

Losing to Gain

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Most of us have learned that the successful life is about *achievement, acquisition and gain*—in essence, a process of **addition**. We have learned this in the area of business, for example, when we look at the expansion of companies over larger territories. We have also been taught in the area of education and science that knowledge builds upon past knowledge. Unfortunately, we have also applied this same principle to our spiritual lives. We seek more biblical knowledge, and respect those who are more biblically literate than we. We want to learn from them, add to our knowledge thereby building our spiritual lives. Those of a more charismatic persuasion seek more spiritual experiences, such as speaking in tongues, being slain in the spirit or prophetic encounters. As we add to these experiences (or knowledge), we believe ourselves to be somehow more spiritual.

This mindset represents a paradigm, a world view that must change. If we are to function effectively in the Kingdom of God and in the operation of the Spirit we must recognize the opposite law at work: we lose in order to gain. Interestingly, we have recognized this truth in other areas. How many businesses have struggled, perhaps making small, incremental increases in profits until they came to the awareness of an alternative production method that would require them to abandon everything that had “worked” before, resulting in unprecedented cost-

effectiveness and increased profits? It required first an **abandonment**, losing the old, in order to implement the new. We have also seen this truth in science in the last 50 years as we abandoned the one time belief that science represented the gradual accumulation of knowledge, adding discoveries to previously existing knowledge. The philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn, exploded this myth with the understanding that before science can truly advance, it must abandon old paradigms that could not adequately explain anomalies that were subsequently observed. When enough of these anomalies occur, the inadequacy of the old paradigms or theories becomes obvious. Eventually, a new theory emerges that accounts for these heretofore unexplainable observances, as well as the observations that “fit” the prior paradigm that it replaced. Science had to abandon, for example, the old paradigm that the earth was the center of the solar system and universe and replace it with a sun-centered solar system in order to explain the many new observations that emerged with the perfection of the telescope that could not be explained by an earth-centered solar system. And so, the Copernican revolution was born. This involved the death of an old paradigm.

This principle of *losing to gain* is a principle that has almost been overlooked in western Christianity. It is found throughout scripture, but it is not an easy message and hence overlooked by most modern day preachers. Jesus said, *“He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it”* (Matt. 10:39). The apostle Paul also makes this principle clear in his letter to the Ephesians when he says, *“put off ... **the old man**, which is corrupt according to **the deceitful lusts**; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind”* (Eph 4:22-23).

There is a great loss of soul that is the price for failure to understand this *losing to gain* principle. Failure to understand this spiritual principle will require our very soul. Jesus asked the question, *“For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”* (Mark 8:36). The world that we gain is meaningless from an eternal perspective; that which we lose is precious...it is our essence and the very thing Christ came to save. What shall it profit a man if he should GAIN the whole world, but LOSE his own soul? A lose-lose proposition indeed.

We must LOSE the world in order to GAIN our souls through the renewing of the Spirit. We must understand that there is something to be lost or a **subtraction** in the soulish/material/natural realm in order for a gain to be made in the spiritual. That which is lost (a worldly mindset that only drains and sucks life) is nothing compared to the eternal weight of glory to be obtained...a definite win-win. *And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*"(Mark 10:29-30).

This is the power of the cross. An emptying or loss of self....the ultimate denial of self, made in a decisive blow to our soulish ambitions becomes the necessary cost to purchase the very freedom for our souls. This freedom gained in the working out of our salvation through the application of the cross is no less than Christ's freedom in and through our very lives. The price is a loss of our reason, our natural abilities to achieve anything; indeed, it is the loss of our very wills. Moreover, as Jesus said, it will also involve persecution, as those around us will not understand the laying down of all that was so important before. The prize is the freedom of the Spirit through us that can do the impossible with no effort but total surrender on our part.

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