



Jesus said to his disciples: "I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones. If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth? If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another, who will give you what is yours? No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all these things and sneered at him. And he said to them, "You justify yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your hearts; for what is of human esteem is an abomination in the sight of God."

Introductory Prayer: Father in heaven, I come to you today to praise and worship you. In my faith, I reach out to you, knowing that you love me and are leading me to heaven. I trust in your mercy and boundless love.

Petition: Lord, help me to break the disordered attachments in my life.

1. Earning Trust: Parents know well what this means! Discovering that your teenage child's story about being at a friend's house studying was just that — a story — makes for a very unpleasant realization. Trust has been broken. After the "grounding" takes effect, the speech is then delivered: "Here's what you do if you want to earn back our trust..." Certainly the family car won't be lent out again until progress in the small things has been seen. That's the message Jesus has for us today. Our sins are like the trust-breakers of the teenage kid. They show we aren't ready for God's greatest gifts, so we have to start with the small things. Each grace we respond to opens the door to receiving

another grace. If we are trustworthy in very small matters, we can be trusted with the greater. Following through on the everyday graces will someday lead to the grace of graces: the Beatific Vision.

2. God and/or Mammon: Part of earning trust with God is getting our priorities straight. Taking a God-AND-mammon approach to life is similar to trying to say the rosary while watching television. The Hail Mary's may come out, but they do so with as much reflection as is put into breathing. We simply can't have our cake and eat it too. Foolishly entertaining any bad habits (our personal version of mammon) that erode our commitment shows God that we are not spiritually mature enough to be fully trusted. On the other hand, when we take a determined step to break these attachments, we make a big step forward. God must come first!

3. Human Eyes See Only Part of the Story: Naturally, this effort to live a God-centered life is going to generate mixed reactions. The Pharisees scorn Jesus for this: To them, he seems totally naïve about money. Like them, if we see things only from a merely human perspective, big chunks of reality elude us. Jesus is the one who has the complete picture. We can trust him completely to lead us in the right direction. We won't need to hedge our bets with human props for our sense of security.

Conversation with Christ: Lord Jesus, thank you for helping me to realize that your grace is more important than anything I could ever have in this world. Break the hold of mammon in my life so that I might serve you with greater purity of intention.

Resolution: I will make that sacrificial donation to charity that I have been putting off.