

Panthers:

Do you desire money for the control that it brings? Control literally means “to roll against.” It is the extension of our will over another person or object. We attempt to control others, our own lives, or even God. The desire for control came from man being empowered by God to rule over the earth, and to use that control to humbly serve Him (Gen. 1:28).

The first sin was pride, man desiring control apart from God (Gen. 3:5-6). God had created Adam and Eve with humble hearts. The object and satisfaction of their desires was God. Pride made man the object of his own desires. Now each person is born with and chooses a proud heart (Gen. 8:21). He trusts in his giftedness rather than his godliness.

Money is pride’s measurement of our giftedness (time, talent, and treasures). Wisdom is humility’s measurement of our godliness (Christ in us). Christ is the image of God (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). He is humble in heart (Matt. 11:29), and He is the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24). Humility toward Christ is the beginning of His wisdom in our lives (Prov. 11:2).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned His disciples about attempting to satisfy their desires with money. He offered wisdom as an alternative. The third desire He addressed was control (Matt. 6:24).

**Pride seeks control from serving money.** *“No one can serve two masters”* (Matt. 6:24). Jesus knew our desire for control would be abused in a dualistic lifestyle where we would attempt to selfishly control others in an attempt to control our own lives. Bob Dylan said, “Everybody’s going to serve somebody.”

**The result is a life that is out of control.** *“Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other”* (Matt. 6:24). Serving two masters is serving one. It is an attempt to serve our selfish desires (Rom. 8:5-8). At some point the two interests collide leaving us with a choice of which master to serve. The question is “Who or what has ultimate control of our lives, God or money?” What controls us affects how we try to control others.

**Humility seeks to serve God.** *“You cannot serve both God and money”* (Matt. 6:24). As previously mentioned, God’s design for control was for us to serve Him. We flesh this out by humbly serving others rather than controlling them. In doing so, our unselfish desires are satisfied as well as the desires of God and the person served (Phil 2:3-5).

**The result is the power of God in Christ** (1 Cor. 1:24; 2 Cor. 12:9-10). Great power resides in humbly serving others because it frees us from pride’s bondage to money and draws others to Christ in us while we grow in our intimacy with both. The more we give up control, the more we find it residing in us. Christ is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:24), and His complete power is unlocked in our lives through the key of humility (2 Cor. 12:9). This power is the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us (Rom. 8:9-11).

This week, when presented with the choice of serving God or money, choose God because serving two masters is serving one. Flesh this out by humbly serving every person that you encounter with your time, talent, and treasures. You can serve the other person’s interests while at the same time serving your unselfish interests as well as God’s. It will not merely be you who is serving, rather it will be Christ in you (1 Peter 4:10-11).

Controlled in Christ's Power,  
Mitch