
Words of Truth

People Often Have A False Sense Of Entitlement

By: Brian A. Yeager

Entitlement is: “the fact of having a right to something” (New Oxford American Dictionary). Our country is full of people that think they have rights to things. Our courts are full of lawsuits wherein people are thinking something is due to them. I was at a department store that had a sale for their credit card users. If you had this store’s credit card you would get between 10-30% off of sale prices. You had to use the store credit card to get these savings. I watched a woman argue with a clerk and two managers about the sale. She was not a store credit card holder. Yet, she felt she was owed the discount anyway.

A parent of an autistic child in Beachwood, NJ went to the media because her child was not permitted to enjoy a ride at an amusement park (9/2007). The park had HEIGHT restrictions on their rides based upon manufacturer recommendations. Yet, this mother ignored that and made the issue about autism. She said: “I don’t understand. They make so much money a year, why can’t they put a couple of rides for handicapped children up there” (<http://www.500words.net/2007/09/index.html>)? The idea that having an autistic child entitles you to special rides at an amusement park is crazy.

There are many other examples that could be cited. There have been racial issues, religious issues, sex issues, physical handicap issues, marital issues, and thousands of others that have been used to abuse what is rightfully due to individuals. The idea that you are owed something because of some circumstance has infected people’s minds in the United States. Sadly, this mindset has led people to think that God owes them something too. From salvation to money, people think the Lord owes them something. This is seen often when people show up to worship services or Bible studies of the local church wanting money, food, and even transportation. People need to realize that the Lord, and His church, does not exist to act like a social welfare program!

People Are Not Entitled To Receive The Lord’s Money

The Lord instructs local churches of Christ to take up a collection of funds on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1-2). Those funds are to be used to carry out the work given to the local church. Thus, those funds can be used to relieve needy saints (Romans 15:25-27, II Corinthians 8:1-9:15, and I Timothy 5:3-16), support preachers (I Corinthians 9:6-14, II Corinthians 11:8, and Philippians 4:11-18), support elders (I Timothy 5:17-18), and to supply for the work of spiritual edification (Ephesians 4:16). Therefore, if one is not a needy saint, an elder in the local church, a faithful preacher of the Gospel, or a widow indeed; the Lord’s money is not to be given to him or her.

Where in the Scriptures did a non-Christian show up to the meeting place of the local church of Christ to receive money? The answer is obvious, that didn’t happen. Nor did the local churches of

Christ, that are revealed in the Scriptures, provide transportation, clothing, food, bill payment services, etc. to any and all who asked. If these things were authorized works of the local church, we'd read about them in the Scriptures (II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:3-4, and II Peter 1:20-21). It is not the Lord's work to provide for the financial needs of individuals or families. If people need money, God has instructed them how to obtain it.

People Are Entitled To Receive That Which They Work To Obtain

"Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase... In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury... Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth... And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing... For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (Proverbs 13:11, Proverbs 14:23, Ephesians 4:28, I Thessalonians 4:11-12, and II Thessalonians 3:10-12).

The Scriptures you just read are very clear and easy to understand. When people make excuses not to work (Proverbs 20:4), they are entitled to die of starvation (Proverbs 19:15). Those who **CHOOSE** not to work are entitled to be without proper clothing (Proverbs 23:21). What these people are not entitled to is the Lord's money or your money either. Certainly, a Christian is expected to help those truly in need (Luke 10:25-37 and Acts 11:27-30). However, someone who has refused to work is simply reaping what he or she has sown – NOTHING (Proverbs 24:30-34 and Proverbs 26:13-15).

The false ideas of entitlement are not just limited to monetary matters. People also feel that they're entitled to receive Heaven as their reward though they've done nothing at all to work toward that end. As we covered in an article two weeks ago, it is not as though we can work our way to Heaven without the grace of God (Ephesians 2:1-10). That being said, we will not be given eternal life without work on our part. We have to initially obey the Gospel to be saved (Acts 2:37-47, Acts 8:12-13, Acts 8:25-38, and Acts 18:8). Then, we have to continue in obedience to remain saved (John 8:31, Colossians 1:21-23, Hebrews 10:22-38, and II Peter 2:20-22; cf. I Peter 4:17-19). Like physical labor, spiritual labor is what gains us spiritual rewards. Plainly put, in all things you reap what you sow (Job 4:8, Proverbs 1:31, Proverbs 22:8, Hosea 8:7, Matthew 25:14-30, John 5:28-29, and Galatians 6:7-9).

Conclusion

The false concepts of entitlement that have spread through our society have ruined a lot of people. Let's not allow these false ideas to creep into our minds. We were created for the pleasure of our Lord (Revelation 4:11). It is our duty to obey Him (Ecclesiastes 12:13). He does not owe us anything. Other people do not owe us anything. Taylor's autism, Katrina's rheumatoid arthritis, Trevor's type 1 diabetes, and my health problems are not a reason for us to think someone owes us something. Fairness is a human concept often blinded by prejudice and greed. Let's not fall prey to these carnal mindsets rooted in physical and spiritual greediness (Proverbs 15:27).