

“Following the Call” by Charles E. Moore

IV. Kingdom Priorities – God or Mammon Ch. 41

Last week we discussed **Matthew 6:22-23** – “The eye is the Lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! **Timothy Keller** says: “He’s (**Jesus**) saying that materialism is an inordinate desire or dependence on money and material things has the peculiar effect of blinding you spiritually...”. How can materialism blind us? And how do we prevent this? **Matthew 6:24** – “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” What does this mean to you?



Eberhard Arnold (1883 - 1935) was a German publisher and founder of the Bruderhof community in 1920.

Inner Land: A Guide Into the Heart of the Gospel: This is widely considered Arnold's most seminal work. He labored over it for most of his adult life, and the manuscript had to be buried in metal boxes at night to save it from Nazi raids. It offers a deep call away from modern societal greed and nationalistic fervor toward a life firmly rooted in spiritual strength. His other books include; **Salt and Light**, **God's Revolution**, **The Early Christians in Their Own Words**, and **Called to Community**.

Arnold says: “Jesus defined with utmost sharpness the nature of this mammon spirit. He unmasked the piety of the wealthy classes, exposing their worship of the spirit of death.” What is mammon? Why is it a “spirit of death”?

Mammon – comes from an Aramaic and Greek word “mamonas” meaning “that which is trusted” or riches. **Jesus** describes it as a false master. It is only ever used by **Jesus** in the bible. He says it four times; **Matt. 6:24**, **Luke 16:9**, **Luke 16:11**, and **Luke 16:13**.

All pertain to managing wealth righteously and not falling into the trap of mammon worship. Why would **Jesus** emphasize this?

“Murder and lying become part of daily life because of this urge to possess.” Where can we see this occurring today?

“Mammon and big business rule through the power of the lying spirit. It is impossible to wage war without a basic inner deception.”

What is **Arnold** saying here? What are some examples?

“In the same way, only by lying and by duping the public can a capitalistic society be maintained.” Do you agree with **Arnold**? Why?

Arnold says; “capitalism involves injustice” and is the “greatest deception in the history of mankind.” What was happening during **Arnold's** life? Between 1883 and 1935, Germany transformed from an industrializing imperial monarchy under Otto von Bismarck, through defeat in World War I and the fragile democracy of the Weimar Republic, into the totalitarian Nazi dictatorship. This era spanned the birth of the modern welfare state, a catastrophic economic collapse, and the rise of Adolf Hitler.

Why would **Arnold** consider capitalism evil and that he was “under the rule of this god, mammon”?

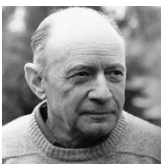
“God gives us the richest relationships of love between people, from spirit to spirit, heart to heart, that lead to a growing, organic, constructive fellowship. But there is a devilish means that seeks to rob all relationships of heart and spirit, of God. This means is money.” What is **Arnold** saying?

1 Timothy 6:9-10 – **Paul** wrote to **Timothy** – “People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.”

What is **Paul** saying here about money and riches? How can the love of money be harmful to the spirit?

The Greek word translated as “love of money” in **1 Timothy 6:10** is **φιλαργυρία** (*philarguria*). It is a compound noun formed from *philos* (loving or fond of) and *argurion* (silver or money), literally meaning greed, avarice, or a fondness for silver.

Arnold continues; “In truth, this spirit of mammon – the spirit of lying, impurity, and murder – is the spirit of weakness and death.” Why does **Arnold** say the spirit of mammon is a spirit of weakness? Why does it lead to death?



Jacques Ellul (1912 - 1994) was a French-born philosopher, sociologist, lay theologian, resistance fighter and professor. Noted as a Christian anarchist, **Ellul** was a longtime professor of History and Sociology of Institutions. He was on the Faculty of Law and Economic Sciences at the University of Bordeaux.

“What **Jesus** is revealing is that money is a power. Power is never neutral. It is oriented; it also orients people.”

What is **Ellul** saying about money? Have you ever heard of money being a multiplier?

“Finally, power is more or less personal. And just as death often appears in the Bible as a personal force, so here with money. God as a person and mammon as a person find themselves in conflict. ...it is the relationship between servant and master. Mammon can be a master the same way God is; that is, mammon can be a personal master.” How can money be a master?

“He (**Jesus**) is speaking of a power which tries to be like God, which makes itself our master and which has specific goals.”

“To love money is to be condemned to follow it in its destruction, its disappearance, its annihilation, and its death...”

Money is a human-made, tangible tool used to exchange value and buy physical goods. God is viewed as a supreme, spiritual being who created the universe and everything in it. While money can buy physical things, it cannot offer unconditional love, eternal life, or ultimate meaning. If this is true, why do people get money confused with God and worship it? Do they know they worship it?



David Bentley Hart (1965 -) is an American philosopher, theologian, essayist, fiction author, and religious studies scholar. He is the author of twenty-four books including **That ALL Shall be Saved** (2019).

“Certainly Christ condemned not only an unhealthy preoccupation with riches, but the getting and keeping of riches as such.” He quotes the story of the rich man in **Matthew 19: 21-22** and the camel going through the eye of a needle in **Matthew 19:24**. What do these stories tell you about the power of money?

Luke 1:53 – **Mary** said; “He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.”

Why would the rich be denied the kingdom of God? Having worldly riches, what are they lacking? Where is your heart?