

## The Power of Exchange *What would you give your life in exchange for?*

"A young Jamaican worked for a banana company near his home town in Kingston. He was doing so well that one of the chief executives invited him into his office to discuss his future.

He told him that he recognized his potential and that he could have a great future with the company. However, he was looking for committed men and told him that to be a success, he would have to give his life in exchange for bananas."

Now, I really believe that no one reading this article would actually consider giving their life in exchange for bananas. Bananas taste good and they are nourishing but they perish very quickly. If one would exchange their life for anything, it should be for that which doesn't perish.

Jesus spoke about exchange in Matt. 16:26 when He asked this question: "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" In verse 25 He explains the exchange principle "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."

The greatest exchange is accomplished when we lose our life for Jesus and the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. We actually give up death in exchange for eternal life with Christ.

Although the Christian life is a changed life: II Cor. 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! -- the greater reality is that when we are in Christ we exchange the old life of the flesh for the new life in the Spirit.

This process of exchange is more clearly articulated in the fourth and fifth chapters of Ephesians. Eph. 4:22-24 says: "put off your old self, which is being corrupted by deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

"The Message" puts it this way: "take on an entirely new way of life -- a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces His character in you."

When we accept Christ and exchange the old life for the new life in Christ, we discover an even greater "power" in this exchange.

We exchange the perishable -- (remember the bananas?) -- for the imperishable.

I Peter 1:3 & 4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade -- kept in heaven for you -- The perishing is all around us while the imperishable is "stored up" as our inheritance; "kept in heaven for you."

When Jesus spoke about "treasure" he also gave a clear example of the principle of exchange: "Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or -- worse! -- stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it's safe from moth and rust and burglars. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be and end up being." (Matt. 6:19-21 "The Message")

The exchange process is revealed throughout the Word.

We exchange:

**Death for Life:** Matt. 16:25 "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life, for me will find it."

**Darkness for Light:** Eph. 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

**Weakness for Strength:** II Cor. 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

**Defeat for Victory:** I Cor. 15:57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Mourning for Gladness:** Is. 61:3 -- to provide -- the oil of gladness instead of mourning.

**Despair for Praise:** Is. 61:3 -- to provide -- a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

Exchange is defined as the giving or taking of one thing for another; therefore we can easily see that as we give up (exchange) our fleshly, perishing life for the good of the Kingdom of God, we receive (in exchange) the life that does not perish -- the inheritance we have in Christ -- kept in heaven for us.

In 1956 five young men penetrated the jungles of Ecuador to bring the gospel to several small primitive Indian tribes; mainly the Aucas. They were killed by these same Aucas but their deaths resulted in the doors opening for missionary work, resulting in churches being established and the translation of the Word into the tribal languages.

One of these young men was Jim Elliott who, months before, made this often quoted statement: "He is no fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

He gave up his life, which he could not keep, to gain that which he could not lose; thus fulfilling the truth of Matt. 16:25 "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."

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