

# Ministry Leader: What Do I Have to Give Up for Christ?

“What do I have to give up?” This is a common question one may ask when turning his or her life over to Christ.

People are very attached to what they have acquired or achieved – and why shouldn't they be? A lot of time, energy and resources go into everything we obtain in life. Do we have to relinquish it all to follow Christ?

A commitment to Christ doesn't mean we have to live in poverty. The walk of a Christian is never determined by what we have or don't have. To follow Christ is not the denial of things, but the denial of our will in order to accept His will. It is a life surrendered to God. However, if my heart is consumed by my possessions, then my walk with Christ is distracted. I cannot follow Christ if my love for things outweighs my love for Him. What is holding you back from committing to Christ? Is it your lifestyle? Is it a relationship with someone or something? Is it fear or doubts? What are you holding on to that you just can't let go of? What is it that you value above your soul?

The Word of God states, “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?” (Mark 8:36, MEV). What we see and feel is all temporary. These things fade away. They corrupt and rot. They get stolen and lost. People are on our side today, and tomorrow they can turn their backs on us. When we put our trust in things or people, we must be open to the chance that these things will fail us. What about your soul? Have you made an investment in the keeping of your soul? None of the things we see in front of us goes with us to the grave. Our souls will not die; the body will die, but the soul lives on.

What investment have you made into eternity? In Matthew 19:21-22 the rich man approached Jesus and wanted to know what it would take to follow Him. Jesus said, "Go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and ... follow me" (v. 21, NIV). The rich man could not follow Jesus because his heart was with his wealth.

Our focus should never be on what we lose. When we think of Christ, we need to focus on what we will gain. Christ did not come into this world to take anything away from us other than our sin. He came that our lives would be abundant and fulfilling (John 10:10). The world has tainted us to measure success by quantifying our possessions. This ideology has crossed over into our walk with the Lord. So many people measure the depth of their walk with God based on whether they have a big house or the finest car. God is so much bigger than these material things. Our focus must never be centralized on the gifts, but rather the Giver. We must see the value in who God is and not in what God does. He wants people who are not wrapped up in things but in Him.

If you are at a moment of decision and you are concerned about what you have to give up, stop for a moment and refocus. Christ knows everything about you, including your status and achievements. In fact, it is the blessing from God that has allowed us all to reach the status in life where we are. God has bestowed upon us all His great grace and mercy. If we put our focus on Him, we can see His provision as a loving Father who gives us everything we need to succeed. As we fine-tune our focus to see our Father, we see Him not holding things back from us but pouring out abundant blessings. These blessings are not to be hoarded but used in wisdom and love, being blessed and blessing others.

What do we have to give up? We must surrender whatever stands in the way of our relationship with Christ. If we can serve God and not allow our hearts to be distracted by material things, that is great. However, if material things or the love

of any other thing stands in the way of your relationship with God, then that is the thing you must surrender until your love for God is the most dominant part of your life. Surrender is a matter of trusting our loving Father, who has the very best in store for us. {eoa}

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