

How One Woman Learned the Blessing of Doing What's Right, No Matter the Cost

"What does it cost to be a Christian?" someone asked devotional writer and poet Henry Drummond. His reply was, "The entrance fee is nothing, but the annual subscription is everything" (quoted in Corrie ten Boom, *Clippings From My Notebook*). Drummond echoes the apostle Paul's words about the entrance fee: "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). God's gift of eternal life is free, but the expense of the annual subscription is described in this paraphrase of the letter to the Ephesians: "Take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you" (Eph. 4:22-24, MSG).

The entrance into God's kingdom has been freely paid by Christ's death on the cross, and with this gracious gift, we receive freedom from our old nature and a new life to be lived in the likeness of our heavenly Father. The annual subscription cost is a dying to self, accompanied by a wholehearted desire to do what is right. Through Christ, the power of sin has been broken, and we now have the power to live for the glory of God. Again, the apostle Paul exhorts us:

"Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. ... Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God" (Rom. 6:12-13).

I saw these verses lived out by a woman I met at a weekend conference. Kay asked if we could have lunch together, and

when we met the next day, she told me a compelling story. “I used to have a high-paying job at a good company. I really enjoyed what I did, and my flexible hours allowed me to be available to our teenage children. But after I had been at the company for a while, I found myself attracted to a co-worker, even though my husband and I have always had a good relationship. I was extremely careful about how I related to my colleague and was confident that he was oblivious to my thoughts and feelings. I assumed the ‘crush’ would soon pass, but I couldn’t seem to control my emotions.

“I prayed, I confessed my sin and I even told a trusted friend and asked her to pray for and with me. This helped, but as the months passed, my unrighteous thoughts continued to dominate my life. I began to feel hopeless and didn’t know what to do. It was during a time of crying out to God that I felt His leading to quit my job. Quit? I took a deep breath. This job was the best, and we needed the money. How would I explain to everyone, especially my husband, why I was leaving such a good job?

“But the Lord was clear: ‘Kay, flee from youthful lusts.’ I knew that God was right, and I was so ready to end my emotional turmoil that I immediately handed in my resignation.”

As I listened to Kay, I thought back to another conference, when I had listened to Suzanne’s heartbreaking story of giving in to temptation, of having an affair. In the process, Suzanne lost her husband.

These two women were both enticed by their own desires, yet their responses stood in stark contrast. Suzanne, although restored and forgiven, still lives with regret for doing what was wrong. Kay, on the other hand, lives with no regret because she did what was right.

Before Kay and I finished our lunch that day, I asked her what

she had told others about why she resigned so abruptly. She continued her story: "I struggled with how to answer people who asked me why I was leaving. I wanted to be truthful, but I certainly didn't want to implicate my co-worker. Actually, this process was much harder than I thought it would be. I wished I could have just slipped away, but I wanted to do what was right. I realized that God was using my decision to solidify my faith and that He wanted me to share honestly about what it means to have a relationship with Him. I was scared and embarrassed, but the Lord gave me wisdom.

"First, I knew that I should respond only to those who asked me why I was leaving. I didn't need to go around telling everyone. To my colleagues who asked, I said, 'I have so enjoyed working here. It has been a blessing, but I have been struggling in the past few months with some personal issues that were affecting my relationship with God. I felt that in order to honor Him, I needed to make this difficult decision to leave. The bottom line is that nothing is more valuable to me than my relationship with God.'

"To my husband, I was honest. In a way, my telling him the truth brought us closer together. He understood that I was willing to sacrifice my job so that our marriage would not be compromised. His acceptance of me has deepened my love and respect for him.

"To my Christian friends, I felt that the truth would serve as a warning and a testimony that doing the right thing means we must make hard choices. Several women have thanked me for telling them about my experience. And, Cynthia, the reason I wanted to tell you my story is so that you can encourage other women who are faced with temptation. Tell them that in my case, there was a cost in doing what was right, but the cost was minuscule compared to what I would have lost. This happened several years ago, and I have never regretted my decision."

Kay's life illustrates that doing what is right is not always easy, and it often involves sacrifice. This is part of the "subscription rate" that Drummond referred to when he said that it costs everything. It does cost, but as God's child who loves and honors her Father, Kay gladly paid the price. {eoa}

Cynthia Heald is a Bible teacher and the author of the popular *Becoming a Woman Bible study series*. She speaks frequently for church women's retreats and seminars nationally and internationally. Cynthia and her husband, Jack, serve with The Navigators and live in Tucson, Arizona.

This article was excerpted from Living Wisely: Believing the Truths of Scripture by Cynthia Heald. Copyright © 2020. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, a Division of Tyndale House Ministries.