

One Thing You Lack

By Robert Turner

And then Jesus told him six things to do: go your way, sell whatever you have, and give to the poor. . .and come take up your cross, and follow Me (Mk.10:21). Six things? Or was it really just, "You must change your allegiance – put Me before worldly possessions." The records say Jesus "beholding him loved him" but the love did not change the requirements, and He allowed the young man to go away sad and grieved – but unsaved.

Sometimes I hear brethren speak of some good neighbor, well loved and respected for his clean moral life; and they say, "All he would have to do is just be baptized." How very wrong and shallow we can be at times.

"Just be baptized?" Just see yourself as a lost sinner, wholly dependent upon the mercies of God? Just die to you past life? Just submit to Him as Lord, in an act of dedication, a pledge to put Him first for the remainder of your life, regardless of the cost? The problem here is, we are unaware of our own failures, our own lack of dedication, our tarnished new life (?), but want to use ourselves as the standard for measuring others whom

we would see "come to Christ." To Christ? Or to be with us?

An obedient faith is "one thing" all lack, who have not come to Jesus Christ; but Jesus actually was being more particular than we have indicated. When he spoke of "one thing" He seemed to see the young ruler was allowing material possessions to stand between him and God. In that sense, our lack of dedication may be due to some particular weakness. Our special weakness might be the "one thing" that keeps us from seeing ourselves as we are, and changing our way of life: one's craze for popularity, another's desire for power, envy of the neighbors (called "keeping up with the Jones") or pure ego. These "one thing" or more like them, can be the particulars that keep many of us from serving Christ as we should.

My mother used to say, "A little thing may keep you out of heaven." She knew it wasn't "little" if it did that – but she wanted me to realize something I gave scant attention perhaps deserved prayer and work. Don't allow "one thing" to condemn you soul.



The North Charlottesville church of Christ

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Bible Class (children and adults).....10:00 AM
Morning Worship Service.....11:00 AM

Thursday

Bible Class (children and adults).....7:00 PM

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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There's More to It than That

By Dee Bowman



Thought to Ponder

The closest to perfection a person ever comes is when he fills out a job application form.

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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Bible Class 10:00 AM
Worship 11:00AM

Thursday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Larry Rouse
Editor

The Bible is a book about people. It uses the lives of people to teach and illustrate truth and righteousness, rebellion and impiety. People are the ultimate products of God's creation, the only part of His creation blessed with a sense of ought—the will to determine which way to go, what path to choose. He has set before man a blessing and a curse—a blessing if he seeks after the good, a curse he seeks after his own desires in preference to what God has commanded (see **Deut. 11:26-28**). Jesus spoke of this choosing when He described the two ways a man may choose: a broad way that leads to destruction, or a strait way that leads to life eternal (**Matt. 7:13-14**). It's people who make these choices. They do it of their own free will.

God has given us great illustrations of faithfulness, couched in the character and personalities of men. For instance, have you ever considered:

The faithfulness of Abraham? Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees of his own free will, choosing deliberately to go out, "not knowing whither he went." Think about that.

They were all people, people just like you and me. God has given us information about them so that we might learn how to please Him and what to do to avoid His displeasure. What a wonderful book, this Bible! What a people book!

You want to talk about faith? "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country," (**Heb. 11:9**), "for he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God" (**11:10**). He saw, by the eye of faith, something better. Do you reckon we would have the courage to do as he did? Abraham's faith is a model for us today. God treats our willingness to obey in the same way He did that of Abraham.

The virtue of Joseph? Joseph had all kinds of difficulties handed to him—difficulties he had done nothing to deserve. He was sold into slavery

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by his own brothers. He was thrown into prison for no crime, for an accusation by Potiphar's wife (**Gen. 39**). One thing impresses me about his virtue. When he was with Potiphar's wife, he hadn't taken off his cloak; he never intended to stay. And when she sought to seduce him, his question was, "how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (**39:9**). He was rejected and forgotten by those whom he befriended, yet he never lost that virtue, nor did he ever become bitter at the allotments of life. In fact, when he could have gotten revenge against his brothers for selling him into slavery, he said, "Now be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life" (**Gen. 45:5**). His faithfulness remained intact, no matter the circumstances. Joseph—an excellent example of moral excellence.

The wisdom of Solomon? Solomon lived life with all the gusto you can. He experienced everything life had to offer, he dipped into every phase of possible enjoyment. He had lands and houses, slaves and servants, power and repute, riches immeasurable. He engaged in great philanthropic enterprises, experimented with botany, and stored up treasures of all sorts. Furthermore, with each experiment he conducted, he said, "my wisdom remained with me"

(**Eccles. 2:2; 2:9**). When it was said and done, he determined that "all was vanity and vexation of spirit and there was no profit under the sun" (**2:11**). He ultimately concluded, after all had been said, and in perhaps the wisest of all his statements, "...fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (**Eccles. 12:13**). Consider the wisdom of Solomon. He tried it all; but he reached the proper conclusion about life.

The meekness of Moses? Moses was reared in Pharaoh's house. He had everything, what was described as "great riches," and "treasures in Egypt" (**Heb. 11:25-26**). But in the midst of

all this power and wealth, he choose—deliberately chose—"...to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than the pleasures of sin for a season." Why? Because, "he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (**11:26**). He saw, by faith, something better. He took control of his faith and, in doing so, made himself the object of scorn and disdain in a true statement of meekness. He put his strength under control. He managed himself in accordance with what he understood to be the greater. To subordinate one's will to the will of God is the essence of meekness. Moses demonstrated that meekness in a most marvelous manner.

The devotion of Paul? Saul was an enemy of the church in his early years. He calls himself a "Hebrew of Hebrews" (**Phil. 3:5**). He was likely destined for greatness in the religion of the Jews. This same Saul was to become the Apostle Paul, the most intense defender of the faith of his or any other time. He "suffered the loss of all things" that he might win Christ. He counted all the worldly things he had discarded as mere refuge in order to maintain his devotion to the cause of his Master, Jesus. He was beaten, shipwrecked, had his brethren swore out oaths to slay him. He was stoned and left for dead, was in perils of various sorts (**see 2 Cor. 11:22-28**), and walked with death at his heels all the days of his life. Yet, was it not he who said, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment worketh for us a far greater and eternal weight of glory" (**2 Cor.4:17-18**)? See his devotion—his total commitment to the cause, his unflinching faith in Jesus Christ. What a great example of devotion.

Or all the others? On and on we could go. What about the heart of David, or the humility of John the Baptist, or the courage of Peter, or the love of the Apostle John, or the encouraging words of Barnabas? They were all people, people just like you and me. God has given us information about them so that we might learn how to please Him and what to do to avoid His displeasure. What a wonderful book, this Bible! What a people book!



Considering the Outcome

By Bill Hall

We have no sympathy for those who at every funeral "preach the dead right on into heaven," who ignore the obvious failure on the part of the deceased to serve the Lord, who try to think that all will somehow get to heaven in spite of their disobedience. There is a hell, and the many of this earth (in contrast to the few) are going there (**Matthew 7:13-14**).

But we must not allow one extreme to beget another. While the majority will be lost, there are those in this world whose single purpose in life is to serve the Lord and go to heaven when they die; who devote themselves daily to studying God's word and living by its precepts. When such people die, it is right to speak of their good life and faithfulness to the Lord; it is right to commend their example of faithfulness and perseverance to those who may be discouraged; it is right to speak of their eternal reward.

The Hebrew writer stated it this way: "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith" (Hebrews 13:7 - NASV). Three things are implied in this verse: (1) There had been men in their midst who had served the Lord faithfully unto death; (2) The Hebrew Christians were to be confident that the outcome of the lives of those men was a happy one; (3) Considering this, they were to imitate their faith.

We, like the Hebrews, have had the good for-

They gained the victory through Christ. Now they are eternally happy because they persevered. Could we ask any one of them, "Was it worth it," his reply immediately would be, "It was a thousand times worth it!" Not one of them regrets a single moment he spent in the Lord's service.

tune of knowing many who have lived godly lives and have now passed on to their reward. Some were elders; some were preachers; some were Bible class teachers; others were just good, faithful, dependable disciples of the Lord who placed His kingdom first in their lives. We are not speaking of the lukewarm and indifferent. We are not speaking of those who claim to

be Christians, but were lacking in the fruits of Christianity. We are speaking of the truly dedicated ones who constantly reflected the character of their Father and their Lord Jesus Christ. Their influence on our lives was tremendous. They were men and women of whom this world was not worthy. And the list grows with each passing year.

Every one of these had to overcome serious obstacles to be faithful to the Lord. The Devil challenged each one of them, but he failed. They gained the victory through Christ. Now they are eternally happy because they persevered. Could we ask any one of them, "Was it worth it," his reply immediately would be, "It was a thousand times worth it!" Not one of them regrets a single moment he spent in the Lord's service.

We thank God for such people. We rejoice in their salvation. We look on their passing not as those "who have no hope." And "considering the result of their conduct," we dedicate ourselves to imitating their faith.

