**Great Principles of Christianity, #7**

**True greatness comes from service, Mat. 20:26, John 13:13-16**

 In the Matthew and John passages listed above and in The Parable of the Pounds and the Parable of the Talents Jesus teaches that God expects us to use our blessings for service in His kingdom. Opportunity comes to each differently: knowledge, talent, power, money, influence, even a great smile – whatever tool God gives us to use in His service. Think about what makes you unique and then ask yourself if you are using that blessing to serve the Lord. Consider also the gift of time. It runs from the hour glass with every moment that passes. Don’t believe the old proverb, “It’s never too late.” Each moment we waste is never recalled as an opportunity to accomplish some facet of God’s will. What is true of time is often true of talent, money, fame, knowledge, power: once we squander an occasion to use these blessings in service to others we may not have another similar opportunity. Instead of “gathering rosebuds while we may,” we should be using our time and opportunities to serve others, thus laying up treasures in heaven, Matthew 6:20. The natural man wishes to be served by others; in Christ’s kingdom the spiritual man seeks to be the servant of others.

**Great Principles of Christianity, #8**

**Love replaces law, Matthew 22:36**

**“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said to him, You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”**

The sentiment embodied in this passage is true because of the nature of love. A good definition for love is “sacrificial good will toward others” which suggests that love manifests itself in positive actions performed to enhance the welfare of the ones loved. In other words, if we care about others we will do them good and not harm, even if doing good requires some kind of expense to self. Because our love is often lacking, we need law to ensure that we do not harm each other. The more greed and selfishness characterize a society, the more laws are required, but where true love exists, law is necessary only as a guide, serving to inform us of the best way to avoid hurting others.

**Great Principles of Christianity, #9**

**Lay up treasures in heaven, not on earth, Matthew 6:19**.

 The basis for this principle is trust. If we trust in riches we will be disappointed for the following reasons: (1) Jesus teaches that moth and rust can destroy riches and thieves can steal them. In other words, we should not trust in riches because they are easily lost in a variety of ways. Similarly, riches last for their owner only so long as he lives in this world, so at best riches are temporary and useful only in this short life. (2) In Mark 10:24 Jesus states that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to enter Christ’s kingdom if one trusts in riches. Not only is it foolish to think that material riches are secure, but it is also foolish to think that material things (rather than spiritual) provide true happiness. (3) Ecclesiastes 5:10 says, “He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase.” What satisfaction we do acquire from material things is temporary because our nature is to seek continually for more than we have, regardless of the riches we amass. We cannot trust in riches to provide true satisfaction, even in this life, to say nothing of eternity.

 In order for us to have riches, most of us have to devote our time and attention to getting them. This takes our attention from service to God. We should all heed the following warnings: **“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows,”** 1Timothy 6:10. **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him,”** 1John 2:15. **“No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier,”** 2Timothy 2:4.

**Great Principles of Christianity, #10**

**Blessings are responsibilities in disguise, Luke 12:48, Matthew 25:14-30**

 In these two passages, Jesus suggests that we are given certain blessings and that these blessings are actually opportunities to serve which are placed in our trust. Such opportunities or trusts are actually **responsibilities** which will call us to account at the judgment. Whether we consider something a gift from God or something we earned, this principle applies, Ephesians 4:28. Consider four other passages which teach the same thing: (1) The Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Luke 16:20-31, (2) James’ representation of the rich in judgment, James 5:1-6, (3) Jesus’ statement in Matthew 6:19-20 that we should lay up treasures in heaven rather than on earth, and (4) The Parable of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:16-21. All of these passages teach that we should use our blessings (responsibilities) to serve God and man while we have the opportunity. We *will* be held accountable in the next life.