



Materialism and the Christian Response



Introduction: What Is Materialism?

Definition:

Materialism is the belief that material possessions, wealth, and physical comfort are the most important or ultimate goals in life.

Biblical Contrast:

“I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, chasing after the wind.”

— *Ecclesiastes 1:14*

Insight:

Ecclesiastes confronts the futility of a life lived only for temporal gain. It reminds us that anything pursued apart from God, no matter how impressive or enjoyable, ultimately leaves us empty. Christians are called to live for what is above the sun—eternal purposes grounded in God's kingdom.



I. The Disappointment of Unfounded *Enrichment*

Problem:

A relentless drive for accumulation—more money, more stuff, more status—leads to anxiety, dissatisfaction, and even debt.

Biblical Response:

Philippians 4:11–12 – “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances... I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation.”

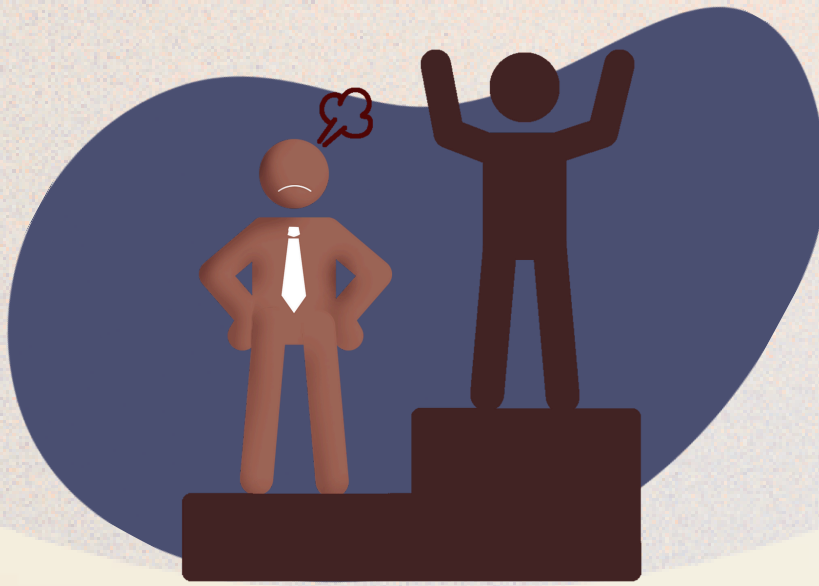
Paul’s contentment comes not from external circumstances, but from the sufficiency of Christ. Whether in plenty or in want, he experiences peace because his heart is rooted in something unshakable.

Luke 12:15 – “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

Jesus warns that our worth and meaning are not measured by what we own. Greed distorts the soul by convincing us that material gain is the measure of a meaningful life. Instead, Jesus points us to a richer life found in relationship with God.

Application:

Cultivate contentment and generosity. Challenge the assumption that “more” equals “better.” Reflect on what you truly need and how much is enough. Replace accumulation with thankfulness, and reframe success as faithful stewardship.



II. The Disappointment of Unexplained *Enhancement*

Problem:

In a culture where worth is measured by wealth and success, people often attach their value to their financial standing or lifestyle. This can lead to pride, comparison, and even despair.

Biblical Response:

Galatians 2:20 – “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

Our identity is not in what we earn, own, or display, but in Christ who lives within us. This redefines worth—it is rooted in grace, not performance or possessions.

1 Timothy 6:17 – “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God...”

Paul acknowledges that wealth is not inherently evil, but warns against trusting in it. Riches are unstable and fleeting; placing our security in them is like building a house on sand.

Application:

Remember that your true value comes from being loved by God, not from your bank account or career milestones. Fight comparison by celebrating others and embracing humility. Ask: Do I find more confidence in what I own or in who owns me?



III. The Disappointment of Unending *Entertainment*

Problem:

In a digital world, entertainment is always a click away. But this endless pursuit of comfort and stimulation can numb our spiritual sensitivity and displace deeper joys.

Biblical Response:

Psalm 16:11 – “In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

God is not against pleasure—He’s the source of it. But the deepest joy comes not from Netflix or social media, but from abiding in God’s presence.

Luke 8:14 – “The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way, they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures.”

Jesus warns that even the Word of God can be choked out by distractions. Entertainment becomes dangerous when it dulls our hunger for God.

Application:

Be mindful of how you consume media. Ask yourself: Is this helping me grow, rest, or glorify God—or is it numbing, distracting, or distorting my desires? Choose spiritual disciplines over digital diversions.



IV. The Disappointment of Unproven *Encroachment*

Problem:

The glorification of overwork as a badge of success often leads to burnout, broken relationships, and spiritual neglect.

Biblical Response:

Exodus 20:8-10 – “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy... On it you shall not do any work.”

Sabbath is a counter-cultural rhythm that reorients us around God. It's a reminder that we are human beings, not human doings. Rest is a declaration that our identity is not found in productivity but in belonging to God.

Matthew 6:33 – “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Jesus invites us to flip our priorities. When we chase the Kingdom first, we find peace, provision, and purpose. When we chase success first, we often find stress and emptiness.

Application:

Prioritize rest, worship, and relationships. Learn to say no. Let your schedule reflect your spiritual priorities. Honor Sabbath not as a legalistic rule, but as a gift of grace.



V. The Disappointment of Unfulfilling *Entrapment*

Problem:

Many live with a short-term mindset, chasing applause, achievements, and accumulation—forgetting the eternal implications of their lives.

Biblical Response:

Matthew 6:19–20 – “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth... but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.”

Jesus teaches that the value of our lives is measured not by what we gain but what we give. Earthly treasures perish; heavenly treasures endure.

Colossians 3:2 – “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

We are urged to develop an eternal mindset—one that reshapes how we spend time, money, and energy. Life is short. Eternity is long. Live accordingly.

Application:

Shift your focus from temporary success to eternal impact. Invest in people, not just projects. Measure significance by faithfulness, not fame.



Conclusion: The Only True Treasure

“What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” – Matthew 16:26

Materialism promises happiness but delivers anxiety, comparison, and spiritual numbness. Only in Christ do we find lasting joy, identity, and purpose.

Practical Pointers: How to Resist Materialism

Here are some simple but powerful ways to respond:

1. Practice gratitude daily – Start or end each day by listing three things you're thankful for.
2. Give regularly and sacrificially – Support a church, mission, or cause that aligns with God's Kingdom.
3. Observe Sabbath rest – Dedicate one day a week to stop, delight, worship, and rest.
4. Simplify your life – Consider what you can give away, reduce, or stop buying.
5. Limit media intake – Choose content that nourishes your soul.
6. Serve others intentionally – Use your time, talents, and treasure to bless others.
7. Spend time in Scripture and prayer – Anchor your identity in God's presence.



Reflection Questions:

1. Which of the five distractions do I struggle with most—and why?
2. How has materialism subtly shaped my definition of success?
3. What practices can I implement this week to realign with God's values?
4. What would change if I lived with a more eternal mindset?
5. In what ways can I use my possessions to bless others rather than build comfort for myself?



About the Speaker

Krish Dhanam was one of only two executive coaches personally trained by Zig Ziglar, Krish has successfully delivered his message of hope, humor and balance in over fifty countries and throughout the continental United States. As a curriculum designer he has authored programs on staff development, sales, leadership, personal development and communication.

He is the CEO with Skylife Success, co-founder of Krish Dhanam Training and President of Mala Ministries. He is the author of The American Dream from an Indian Heart, From Abstracts to Absolutes and Hard Headed and Soft Hearted.

The Dhanam's make their home in Flower Mound, Texas and are the proud parents of Nicolas.



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