

FIRST PLACE, OR NO PLACE!

By: David McCain

Jesus said, *“Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple”* (Luke 14:33). The simple truth is, Jesus, as Commander in Chief of His army, expects absolute loyalty from His troops. The Lord demands first place in your life, or He wants no place at all. You can't be a wishy-washy, on-again off-again friend of Jesus. If you value any relationship, any possession, or any position more than you value Christ and your standing with Him, then you are unworthy to be His follower.

Loyalty as the friend of Christ requires complete obedience to his commands. Jesus said, *“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you”* (John 15:14). Loyalty to Christ means complete allegiance to His cause. In other words, Christ and His church must come first, before school, work, hobbies, vacation, recreation, friends, and relatives—before everything! Sometimes that requires sacrifice, but if we truly love the Lord, we will be willing to sacrifice for Him, even as we do for any person or cause we truly care for in our lives. If we love other people more than Christ, then we are unworthy of Him (Matt. 10:37). If we care more about our earthly relationships than we do about our heavenly relationship, then we are unworthy of the Lord's love. If we give temporal, earthly things more value, time, and care than we do eternal, heavenly things, then we cannot be His disciples. Jesus said, *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it”* (Matt.16:24-25).

Brethren, are we willing to deny ourselves anything, in order to promote the cause of Christ? Or, have we saved our lives for our own selfish purposes, only to lose them eternally?

We sometimes wonder why the cause of Christ does not prosper, when the answer glares before our eyes. The problem lies with a lack of loyalty to Christ. Across our brotherhood, attendance at worship, Bible study services, and Gospel Meetings wanes. Why? The answer is obvious, isn't it? It's because too few are loyal to Christ. As the old saying goes, “Most of the time in life, you do what you really want to do,” which is just as true in religion as in any other realm.

Are you loyal to Christ? Can He count on you to put Him first, before all other people, things, or commitments? Are you loyal to Him in attitude, articulation, and action? Can He depend on you? Think about it! Remember, Christ demands first place in your life, or He wants no place at all.

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