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July 25, 2020

A RADICAL CHOICE

Becoming a Christian means that I now (1) accept the fact that I am a sinner, (2) accept Christ's death in my place for the forgiveness of my sins, (3) want to receive a new heart, and (4) accept the lordship of Christ in my life. It is a radical choice that will affect all areas of my life!

My own criteria or perceptions are no longer the parameter for making decisions, because I know that my "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). Instead, I now accept the lordship of Jesus, submitting my life to His word. One cannot have Jesus while rejecting His Word, because He and His Word are inseparable!

This submission is what wise Solomon meant in his appeal: "Trust in the Lord with all our heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh and strength to your bones" (Prov. 3:5-8).

Solomon then uses the financial life to suggest a way through which we may exercise our submission to Jesus and to His word: "Honor the Lord with your possessions, and

with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine" (Prov. 3:9, 10). There are promised blessings for returning tithes and giving offerings regularly, as firstfruits of every income. To honor the Lord with firstfruits means that we give our best to God first before meeting any other expenses.

On the other hand, one of the first signs of our unwillingness to submit to Jesus and to His word is the disinclination to return tithes and to give offerings of all our increase, before any other expense. Limited submission generates limited blessings, while unlimited submission brings overflowing blessings.

APPEAL: While we humbly bring our tithes and offerings to the Lord today, as the first part of all our increase, let us ask Him to give us a submissive heart and to help us to be willing to say, "Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears" (1 Sam. 3:9).

PRAYER: Dear Lord! Please speak to us today and change our hearts, making us willing to submit to Your guidance and power. Please fulfill your promises of overflowing blessings, according to Your great generosity. Amen.