

Bob Alexander - Wanting Things

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And loving Heavenly Father, we come into Thy holy presence this day again to express our heartfelt thanks for Thy goodness and mercy upon us and for every favor and blessing that Thou hast so richly poured upon us. We do want to show our appreciation to thee, dear Father, not only by word of mouth, but also by desiring to serve Thee in spirit and in truth and by our actions, and so, dear Father, help us that we may be able to do Thy will better as we walk along the pathway that leads to eternal life, and that we might be able to take advantage of every opportunity extended to us, whether be through a blessing or through a trial, that we may use these privileges and opportunities to bring fruit unto life eternal, and so, dear Father, we thank thee now for this hour that is before us that we may have the privilege of listening to the words of Thy servant.

We ask Thy blessing upon his lips and his heart that we might be edified together and that we would be made more useful in Thy service. Dear Father, we not only pray for the one who is to serve us, but we ask Thy special blessing upon the hearers, our hearing ears, and our hearts and minds that they would be open, and we ask that Thou would, at this time, possibly open some deep, secret closet of our hearts that we might be able to plant these wonderful seeds of truth and that we might be able to gain that much more of the character that is so necessary to qualify for that wonderful crown that is at the end of the way for all of us that desire to win that crown, and so we're also mindful of our brethren throughout the world striving to serve Thee in spirit and truth and going through various trials and who are in beds of sickness. May Thy special grace be with them in their special time of need.

We want to also pray upon the harvest work and those who are engaged therein, both collectively and individually, dear Father, that their service not only may redound to Thy glory and honor, but also to all those who may hear that wonderful gospel of that wonderful kingdom for which we continue to pray. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven. All these favors we ask and pray for and give Thee thanks with the forgiveness of our sins and shortcomings in Jesus precious name. Amen.

Now, at this time it's a privilege to introduce again brother who served yesterday, and I appreciate his viewpoint. I heard a few of them during the intermission or before the meal and so on, and I appreciate his viewpoints and appreciate, I'm sure, along with you, his being Here to serve in the Lord. Serve the brethren. He's going to speak on a topic that all of us are plagued with.

It's a difficult thing to overcome. Only he's going to give it. Just a little viewpoint, I'm sure. This topic. Brother Bob Alexander.

Wanting things. Wanting things, Brother Bob.

Thank you, Brother P. It's a blessing to be here with you again, brethren, and again I bring you the love and the greetings of Sister Rachel and the children and the little ecclesia in Washington, D.C. I want also to express my thanks to the Lord and the brethren here at Grand Rapids for the privileges of being here and enjoying the convention with you. Serving the Lord is a great blessing.

But serving the Lord with his people surrounding and being a part of their service is a blessing, and it certainly has been here at Grand Rapids, and we want to publicly acknowledge that and thank him for it, and thank you for your efforts to serve him and his people.

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Another thing, before we get into the topic of the talk. You perhaps remember in a testimony meeting at Jackson, three weeks or four weeks or whatever it is ago, we mentioned a young man who had lost his wife in an automobile accident and asked your prayers on his behalf, and many of you have written to him, and he has received greetings and condolences from brethren all over the country, almost none of whom he knows personally, and I want you to know how much they have helped him and how much he has been encouraged by them.

Presently he is not meeting with the class because he feels that his mind is so defrayed by the experience that he cannot study, cannot concentrate enough to consider the Scriptures very much, except in a devotional way, and so he doesn't come to the study meeting.

True. So I think as a net of all the experience, he needs our continued prayers, and we do, too, in knowing how to be wise counselors and encouragements of him. It's still a very, very distressful period in his life at such a young age.

All of us want things, and when I say things, I mean things sometimes that we can have, that we can hold, that are ours, that we can say that we have title to. We want things. When we answer that question, why do we want things? We want things because of numerous reasons, don't we?

We want things because they're needful and decent in the sight of all men. We have to be dressed appropriately. We have to live in a decent home. We can't live in a hovel unless that's all we can afford, and then we should be thankful for that.

But we want that things because we consider them needful to us and decent in terms of our relationship to our Heavenly Father and relationship to other people and our environment. We who are providers want things so that we can provide for our own. He who has failed to do this is worse than an unbeliever, isn't he? Because he has not perceived the provision that the Heavenly Father has for his own. The Heavenly Father has provided abundantly for his natural creation as well as his spiritual creation.

If we catch what the Lord has done for us as his creation, then we will automatically want to do the same for those who are dependent on us. So we want things. We want to have things for providing for our own, our food and raiment. The Lord has promised, and therefore we need them, and therefore we want them. But we discover, every one of us discovers that our wanting of things goes far beyond what we consider base needs, what we consider appropriate for our environment and our circumstances.

We have preferences, and consequently our wanting of things are associated with our preferences. We have things that we would like to be comfortable with. We were talking about the weather last night in part of the fellowship, and the various advantages of living in the far west or the Southwest, where it is warm most of the winter, compared to up here, where it is cold most of the winter, and one of the brethren was saying how much they enjoyed the winter because it was an opportunity to be comfortable in bed, to curl up with the volumes or the reprints or the Scriptures or whatever, and get studying and reading and meditation and fellowship with the Lord done that the summer activity didn't allow, and so we want comfort, don't we?

We want comfort for our physical being. But even our new creature we want comfort for. We want things to look beautiful, and for some of us, that's one thing, and some of us, it's another thing. We have different aesthetic tips, tastes, our spiritual comforts, preferences, likes, dislikes, all tailor our wants and our dislikes.

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But basically what we want for ourselves is basically to enrich our lives. However we define it, we want to enrich our lives, and the convention has epitomized for the new creation the desire of the consecrated heart. In their theme text in Galatians 6, 7, 9, the part of the theme text that's above and the banner, of course, is part of verse eight, and it's saying that if we would sow to the Spirit, we shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

And that's beautiful. Is that what we want? We have said we want that when we've made our consecration, and every day that we wake up and the time between we wake up and when we go to bed, we prove to ourselves whether that is really true, and the apostle has admonished us to enrich our lives with spiritual blessings.

The human nature often defines a certain area and sometimes several areas as areas that we want to devote ourselves to. We want to have a career, we want to have a family. We want to have this, that, and the other thing. These are our desires, and these are the things that we want things for.

We can even get to the point in them that we are in danger of idolatry. We can say, something has become so important to us that now we are going to spend a greater portion of our life achieving that thing, whatever it is, whether it is a concert career or a business ambition, or a family, or whatever it is, we can spend more time on achieving that thing for ourselves than it is worth in the total perspective of God's arrangement, and so our preferences can lead us into danger of idolatry, and I think particularly in our era today, when advertising and sales promotion are so extensive and the business world is so competitive, the constant push to make you want something that you don't have, whether it's by obsoleting something that you have and they want you to buy something to replace it, to make you want something that you don't have because it's more beautiful than what you have, or more aesthetic or whatever, the constant push is to make you want something.

And so they spend millions and millions and millions of dollars on public relations and trying to make you want something that you don't have so that they can make a profit on it. Well, the Heavenly Father has said, yes, you need things. You certainly need things, and above all else, you need my love, and he has given to us that love by giving us his greatest gift.

And that is his beloved Son.

And in that desire to be consecrated to him, to use our lives not for the getting to oneself, but to the giving of the Lord, he has said, we are wanting things in the other direction. Instead of things for ourselves, we are trying to exercise love, which in an oversimplified definition is simply giving of ourselves to others, isn't it? And agape love is giving of ourselves to others with no thought of return, no sense of obligation, just the. The joy, the privilege of giving ourselves to help, to serve, to bless others. That's love.

And so we have said, rather than use our life in getting things, our desire is to use our love in giving of ourselves in Psalms 42:1. The Prophet is telling us particularly to the new creation, but all of those who claim the name of the children of God, and I mean that in the biblical sense, of course. As the heart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O God. In Colossians, the third chapter, again, the apostle is telling us that we have an opportunity to serve, and that as we serve God, we can be a blessing and be blessed.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on the things of the earth, and so, when we consider in our daily lives what we ask the Lord for, what we spend our energy to get, what we

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really give evidence of wanting things, what are we desirous most of, is it serving the Lord? The apostle here has told us that we can best serve the Lord, and the only way we can really do that is to set our affections on things above, not on things of the earth.

That means so often that when we read the advertisements of all these attractive things that we are encouraged to buy, that we will acknowledge that, yes, the flesh, the new creature, would like to have this beautiful thing or that beautiful thing. But the new creature says, I don't need it for the advancement of the new creature in myself. I don't need it for the encouragement of the truth in my children, in anybody else. Therefore, all the advertising, all the sales promotion that's put into that ad, whether it's on the radio or television or magazines or wherever, has been money spent for somebody else. It's not spent to attract me.

Laying up treasure in heaven is something that we must all do, not because we have to do it, but because we want to do it. We want to do it for the Lord. In Matthew, the 19th chapter, you will remember, the Lord is confronted by a young man who is evidently very, very wealthy. He comes to Jesus and he says, I've kept all the law, the whole list of things that the law has required of me. I've done all those things, and I've not done the things that prohibited me from doing.

What else can I do? And what did the Lord say? He said, sell everything that you have. Take up your cross and follow me, and the Lord knew when he spoke this to the young man that it was too much.

He was asking too much of that young man for the attitude that the young man had then. But he made a lesson for us that we cannot ignore nor forget, and that is that if we want to serve the Lord, if we want to do more for the Lord than just live according to the law, we will be willing to give up everything we have and serve him. That's what we want. That's the thing that we want instead of all the things that are attractive in earth. Well, the young man felt it was too much, and he didn't do it, did he?

And we've often wondered, why is it that the Lord gave to Israel a set of laws, and he said, do these things and don't do these other things, and you will have life. But when the Lord himself, Jesus, came, he said, the law of love is higher than this law. Well, how is the law of love higher? Higher than the law given to Moses on Sinai for the children of Israel. Well, when we consider the instructions that we might receive from a boss or anyone, what would you rather have?

Would you rather have a boss come up and say, you know my motive, you know my objective. Do what you can to meet my objectives? Or. Or would you rather have him come up and say, this is a list of things that I want you to do. When you're finished, you can go home?

Which would you rather have him do? Well, the Lord has said to Israel, this is the list of things that I want you to do, and you may go home, so to speak. But for us, for you and me, brethren, he has said, this is what I want you to do. I want you to want to give yourself to me.

And when you are finished, I will call you home. So the law of love requires so much more from us than the law of Mount Sinai that it is a much more difficult way to walk than if we had a checklist of things we could do. The law of love demands more from us than any law given from Mount Sinai, because it is up, up to us, isn't it? It's up to us how much of ourselves we're going to give to the Lord. It's up to us to decide when I've given enough.

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Because there is no end to love and there is no end to our giving of ourselves for the Lord, and so when the Lord said to the rich young man, give up everything you have and follow me, he was asking that man to set aside the law covenant and live on a higher or more devoted relationship to him, one that would give of himself unstintingly, unendingly.

In 1 Corinthians, the second chapter, the apostle tells us that by this course of action, of giving up our own presentation, preferences and our desires we are not robbing ourselves of things to which we have legitimate call. He is saying that by so doing we are telling the heavenly Father that we want to serve him, and the life which Israel was to receive for their obedience to the law was very, very small in value compared to what we have by giving up all to serve the Lord. Let's read that in 1 Corinthians 2, 9, 10. But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, and we'd like to interject the thought, even the deep things of God, and so it is with us, isn't it, by saying, I don't want things for the flesh, I want to serve. I want the opportunities to serve God. The Lord has said, that's what I need.

That's what I need as proof from you daily behavior along this line, and in return I will give you the secrets, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and certainly any of us who have walked the narrow way for any length of time know that the Lord has bountifully replaced any deficiencies that we may have suffered because we've been shortchanged in material things for our walk in the narrow way. The Lord knew very early in his ministry he provided for the needs of the church in this connection, and I think that it doesn't take us many years in the narrow way before we realize the reality of what the Lord said in Matthew the sixth chapter.

It's right after the part on the Sermon on the Mount, which discusses the Blessed, the Beatitudes, but from chapter in chapter 26, verses 24 through 34, which is essentially the end of the chapter, our Lord is giving us the reassurances that we need to be faithful to Him, and he's telling us the birds have their nests, the lilies of the field are robed in beauty, and they are just the natural environment, and he has called you to be his servants. His servants. He has never asked the lily to serve him, has He?

He's never asked the bird to lay down his life in sacrifice, and yet he's provided for them abundantly, richly. Now he has asked you to lay down your life in sacrifice instead of spending your life for the attainment of things, for the attainment of wealth and comfort and pleasure and beauty and all these other things. But instead you should use your life the way the Lord did by sacrificing, promoting the kingdom interests and the kingdom work, and if the Lord has so generously provided for the natural environment when he hasn't asked them to sacrifice, what is he going to do for you?

What is he going to do for you whom he has asked to sacrifice? Well, Jesus put it very succinctly in the 33rd but seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you. The same story is repeated in Luke the 12th, chapter 22, 31st verses. What the Lord has assured us here is to really reassure us that so service to him which is contrary to our competitive society, to our very sophisticated society, to a society in which the big number one is the important thing. We talk about ego trips and counter egos and all of these things, and it's because the psychology of if you don't take care of yourself, nobody else will, has invaded the philosophy and the structure of our entire society.

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And the world of mankind believes that, and that's why advertising can cater to the big I. It makes you want things for yourself, and therefore what Jesus is saying is, I want you to go counter to this. I want you to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and I will take care of the temporal provision.

We heard yesterday about needing our bread and water, and surely the Lord does provide our bread and water, even though sometimes he says that we will have famine and nakedness. But how many of us have just bread and water? How many of us have butter on that bread? And then how about some jam? We all are abundantly provided for.

None of us have physical needs, do we, that aren't more than adequately provided for. So much so that we can be generous in sharing with others and still have more than we absolutely need for ourselves. I know sometimes it's hard for the young people to understand this and appreciate it. Particularly when every day you just wonder if you can avoid this bill collector or that bill collector or how you can schedule your payment and still eat or have enough money for what you consider the necessities. But it's true, we live at a very accelerated standard of living and it doesn't take many trips abroad to discover that we do in fact live at a very high standard of living, a very self centered standard of living as well.

When we think about people asking for things, wanting things, we look back in history and we see that God and God's people have asked for many things. God's people have asked of God many things for themselves, and God has given them in many cases, in some cases to their blessing, and some cases to their detriment. Let's consider some for a moment. Even in Deuteronomy 6, verse 5, Moses, as a very wise counselor, was trying to tell Israel that her ambitions for herself were excessive, that if she would spend much more time on how to serve and obey the Lord, she would be much better off.

Starting with verse 4 of Deuteronomy 6. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all of thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, and these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. Now, who was Moses to say something like this? He had received this instruction from the heavenly Father, of course, and he knew that it was wise counsel.

But who was Moses to say something like this? Yes, we can say he was a leader of Israel, and yet consider for a moment he was much more than just any leader of Israel. He was a man in his 80s, still vital and strong, but a man who had had a great deal of experience, and what had that experience been? He had been 40 years as the Prince of Egypt.

He had been 40 years, having absolutely no temporal need whatsoever. Undoubtedly, with his Hebrew mind, he was much quicker than any of the natural sons of the Egyptian royalty with whom he lived and fellowshiped as a brother, and yet, because of his loyalty to God, he was cast out, and the Scriptures tell us that he left these courts of Egypt where he had absolutely no temporal needs. All the wealth, the riches, everything, no matter how you define it, was his, and he was put out into the desert.

And who was more ignoble to an Egyptian than a shepherd? Nobody. The shepherds were the lowest rung on the ladder, and so he went from the very highest of earth to the very lowest, and if that weren't bad enough, the Scriptures tell us that God sent him not just to the desert, to 10 sheep, but to the backside of the desert.

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Can you imagine how Moses must have felt left out? He must have really felt, my goodness, have I come a long way down, and yet it was because of that experience that God could use him, and that God could let him be the messenger to say, love the Lord your God above everything else. That's the invitation that he gave to Israel. The Psalmist in Psalm 73 prophesies for the church, the same sort of thing, and it's beautiful for us.

In Psalm 73, verses 24, 26 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee My flesh and my heart faileth but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. Who was saying this?

This was the king of Israel.

This was the king of Israel whom God had given the victory over the enemies, his Philistines, over Saul and all his family, and even over Absalom, the rebellious son. This was the king of Israel who had everything he needed in temporal provision, and what is he telling us? He's saying, set your affections on things above, love God before you love anything else, or want anything for yourself.

Mark 12:30 says the same thing to us in the words of our and all of these go back and harken back to the experiences of the ancients. Abraham wanted for a son in Genesis 15 and he received the son not according to the way he wanted that son to be born, but according to the Lord, the way the Lord wanted as a son to be born, and when we consider the age of Sarah and the age of Abraham when Isaac was born, not only was it virtually impossible to conceive a child at those ages, but to spend nine months nourishing that child, sapping the energy from the mother to provide the energy for a vital child that was full and lively, and yet God worked that miracle to provide that blessing. Eliezer asked for help, didn't he, in selecting Rebekah?

Genesis 24 tells us about that, and why did he want that? Because Eliezer was the servant in the household when Isaac was born. He knew the circumstances of Isaac's birthday, and he knew the great responsibility that he had in selecting the right woman for Isaac, so that the seed of promise should be strong, healthy, and faithful to God, and so the Lord blessed Eleazar in that desire.

In 1 Samuel, the first chapter 10:17 and then 19:20 Hannah petitions the Lord for a son, doesn't she? She was one of two wives, and the other wife had many children, and she wanted one too, and she set before the Lord proposition that she would give that son to him to the Lord, if the Lord interred, would give that son to her. The Lord prosper that son that desire, and that son grew to be Samuel, the judge and the prophet of Israel, the one who was to anoint Israel's first two Kings.

One of the most beautiful desires expressed in the Scriptures is not one that is a petition to God, and it shows how those who are God's people, with whom we associate can be God's servants, and how careful we must be in expressing our wants for things. It's recorded in two Samuel 23, 14, 17. It's a very brief instance. It's the only time it's mentioned in the Scriptures.

But David is exhausted from fighting the Philistines, and he mentions the incidental fact to three of his men that he would long for the waters of Bethlehem, Bethlehem being in the stronghold of the Philistines at the moment, and what happens?

Those men under jeopardy of death go out at night, go to Bethlehem, get the water and bring it back. What a great act of love, isn't it, for an incidental comment from their king on how he longed for the waters of Bethlehem? What did David do with that? And I think this is something that's so

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important for us to remember when we receive things from the Lord. He did the same sort of thing that Abraham did to Isaac that Hannah did with Samuel.

David took that water and gave it to the Lord as a sacrifice in recognition of the great potential of death that these three men had suffered by getting that water. So he used this blessing not for the refreshment of his own body and his own flesh, but he used that blessing as a sacrifice unto the Lord. His wanting, he recognized, cost far more in terms of the jeopardy to the men than its value to himself. His desire to have, he recognized, was more powerful than his worthiness to have for himself, and so he took the gift that the Lord did give to him and poured it out as a sacrifice to the Lord.

Solomon asked for wisdom in 1 Kings 3, chapter 9, as well as chapter 3, and what did the Lord give to him? He gave him wisdom. But he also gave him the assurance that because his request was for wisdom to rule this thy so great a people, I will give you wisdom, but I will give you wealth.

Daniel in the second chapter of Daniel, the 19th verses, and so forth, Daniel asks for an understanding of God's promises and God's prophecies. Why? For himself. Just to satisfy his curious interest. No verses 20, 23 tell us that the purpose of his desire for and understanding is so that he could intercede for his people.

There are also times in which the Lord has prospered a request that it was not to the advantage of the individuals, and mainly it was because they used it on themselves rather than for the Lord's purposes. Israel asked for flesh in Numbers 11, and what did she get? She got her quail, and she got sick from it.

The manna had been more than enough if they had been satisfied. But they were not satisfied. They asked for more, and the Lord gave it to them, but it was to their detriment. The same is true in 1 Samuel 8, 6, 7, when they asked for a king.

And the Lord said to Samuel, they have not rejected you, they have rejected me. I will give them the king. But by giving them that king, they will realize that they have chosen the wrong thing. They have asked for things that are not to benefit them. If they would appreciate how much they had from me already, they would not want a king.

But they thought they wanted a king because all the advertising and sales promotion of the nations around them said, you have to have a king. You have to have a king. You have to have a king. So Israel said, all right, we'll want a king, and they rejected God.

They believed the advertising and the sales promotion, and as a result they were taxed away. The point where they were distracted, they were overburdened, and finally, because of the determination and selfishness of Solomon's son, the nation itself was split in two. In Psalm 92:12, 14 the scripture tells us that the righteous flourish in the courts of the Lord, and certainly that is very true in terms of our temporal provisions.

Even those brethren who seem to be suffering physically, they actually provide opportunities for each one of us who have more than we need to help, don't they? The physical suffering, the physical deficiencies that we see in our brethren are not curses from the Lord, but are opportunities for you and me who have enough to share what we have with them, and so even those brethren who are learning experiences and in seeming neglect are giving you and me an opportunity to show the Lord our love, and so in Philippians 4:19, the apostle says, my God shall supply all your

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needs according to his riches in glory, and surely that's true.

I grew up during the Depression, and I remember the problems that existed during the depression for need and the motto in our home we always had enough. Not as much as we might have liked, but always enough. The Lord was very generous to us.

In Malachi, the third chapter, the eighth through the twelfth verses, the prophet is admonishing Israel and admonishing you and me, dear brethren, that because Israel had failed to bring her tithes to the Lord, because she had failed to obey the requirements of the tithe, God dealt with her stingily. But if they would bring the tithe into the storehouse, what would happen? That he would open the windows of heaven, that their houses could not contain all the blessings that he would provide for them?

In James, the third chapter, the first to the tenth verses, the apostle admonishes us to grow in grace. He wants us to want the things of the Spirit, not the things of the flesh, and he shows us there that our growth in grace is entirely dependent on our love for God and his willingness to respond to this love. If our love is short, then his response will be short. If our love is just, generous.

His response is more than generous, and so in John 17, what is it that Jesus asks for the church? He asks that they shall have the truth, that they shall be sanctified, and so when we ask the Lord for things, we want things, and sometimes all we have to do is express a thought in our mind.

We don't even have to petition the Lord in prayer that he responds generously to us, and I've often thought an idle comment would very often be, gee, I'd like to have this, or oh, that's beautiful, I'd like to have it. Well, if you're in many of the foreign countries, particularly the Far Eastern country, if you express an interest in anything in a person's house, that person is obligated to give it to you. So be very careful about what you say about a person's possession. They may feel an obligation to give it to you.

Well, it's true with us, too. We may find ourselves in a position that we want things so much without thinking about the seriousness of wanting those things, that the Lord gives it to us and sees how we use it. Do we use it to the advancement of the new creation, the comfort and the encouragement of them in the new creature, or do we use it for the comfort and disposition of the flesh? It's up to us. We can make the decision.

The Lord over and over again reminds us that we are to mortify our carnal desires. Romans 8, 13 Romans 13, 14 1 Corinthians 9, 27 Colossians 3:5, which is associated with our theme text 1st Thessalonians 4, 5 Romans 6, 6 Galatians 5, 24. All of these admonish us and alert us to the disaster of wanting carnal things, because they will rob us of the opportunity to serve God. They will rob us of the opportunity to grow the new creature.

Our attitude in wanting things can be very much like that of Paul. After he had this marvelous vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus. What did he do? He went to receive the blessings of the Holy Spirit, and then what did he do?

He had had to pay the price of his eyesight. For the revelation of the vision. Paul asked three times, according to 2 Corinthians 1, 9, 11, 3 times to have his eyesight back again. It was the price that he had to pay for the vision on the road to Damascus. But he asked for it back again.

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The Lord never gave it to him, and it was a thorn in the flesh ever since, wasn't it? But it helped him to remember how much the Lord had given to him on Damascus, that great revelation. Who of the brethren there wouldn't have paid with their eyes to see the Lord, to have an unmistakable evidence of his dealings with him. God denied the request each of the three times.

And Paul stopped asking. He acknowledged that this was the thorn in the flesh to keep him humble, to keep him remembering that his desire was for the Lord, not for his own comfort, and so it is with us. We should be very careful what we ask for and why we get it. Because everything comes at a price.

We have to pay with our lives for the new creature. The old man must die, and the new creature can live, and if we are not willing to pay the full price of the old creature's comfort, the new creature won't survive. It requires that full price. The example, of course, is Ananias and Sapphira in the fifth chapter of Acts.

They weren't honest with themselves any more than Israel was honest with itself when it brought the tithes to the storehouse and the Lord cut them off, and so it is with us. Natural Israel was dishonest. Ananias and Sapphira was helped us to see that dishonesty continuing into the new creation is not acceptable either, and so it's up to us.

We've said we consecrated our lives to the Lord, and now what do we want? What things are we wanting? We have to be honest about it. God punishes the dishonesty, whether it's in us or not, whether it's in anyone else. He's not a respecter of persons.

He's not a person that would have tolerated any dishonesty, any deception, any failures in Jesus, and he doesn't accept it in ours either. Except, of course, as Jesus covers our robe of righteousness. But it can never be an intentional dishonesty. Our actions are just between the Lord and us.

Yes, we have to be very careful that we don't stumble, our brethren. But the relationship of our actions as proof of our desires, proof of the things that we want, is the relationship of us to the Lord.

In Matthew 6, 26, 33, which we referred to, and Psalms 92, 12, 14. The Scriptures reassure us that when we want for things, don't worry about the things of our temporal provision. It doesn't mean that we should ignore them, but we should minimize the needs that we have. What we decide are our needs, and I think of this every time we go to a store.

I guess not every time, because I buy some things after I get them home and I wonder now, how in the world am I going to use this for the advancement of a new creature? And I must admit there are times where I cannot give the right answer. But I'd like to think of it each time I go into store and I look at something and say, do I need this or do I need that? And I think to myself, if I always thought to myself now, how is this going to advance the new creature? Then my judgment as to what I should buy and what I shouldn't buy would be a lot clearer.

It would be a lot easier to stay out of debt too. For those of you who are in debt.

Our affection. What do we want in our affection? Do we want self gratification? Do we have an ego trip that we have to satisfy? Do we want people who cater to us?

Do we have a proud streak in us that still hasn't been overcome? Our communion with Christ in Luke 24:32. Did not our hearts burn within us? How do we spend our time? Do we really set the

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things aside when we get home that we don't have to do?

How much time do we spend looking at television? What's the subject that we watch in television? Is it entertaining? Is it uplifting in the flesh? Or is it just a waste of time?

Totally. Every time we spend a minute on television or reading a newspaper or magazine that we don't need to, that doesn't really contribute to the. The growth of a new creature. We are robbing from ourselves the privilege of sitting down with the Scriptures, with the volumes, studying, understanding, and it's only by our study that we evidence to the Lord our determination to understand him better.

Not only by our study, but that's one of the ways we can, and if you've ever turned the television off in the middle of something, knowing that it wasn't redeeming the time and we wanted to redeem the time, turned it off, picked up the Bible, gone to somewhere you can read, and sat down and read and meditated and prayed with the Lord, how many times have you done that? That he hasn't blessed you with some warmth, some greater closeness to Him? He always does it. There's never a time that you can turn off the television, pick up the Scriptures and read them that you aren't a lot better for having read the Scriptures Scripture than watch the television.

The television is only representative of anything that we do. Our sporting events or wherever we want to go, the concerts, all of these fit into the same category. What things do we want? Do we want the Lord enough, or do we want our own comfort and our own disposition? Associated texts with our theme text are included in Math or 1st Corinthians 4, 5, Mark 4:22, Luke 12:2 3, Romans 8:1 15, Colossians 3:25 and Psalm 28:4.

All of them tell us one thing. If we sow to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption. If we sow to the Spirit, we shall understand. Spirit reap life everlasting. May the Lord bless our efforts and our desires and the disciplining of our minds and desires so that the things that we want are the things of a new creature.

He will bless us and open the windows of heaven that we cannot contain the blessing.

We thank Brother Bob for his message, for helping us to see the other view to wanting things. He has brought forth many helpful remarks and may we consider and use what will be helpful to us in seeing the Lord's will in our life and what is pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

We're going to close at this time with song number four.