



## Moving Beyond Mammon

By Bob Garrett



Mammon is an unclean spirit and/or stronghold that influences our thoughts and actions regarding money, possessions, material goods, time use etc. and which leads to selfishness, greed, entitlement thinking, deception, and other really bad things. We are living in a day when the spirit of mammon has become politically correct and an everyday fixture that is energetically promoted in our modern culture. If good people, even committed Christians, don't resist the tide of this cultural and spiritual trend, then they will almost certainly be swept up and "go with the flow" by allowing Mammon to negatively affect their values, priorities and lifestyles. This is serious business because the Bible is so clear about God's displeasure with those who let Mammon run (and ruin) their lives. Consider these sobering examples:

**Example #1** – Gehazi, Elisha's assistant. Gehazi tried wrongly to receive a reward for Elisha's healing of

a wealthy foreign general named Naaman and then he tried to deceive Elisha about having done so. The result was that Gehazi and his family members ended up being afflicted with Naaman's disease, Leprosy, *forever!* (2 Kings 5:13-16; 19-27 NIV)

**Example #2** – Judas, Jesus' disciple. Judas was both a disciple and a thief who stole from Jesus and the other disciples. Of course, Jesus was not in the least fooled about this dishonesty and allowed Judas to continue being a disciple. This is the "mammon sequence" that Judas followed: he began with small things (theft of money, deception, etc.) and those actions ultimately led to his total betrayal of Jesus with the kiss that led to the Lord's arrest and crucifixion. In the end, Judas died a gory death. (Matthew 26:14-16; John 12:6; Acts 1:18)

**Example #3** – Ananias and Sapphira. This Christian couple started off right but along the way decided they

wanted to try to deceive Peter and the disciples about their generosity. They owned some land that they sold and agreed between themselves to give part of the money to the needs of other Christians while keeping the other part for themselves. This was perfectly okay for them to do, but trying to lie about it and deceive the other believers (really, the Holy Spirit!) about their having given everything was a big problem. As you know both Ananias and Sapphira died as a result of their attempted deception. (Acts 5: 1-11)

These are extreme (and scary) examples, but you can be sure that God intends for us to draw some conclusions from them.

In one of my recent Monday morning men's group meetings, we discussed the subject of Mammon, our culture and how we can recognize the creeping "mammonization" of our lives. One brother said our discussion

# Cultivate a Practical Sense of God's Ownership

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was part of the Holy Spirit's continued efforts to "drain the swamp" of mammon and idolatry in our lives over the course of many years. We discussed the negative indicators of the presence and influence of mammon, and we discussed the positive indicators that show the Holy Spirit's handiwork in our lives. It was a real *eye opener*, because we could clearly see that all of us were dealing with the pervasive mammon spirit on a daily basis. Sometimes we respond to this struggle well, and sometimes we don't, but we all want to do better. As we enter the season of Advent and the post-Thanksgiving shopping holiday season of "Black Friday and beyond", now is the time to take action. Now is the time to make concrete plans to do better.

## Some tips:

1) **Negative:** If one finds himself or herself desiring to misrepresent or hide things where mammon (money, possessions, "wants," time use, priorities, etc.) might be involved, they should be very careful to keep everything in the light. A mammon spirit uses a small army of other unclean spirits to help him: isolation, pride, self-concern, entitlement, selfishness, greed, stinginess, deception, confusion, many forms of idolatry and more. These unclean spirits all thrive in an environment of secrecy, deception and misrepresentation. Any or all of these demon spirits lead to an unwillingness to share, a desire to withdraw and to an unhealthy attachment to our personal resources of

time, talent and treasure.

2) **Positive:** If one deeply desires detachment from their "stuff", and they really want to experience a growing presence of stewardship and generosity in their lives, there is a simple step they can take that might make a big difference. They can ask for prayers, especially "impartation" prayers from someone they know who is already manifesting generosity and alertness to the needs of others. In other words, they can sow to the supernatural and reap in the natural.

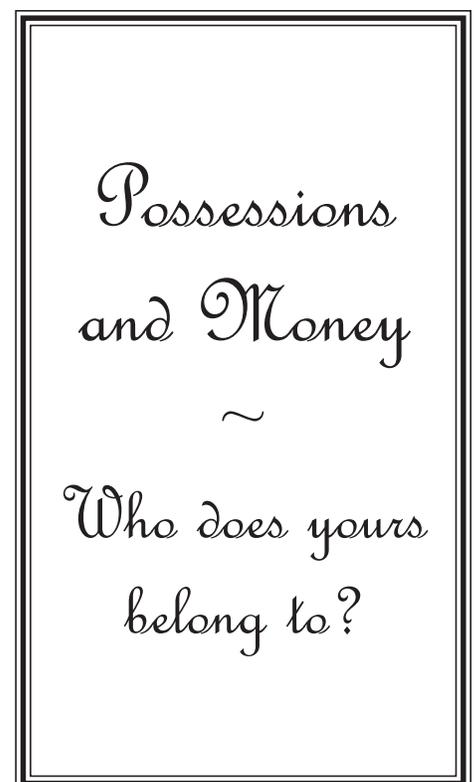
Cultivating a practical sense of God's literal ownership of everything, including time and money, is necessary for all true disciples of Jesus. Following Biblical teaching regarding generosity, money, possessions and greed is important. Some simple but valuable verses are found in Matthew 6:24; 31-34 and Hebrews 13:5-6. These instructions of Jesus and Paul are not simply metaphors for the followers of Jesus — they are the (literal) essential equipment of discipleship. Everyone needs some assistance from God and from others as they undergo the transformation process.

Fortunately, the Holy Spirit knows exactly what each and all of us need in order to be free from a spirit of mammon. If we struggle with sharing with or giving to others, we can ask the Holy Spirit to help us by showing what He wants us to give to others — to whom and how much. If we struggle with a compulsive lust for more and more things, we can ask

Him to show us how to refocus ourselves on His plan for our holiness.

As we enter the season where Mammon has in many ways replaced the joy of Christmas giving with lust for more and more worthless distractions or even idolatry, let us pray for God's mercy and guidance and for impartations of generosity, kindness and detachment from material goods.

Christmas is the season for giving, for blessing others, for serving in the name of Jesus, for sharing, for laughing, for loving and for Jesus Himself. We have a fresh opportunity to put forth our best efforts to be creatively generous with others. We also have a fresh opportunity to seek God's highest and best for our celebration of the incarnation of His Son, and our Savior — Jesus!



# Suggestions for Your P & R Christmas Wish/Gift List

If you are thinking about P & R or useful items to give, here are some ideas for provident and resourceful gifts for everyone on your gift list:

## \$1-\$10

1. Whistle, compass, small LED flashlight, fire starter, waterproof matches or Bic lighters, local map
2. Emergency blanket, flares, larger LED flashlight, small 1<sup>st</sup> Aid kit, emergency candles
3. Parachute cord
4. Rain gear
5. Travel games
6. Hand held can opener
7. Duct Tape
8. Magnifying glass
9. Small sewing kit and safety pins
10. Foods for Go Bags: Beef jerky, raisins, chewing gum, dried persimmons, figs, bananas, MREs, salmon and tuna packs
11. Travel cups, bowls, cutlery
12. Hygiene items
13. Plastic Bags
14. Ice scraper
15. Water proof pouches for important documents
16. Water purifying tablets
17. Two bottles of camp stove fuel
18. Spool of 12lb test mono-filament fishing line



19. Two pkgs. of hooks and some sinkers or corks
20. Artificial lure or two pkgs. soft plastic worms
21. Package of upholstery needles and nylon thread
22. Canning jars, lids, funnel, tongs
23. Protein energy bars
24. Packets of seeds
25. Sprouting seeds
26. Gardening tools
27. Pepper or Wasp spray

## \$10-\$25

1. *Cooking with Long Term Storage* cookbook
2. American Red Cross 1<sup>st</sup> Aid Book
3. Ball Canning Book 2014
4. Individual water filter/ filtered water bottle
5. LED lanterns
6. Battery packs
7. Folding Shovel
8. Hand crank/solar radio
9. Hot hands
10. Pocket saw
12. Portable cooker & pots
13. Pocket Bible
14. Leather Work gloves
15. Mylar bags for long term food storage
16. Battery charger
17. Oxygen absorbers
18. *More with Less Cookbook* by Doris Longacre
19. *It's a Disaster* by Bill & Janet Liebsch
20. Water Bricks
21. Particulate N95 masks

## \$25-\$40

1. 72-hr. To Go Bags for each family member

2. Sleeping Bags
3. Cast iron Dutch oven, skillet, or griddle
4. Nitro-Pac dehydrated cans of meals
5. Mountain House Bucket of dehydrated packets of meals
6. Medical supplies: 2x2 gauze pads, 4x4 gauze pads, Allergy/antihistamine pills, Aspirin, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Aleve, Biofreeze, Butterfly and regular band aids, Clear eyes wash, Cortisone cream, Vaseline, First aid guide, plastic gloves, First aid waterproof tape, Germicidal water tablets, Moist wipes, alcohol preps, Q-tips, Rolled gauze, Triple antibiotic ointment, Tums, laxative, anti-diarrhea pills, scissors, tweezers, thermometer
7. Small portable air compressor
8. Oil, brake fluid, anti-freeze for car kit
9. Car tool kit: Multi-tip screwdriver, pliers, wrenches
10. Fire extinguisher
11. Swiss Army Knife
12. assorted bungee cords
13. 30ft nylon rope
14. Booster cables
15. Earthboxes for gardening
16. Plastic Tarps
17. Books on Gardening
18. Inverter for car
19. Food Preservation Class by Betty English from Richmond County Extension office and includes the book *So Easy to Preserve*. (See Mary Keegan for details)

# Gift Ideas

(Continued from page 3 – GIFT IDEAS)

## 20. Dog/cat Go-Bag kit

### \$40-\$75

1. Multifunctional tool
2. Fire extinguishers
3. Set of two-way radios
4. Weather Radio
5. *Making the Best of Basics Family Preparedness* by James Stephens
6. Pressure cooker
7. 6-gallon buckets of grains and beans
8. Water barrels

### \$75-\$100

1. Tent
2. Pressure Canner
3. Camp stove – 2-burner
4. Propane Heater
5. 50 gal. propane tank

### Over \$100

1. Berkey Water Filter
2. Grain Mill
3. Generator
4. Chain Saw
5. Food dehydrator
6. Ham radio

### For Grandparents

1. Medical information sheet for First Responders/Emergency Room Staff
2. Spare non-prescription glasses
3. Good magnifying glass
4. Extra mylar blankets
5. Hand warmers
6. Personal hygiene packs
7. Audio books
8. Easily portable photo album with photos of loved ones and Medical information (see article this page)

# Emergency Photo Album Could Aid Older Adults

By Barbara Harshman

A great suggestion from SurvivalLife.com puts a new twist on the cute kids in a framed photo gift idea and helps emergency responders and nursing facility staff know who the loved ones of the elderly are in case of an emergency and you cannot get to their sides in the short term. If the power grid goes down, or there is a fire, or an evacuation has taken place, the contact information for the grandparent will no longer be available. If the loved one struggles with memory, even the most familiar faces might not be recognized after a traumatic situation.

Purchase an attractive yet small and easily portable photo album and put a photo of a loved one or a small group of loved ones on each page. On the back of the photo or following page, list the names of everyone in

order and all necessary contact information. A personal message from each loved one will make the gift an even more cherished keepsake and may help to keep the elderly loved and calm during an emergency or evacuation.

A printout of the grandparent's medical history and current medications could be added in the back pages of the book. If possible, buy a mail organizer rack and hang it near a door and add a label to either the book or the shelf (or both) noting that the keepsake album contains emergency information. First responders will likely notice such a label more quickly if it is typed in bold red letters. Remind staff or the grandparents that the book is hanging by the door and should always be grabbed in case of an emergency.

