

Thought of the Week – More Than Your Best

(Week: 20180409)--By Jim Fannin

In the words of Sir Winston Churchill,

"It's not enough that we do our best; sometimes we have to do what's required. "

As I thought of Winston Churchill's words, the New Testament story (Mathew 19:16-22) about the rich young ruler came to mind. Like many of us he thought he had done his best to be a faithful follower of God. When questioned by Jesus about his activities and his observance of the law, he answered, "All these things I have done from my youth." and Jesus told him,

"If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

The scripture says he went away sad, because he had a lot of material wealth. His potential went unfulfilled because was **unwilling** to do what was required.

Sometimes we find ourselves in the same circumstance. We think have done our best. Yet we feel unfulfilled, frustrated that things are not working like we expect, or perhaps smarting from unrealized expectations or even criticism from someone else. Success escapes us; perhaps as defined by others, but more importantly, as measured by our relationship with Jesus. It's often not just a matter of doing our best. We have been doing that for a long time.

But just as the rich young ruler was turned away because he would not do the "thing" that was required, so ignoring whatever it is, that is required for success in God's eyes, will leave you wanting.

Consider this. Jesus takes the occasion of the encounter with the rich young ruler to illuminate some requirements we may not have known. When Jesus was asked, "What is the greatest commandment?", He tells us to love God with all our hearts and minds. He then goes on to say in Matthew 22:39, there is a similar, second commandment:

"Love your neighbor as yourself."

We should not miss the importance of this commandment. Not only is it mentioned in the same breath as the first commandment, but Jesus emphasizes its importance in verse 40:

"All the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Jesus tells us as Christians, we are required, not just to love our neighbor but to

do so, as you love "yourself!" This is a much broader requirement than you might think. You must love yourself in a healthy way in which you take time to nurture your spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual health. If you are not rested and at peace in all areas of your life, it is very difficult for the Holy Spirit to work through you.

We must come to realize that all aspects of our life belong to Christ. Our willingness to do the things required to provide for good family relationships, good financial foundations, proper rest, prayer, recreation, leisure time, and our job, are all part of our "Christian" life. Doing your best is sometimes not enough.

Don't get me wrong! It is hard! And for the most part, we do a pretty good job of managing our life requirements. But it is easy to get off track. It is easy to put off that **one thing** we know we need to do. Why? Because neglecting yourself is one of Satan's favorite lies and tricks to minimize your effectiveness. You must take care of yourself in every respect.

As Jesus says, if you want to be complete, it is not **OK** to just do your best, as the rich young ruler found out. Winston Churchill reminds us, you must do what is required. This means all areas of your life, because it is all, "The Christian Life."

Don't be like the rich young ruler who turned away from being the complete person God's wants us to be, because you are unwilling to do what is required. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 13:5-

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?