

The purpose of this publication is to spread the truth, to sow God's good seed, the Word of God, and to confront religious error for the good of men's souls. Editor: Allen Dvorak

Published weekly by a group of God's people in the Monrovia community and meeting at:
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<http://spreadingtruth.org>

I have no reason to doubt that God received John and Mary as faithful servants, based on what I know about their lives. If I understand the truths in God's word, I am convinced that they are both in better circumstances now than when they lived in this world. Neither has any care about the "things" they left behind. It is ironic that sometimes people are buried with some of their "things" as though needing them or even caring about them in the world beyond the grave.

I need to cultivate that same attitude toward "my" things *while living in this life*, i.e., they are just "things" and of use to me only in this world. My life needs to be defined by my relationship to God and how that affects my conduct. The Christian's faith should be that God will take care of him; even the accumulation of wealth in this world doesn't guarantee safety or ease. Robbers can break in and steal; things are subject to corruption and loss (Matthew 6:19). The Lord counseled us to

"lay up for [our]selves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal" (v. 20). The reason? Not only are earthly treasures uncertain and fleeting, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (v. 21). The covetous man may talk about heaven, but his heart is really focused on this world.

The task of going through John's possessions has impressed me with the fact that someday I also will leave all of my possessions behind. It would be good to open my hands to others, before death does it for me.

What defines your life?

Bible Challenge Question - Answer

The unbelieving Jews at Corinth brought Paul before the proconsul Gallio, accusing him of "persuading people to worship God contrary to the law" (Acts 18:12-13). Gallio cared nothing about that and refused to judge the matter. Sosthenes, ruler of the synagogue, was then beaten; who beat him is disputed. The NKJV reads "all the Greeks," but the ESV reads "they all" (textual variant). Paul mentioned a man named Sosthenes in the salutation of 1 Corinthians, written from Ephesus. Although the name was not unusual, could this be the same man mentioned as beaten in Acts? It has been suggested that the unbelieving Jews beat Sosthenes because of his sympathies toward Paul (Polhill, *The New American Commentary: Acts*, pp. 388-9). This is not out of the question; the previous "ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, had already been converted with all his household.



Volume 10, Number 5

January 29, 2017

What Defines Your Life?

By Allen Dvorak

My father-in-law, John Nunn, lived to be 85 years old. In his final months and days, he suffered from dementia and cancer, but he served the Lord as long as he was able. He and his wife Mary, who passed away in 2010, were quiet people and so it was not surprising that he passed away quietly on July 12th of this past year.

A little background might be helpful for the reader unfamiliar with my family. When we moved back to the States from Brazil, we came to the Madison, Alabama area. We built a house somewhat along the lines of a condominium, a ranch style home with two independent living areas joined by a door in between. My in-laws lived in San Marcos, TX at the time, but they moved to live with us in June of 2002.

They were "private" folks and we respected their privacy as they did ours. When Mary died, John didn't keep much of her personal items, giving nearly all of them away. He lived in "the apartment" for another 5½ years. In

his final months, Debbie and I spent more time on "his side" of the house, helping with meals, laundry and taking care of his cat.

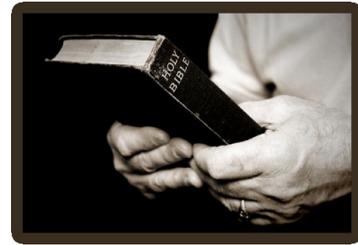
After John's passing, we have had the task of deciding what to do with his possessions. Although we have started going through clothing and "important papers," much of the apartment remains as he left it. During hunting season, I have used "the apartment" to get myself prepared in the early hours of the morning to keep from waking Debbie.

Essentially everything in the apartment – furniture, appliances, electronics, etc. – became ours. But I have a hard time using things in the apartment without thinking that they are John's. It was his home and his "stuff." It is difficult to describe the emotion, but I feel like an interloper, just by entering the apartment, almost as though I need to apologize for intruding into his personal space.

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Make Up Your Mind!

By Allen Dvorak



Text: _____

Challenges to choose:

1. _____ (_____)
2. _____ (_____)
3. _____ (_____)

Jesus said that we can't serve two _____.

James has been called the _____.

“Double-minded” only appears ___x in the Scriptures (ESV).

“Double-minded” literally means _____.

Examples of the double-minded man in James:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

A grave danger for the Christian is the _____.

“No one can serve two _____, for either he will _____ the one and _____ the other, or he will be _____ to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve _____ and _____.

-- Matthew _____; ESV

“Successful people are simply those with success habits.”

-- Brian Tracy

“Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely.”

-- Karen Kaiser Clark

It has occurred to me that I associate these “things” with John and Mary although I know intuitively that neither of them has any use for them anymore. The “things” in the apartment were associated with my in-laws for so long that I think of them, particularly John, every time I see their things.

The apostle Paul certainly wrote the truth when he affirmed that each of us brings nothing in the way of possessions when we enter this world and we take nothing with us when we leave (1 Timothy 6:7). All the “stuff” that we use while living in this world will become of no importance in the life to come. As someone has said, “There are no pockets in a burial shroud.”

On one occasion, Jesus was asked by someone in the crowd to act as an arbiter between him and his brother regarding an inheritance. Jesus refused to do so, but in His response He said so much more. “Take care,” He said, “and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15). Jesus continued

by telling the parable of the foolish rich farmer who “laid up treasure for himself” rather than being rich toward God (v. 21).

What an important truth! The rich farmer had been blessed with an abundant harvest and his entire focus was on how he was going to preserve that wealth for himself. But our lives are not defined by our “stuff”; the things I “own” are just tools for survival in this world and when my life here is over, I will leave every one of them behind for someone else to use or dispose of.

The lesson for us, of course, is not to get “attached” to our possessions. Life is much more than temporary “things” and they can become our master as we struggle to keep what we have. The last commandment in the Decalogue makes it obvious that covetousness can involve more than just “things” (Exodus 20:17 – “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”). Covetousness certainly involves the sinful desire to have what belongs to my neighbor, but it can also involve the selfish determination to keep everything I have for myself (note the intention of the rich farmer in the parable). Covetousness is definitely a danger for human beings and perhaps even more as we accumulate more things.

Bible Challenge Question

Who was beaten in front of the judgment seat at Corinth?

The answer to this question is on the back page.

[Concluded on page 4]