

Bible Enforced in "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant

Human nature has evolved over many generations till today. A notable time of human progression is the 1800's: a time where humans emphasize the importance of wealth and the "need" for materialistic items. "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant models a prime example of the 1800's attitude. It reflects a major aspect of the lives in the 1800's where anything is possible and people seek to improve their own lives. The story and characters in "The Necklace" represent society as a whole back then by providing readers with an image on how society held things of importance in high respect leading to everyone to want to be the "best of the best". Specifically in the story, many characters' attitudes lead to damaging events. Mathilde Loisel's attitude of discontent is a leading reason for her acquisitive desire of wealth, Jeanne Forestier's and Loisel's husband's character of being prideful leads to the reluctance of truth. Overall, the story shares the theme of: "Pride and greed can cause many people sorrows and hardships", depicted through the Bible, summarizes the Nineteenth century. Since the Bible is a chief book that is used from about 82% of the world's population, it is safe to say it contains substantial ideas on the human morals on what to do and what not to do. Basing off the character's actions from the Bible will offer the readers with a better idea on right from wrong.

First, to prove the theme, Mathilde Loisel's attitude of discontent and materialistic dreams is identified. Mathilde's current situation is a middle class, beautiful, and charming woman who lives in a house adorned with "silent chambers, draped Oriental tapestries/ bronze floor lamps/ large overstuffed armchairs." Mathilde is in no way satisfied with her safe lifestyle. She does not realize how lucky she is to be financially stable and have enough money to afford a few luxuries of life! Loisel forgets about the population below her and dreams about being with the wealthier population. Her family is middle class; she lives an average life where they can afford nice things such as a fancy ball gowns or rifle when they save up (unlike the lower class). Her situation is illustrated through Mathew 6:24: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one or love the other, or he will be devoted to one or despise the other. You can not serve God and wealth." As described in the beginning of the book, she has two servants to wait on her but she wants to have specifically two handsome butlers that are dressed nicely. She keeps thinking about what she doesn't have such as evening clothes, jewels, and jealousy from others and does not

appreciate what she does have such as servants, a kind husband, and respectable looks. Mathilde continues to seek more than what she already has but the verse states: "no one can serve two masters" meaning she will never get the best of both worlds. Loisel can not serve God and wealth. She seeks to have additional material goods and so she gets it when receiving the new evening dress. Ironically, at the end of the party, she wants more as shown when she desires to have a fur coat like the other women. Mathilde will not be able to satisfy her materialistic needs of fitting into the high society of life (wealth) and her basic moral duties of serving God. Wealth means power which leads to corruption. It is a never-ending cycle, and in the end, she is even less happy than she was before. She ends up "un-happier", because she had suffered 10 years of paying off debts due to losing her Forestier's necklace and not telling the truth. She devotes her life to finding happiness by trying to convince her husband to get her new dresses and jewelry but despises the fact she can't because in the end near her old age she still seeks wealth and compares herself to her friend Mme. Forestier.

Another characteristic of the 1800's expressed through the story is society's arrogance is shown through Jeanne Forestier and Loisel's husband. Their characters are expressed through Psalm 31:18: "Let the lying lips be mute, which speak insolently against the righteous with pride and contempt." Mme. Forestier is prideful because she allows Mathilde to borrow her diamond necklace but refuses to tell Mathilde it is made of paste and fake. If she tells the truth at that moment, she risks embarrassment because she cannot afford the real diamond necklace. She does not want to jeopardize her reputation of being affluent, so she is "mute" about the truth of the necklace by being a liar. Forestier does not think about the effects of her lie. In addition, Mathilde's husband is in the same situation. Loisel finds out she has lost the necklace, and her husband tells her to lie to Mme. Forestier to stall and create time to hide her mistake. His excuse for Loisel's delay for the return of the necklace is that she has broken the clasp and has not lost it. Deep down he cares about his reputation and wants to protect his dignity. He does not want people looking at his family like they are "poor" or untrustworthy. As a result, he tells Mme. Loisel, his wife, to be "mute" about the truth on how he can't find the necklace, ensuing ten years of hardships. His arrogance (pride) causes him to lie to Forestier (and become mute).

Finally, the focus of the Nineteenth century is summarized through the shared theme of the story: "Pride and greed can cause people sorrow and hardships". The theme is implied by 1 Timothy 6:10: "For the love of money is the root of evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." In general, both lines show

how pride result in sorrows and how money and wealth is not always a good thing. The most significant character that demonstrates the theme is Madame Loseil, the protagonist. Mathilde's longing desire to live a more luxurious life sets off a chain reaction of events that make her suffer for ten years resulting in a loss of youth but even after that, she does not learn her lesson. She first desires to have all these materialistic things such as "great reception halls", leading her to want to ask her husband for money to go to the ball, and this finally causes her to want jewelry to go with the dress for the ball. Ultimately, that leads to her losing the necklace and paying off a debt. She still seeks to be like Mme. Forestier and judges others by their materialistic belongings and looks. When she sees Jeanne after the incident, she only focuses on her looks and how Forestier still looks young-looking, beautiful, and charming. Loisel has not learned her lesson to appreciate what she has, because she still pities herself and wants a better life in society with money. Throughout the story, Mathilde needs money to keep her spot in high society as shown with the four hundred francs dress and then the thirty-six thousand franc necklace. Everything in life comes with a price and so Loisel cannot reach contentment with her situation. Her "love of money" and wealth causes "many sorrows" and she ends up being discontent and unsatisfied in the end.

Taken as a whole, the short story "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant contains values of 1800's relating to the desire of wealth and higher social standards. Since it has been over 200 years since the era, humans have undeniably changed for better and worse. There are more stances against animal abuse, mistreatment of women, world hunger, etc. but with the gain of political stances, we lose basic moral values that are now questionable. The Bible establishes regulations against the sins of greed and jealousy. With the materials that have been invented in the twenty-first century, the temptations are so much greater. The lifestyle and morals of everyday life can be found in the Bible because greed and pride are timeless and universal since it is part of human nature. Although these human behaviors are inevitable, following the word of the Bible is an important way to live by, both now and back then.