

“After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this.”

(Ezra 9:13)

Deserve

The word “deserve” only appears once in the entire Bible that we were able to find, and it is in the above verse. Ezra is of course testifying that God did not deal with Israel as severely as they deserved because of their sins. In this case it was for mingling and inter- marrying with peoples that God had forbidden.

Now deserve can be taken in other ways as well, such as the entitlement mentality. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines entitlement as “the condition of having a right to have, do, or get something, the feeling or belief that you deserve to be given something (such as special privileges).” A question that arises today is what part should entitlement or “deserve” play in the life of a Christian. To get the answer to this question we should of course go to the foundation of Christian life, the Bible. What does the Bible say about “deserve” when used with the entitlement mentality.

Let's view some scriptures which we believe helps put this idea into its proper perspective.

In Romans 12:1, the apostle Paul, speaking to his brethren said:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

Jesus, in His own Words said in Luke 17:

“But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”

Most people have heard of David Livingstone's famous quote, “I never made a sacrifice”.

Here is the quote in it's entirety:

“People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger now and then with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause and cause the spirit to waver and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice,”
Speech to students at Cambridge University (4 December 1857)

Job, in chapter 11, verse 6, would seem to agree with Ezra when he said:

Paul, in 1 Timothy 6:8, told us what to be content with in our service for God in this life:

“...having food and raiment let us be therewith content”.

Jesus said in Luke, chapter nine:

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

Here are a few quotes from well known men and women of God.

“Nothing is really lost by a life of sacrifice; everything is lost by failure to obey God's call.” Henry Parry Liddon

“Leave me as I am, the one who gives me strength to endure the fire will also give me

strength to stay quite still on the pyre., even without the precaution of your nails.... For eighty and six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong, and how can I blaspheme my King who saved me? Last words, at the time of his martyrdom.” (69-155) Polycarp

“Look at the candle. What is it used for? It is not for giving light? If it is to give light, it must burn and make itself less and less. But if the candle were to protest and say, "I will not burn and become less and less; I cannot suffer hurt, neither can my form be changed," then what would be its value? In the same way, those who determine not to put self to death will never see the will of God fulfilled in their lives. Those who ought to become the light of the world must necessarily burn and become less and less. By denying self, we are able to win others.”

Sadhu Sundar Singh

Paul, in Philippians, three, said:

“I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”

Samuel Ketcham's Blog Page (Edited)

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me." – John 15:4

The Mentality of the “Entitlement Generation” and the Christian Response

I recently attended an Army out-processing briefing on Fort Benning wherein I observed the classic “entitlement” mentality. One speaker started his brief saying, “This is my motto – ‘If you serve, then you deserve!’” Is not the very definition of “service” to exclude doing something in order to get something in return?

The Christian Response and the Power Fueling It

What does every man deserve? Death. “For the wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23)

We do not deserve anything from God. We have sinned against Him and were born in sin as sons of Adam. We do not deserve a fair shot at life or a good education or painless health or a sports car, etc... The man’s motto, ‘If you serve, then you deserve’ is bad theology that a Christian must not accept. We deserve death because we are sinners.

However, because of Christ’s supreme sacrifice on the cross, because of His guilt bearing, the person who believes in Him has received life. “He who believes in me has eternal life.” (John 6:47) Therefore, the Christian’s mentality is governed, not by the question “What can I get?”, but by the question “What can I give?”

The Scriptures teach, “We [the Christian] love, because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

This is the fuel behind our selfless dominated life. Christ gave of Himself. “And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” (1 Peter 2:24) Therefore, the Christian is fueled by Christ’s love. “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

Every Christian should respond to this problem by conducting an honest self-examination. “Am I a part of this problem or am I a part of the solution for this problem?” In other words, Christians should respond to this “entitlement generation” mentality by first examining themselves. God knows rather we are hypocrites and are selfishly taking things that we do not need or being lazy when we should work. He knows whether we are a part of the problem. He knows if we are not exercising love for others and, alternatively, being selfish. He knows if we are being lazy. He knows if we

are claiming benefits that we do not need. And because He has died and saved us from our sins, we should respond to Him as our Lord with a spirit of thankfulness. We are enabled by His Spirit to respond accordingly.

The Goal of the Christian Response

The real problem is a spiritual problem and the goal of cleaning our act is a spiritual goal.

If you volunteer for something, something that may require a sacrifice, should you expect or deserve to be paid in some way,... when you have volunteered?

If you feel you deserve something from God because of something you did and do not get it, how might that make you feel, resentful, angry, murmuring etc. This is often why people accuse God of being unfair. Whereas the Bible says to “Do all things without murmurings and disputings.” Philippians 2:14

If you are a Christian and believe you deserve or are entitled to certain things other than what Jesus has promised, you can continue to believe in this way of thinking, you can try to live it and you can even share it with others, but we don't believe you can defend it scripturally.

“Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”

Psalm 37:4

And finally; “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”

If we are Christians what do we deserve? We hope the above points help to answer that question.

“In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be...unthankful.” 2 Timothy 3:1-2

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