

## A Deeper Consecration

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**“I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, when you were young you girded yourself [put on your own belt or girdle] and you walked about wherever you pleased to go. But when you grow old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will put a girdle around you and carry you where you do not wish to go.”** John 21:18, Amplified

The Christian life consists of three stages of spiritual development: little children, young men and fathers (I John 2:12-14).

As we mature in the Lord, greater levels of dedication and commitment are required of us as the Lord Himself increasingly girds us and leads us where we do not wish to go. In this way, His will is gradually worked into every fiber of our lives, bringing us closer to His ultimate purpose for us.

Therefore, as we mature, the gulf is widened between what is “permissible” and what is “profitable,” between what is “allowed” and what is “helpful,” knowing that we can no longer do as we please.

The apostle Paul disclosed this principle in I Corinthians 6:12 (Amplified):

**“Everything is permissible (allowable and lawful) for me; but not all things are helpful (good for me to do, expedient and profitable when considered with other things). Everything is lawful for me, but I will not become the slave of anything or be brought under its power.”**

This deals with a code that is inherently active within the deeper principles of divine commitment. As one draws nearer to the Lord, it becomes increasingly necessary to pursue and allow only those things that are especially profitable (edifying) to the furthering of an even deeper commitment to the Lord and to His purposes.

There are many Christians who say, “I am allowed to do anything; as long as it is not a sin.” But those who have committed their lives to the Lord understand that while this is true, not everything benefits our spiritual progress. The way that leads to Life is “straight” and “narrow” (Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:24) and few are willing to pay the price by staying on this path.

This is the process of restriction, where the Lord Himself tries our reins and tightens them ever so firmly around the neck of our will through the power of a spiritual hunger He has placed within us, thereby overpowering all natural, human desires (Job 16:13; 19:6-29; Psalm 7:9; 26:2; Jeremiah 17:10; Lamentations 3:13).

Within the Church, there are many well-meaning believers who are, as Paul put it, “running the race” but there is “one” who “receives the prize.” This “one” -- this remnant -- is running with certainty, with one definite aim: to lay hold of the prize of “the high calling” of Christ (I Corinthians 9:24-27).

However, this “prize” will never be won without our paying the full price in the School of Christ, where each student is individually tutored with “all temperance” (self-control and discipline) in “all things.” This training is seemingly foolish when compared to the daily life and lifestyle of the typical believer, for this “one” is required to walk along a narrower pathway than others, separated unto the Lord alone. As a result, they are scorned and ridiculed for being “too serious,” “too intense,” “too zealous,” or “too driven.”

These do not fit in with the activities of the religious majority. Therefore, at every fork in the road, these runners have a choice to make. Will they submit themselves to a life of misunderstanding or will they give in to the pull of popular sentiment? Will they be distracted by even the seemingly insignificant “little foxes” or will they keep the set of their spirit focused on the rigorous course of Christ?

The writer of Hebrews understood this principle:

**“Let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance (unnecessary weight) and that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us.”** Hebrews 12:1 Amplified

According to this passage, there are two things that hinder the spiritual runner: weights and sin.

“Sin” is easily discerned, but “weights” are altogether different. A “weight,” by itself, can go virtually undetected since it is comprised of that which is neither right nor wrong, good nor bad, and yet it “entangles” (encumbers).

Those who are driven by a passion to “receive the prize,” which is reserved for the winner alone, are those who are able to discern between those things that are necessary for victory and those things that will hinder. And, they are not afraid of sacrificing anything that has any possibility of impeding them.

The life of the committed runner is keep simple and free of everything except that which is expressly for the singular good of the prize. What was once acceptable is no longer acceptable in light of the goal.

The price tag attached to the high calling is not for everyone since the substance of this call cannot be known or experienced apart from this stripping process. This is why few are chosen out from the many who are called.

When the Lord strips an individual through this progressive consecration, requiring them to only live according to that which promotes their spiritual development, He does it in order to groom them for an experiential union and partnership with Him in His end-time purposes (II Timothy 1:9).

Presently, the Lord is sealing His bondservants through a focused, hidden work of preparation for the time when they will become stewards of His will and intention, as He calls upon them for divine service.

When the time is right, these “living sacrifices” will emerge as trustworthy representatives of the King and His Kingdom. As regal ambassadors, they will wield the powers of the ages to come, with boldness, wisdom and love.