

TAKE AWAY: Your relationship with Christ is your top priority

Last week we discussed the profound and practical necessity of making Christ your top priority. Not just because it's the right thing to do, but also because it's the smart thing to do.

This week we pick up the conversation by looking at the "Manna Wall": The theoretical boundary that separates the hard worker from the wise worker.

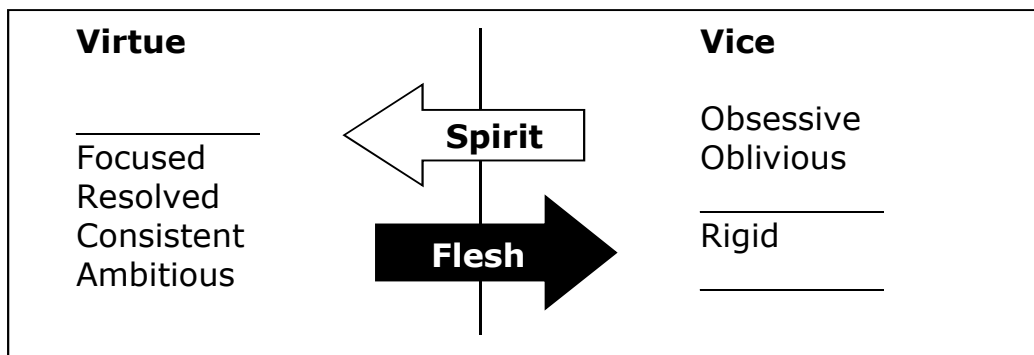
I) The Manna Wall

We do the same thing with much of what we target as a goal or a worthy enterprise. We see it as something that falls squarely on our shoulders and God's involvement is invited only if we start running into problems. Meanwhile, God is offering Counsel and Instructions. He offers a method that gets the job done, but without compromising those things that represent godly priorities and healthy methodologies.

While our approach should be one that depends on God, we're usually way on the other end of the spectrum. We're out gathering as much manna as we can hold, and sometimes we're out there on Sunday expecting to find something that's not there.

Every virtue has a corresponding vice. The boundary that separates the two is the "Manna Wall." It's that line that once crossed has you depending on your own resources and ignoring the Wisdom and the Guidance that God is offering.

The consequences of disobedience aren't always lethal. You might even be able to accomplish something. But in the end, the difference between doing something in a godly manner that honors and applies holy priorities is infinitely superior both in quality and significance when compared to it's human equivalent.



Session Four – The Top Button (Part II)

The distance between a virtue and its sinful perversion is a pretty short trip. Every one of the virtues listed to the left can very easily and very deteriorate into its corresponding vice. Your sinful nature is constantly parked outside, quietly yet very compellingly wooing you to the dark side of ambition. Using the allure of accomplishment, both your good intentions and your holy resolve slowly starts morphing into a self – serving agenda. Much like the guy with the great yard, you’re now sitting on top of a prize built upon selfishness and distorted priorities as opposed to a noble accomplishment realized in the context of obedience and a holy disposition.

II) The Top Button

Anything that distracts or successfully competes with being obedient to your Heavenly Father is a snare. Who we are, what we have and what we do all spring from our relationship with Christ.² It’s like the top button of your shirt. Get that one button right and everything else lines up just the way it should. Get it wrong and it doesn’t matter how much heavy starch or how many collar stays you’ve used – you are one disheveled looking individual.

- A) Col 3:4 – who is your _____
- B) Psalm 16:2 - I have no good _____
- C) John 15:5 – you can do _____

III) Wrap Up

Before you exercise in the mornings, spend some time with your _____.³ Before you make a decision, ask for _____.⁴ Before you lose your temper, ask for _____.⁵ Before you do another set or take another lap or down another protein bar, acknowledge your Redeemer and ensure that your top button is buttoned. Only then are you guaranteed real success and not just a flatter stomach.

1. Proverbs 24:30-34; Ecclesiastes 10:18; Matthew 25:14-23
2. Colossians 3:4; Psalm 16:2; John 15:5
3. Mark 1:35
4. James 1:5
5. Isaiah 26:3

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