

We'd like to think that we're fairly decent people. Of course, good people don't brag about this, but if God divided the world into two camps, good people and bad people, most of us would be on the good side.

We know the rules: go to church, be nice to people, don't murder people, take care of the kids, give some money away, don't shoplift, avoid trans fats, recycle plastic items, and volunteer somewhere. We have our problems and our addictions and our sinful habits, but all in all, we're decent people much like the man in this story.

So how will Jesus respond to the decent life I'm trying to build for myself and my family? Will Jesus come along and add the icing on the cake of my decent life?

Max Lucado said that "If there are a thousand steps between us and God, God will take all but one. He will leave the final one for us."

As Jesus said, "One thing you lack." Just one step... I'm sure the guy was thinking, Oh good, just one thing. What is it? I can do it. Read the Bible a little more? I can do that. Not smart off to my parents? I can do that. Volunteer a little more? I can do that. Just let me know, Jesus.

But he didn't expect Jesus' next statement: "One thing you lack: Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven." Verse 22 reads, "At this the man's face fell. He went away sad."

Why did Jesus say this? Does that mean I have to sell everything too? Is this the prerequisite for discipleship for everyone? In Scripture we find that Jesus doesn't tell every wealthy person he encounters to sell everything. A rich man named Zacchaeus, for example, gave half of his possessions to the poor (Luke 19:8).

But before we sigh with relief and say, "Whew! For a minute there I thought Jesus was going after my bank accounts and stocks!" We must realize this: Jesus isn't just after our money; he's after us.

+Suppose someone shows you a picture of a circle. In the center of the circle there is a large chair or throne. Around the edge of the circle, there are different circles representing the activities and priorities in our lives: work, hobbies, school, relationships, sports, music, etc.

Whatever sits on the throne, will control the activities around the edge. The question is, "What is on your throne?" Either Christ sits on the throne, or you have put something else in that place of priority.

It could be work, our need to get ahead of the Joneses, golf, video games or what have you. Whatever sits on the throne becomes your god and will control the other areas of your life.

Here is what Jesus asks the rich young man to do: Put me on the throne. Put me first. Right now, you have another, lesser god on the throne, money, status, being a decent person. I don't want a

little bit of your money; I don't want a little more of your time; I don't want a little more of your religious efforts; I want you all of you. Put me on the throne and I'll give you something better—much better.

There are only two options for being on the road with Jesus. I'll call the first path the Decent Way and the second path the Disciple's Way.

The Decent Way is all about what is proper, respectable, and natural. It's the path of lukewarm Christianity. It's neither hot nor cold. It goes through the motions but without the influence or power of the Holy Spirit. It's what some people call "cultural Christianity."

Along the Decent Way, I come to Jesus because my parents did or because it gives me comfort in the face of death or meaning in the face of a cold universe, or it helps me act decently. This way still allows me to put myself on the throne of my life or maybe, in the name of Christianity.

In this way Jesus floats somewhere on the outer edge of my life. He's one of my many life activities.

The Disciple's Way is a far cry from the Decent Way. It begins when you know that Jesus is looking at you with love. That's where it begins. It continues when you hear Jesus say, "I don't want your decent, lukewarm, conventional, safe approach to faith.

I want you. I don't want your activity. I want your love. I don't just want your pocketbook. I want the heart that controls the pocketbook." That is how we let him sit on the throne.

C. S. Lewis compared the Disciple's Way to going to a dentist. When our tooth is hurting, we go to the dentist. We just want relief from the pain, but the dentist has a different agenda: the dentist wants to set all of our teeth right.

I've heard people say, "I'm checking out Christianity, but I also understand Christians can't do this and the bible says your supposed to do that. I'm not sure I want to do all that." People come to Christ with conditions.

But the real question is: Is there a God who is the source of all beauty and glory and life, and knowing Christ will fill your life with his goodness and power and joy, so that you would live with him in endless ages with his life increasing in every way?

If that is true, you wouldn't say things like, "You mean, I have to give up N.?" If Christ is really God, then all the conditions are gone. If he is really God, he can't just be a supplement.

Know he is truly God who sits on our throne, we would then invite him in every facet of our life. But we have to be willing to take that one step.

Let me quote C. S. Lewis once again: "Keep nothing back. Nothing that you have not given away will ever be really yours. Nothing that has not died will ever be raised from the dead."

If we place only ourselves on the throne, we will never know the fullness of life, of what we are truly called to be beyond just a “good person”.

But look for Christ, put him on the throne, and I can promise you that life will never be the same. Find him, and with him everything else thrown in. Yes, he looks at us with love, to take that one step. It is a step unique to only us, and we do know what is that he asks of us.