

Who's Your Daddy?  
Matthew 6:19-243  
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Show "What Defines You?" video; then Alan reads scripture

This passage is all about what defines us; what is it that is a priority in our lives; or as the 1968 song by the Zombies puts it: "Who's Your Daddy?" What is it in your life that controls you and what you do?

None of us are immune from that sort of question; we make decisions about what to embrace all the time. Walk into the voting booth, and you'll be asked to decide: Republican or Democrat- or something else? Conservative or liberal? Casinos in Ohio, or not? Skyline or Gold Star? Kroger expects you to decide- Diet Coke or Diet Pepsi, or Kroger Private Selection? Turn on your television- cable or satellite, channel 3, 7, 9, 12m, ESPN or the Food Network? Jazz or hip-hop, classical, rock n' roll or country-western? Underneath it all, what are the principles, the priorities, the issues that determine your choices? Are you going to be kind or cruel? Soft-spoken or harsh? Full of love or brimming with angry resentment?

What we read this morning comes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. If you go back to the beginning of Matthew 5, you'll find that Jesus calls his followers together and begins to teach them: "Blessed are the poor in Spirit," he begins- "for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." In a way that is reminiscent of Moses bringing the Ten Commandments to the Hebrew people from Mount Sinai, Jesus offers up guidelines for

living life. Whether the beatitudes, or the Lord's Prayer, or what we call the Golden Rule- Jesus teaches us about life from God's point of view. We find the sayings about the lilies of the field in the Sermon on the Mount, encouragement to ask-seek-knock in approaching God, and the exhortation to be like salt or a light on a lamp stand with regard to those around us. Underneath all of it is a foundational sense of having God at the center of our living... and that when God's our heavenly Father- we won't get lost along life's way. We have to choose the foundation upon which to build our lives, and it can make all the difference in where we end up.

Admiral Robert Perry was working his way toward the North Pole, and had pitched his tent somewhere up north. After setting up camp, he decided to reconnoiter the area. He hadn't gone far when a blinding blizzard suddenly struck, and he was all alone. He realized that he didn't know which direction his shelter was located; without it, he would freeze to death. Plunging his walking stick into the ice, he walked one direction and would return to his central point. He then walked another direction, being careful to keep his bearings focused on that stick. After four or five efforts, he finally found the tent he was looking for and crawled into safety. He had a point of reference- a core something to go by.

Faith in God is like that. When the blizzards of life strike, when we feel we've lost the way, when we're uncertain and afraid... having God at the center of our lives gives us what we need to live rightly... but too often- we choose something else... and run the risk of losing our way in idolatry.

While Moses was on top of Mt. Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments- those sacred instructions for life... down below... does anyone remember what the Hebrew

people were doing? (picture of golden calf, if you've got it) They had fashioned for themselves an idol, and were dancing around a golden calf in a wild decadent festival of self-indulgence. Their living had collapsed into themselves, and they embraced a self-centered lifestyle. If you remember, Moses returned to witness all that, and he smashed the stone tablets to the ground in pronouncing God's judgment on the people. God was no longer central- in spite of all God had done for them. (close golden calf picture)

CS Lewis once wrote, *“One of the dangers in having a lot of money is that you may be quite satisfied with the kinds of happiness money can give and so fail to realize your need for God. If everything seems to come simply by writing checks, you may forget that you are at every moment totally dependent on God.”* A risk for us whenever we begin to dance around our net-worth or 401Ks and make them the central focus of our living... whether they are going up, or going down... we not only turn away from God, but we turn away from our neighbors in need by looking only to our own interests. We begin to live small-hearted, shabby lives- no matter how much money we've got- lives reflecting whichever way the stock market winds are blowing. Our consumerism is a choice we make... and whether we've got a lot or a little, it too easily becomes our own golden calf- an idol that leaves us vulnerable to the judgment of God who demands that we live lives well-grounded in him.

What I find intriguing is that the insight offered us by Jesus emerges from 2000 year old sacred scribblings. His insights would be right at home in today's psychology text book, and can be found in advice columnists on every hand. Focus on the good in life, he says- not the destructive sorts of things that will darken your soul. Count up your blessings- don't worry so much about what you don't have. Remember- the glass is half-

full, not half-empty. Unless you want to shrink your relationships down to the size of your computer screen- the pornography has got to go. Turn off the TV, get off the couch and volunteer to help... focus on someone else and their need. Do those sorts of things, and the darkness- what we might call depression- will begin to lift. Remember how Jesus spoke of the body being full of light... 1<sup>st</sup> Century wisdom with a 21<sup>st</sup> Century impact.

As for your cherished possessions- Jesus states the obvious; it's all going to either rot or rust; someday, somebody else is going to drive your Lexus unless it gets shredded for scrap in the next version of cash for clunkers. Try instead storing up treasures in heaven where computer hackers can't break in and steal them. After all, like the bumper sticker says: "He who dies with most toys.... dies." Someone once told me that that the most important thing on a tombstone isn't the birth date or date of someone's death.... it's the dash between the two. That dash is where you and I do all our living, and that dash is where whatever God has given you is to be used wisely, and not so selfishly. Giving is a wonderful antidote to the insidious nature of consumerism; sacrificial, extra-mile giving allows you to come alongside God's sacrificial gift of his only son, Jesus Christ for you and for me. Try giving a bit more for the least of those Jesus so clearly told us to care about... and today's scripture promises that you and I will be storing up riches in heaven.

**(Adventure of Faith logo)** In just a moment, you'll be asked to bring your Adventure of Faith pledge cards to the front of the church. Don't just do nothing... do something, and base it on your faith in God; let God direct your living, your lifestyle- not something or someone else. If you're not in a place right now to pledge financial support to this church and its ministries.... take a card out of the pew pocket in front of you and

simply write on it: “I want to pray for Crestview;” or write on it where or how you’d like to do something through the church- and then do it.

Who’s your Daddy... who’s going to direct your life? How about your Heavenly Father? Invest something of yourself in the Kingdom of God, and live out your priorities to the glory of God. Let’s pray....