

SIMPLE FAITH

When Simple Faith Erodes

Matthew 6:19–24



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Divided loyalties are nothing new. It's not uncommon to find people who were formerly single-minded, committed to the core, with their full allegiance given to one major objective. But as time passed and one compromise led to others, they became distracted, leaving their loyalty diluted and divided.

Insightfully, Jesus did not leave this stone unturned as He spoke on the mount centuries ago. Realizing the beast of greed within all of us, He chose not to ignore it but to expose it and warn against its ravenous appetite.

Every genuine disciple of Jesus Christ must come to terms with the question: *Which master will I serve?*



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1. The Tragedy of Settling for Less

Life presents us with constant choices. Day in, day out, we each have to choose how we will approach the circumstances before us. We can all recall the joy of making the right choice, as well as the pain of settling for less. This story of human success and frailty is written across the pages of Scripture.

2. The Reality of Being on Display

Hebrews 4:13 reminds us that “there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare.” We can never escape the sight of almighty God. Whether we make the lesser choice or the greater, whether we choose ourselves first or others first, God sees. Knowing we are under the caring, watchful eye of the source of all goodness should bring us comfort. But for many of us, the reality of our sin makes living under His sight more like a cage of conviction. We need to clarify for ourselves just whom we serve.



Quotable

*No home
suddenly fractures.
No church suddenly
splits. It's a slow
erosion based
on choices.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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3. The Impossibility of Serving Two Masters

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke pointedly about the impossibility of serving two masters. Vacillating between good choices and bad, we often believe that we can have it both ways. But Jesus pointed out the lie in such thinking, calling out our flirtation with wickedness and directing us to true devotion.



GETTING TO THE ROOT

Master Jesus

The Hebrew word for “master” or “lord” is *adon* or *adonai*.¹ While the Hebrew term was used commonly to connote household or political authority (Genesis 45:8), it was also frequently used as a name for God. Reverent Jews today still say *adonai* in place of YHWH, or Yahweh, which they consider too sacred to utter.

To call Jesus “Master” was not just a sign of respect but also an inspired nod to His deity. For example, Luke, in writing his gospel account, acknowledged this by using the term to describe Jesus’ divine authority over creation.

Between Luke 5 and 8, because of the word or touch of Jesus, fish gave themselves to be caught; the waves surrendered; people were healed of leprosy (5:13); the lame began to walk (5:24–25); a man’s withered hand was made whole (6:10); and a centurion’s servant was delivered from fatal illness (7:6–10). A mother’s son even rose from the dead (7:12–15)!

Jesus—the Master—is in control. He is as powerful today as He was when He walked the earth. He has dominion over the wind and waves of our lives. We can come to Him with our empty nets, our stormy journeys, our lives drenched with troubles, confident in His compassion and ability to save us.



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LET'S LIVE IT

When it comes to choosing one master—and the proper one at that—we need insight in answering two questions: *What should I choose?* and *Whom should I serve?* We'll get neither right if we don't first decide to cling to the truth, no matter what.

- First, *by living in truth our options remain open.* Living in truth gives us the opportunity to choose well.
- Second, *by living in truth our focus stays clear.* When we live in truth, we can focus our attentions where they should be.

Think about your focus on the Lord—particularly in your decision-making. Do you have a habit of considering whether your choices will honor the Lord? At what times do you fail to take that question into account?

ENDNOTES

1. *Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, gen.ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 515.



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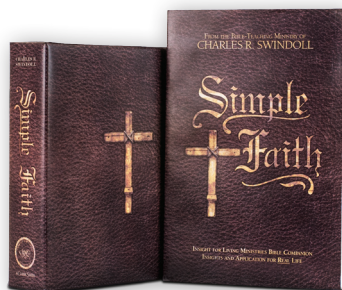
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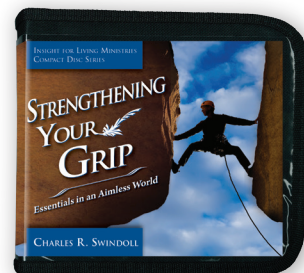
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