

The Pursuit of God
by A. W. Tozer
Chapter 2 - The Blessedness of Possessing Nothing

“God blesses those people who depend only on him. They belong to the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:3 (CEV version)

1. Before He made man, God created a world of useful and pleasant “things” for man’s use and enjoyment.
 - The created things were meant to be external to the man and subservient to him.
 - In the deep heart of man was a shrine where none but God was worthy to come.
 - Sin introduced complications and has made these very gifts of God a potential source of ruin to the soul.
 - Our real spiritual trouble is that the human heart covets things with a deep and fierce passion. God's gifts have taken the place reserved for Him alone.

2. Jesus referred to this tyranny of things in **Matthew 6:31-33**.
 - There is an enemy within each of us – our natural man, or self. Its chief characteristic is its possessiveness.
 - To allow this enemy to live is, in the end, to lose everything.
 - To repudiate it and give up all for Christ’s sake is to lose nothing of spiritual or eternal value, but to preserve everything for eternity.
 - The only way to destroy this enemy is by The Cross. **Luke 9:23-25; Galatians 2:20**

3. The blessed ones who possess the Kingdom are those who have repudiated every external thing and have rooted from their hearts all sense of possessing. These are the “poor in spirit”. **Matthew 5:3**
 - They are no longer slaves to the tyranny of “things”. They have broken the yoke of the oppressor, not by fighting but by surrendering.

4. This New Testament principle of the spiritual life finds its best illustration in the Old Testament story of Abraham and Isaac. **Genesis 22:1-19**
 - Abraham’s love for Isaac threatened to usurp God from the throne of Abraham’s heart.
 - God only wanted to remove Isaac from the temple of Abraham’s heart so that He might reign unchallenged there.
 - Abraham was now a man wholly surrendered, a man utterly obedient, a man who possessed nothing. He had everything – but he possessed nothing! There is the

spiritual secret. There is the sweet theology of the heart which can be learned only in the school of renunciation.

- “Things” had now become external to Abraham; his real treasures were now inward and eternal.
5. Our possessive clinging to things is so natural, it is rarely recognized for the evil it is; but its results are tragic. Everything we have is on loan to us by God – including our most love ones and our gifts and talents. **1 Corinthians 4:7**
6. How do we free ourselves from our possessive nature?
- a) We must make no attempt to excuse ourselves, either in our own eyes or before the Lord. Ask the Lord to reveal to you the things/people you hold in your heart above Him. **Psalm 139:23-24**
- b) Remember that this is holy business – no careless or casual dealings will suffice.
- Insist that God remove things out of my heart, that He will reign there alone.
 - A truth such as this cannot be learned from the facts – it must be *experienced*. **James 1:22-25**
 - The ancient curse will not go out painlessly, will not lie down and die in obedience to our command. It must be torn out of our heart like a plant from the soil; it must be extracted in agony and blood like a tooth from the jaw.
7. If we are set upon the pursuit of God, He will sooner or later bring us to this test.
- We will be brought one by one to the testing place, and we may never know when we are there. At that testing place there will be only two choices – just one and an alternative. Our whole future will be conditioned by the choice we make.

Father, I want to know Thee, but my cowardly heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding, and I do not try to hide from Thee the terror of the parting. I come trembling, but I do come. Please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self, so that Thou may enter and dwell there without a rival. Then shall Thou make the place of Thy feet glorious. Then shall my heart have no need of the sun to shine in it, for Thyself will be the light of it, and there shall be no night there. In Jesus' name. Amen.