

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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What Is Your Trademark?

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A trademark is a sign, symbol, or brand that identifies a thing or person. Trademarks are everywhere: We see them on clothes, buildings, billboards, and products. Christ said, "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" (Matthew 6:24 NKJV). Mammon literally means "riches." Our worldly wealth becomes an identifying trademark that defines which master we serve.

Doesn't it seem odd that Christ would contrast serving God with serving riches? Most people would say, "I am not serving money!" It seems strange to us because we don't see our riches as God sees them. God is watching to see whether you are serving Him or your riches. God will know whom you really love most by what you do with your wealth.

Someone may ask, "If a person teaches Sunday school, serves as a deacon, works in the nursery, or pastors a church, aren't they serving God?" Perhaps, but according to what Christ is teaching, that is no guarantee. How can we know whom we are serving? Jesus gave us some guidelines to help us understand which master we serve.

One measure of determining which master you serve is whether you worry about riches. In Matthew 6:25-34, Christ said we shouldn't worry about life and whether we will have food to eat or clothes to wear. When we begin worrying about these things, we soon find ourselves serving riches rather than God. Worldly wealth becomes a preoccupation in order to secure our desire for life, food, and clothes. We often direct our efforts to working in order to have more wealth rather than working to serve God. This is simply selfishness disguised as responsibility.

Christ reminded His disciples that God did not want them to worry about the provision for their needs. God

provides food for the birds and clothes the flowers of the field, both of which die. If God provides for birds and flowers, which are temporary, then He will provide all the more for those who will live eternally with Him.

God wants us to trust Him to provide for our needs and give Him first priority. When we seek God's kingdom and His righteousness first, then we acknowledge God as Master and Lord (Matthew 6:33).

The next time you go to the mall, notice how many trademarks you see. Each social group has an identity that is quickly noticed. People dress differently by age, race, and social class. Christians are to be distinctive in our use of money so we can show non-Christians our spiritual trademark.

What do you have that God could use for His kingdom? Are you willing to use what you have today for the Lord and trust Him to provide for your future? So many people are working today to build a secure future for themselves through the accumulation of wealth. Security doesn't come from the things we possess in this life. Security comes from the Lord.

Christ is calling you to serve God rather than your worldly riches. Live by faith—trusting God to provide for your needs. Be generous—tithing on your income whether you can afford to or not. Live within your means—don't use credit to acquire a higher lifestyle than God intended for you. Rise each day excited to serve the Lord rather than your wallet. Be content with the life God has given to you, and you will find a happiness that money can't buy!

You are wearing your trademark. What is it?

BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: bbcfoundation.org; e-mail: info@bbcfoundation.org