

12/10/06

Giving It Up for Jesus – Part 2

In this second part of “*Giving It Up For Jesus*,” we will examine some considerations of how to properly apply and avoid misapplying this very biblical principle.

There are biblical mandates to reprove sinners and disdain sin, but not for screaming condescendingly at those in sin as if we were superior, forgetting our own weak natures. There are biblical mandates to live by higher standards than social norms; a holy life, to let our light shine, and to evangelize, but none to stupefy with visceral dogmatic ranting and performances accompanied by feigned and inflated airs of religiosity or to withdraw into permanent sheltered seclusion, estranged from the rest of humanity. Scriptures provide a balance; compare 1 Cor. 5:9-11, Ja. 4:4, & Jh. 17:14-18 with Rom. 12:2; also Mk. 6:31). The Bible does not promote dramatized excesses in *flesh-abuse* for developing humility or self-control. Yet, such have long been incorporated within some spiritual formation exercises (Col. 2:20-23). It does promote fasting and self-sacrifice (Lk. 5:35; I Cor. 7:5; Rom. 12:1, Acts 14:23).

When we try to determine what we should be “giving up” or what is *inappropriate*, we need to approach God in prayer and meditation thoughtfully, humbly, and non-presumptuously. We need God’s clarity and the wisdom of Christ, which comes from the Spirit of Christ, so that we can properly identify what is proper in God’s eyes and *what is contrary* to God’s will or what may be *borderline insanity*. Some of the most foolish and repugnant behaviors condemned by God have been done within the context of worshiping God, even within Christianity (Jer. 7:9-15; Gal. 3:1-5f, 4:17; Col. 2:22-23). Paul made it clear to the church that non-Christians did not corner the market on the *commodity* we call sin (Rom. 1:22-32; 2:17-29; 1 Cor. 5:1-2).

When Scripture informs us that we should be willing to give up everything for God (Phi. 3:8), it is not instructing us to make rash, unwise or headstrong decisions nor to commit destructive behaviors that cause unnecessary harm to ourselves, our families, friends and strangers. Godly self-sacrifice requires a sound mind to make sound spiritual determinations. When ‘giving it up for Jesus,’ it is implicit that we must prayerfully, studiously and thoughtfully seek God’s guidance and clarification for responding properly. Does this describe your approach?

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