

# Matthew 6:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

## Analysis

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Jesus declares exclusive loyalty: 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon' (Greek: οὐ δύνασθε θεῷ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾷ, 'you cannot serve God and wealth'). The verb δουλεύω means 'serve as a slave,' indicating total ownership. 'Masters' (κύριος) implies lord/owner with absolute authority. 'Mammon' (μαμωνᾶς, Aramaic ܡܝܢܗ) is personified wealth - not merely money but the system, security, and power it represents. The logic is absolute: divided loyalty is impossible. Wealth becomes idolatrous when it competes with God for ultimate allegiance.

## Historical Context

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Roman society operated on patron-client relationships where clients served patrons for protection and provision. A client literally couldn't serve two patrons with conflicting interests. Jesus applies this social reality to spiritual loyalty. 'Mammon' as personified wealth suggests demonic power behind wealth's enslaving attraction (similar to 'powers and principalities' in Ephesians 6:12). Early Christians' economic sharing (Acts 2:44-45) demonstrated liberation from mammon's mastery.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. In what subtle ways does wealth compete with God for our ultimate loyalty?
2. How do we recognize when financial decisions reflect service to mammon rather than God?
3. What would it look like to truly serve God rather than wealth in your financial life?

## Interlinear Text

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Οὐδεὶς δύνασθε δυσὶ κυρίοις δουλεύειν ἢ γὰρ τὸν  
**No man** **can** **two** **masters** **serve** **either** **for** G3588  
G3762 G1410 G1417 G2962 G1398 G2228 G1063

ἐνὸς μισήσει καὶ τὸν ἑτέρου ἀγαπήσει ἢ ἐνὸς  
**the one** **he will hate** **and** G3588 **the other** **love** **either** **the one**  
G1520 G3404 G2532 G2087 G25 G2228 G1520

ἀνθέξεται καὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου καταφρονήσει· οὐ δύνασθε  
**he will hold** **and** G3588 **the other** **despise** **Ye cannot** **can**  
G472 G2532 G2087 G2706 G3756 G1410

θεῷ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμμωνᾷ  
**God** **serve** **and** **mammon**  
G2316 G1398 G2532 G3126

## Additional Cross-References

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**Luke 16:13** (Love): No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

**James 4:4** (References God): Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

**Galatians 1:10** (References God): For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

**Joshua 24:15** (References God): And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

**Matthew 4:10** (References God): Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

**Luke 16:11** (Parallel theme): If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

**1 Kings 18:21** (References God): And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

**1 Timothy 6:17** (References God): Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

**Luke 16:9** (Parallel theme): And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

**1 Samuel 7:3** (References God): And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the

LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

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