

Managers for the King

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you (I Peter 5:6-7).

How can you know that you have truly surrendered everything to God? Anything which still causes you to be anxious or concerned is not yet His.

Christ gave His all for you, He expects nothing less in return. When you have truly turned it over to Christ, you no longer worry about it, since it is not yours! If Christ asks you to surrender it, you do so calmly and voluntarily. If God takes it away, you say with Job, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord (Job 1:21-22).”

You can also tell if you have truly surrendered something to God by whether or not you are willing to give it up when called upon to do so. Anything you hold back from God is a violation of your covenant and will cause you to miss out on some of the blessings, at least, and maybe more as illustrated in the situation with the rich young ruler of Mark 10:17-18,19-22: “As [Jesus] was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and began asking Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ And Jesus said to him, . . . ‘You know the commandments, “do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.”’ And he said to Him, ‘Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.’ And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property.” Jesus did not rebuke him or call him a liar when he said he kept all the other commandments. Instead, He “felt a love for him” and said that only “One thing you lack!” Jesus then gave him the answer for his remaining problem. Note that the only command Jesus had not initially listed of those regarding other people was “do not covet.” Had the young ruler been willing to give away everything he owned, he would have overcome his covetousness, learned to trust God and received the eternal riches

God had in store for him.

Immediately afterwards, Peter said to Christ, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You (Mark 10:28).” Christ responded, as we noted in the last section, that whoever gives up anything for His sake and that of the gospel shall receive a hundred-fold in this life time and eternal life hereafter, although accompanied by persecutions (Mark 10:29-30). We cannot lose in this covenant – unless we fail to follow it!

But some will then ask, “Why should I even desire God’s blessings when I may have to surrender them anyway?” Because when you give up everything for God, He gives to you Himself – a greater reward than all the wealth in the world – while at the same time promising that all your needs will be more than met, though not without testings and persecutions. And is this not the real reason we desire wealth: that we will always have the security of knowing all our needs, present and future, will be met? In which case, we will be more than satisfied. Unless of course, you desire to impress others with your valuable status symbols. If so, expect a few extra rounds of testings and persecutions!

Jesus illustrated that giving up everything is a requirement for everyone, not just this rich young ruler, in Luke 14:27-33: “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace. So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.” The only things you do not have to give up are those which you realize that you do not own but only manage for the King. As in the parable of the talents, we have each been entrusted with things and abilities to be used for God’s glory. We are managers, not owners, of everything which God has provided for us. We will be

called to account for how every item has been used.

But everyone, genuinely or falsely, will then insist that they should keep all they have because they are merely managers. So I bring back to mind the first two ways of knowing if everything has been surrendered to our King: are you free from worry, and could you surrender what you have? Now I will add a third: do you follow God's commands and instructions regardless of the apparent loss to yourself?

Two commands that were among the most obvious signs of keeping the Old Covenant were giving tithes, or 10% of your income, *and* keeping the Sabbath, or giving 1/7 of your time to God in worship, study, and service. The requirements of the New Covenant are greater: we are required to give *all* our income and *all* our time. But a person who says they have surrendered all to God, yet cannot fulfill even the original commands, is not being honest. Jesus told a parable about why people do not give to God and why they killed His Son in Luke 20:9-16: "A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time. And at the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order that they might give him some of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out. And the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.' But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, 'This is the heir; let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours.' And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, therefore, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others." What did the owner of the vineyard, representing God, want from the vine-growers? The rent, that which was due Him, the tithe! Why did the vine-growers kill the prophets and then Christ? Because they did not want to give to God what was required. They hoped instead that if they could get rid of the heir, Christ, they could do whatever they wanted with what had been entrusted to them!

Not only has every one of our sins put Christ on the cross, but every time we have refused to give God what was rightfully His, we pound the nails deeper.