement more than to the return of Christ?
 10. Do you still carry bitterness about financial losses?
 11. When you are with friends, do you talk more about financial matters than about spiritual matters?
 12. Do you pray before every meal, even when non-Christian business associates or clients are present?
 13. Do you have convictions against selling such things as liquor, cigarettes, and pornography?
 14. Do you spend more time each week reading newspapers or magazines than reading the Bible?
 15. Are you more concerned about giving your children a financial heritage than a Godly heritage?
 16. Would your family say that your job is more important to you than your family is?
 17. Do you have a secret desire to be rich?
 18. Have you ever sacrificially given a large sum of money to God?
 19. Do you tend to limit your friends to those who are rich and influential?
 20. Have you ever dedicated all of your money and possessions to God?
- TOTAL CORRECT**

EVALUATION SCORE:

- 20 correct =
19-17 correct =
16-14 correct =
13-9 correct =
8-4 correct =
3-0 correct =

THE WITNESS OF GOD AGAINST THOSE WHO TRIED TO SERVE GOD AND MONEY

NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS

1. Using religion for gain

Balaam was a prophet during the early days of the nation of Israel. He had a special power. Those whom he cursed were cursed, and those whom he blessed were blessed. The king of Moab hired Balaam to curse Israel; but God warned Balaam not to curse His people, so he blessed them instead. This angered the king of Moab. Balaam appeased the king and collected his money by teaching the king how to morally corrupt the people whom he could not curse. Later, Balaam lost his money and his life when Israel conquered Moab. (See Numbers 22-24; Jude 11; Revelation 2:14.)



BALAAM

2. Compromising with evil

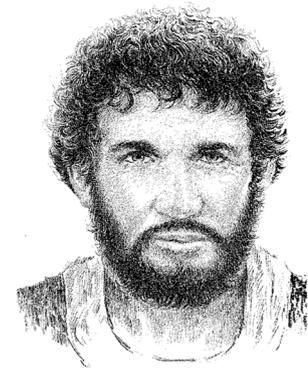
Lot was the nephew of Abraham. He went with Abraham to the land of Canaan, where his flocks and herds increased so much that there was not enough land for his flocks and Abraham's flocks together. Lot separated from Abraham and chose to live near Sodom, an area that was very fertile. Lot's business dealings caused him to compromise in his choice of associates. He tried to be an example to them, but ultimately he lost all of his possessions and most of his family. (See Genesis 12-14, 19.)



LOT

3. Mixing faith and self-effort

Jacob was assured by God that he would be blessed, but he felt that he had to help God work out the blessing. He talked his brother out of the birthright, stole his brother's blessing, and cleverly worked to get his father-in-law's flocks. God brought Jacob to a crisis when his brother Esau came with four hundred men to get revenge for being cheated. Jacob first made restitution and then spent a night wrestling with God. Through that experience he demonstrated a new trust in God, but the seeds of destruction took a heavy toll with his wife and children. (See Genesis 27-34.)



JACOB

4. Yielding to covetousness

Achan had fought in Joshua's army and had helped to conquer Jericho. He knew of God's promise to give victory and certain spoils of the land to Joshua and his army. In his service for God, however, Achan was exposed to the corrupt things of the enemy. Rather than treating them with Godly contempt, he determined how they would benefit his life; and then he took the forbidden treasures in violation of God's clear command, .. *Keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed...* (Joshua 6:18). God judged Achan by having him and his entire family stoned to death (See Joshua 7.)



ACHAN

5. Commercializing religion

Gideon was used of God to conquer the Midianites and to free Israel from their oppression. The men of Israel asked Gideon to be their king. He refused this honor but requested instead that he be given all of the golden earrings of the enemy. From these earrings he made a golden ephod, a richly-embroidered outer vestment worn by Jewish priests. This ephod became a national tourist attraction; and although it was used for religious worship, it caused "... *all Israel [to go]... a whoring after it. . .*" (Judges 8:27). Gideon had many wives and seventy sons. After he died, God judged his family through the son of a concubine. This son killed sixty-nine of his half-brothers and seized the kingship which his father had refused. (See Judges 8:24—9:6.)



GIDEON

6. Cashing in on another's ministry

Gehazi was the servant of the prophet Elisha. When Naaman, the captain of the Syrian army, came to Elisha to be cured of leprosy, Elisha instructed Naaman through Gehazi. Naaman was miraculously healed of his leprosy, and he wanted to give Elisha a valuable reward. Gehazi listened as Elisha clearly refused it. After Naaman left, Gehazi ran after him and, through deception, got some of the reward for himself. He was sharply rebuked by Elisha, and the leprosy of Naaman came upon Gehazi. (See II Kings 5.)



GEHAZI

7. Trying to worship Christ and money

The rich young ruler possessed more than riches. He had character qualities that were outstanding. He showed diligence in coming to Jesus, he demonstrated honor to Jesus, he had a teachable spirit, and he was morally upright from his youth. Jesus detected only one major flaw in this young man—he loved money. Jesus instructed him to sell all that he had, give it to the poor, and then follow Him. Upon hearing this, the rich young ruler walked away sorrowfully, for he had great riches. Jesus used this incident to explain how difficult it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. (See Luke 18:18-30.)



THE RICH YOUNG RULER

8. Selling inside information

Judas was the most trusted of the disciples. He was the only one among the disciples to hold an office. Perhaps he was appointed treasurer because his interest in money was obvious. He evaluated events on the basis of monetary gain for the treasury and for himself. Consequently, he totally missed the message and significance of Mary's anointing of Jesus' feet. He determined that the ointment which she used could have been sold for 300 pence and given to the poor. It is possible that the information he sold to the religious leaders was designed to enrich his pockets while giving Christ another opportunity to escape death. When he saw that he had betrayed innocent blood, Judas returned the money and hanged himself. (See Matthew 26-27.)



JUDAS

9. Purchasing public praise

Ananias and Sapphira were involved in the social concerns of the early Church. When Barnabas sold his property and gave the money to the Church leaders, Ananias and Sapphira saw the admiration and encouragement that he received. They decided to follow Barnabas' example, but they secretly agreed between themselves to keep back part of the money. In this way they planned on getting public recognition while still maintaining private resources. However, their deception failed to elude the spiritual alertness of Peter. When they lied about the amount of the sale, Peter rebuked them. Immediately after being rebuked by Peter, both Ananias and Sapphira fell dead at his feet. (See Acts 5.)



ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

10. Trying to buy spirituality

Simon was a converted sorcerer. Before his salvation he had been a very powerful person. He had kept the people spellbound with his magic and experienced their continual admiration. When Simon saw Peter transmitting the power of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, he immediately recognized this as being more effective than any of his magic. He visualized the personal gain and admiration which he could have with this power, so he offered Peter money to buy it. Peter sharply rebuked Simon for his carnal approach to spiritual ministry. In his rebuke, Peter exposed Simon's root problems, saying that Simon was in the gall of bitterness and bound with his own iniquity. (See Acts 8:9-24.)



SIMON

***CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY
WHOM YOU WILL SERVE***



Genesis 22

HOW TO SERVE GOD RATHER THAN MONEY

Most Christians, if asked, would claim that they are serving God. They would deny that they have a greater love of money than of God. However, God knows our hearts. He searches out our motives. He is aware of how many of the following steps we have actually taken.

1.

NAME THE THINGS THAT YOU LOVE THE MOST

***...Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest...* (Genesis 22:2).**

God will always start with the things that we love the most. He will direct us to name the people or possessions which have captured our affections.

Unless the objects of our strongest love are dedicated to Him, they will become objects of our worship and sources of future sorrow. In the end, we will lose the very things that we refused to give to God.

Who or what, if taken from you, would give you the greatest inward pain:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your Wife | <input type="checkbox"/> Your Freedom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your Son | <input type="checkbox"/> Your Parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your Daughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Your Reputation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your Home | <input type="checkbox"/> Your Money |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your Job | <input type="checkbox"/> Your Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Your Possessions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your Sisters or Brothers | <input type="checkbox"/> Your Skills |

- **Present them completely to the Lord**

"... Offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Genesis 22:2).

God's way of doing business involves a specific time and place. He wants us to make definite decisions that we will remember.

Just as Abraham built his altar, we can also get alone with the Lord and "build our altar."

Abraham was confident that the God who told him to offer his only son was also able to raise him up again. We can be sure that whatever we give to God He can protect and bless and restore. *"... I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Timothy 1:12).*

By giving our most cherished objects of affection to the Lord, we are saying: "From this moment on these things belong to You. I give them to You. I have no more rights to them or claim on them."

- **Die to them in your human emotions**

"And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son" (Genesis 22:10).

The action of dedicating our most cherished possessions to the Lord is not complete until we die to them in our human emotions.

This means that we *thank God ahead of time* for whatever He allows to happen to the things that we gave to Him.

Be prepared to thank God if He allows the things that you gave to Him to be taken from you; and be prepared to thank God if they are entrusted back to your care.

Abraham never could have lifted the knife over his son if he had not first "died to him" in his human emotions. Without this emotional break, the offering is only a meaningless ritual.

Realize that God will test your sincerity with whatever you give to Him.

2.

EXPECT GOD TO SHOW HIS SUPERNATURAL POWER THROUGH THAT WHICH YOU GIVE TO HIM

...Lay not thine hand upon the lad.... Because thou... hast not withheld thy son ... I will bless thee ..." (Genesis 22:12, 16-17).

Abraham learned that the real sacrifice takes place in the heart, not in the act of sacrifice itself.

Abraham also illustrates that once we emotionally let go of our most treasured possessions, God will be able to show His miraculous power through them. They will become the basis of our service to God and the means through which He works.

Abraham gave his son to God, and God made of him a great nation. Moses gave his rod to God, and God worked through it to lead the nation of Israel out of bondage.

- Give your marriage to God, and He will give you love that surpasses human understanding. (See Ephesians 3:19.)
- Give your family to God, and He will raise up the foundations of many Godly generations. (See Isaiah 61:4.)
- Give your home and possessions to God, and you .. *shall receive an hundredfold now in this time ... and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:30).*
- Give your friendships to God, and He will allow you to experience true fellowship. (See I John 1:7.)
- Give your reputation to God, and He will lead you to make right decisions in order to protect His reputation. (See Psalm 23:3.)

3.

THE PRECISE STEPS WHICH A FATHER TOOK IN TRANSFERRING OWNERSHIP TO GOD

I PICTURED MYSELF KNEELING BEFORE GOD'S ALTAR

"I knew that I had failed in managing the money that God had entrusted to me. My deep indebtedness was daily evidence of that fact. After hearing about dedicating everything I had to God, I went into my bedroom and got down on my knees.

"I pictured everything that I loved and owned behind me—my wife, children, home, car, job, and every other item that I could think of. One by one I pictured myself taking each item from behind me and placing it on God's altar.

"I prayed, 'God, I give You my wife, whom I love. From now on, she belongs to You. If You allow something to happen beyond my control, I will thank You for it. And if You allow me to continue to enjoy her love and fellowship, I will thank You for that. Lord, here is my job. I give You the rights to it. If You continue to allow me to have the job, I will accept the responsibility of working as unto You.'

"I continued praying in this manner until every single item was taken from behind me and placed on the altar. When I finished, I felt an inner freedom that I had never experienced before. That dedication became the turning point in my finances. It released me from the pressure of doing things my way and freed me to learn how to do things God's way.

I WAS ABLE TO TEACH MY CHILDREN TRUTHS THAT HAD BECOME REAL TO ME

"Once I experienced the freedom and blessing of dedicating everything I had to God, I was able to include the family in any new dedication of a possession. One day we bought a camper. I said to my wife and children, 'Let's go out in the camper and dedicate it to God.' We prayed, 'Lord, You gave us the funds for this camper and the direction to buy it. We now give it back to You. You are free to do with it whatever You want. If You allow us to use it, we purpose to use it to bring glory to You.' This time of prayer was especially significant to my young son, and the camper became a means for God to teach valuable lessons to our family."

CHOOSE TO SERVE GOD



NICODEMUS

"YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN"

Nicodemus was a religious ruler. He came to Jesus one night and listened as Jesus said to him, "... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

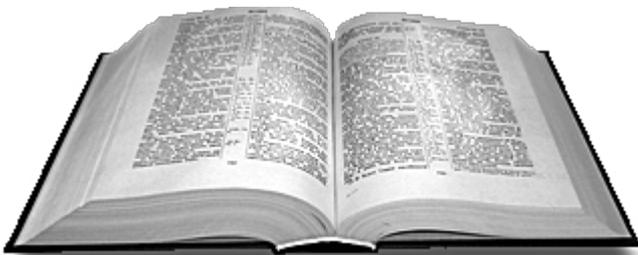
THE FIRST STEP IS TO RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR

1. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:10, 23).
2. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).
3. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).
4. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).
5. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).
6. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).
7. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16).
8. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13).

Personal Commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ

"Thank You, God, for loving me, a sinner, and for sending Your Son to pay the penalty of my sin. Right now I put my trust in His death and resurrection for my salvation, and I receive the eternal life that You offer me through Him. Thank You for hearing this prayer, cleansing all my sin through Christ's blood, and accepting me now as Your child. Teach me and direct me through Your Word and Your Spirit to discover Your purpose and will for my life. Amen."

Date _____



Personal Commitment to Serve God Rather Than Money

As a believer, I now purpose to give the ownership and rights to my money, possessions, and time to God. I purpose that the principles of His Word will now be my final authority for earning and managing whatever God entrusts to me.

Date _____

Signature _____

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO TRANSFER OWNERSHIP TO GOD?

Use the words at the right to complete each statement.

1. Transferring ownership to God means that every decision as to how my money will be earned or used will be based on _____
2. After I dedicate my money to God, I must view myself as a _____ rather than an owner.
3. Once I transfer ownership to God, He has the right to _____ those funds as He sees fit.
4. By giving God the ownership of my money, I allow Him to work _____ through it.
5. God will require me to follow His _____ once I transfer ownership of my money to Him.
6. One day I must give _____ as to how I managed all the funds that God entrusted to me.
7. God usually asks for the object of my most cherished affection _____
8. Giving God the rightful ownership of my possessions means that I _____ to them.
9. The actions of _____ in Scripture provide an excellent example to me of how to transfer ownership of my possessions to God.
10. I have purposed this date to serve _____ rather than money.

- A. Commands
- B. Supernaturally
- C. The Lord
- D. First
- E. Scriptural principles
- F. Abraham
- G. Steward
- H. An account
- I. Take or leave
- J. Die emotionally



WHOSE CHOICES FREED GOD TO WORK SUPERNATURALLY?

Match each statement with the best answer.

1. God asked me to take what was in my hand and give it to Him. He then gave it back to me and worked through it to show His supernatural power. Who am I?
2. I willingly offered what was in my hand to the Lord. He took it, broke it, blessed it, and performed a great miracle through it. Who am I?
3. My son and I were one meal away from starvation, and God's servant asked me for that meal. I gave it to him, and God fed us for three years. Who am I?
4. I gave a thousand offerings but could not outgive God. He had me name my greatest wish, and He miraculously fulfilled it. Who am I?
5. I gave my rights and expectations of marriage and children to God. He marvelously provided a husband and descendants who became world famous. Who am I?
6. I surrendered to God what I longed for the most. He took what I gave Him, but He gave me fivefold in its place. Who am I?
7. I sold what I had and gave all the money to the Lord. He used it to encourage the entire Church, and He gave me a special ministry. Who am I?
8. I gave the little I had to the Lord, but He saw the motive of my heart and used my gift to teach an important truth about sacrificial giving. Who am I?
- A. The widow of Zarephath**
(See *1 Kings 17:8-16.*)
- B. The widow at the treasury**
(See *Mark 12:41-44.*)
- C. Ruth**
(See *Ruth.*)
- D. The lad with the loaves and fishes**
(See *John 6:1-14.*)
- E. Barnabas**
(See *Acts 4:32-37.*)
- F. Solomon**
(See *1 Kings 3:4-15.*)
- G. Moses**
(See *Exodus 4:2-5.*)
- H. Hannah**
(See *1 Samuel 1:10-2:21.*)



WHOSE LIFE GOALS WERE GREATER THAN MONEY?

Match each statement with the best answer.

- 1. He learned that God's people were in great distress, because their enemies could easily torment and afflict them. His goal was to build a protective wall around them.
- 2. He wanted to encourage worship and praise to the God of heaven and earth. He dedicated the rest of his life to making preparations to build a house of praise and prayer.
- 3. He saw his people suffer under the cruel treatment of the heathen rulers. He purposed to make whatever sacrifices that were necessary to lead them out of bondage.
- 4. He realized that God's judgment would soon overwhelm the wicked people of his day. He invested everything that he had into what became both a warning to his generation and an escape for him and his family.
- 5. He lived among a nation that refused to obey God's Word. He saw the inevitable consequences and committed his life to giving persistent warnings of coming judgment.
- 6. He had an outstanding education, practical skills, and influential friends. He turned his back on them all in order to proclaim the Gospel to those who had never heard it.
- 7. He had specialized training and could have made a comfortable living. Instead, he used his life and skills to serve one of God's greatest leaders.
- 8. He followed the goals which his parents gave him for serving God. This involved rejecting evil companions and wrongful gain. He provided wise leadership during a time when this was lacking among God's people.

- A. Luke**
(See *Colossians 4:14.*)
- B. Noah**
(See *Hebrews 11:7.*)
- C. Nehemiah**
(See *Nehemiah 1.*)
- D. Samuel**
(See *I Samuel 1-3.*)
- E. Moses**
(See *Hebrews 11:24-29.*)
- F. Paul**
(See *Philippians 3:4-8.*)
- G. David**
(See *II Samuel 7:4-11.*)
- H. Jeremiah**
(See *Jeremiah 1.*)

