

What's the 'One Thing'?

by K.P. Yohannan

The key to experiencing the full life of Christ is to surrender the 'one thing' we grasp so tightly and depend on, and see Him as everything and all things to us.

Scripture: Luke 18:18

Topics: "Surrender", "The Pearl of Great Price"

Description

K.P. Yohannan explores the contrasting responses of the rich young ruler and Zacchaeus to Jesus' call, emphasizing the importance of recognizing the 'one thing' that hinders our full surrender to Christ. While the rich young ruler focused on what he would lose, Zacchaeus saw Jesus as the ultimate treasure, leading him to joyfully give away his wealth. Yohannan warns that self-reliance and attachment to worldly possessions can create distance from God, resulting in frustration and spiritual stagnation. He encourages believers to identify and surrender their 'one thing' to experience the fullness of life in Christ. Ultimately, true contentment comes from seeing Jesus as the pearl of great price, leading to a life of joy and abundance.

Transcript

Two individuals came to Jesus, each with a deep spiritual problem. One found life, but the other lost it. What went wrong in this counseling session? The first person was a rich young ruler who approached the Lord with the most burning question of his heart: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18:18). He was not seeking a religious debate as so many others did. He honestly wanted to know. When Jesus listed five of the commandments, the young man replied that he had a perfect record in keeping them all.

Christ simply responded to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor . . . and come, follow Me" (Luke 18:22). Scripture tells us that the rich ruler went away sorrowful (see Matthew 19:22). The second man was also rich, but he had gained his wealth by shamelessly defrauding others. Zacchaeus was a well-known crook. When Jesus came to his house, He said nothing to the man about selling his house or giving his money away. Amazingly, Zacchaeus freely made the decision to give half of his possessions to the poor and restore four times the amount he stole to everyone he'd cheated.

What was it that compelled Zacchaeus to respond so differently than the rich young ruler? When Zacchaeus saw Christ, he saw the pearl of great price. He saw in Him everything, all things, completion. He realized, If I have Him, I can easily give away everything. What else do I need? But when the young ruler saw Jesus, he didn't see the pearl of great price. If we could know what his thoughts were that day, I

imagine most of them were focused on what he would be giving up, more than what he would gain in Christ.

We very often make the same mistake as the rich young ruler. We truly want to follow Christ and experience His abundant life, but we focus on what we may have to give up and are afraid to let go of those things we have relied on for so long. I believe the Lord looks for that "one thing" we grasp so tightly and depend on. It could be anything: our strength, our abilities, our education, a meaningful relationship, our years of Christian experience, our connections, the good reputation we have established, our position, our extraordinary discernment and other spiritual gifts, our plans for marriage or the things of this world like the rich young ruler.

In the New Testament book of Revelation, we encounter a group of people in the church of Laodicea who were convinced that they were rich and lacked nothing. Yet the Lord told them that they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. Why did the Lord think they lacked everything? It is because they had become self-reliant, which prevented them from experiencing the genuine life of Christ. As long as we hold on to that one thing in which we trust, we will never be able to surrender fully to Christ.

Consequently, there will always be a distance between the Lord and us. Such lack of closeness results in frustration and discouragement on our part. In addition, that one thing will be a constant hindrance for the rivers of living water to flow freely out from us and give life to others. How do we recognize the "one thing" still lacking in us? We will know it by the discouragement, tension, bitterness, frustration and irritation that fill our hearts, when that "one thing" is tampered with.

God will open our eyes, and we will recognize it if we truly desire to. We will then have the grace to surrender it to the Lord, not by looking at what we are letting go, but by looking at all that we have in Christ-- the pearl of great price. You see, if "our riches," that which we value most, are the Lord and what we have in Him, then no raging storm can cause any disturbance. Amy Carmichael once wrote, "A cup brimful of sweet water cannot spill even one drop of bitter water, however suddenly jolted."¹ I believe the Lord wants us to live in a continual state of seeing Him as everything and being content in Him alone.

Those whose life is full of joy and the unhindered presence of the Lord are the ones who experience a continuous feast on Him. Nothing else will matter to them, and abandonment to Christ alone is their obvious choice. Will you believe that He is truly the pearl of great price? Step out. You'll find Him to be so much more than you imagine. Notes: What's the "One Thing"? 1. Amy Carmichael, *If* (London: SPCK Publishing, 1951), p. 37.

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