

Gain and Loss

Robert Johnson was a man with a happy marriage, a person who was well respected by his neighbors, and the owner of one of the most prosperous businesses in the city. Robert had



arrived to this position because of his persistent dedication to his studies and work.

Due to the fact that he was an exceptional businessman, he was asked to be a partner of a very exclusive club. This meant he was obligated to be present on various nights each week.

He believed that he would gain some financial direction being part of this club. He was told, "No one becomes rich by working. You need to invest in companies that will do the work for you."

The first investment of his savings was a total loss when a company that had just started suffered unexpected setbacks. But his new friends knew of a method by which he could quickly

recover. It was through gambling at the casino.

But luck did not favor Robert, not the first time, not the second, nor any of the times that he put his money into the games. Each time he needed to "invest" more of his possessions, his savings in the bank, later his property and finally his business facilities.

He would justify himself by telling his family that times were difficult, that the business competition was dishonest and that taxes were unjust. Unfortunately, in one form or another, this example is very common.

Robert made the error of believing that his initial success was due to his own superior ability. He felt that he had succeeded by his own efforts and that he could accumulate a fortune without working. In his pride he did not take God and His principles, which are well described in the Bible, into account.

It is not sinful to prosper and to care for the family. The mistake is in forgetting that we are stewards that will need to give an account of how we utilized the things that God has given us.

If you have a good job or business and have reached a stable and healthy economic position, do your hiring for the benefit of others and for the glory of God.

In the Bible we read: "*And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*" (1 Corinthians 4:7).

"*What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?*" (Mark 8:36).

Your soul will be saved when you believe in Christ and accept what He has done for you!

Genuine Rest

According to the Bible, God finished His creation in six days and on the seventh day He rested. Of course, His time to pause or rest was not the result of being tired which would be the case for a human being. This time of rest indicated that He had finished His work, which included providing what is necessary for the well-being of mankind.



Sunday has a special significance for all Christians because it corresponds to the day of Jesus' resurrection. The word Sunday signifies "the day of the Lord".

The seventh day of the week, the Sabbath, was given to the Jews through Moses on Mt. Sinai. Beginning that day it became a weekly tradition for them. It was also a reminder that God had created the world in six days and then He rested (Genesis 2:2).

Keeping the Sabbath was customary for the Jews who were faithful. If a person did not observe it, it was a sign that they had dishonored God. Afterwards, when Christianity began, this tradition was no longer practiced among the Jews who had been converted.

Most people recognize the practical value in setting aside a day to change activities, rest and be refreshed. The Christian belief is that every day belongs to God and that no day should be lived without Him. Sunday is generally dedicated to resting and to religious services of worship in certain countries.

Besides its historical importance and the practical value in having a day free from work every seventh day, could there be another important meaning in this command to keep one day set aside for rest?

God's creation was finished. His plan for the salvation of our souls also was finished when Christ died on the cross. We can rest in this truth.

The New Testament confirms that we are saved, not by our own works and good deeds, but by the finished work of Christ on the cross. *"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit"* (Titus 3:5). □

**And God rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.
(Genesis 2:2)**

The Word "Christian"

In some places, it can be offensive to ask a person if they are a Christian. They might think we are asking them if they are part of the human race. The conversation can have an unpleasant result!

If we speak of someone as a doctor or professor or carpenter, we are indicating who this person is. We can add a positive or negative adjective, but in essence what we say tells what type of person they are.

Of course, sometimes we might say that a mechanic is very capable or that an athlete is very talented. But it doesn't make sense to say that they are more or less of a mechanic or athlete than another one is. They are either a mechanic or not. He or she might be a "bad athlete", but that doesn't mean they are any less an athlete.

The word "Christian", just as the words mechanic or athlete, is not an adjective. It is a name.

A Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ. They are a person that has committed themselves to the Savior, has received forgiveness of their sins and now loves and serves Him.

Those with different beliefs are not Christians. Their affiliation to a religion or their good behavior makes no difference. Either they are a Christian



or they are not. There is no such thing as a half Christian.

It cannot be said that a person is more or less a Christian. They can be an ignorant, arrogant or awkward Christian, but they are a Christian if they have received Christ into their heart. By the same measure, the person who is honorable and generous but has never encountered Christ, whether they are Muslim, Hindu or an atheist, is not a Christian.

We hope we have explained this in a way that can be understood. A person becomes a Christian through a deep and genuine repentance from their previous sinful life. They recognize their estranged position from God and realize they cannot save themselves. They turn to God and trust in Jesus for their salvation.

When we ask someone if they are truly a Christian, we are asking them if they are a follower of Jesus Christ.

When we understand well what a Christian is, right away we see that in reality many of the people we know are not Christians.

Reading friend, are you a Christian?

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What's in your wallet?



Many people are worried and preoccupied with their finances. They are afraid that they will not have enough to pay their bills, that there might be unexpected expenses and that they could lose all that they have.

Yet, although the situation can be very serious, it becomes insignificant compared to the accounts that we have with God. Accounts with God? What are those? How can we know if they are accurate? How do we calculate these accounts?

With respect to all that we have in life, the apostle Paul says, *“So then, each one of us will give an account of himself to God”* (Romans 14:12).

But, how are these ‘bills’ calculated? A very popular belief is that we begin our lives with a blank page. The good actions are noted as cred-

its on one side of the page while the bad actions are noted as debts on the other side. The object of life would then be to always have more credit than debt in order to eventually obtain God’s approval and the salvation of our souls.

God does not carry these types of books. If this were the case, then we would never know with certainty how our accounts are progressing. The Bible says that our lives initially begin in debt. Our only payment would be to obey all the commandments of God, but it’s impossible for us to do so.

The Bible also says that, *“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all”* (James 2:10).

When the time comes for God to judge you, you will need to appear before Him because *“it is appointed for people to die once, and after this comes judgment”* (Hebrews 9:27). But, we have good news! The death of Christ is accepted by God as the payment for our debt! 1 Peter 3:18 says, *“Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God”*. No matter how awful our accounts are, the death of Christ settles this very serious problem the moment that we trust in Him. How is your account? □