

What Would Jesus Ask You to Give Up?

Regular readers of this blog know my previous post was about some “addictions” a lot of us have in common. The focus was on whether we could give up certain practices—or at least ease off of them—if it would deepen our walk with Christ.

To be fair, Jesus never told anyone to give up social media, smartphones, or chocolate (whew!). However, He did tell one man to give up something.

Everything.

“If you want to be perfect,” Jesus said to him, “go, sell your belongings and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me” (Matt. 19:21).

Yikes. That covers everything, including my smartphone and any chocolate I have hidden in the pantry behind cans of Old El Paso refried beans. But before any of us get rid of our possessions in an estate sale and quickly consume all the chocolate (He said to get rid of it, right?), let’s remember one key truth: This rich young ruler was the only person recorded in the Gospels to whom Jesus gave this command.

This young man was commendable for the way he kept all the Commandments ... well, most of them. The one Commandment he broke was “Do not covet” (Ex. 20:17). He was doing everything right outwardly, but internally, in his heart, he loved his possessions. This man may have loved God, but he loved his stuff more.

This man was addicted to possessing stuff—and lots of it. An addiction is anything that controls us, and this man was controlled by his passion for his money and possessions.

So go ahead with that sigh of relief. Jesus is probably not telling you to give up all your possessions. But that doesn’t mean Jesus is not calling you to give up something.

- **If Jesus did ask you to sell everything, what would be the one thing hardest to give up?**

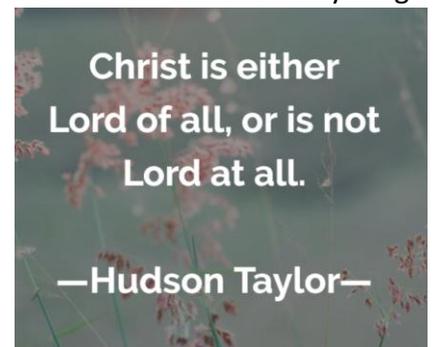
Do some self-evaluation. What’s the reason that one item would be hard to give up? Anything you love so much that it would be ridiculously hard to let go of sounds like something you love more than Jesus.

- **What is that one thing you devote time to daily or weekly? Could you set it aside for a day? a week? a year?**

If you don’t think that controls your life, take a fast from it. Set it aside for an entire week—or a month. Give it up for a season, a set period of time. Anything you might find hard to give up is a sign that you may love it more than Jesus.

The words of Jesus come with no legalism. In fact, a person could sell all he owns and still not be fully devoted to Christ. Jesus’ words to the rich young ruler carry a

message for all of us: if you want to follow Jesus, jump in with both feet. Let Him be Lord over *everything* in your life. As the missionary Hudson Taylor said:



Christ is either Lord of all, or is not Lord at all.

What would Jesus ask you to give up?