

ALIGN__1

Give God What He Wants Most

“So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him.”
- Romans 12:1, GNB

But Christ has shown me that what I thought was valuable is worthless. Nothing is as wonderful as knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have given up everything else and count it all as garbage.
- Philippians 3:7-8, CEV

How do you know that you are in a position to receive the very best God has to offer?

A man once asked Jesus essentially the same question, “*What must I do to inherit eternal life?*” (Mark 10:17-23). Jesus deeply cared about the man and knew that nothing short of the radical demand of the Kingdom would provide what he most wanted. Specifically Jesus challenged him to sell all that he had, knowing that his preoccupation with the *material* was preventing him from receiving the *spiritual* (that which is truly valuable).

Likewise Jesus challenges us to give God what He wants most—ourselves. But as various Kingdom parables suggest, we give up something of value for something of even greater value. In fact, the demand of the Kingdom becomes the very avenue of God’s blessing (notice Mark 10:29-30).

Welcome

What’s the best deal you’ve ever made—either at a garage sale, on eBay, or someplace similar?

Word

Read Matthew 13:44-46

1. Jesus told two stories about pursuing the kingdom of heaven. What exactly, do these two stories have in common?
2. In your opinion, what were the critical factors in each person’s response? What does this suggest about the reason why more people don’t make the kingdom (pursuing God’s rule) a matter of first priority?
3. In both stories, was the focus more on what was *given up*, or on what was *received*? Why is this a significant distinction?
4. What do you think about the following statement, “*Total commitment to God’s will is the avenue through which God’s greatest blessings flow to His children.*”

Read Romans 12:1

5. What does this verse have in common with the two stories just considered in Matthew 13? What is it that God wants most? What’s the motivation for making such a commitment? Have you ever been hesitant to “totally commit” yourself to God—perhaps with a particular decision you had to make—for fear that you might not get the best in return? What was the outcome?

Works

The Kingdom of God (God’s rule in our lives) continually calls for a re-alignment of our motives, resources, priorities and goals. How will what you’ve read and discussed tonight help to frame the next big decision you make about whether or not to “abandon” yourself to pursue God’s will?

Worship

Respond to God in song and prayer. Possibilities: “We Are An Offering” (668), “Lord, Take Control” (790), “I’m Yours, Lord.”