

The Christmas Carol

Part One: *Marley & Scrooge*

December 4, 2022

This December, I'm going to use Charles Dickens' bestseller *A Christmas Carol* and God's bestseller the Bible to teach you four valuable life lessons. If you listen to the Dickens' four fictional spirits & the Holy Spirit this month, you will not only grow spiritually, but you will be moved to help the poor and powerless in your community.

Stave One: *A Christmas Carol* opens on a bleak, cold Christmas Eve in London, seven years after the death of Jacob Marley - Ebenezer Scrooge's business partner. Scrooge, an aging miser, dislikes Christmas and refuses a dinner invitation from his nephew Fred. Scrooge also turns away two men who seek a donation for the poor. He does grudgingly allow his overworked, underpaid clerk, Bob Cratchit, Christmas Day off with pay because it is the social custom. That night Scrooge is visited at his home by Marley's ghost. For seven years, Marley has wandered the Earth entwined by heavy chains and money boxes which he forged during his lifetime of greed and selfishness. Marley tells Scrooge that he has a single chance to avoid the same fate.

- Marley's purpose in *A Christmas Carol* is to tell Scrooge that he needs to change.
- Ebenezer Scrooge is like the rich farmer in Jesus' Parable of the Rich Fool. Luke 12:13-21

How does a person become a scrooge?

Step One: You believe the lie that money is the key to happiness and a successful life.

Satan is a liar. In fact, Jesus said the Devil is the originator of lies (John 8:44)! One of Devil's biggest lies is money is the key to happiness. *He tells us this lie because...*

- Satan knows we cannot love God and money.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 22:34-40 that loving God should be our greatest goal in life. Well, 1 John 2:15-17 tells us Satan tempts us with money and possessions to keep us from loving God.

- Satan knows we cannot serve God and money. Matthew 6:22-24

In verses 22-23, Jesus uses the symbol of a single eye to portray a singular focus in life. He says a person who loves light (focused on loving God) is spiritually healthy. But a person who loves darkness (focused on loving worldly things) is spiritually sick. Jesus then applies his allegory by stating that no one can serve two masters.

Step Two: You choose to spend your life pursuing money.

People that believe money brings happiness spend their life trying to get as much money as they can. They become greedy people that give all their time and energy to getting more and more money. But their pursuit of money doesn't bring happiness; it brings sorrow (1st Timothy 6:9-10).

What the life lesson you need to take home today?

- You must define success correctly to live a successful life.

Scrooge believed Satan's lie that money is the key to happiness and a successful life. But Scrooge's wrong definition of success caused him to live life in the wrong way. He had lots of money, but he wasn't happy or successful at life (Ecclesiastes 5:10). He was a miserable miser that didn't love God, others, or even himself! Scrooge needed to repent (turn from) his sins and allow Jesus to make him into a new man.