

Guilty Treasures

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Mathew 6:21

I'm crazy about beautiful glass art pieces. Particularly captivating are vases or sculptures into which gleaming swirls of metallic color have been embedded; when exposed to sunshine, they glitter and sparkle with fleeting rays of light. But because the cost of such art is typically proportional to its beauty, I'm usually forced to admire such pieces from the outside looking in. However, some time ago at Knott's Berry Farm, I encountered an artist liquidating her beautiful glass inventory at great cost reduction. At that moment, a unique window of opportunity opened. *Why I would be foolish not to take advantage of such a break*, I told myself. The prices still weren't cheap, but the savings were great. Any would make a wonderful gift, and although Christmas was months away, it seemed prudent to buy them now to give as presents later.

I used this rationale to exceed my usual shopping budget, and I carried home five such treasures. In the days that followed, I fell into a daily routine of removing each one from its box to marvel at them all collectively. When finished, I'd tuck each piece back into its bed of tissue paper for the night.

But this routine soon morphed into something different. Although I'd planned to give them away later in the year, it seemed wasteful to keep them hidden and unappreciated in the interim. So removing them from their boxes, I arranged all five pieces along a wide, east-facing windowsill—as if they were a company of magnificently adorned little soldiers lined up at my command. For months I viewed their brilliant colors in the morning sun each day, periodically reconfiguring them as a group according to color, size, shape, or whatever suited my whim.

By the time Christmas season rolled around that year, I became emotionally bonded to my glass collection. Even the looming pressure to find suitable gifts couldn't uproot them from their now-permanent place on my windowsill. No longer a prudent shopper who had bought the perfect December gifts months in advance, I entered the crowded malls to find other presents. So much extra trouble, just because my heart interfered with my plans.

Jesus said, where your treasure is, there your heart will be (Matt. 6:21). This reality became crystal clear to me in a new way. I had treasured the glass pieces by arranging them on a windowsill for my daily viewing pleasure. My emotional attachment became inevitable, which made parting with them unthinkable. But it didn't have to be that way; had I instead stored them boxed in the closet, they would have been out of sight, out of mind, and more significantly, out of my heart. Then parting with them, giving them as gifts, would not have been difficult.

Because the heart follows the mind, it's a natural progression to love what we set our minds upon. Moreover, what we set our minds upon (that will ultimately harbor our hearts) needn't be the result of random chance but rather of conscious choice. We choose our mind's preoccupations, whether the things of God or the things of this world. If we choose God, the riches gained include spiritual life and incorruptible treasures in Heaven. However, as walking by means of the Spirit, this also includes falling in love with Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Psalms 1 describes such a person as blessed, as one who meditates on God's Law day and night. God's Word is the righteous person's preoccupation and his *delight* (Psalm 1:2). Similarly, His Word becomes our delight if we choose to treasure it.

God has given us all things richly to enjoy, including earthly treasures. But in keeping them in the proper perspective through the wisdom that does endure, we hold our earthly blessings loosely, knowing that they can't endure. Like all things physical, my beautiful glass creations won't last forever; nonetheless they serve as daily reminders that my life tomorrow is influenced by the presence or absence of wise choices made today.

By Mary Nixon