

The Masterpiece that Is Your Life

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What is your greatest aspiration? Have you thought about it? Is it written down? Have you done as the gurus admonish and "set your intention"? That's just the first step toward achieving your goals. This lesson is about the rest.

Let It Go

The second step is letting go of it. Yes, you read that right. Let it go. Give it to God. Say, "not my will but thine be done" and mean it! Letting go is pivotal because all faith is proven by sacrifice. Abraham did it. Jesus Christ did it. In agony He prayed, "*Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done*" (Luke 22:42). What did Jesus Christ obtain by sacrificing His life? Resurrection and an eternal life of glory!

Every sacrifice produces a corresponding result that far outweighs the initial sacrifice. Think of a bean seed. You can eat a bean and receive only a fleeting satisfaction from it. Or you can put the bean in the ground and receive an entire plant full of beans in return.

This is why Jesus said, "*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.*" (Mark 8: 35) You cannot give God an apple without receiving an orchard in return. All sacrifices reap a multitude of blessings. Everything in nature testifies to this. God illustrates this critical principle over and over in creation.

Then why are we so reluctant to surrender our dreams, aspirations and goals to His will? Bottom line, it's a lack of faith. We can't see the results so we cling tenaciously to what we have -- or think we can have. Do you know the story of Elijah and the widow as told in I Kings 17?

The story takes place during a famine. The Lord sent the prophet Elijah to a certain widow. Upon entering the city, Elijah found the woman gathering sticks and asked her, "Bring thee I pray thee a morsel of bread in thine hand." The woman replied that she was gathering sticks to make a fire and cook the last bit of oil and meal she had so she and her son could eat their last meal and die.

Elijah responded, "*Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.*"

The widow took Elijah at his word, gave him some bread first *and "she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah."* (See 1 Kings 17:11-16)

In order to obtain her miracle the widow did not need to do anything outside her abilities. She wasn't asked to climb Mount Everest, perform brain surgery, or pass a bar exam. She didn't have to do anything she didn't know "how" to do. She wasn't asked to perform something beyond her capabilities or to act outside her sphere of influence.

Yet, what Elijah asked of her must have seemed an incredible sacrifice. He was telling her in essence: sacrifice your life and your child's life by giving me your last meal. If you do God promises you will not starve to death, but will have a steady stream of food throughout the famine.

From her one act of sacrifice, the initially scarce oil and meal became a steady nourishing stream of sustenance. Sacrifice is the bridge between scarcity and abundance. Usually, if not always, when we wish to receive a significant blessing, we must make a sacrifice and take a leap of faith. We must let go and sacrifice our will to God's will. The sacrifice may seem like a lot to ask, but it won't be something outside our abilities, talents or resources. It will be something that requires us to act upon the people and things around us. It won't require talents we don't have or can't obtain. The Lord always provides everything we need to accomplish our righteous desires, but He often requires us to sacrifice our time, talents, means or dreams to achieve them.

If you are struggling with lack in any area of your life, in order to receive abundance in that area, you will need to make a leap of faith. It may be the sacrifice of your old way of thinking, pet sins, inaccurate beliefs, or even your aspirations. It may be the literal sacrifice of your dream -- or just the perceived sacrifice of it. The story of Elijah and the widow illustrates that a sacrifice is no sacrifice at all. It is merely an investment. It's a seed planted in the ground that multiplies exceedingly.

If we were to look only at the beginning of this story, we would say the widow was asked to make a great sacrifice, but knowing the end, we see that it was a small price to pay to give up a little bit of oil and meal to have a continuous supply of food throughout the entire famine. It was merely an investment toward amazing abundance. The same is true for you. Let go. Surrender your desires. Put them completely in God's hands and watch things start to fall into place in a better way than you ever imagined.

Listen and Obey

The next step in this process of achieving your heart's desire is listening to inspiration. As you study your scriptures, ponder, and pray you will receive strokes of ideas or insights. Act immediately upon anything you feel prompted to do which is in harmony with God's commandments. The sooner you act when the Spirit prompts, the better off you will be. If you hesitate in fear, you can lose windows of opportunity (just as Peter lost his chance to keep walking on water).

Don't worry if what you feel directed to do doesn't make complete sense or if you can't see where it is going or how it will help. Trust and walk forward in faith. As you do, doors will open along the way. Of this I can personally testify because I've seen it happen over and over again in my own life. God loves you and He knows your full potential. If you will let Him, He will transform you into one of his greatest masterpieces.