
Words of Truth

Must You Sell Everything You Have And Follow Jesus?

By: Brian A. Yeager

You open your Bible. You are looking for the truth. You find this: *“And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting”* (Luke 18:18-30).

After reading what I just quoted, you find that one man was found unworthy because he wouldn't sell all that he had, give to the poor, and then follow Jesus. Peter then spoke and stated, that he and by implication the other Apostles, had left everything to follow Jesus. If you were to continue reading through Luke and then into the second letter to Theophilus (Acts), you would find that others did similar things.

These passages add compelling evidence that you must abandon everything to be a disciple of Christ. Notice: *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved... And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things*

which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common” (Acts 2:41-47 and Acts 4:32). Is this what all must do to be saved?

Learn To Rightly Divide The Truth By Understanding Circumstances

The rich young ruler valued his earthly possessions above everything, even the Lord. You have to be willing, if necessary, to forsake all to follow Jesus (Luke 9:57-62, Luke 14:25-33, and Philippians 3:3-21). Jesus taught the rich young ruler what applied to him. Does it apply to all? Priscilla and Aquila were faithful saints that had a business and a home that was even used for the congregation there to assemble in (Acts 18:1-3 and Romans 16:3-5). Philemon had a home, servants, etc. and yet was a faithful brother (Philemon 1:1-25). Lydia owned a business and had a home, yet when converted was never told to forsake it all. The fact is, she was hospitable after her conversion and then again later towards Paul and Silas (Acts 16:13-15 and Acts 16:40).

Peter and the Apostles were unlike any of us. They were going to take over the work of Christ, as His ambassadors (II Corinthians 5:18-20). They, being directly led by the Holy Spirit (John 16:1-13, Acts 16:1-10, I Corinthians 2:1-13, Galatians 1:6-12, etc.) were going to take the Gospel into the whole world (Matthew 28:17-20 and Mark 16:14-20). No one after them was expected to or even capable of doing what they did. They were unique in many things. Evangelists, whom were/are not Apostles, did some traveling and teaching. However, they ultimately were permitted to have homes in a certain location (Acts 8:26-40 and Acts 21:8). There are things saints are expected to do that require us to have a place we call home and stable funds (Luke 10:25-37, Romans 12:13, I Corinthians 11:22; 34, I Corinthians 16:1-4, Colossians 4:15, II Thessalonians 3:10, I Timothy 5:8, I Timothy 6:17-18, I Peter 4:9, etc.).

When you read the second letter to Theophilus (Acts), you are reading first about a time wherein there was only one congregation on earth. That congregation was in Jerusalem. Therefore, when people came to Jerusalem from all over the earth (Acts 2:5-11) and were converted; they needed to stay in Jerusalem. There were no other congregations for them to be part of. The New Testament was not even at the beginning of being written. They needed to stay together, among the Apostles, in a situation that will not be replicated again. The rich young ruler, the Apostles, and the first Christians on earth are not our pattern for today in those particular, unique situations.

Conclusion

We must rightly handle the word of God (II Timothy 2:14-18). Since we have the Scriptures, we must learn to live by them all (Luke 4:4). We have to be reasonable. If we wrest the Scriptures, even through ignorance, we will end up destroying ourselves (II Peter 3:15-18). Unless your situation dictates it, you don't have to sell everything to be a saint.