

Materialism versus Spirituality

Materialism is a form of idol worship. It is the desire for more and more material things like bigger cars, bigger houses, bigger bank balances and more earthly possessions in general. It is the building up of little kingdoms and little empires, often at the cost of others.

Is this really why we are on this planet? Do any of these desires really have any eternal value for our souls? Do we really have to keep up with the Joneses? How rich do we want to be before we are satisfied? Will we ever be satisfied? Who is our God? Is it money and material things? Do we really need God, when we have all the material things that we can think of? Do we really need God when we have insurance policies, pension funds, medical aids and huge bank balances?

1. Who is God?
2. Where is God?
3. How do we serve God?

These three questions are answered by Jesus in Matthew 22:34-40, which are arguably the most important verses in the whole Bible. It is called The Great Commandment and it goes like this: "LOVE the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with your entire mind".

How do we love someone or something that we do not know and cannot see? Well, to answer this question, Jesus added a second commandment, which is equal to the first, and it goes like this: "LOVE your neighbour as you love yourself." Some people may say that they love their neighbours, but they resent and hate certain classes of society and certain race groups and people of different faiths. In Luke 6:27-28, Jesus tells us the following: "LOVE your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you and pray for those who ill-treat you." It follows therefore that we should LOVE all of humanity, irrespective of race, creed or moral difference. To answer the question as to how we should LOVE God, Jesus gave us the second commandment, and that is to LOVE our neighbours and also our enemies, in other words we should LOVE all people. We can take it a step further by loving all of creation. So how do we love our creator? It is quite simple. LOVE all of creation. To LOVE God is to LOVE humanity.

Humanity was created in God's image. Let's not judge and condemn people, let's LOVE them. All were created in God's image and all are equal. Okay, so now we know how to LOVE God. We have a choice whether or not to LOVE all people and all of creation. We don't have to, but if we don't, then we don't really LOVE God, or know Him. If we say we LOVE God, but hate certain people or classes of societies, we are liars.

If we LOVE God, we will serve Him. True love is not conditional. To truly LOVE God is to serve Him unconditionally. How do we serve God unconditionally? Serve humanity unconditionally and live in harmony with all of creation. When we accumulate riches and earthly possessions, who do we really serve? Do we serve our selfish desires, or do we serve God? Who is our God? Is it money and material possessions, or is it something greater than that? Jesus teaches us in Matthew 6:24-34 that we should place God and the will of God above our worries and material possessions. 'No one can be a slave of two masters; he will hate one and LOVE the other. You cannot serve both God and money.' (Matthew 6:24). 'Be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what He requires of you, and He will provide you with all these other things.' (Matthew 6:33). Make a choice today. Are you materialistically or spiritually inclined? Bear in mind that as you sow, you shall also reap, in this life and the next.

In Matthew 22:40 Jesus tells us that the whole Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depend on these two Commandments. If you understand the Great Commandment, the Law of Moses and the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) will be written on your heart.

1. You will serve only God.
2. You will not worship manmade images or idols.
3. You will not misuse the name of God.
4. You will set a day aside for rest and spiritual matters.
5. You will respect your father and your mother.
6. You will not kill.
7. You will not commit adultery.
8. You will not steal.
9. You will not lie.
10. You will not desire something that does not belong to you.

The teachings of the prophets will also be written on your heart if you love God and all of creation. Most Old Testament prophecies have already come to pass and can be considered as Jewish history. The New Covenant replaces the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant was written for unsophisticated and perverse generations. Jesus came to break the curse of hypocrisy, religiosity, condemnation and judgement. We have no right to judge and condemn one another. We should educate one another. Let's not always criticize government. What are we doing to improve the status quo?

Be like Jesus to the world and lead by example. Did Jesus live in a mansion and accumulate wealth and riches for himself at the cost of others? He literally sacrificed His life to uplift humanity even to the point of death. He came to save humanity from themselves. He never considered himself superior to other human beings. He despised the Pharisees and Scribes for their hypocrisy and religiosity. Religious people crucified the Lord Jesus. Religious people don't know God. Religious people try to obey God by following manmade rules and regulations. Religious people serve God out of fear and not out of LOVE. Religious people try to earn a place in heaven by doing good deeds because of fear of punishment. Religious people should stop reading the Old Testament and start focusing on the New Testament. In the Old Testament God is portrayed as a god of wrath. In the New Testament God is portrayed as a God of LOVE and grace. The apostle Paul was very religious prior to his meeting with the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. He thought he was doing God a service by killing followers of the Christian faith. Clearly he was serving the "devil" and not God. When he met Jesus, his spiritual eyes opened and he turned away from his wicked ways. He ended up writing approximately two-thirds of the New Testament. Pure Christianity is to LOVE God and all of creation unconditionally. Pure Christianity is to do the will of God selflessly without expecting anything in return. Pure Christianity is to crucify the SELF and to follow the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit shows the way. The Holy Spirit opens new doors. The Holy Spirit brings wisdom, insight and inspiration. The Holy Spirit brings LOVE, joy and divine peace that surpass all understanding. The Holy Spirit is patient and kind. The Holy Spirit is powerful, yet humble and self-controlled. The Holy Spirit is good and faithful. Ask God every morning to fill you with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will lead you and guide you and help you to overcome the things of this world, including materialism. God is LOVE and perfect love drives out all fear. Love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment (1 John 4:7-21). Loving God implies loving all of humanity and all of God's creation.

'Be obedient to God, and do not allow your lives to be shaped by those desires you had when you were still ignorant. Instead, be holy in all that you do, just as God who called you is holy. The scripture says, "Be holy because I am holy" (1 Peter 1:14-16). God will not give

us impossible tasks. The Holy Spirit will help us to become Holy as God requires us to be. The Holy Spirit is a free gift from God to all those who sincerely ask for it. Keep on asking for the Holy Spirit to fill you and to flow through you. Ask and you shall receive (Luke 11:1-13). Place emphasis on verses 9 and 13. When God is on your side you have no need to fear anything or anyone including the "devil". If you turn your back on God, the "devil" will haunt you and lead you astray. Turn your back on the "devil" and follow Jesus. Pray at every opportunity as the Spirit leads. Don't be ashamed of Jesus. Stand up for Jesus. It's the least we can do. He did God's will right up to the point of crucifixion and gave His life to save us from our paths of self-destruction. God's Holy Spirit resurrected Him three days later to prove to mankind that even death can be overcome. O death where is your sting? (1 Corinthians 15:55). Make the decision today to turn back to God so that your joy may be complete.

Don't be prideful and arrogant and think that everything you have is as a result of your own efforts. All blessings come from God, be they material, spiritual, mental or physical. Be thankful and apply your resources for the benefit of all. Don't be materialistic. Use your wealth and talents to uplift humanity as a whole.

Stop criticizing the government. Use your God-given talents and make a difference to this new world. The old world came to an end during 2012. It's the end of the world as we know it. Revival is here. Peace and harmony is our portion from the 21st century to the 31st century. LOVE and LIGHT dispel hate and darkness.

Stop being so materialistic, and become more spiritual. Lead by example and make this world a better place.

Believe in yourself, follow Jesus and trust God.