



Say it in a sentence: The position you will receive in heaven will be determined by how you are positioning yourself on earth.

Tell about a time when you were a winner. How did it make you feel?

Tell about a time when you were a loser. How did that feel?

How much do you think about crossing the finish line of your life? How does contemplating your eternal position affect your daily decisions?

Here is how the world determines who is first. Are you or do you desire to be first in the world's eyes?

1. Those who have the most (talent, wealth, beauty, intelligence, friends, power, etc.)
2. Those who have the best (houses, cars, gadgets, clothes, etc.)
3. Those who are the first (in rank, in position, in order, in influence, etc.)

1) The illusion: The more you have, the harder it is to see what you lack. (v.16)

Are you living under the illusion that because you have the MOST, the BEST, and are FIRST now, that you won't be counted the LEAST, WORST, and LAST when you stand before God?

What do you lack in your relationship with God? Do you have assurance of heaven? Do you have a righteousness that meets God's requirement? Do you have a pardon of sin? Do you have power in prayer? Do you have power over temptation? Do you have control of your appetites? Do you have the respect of your family? Do you have favor with God?

2) The intrusion: What I can do seems impressive until I see the sin behind my sin. (v.17-20)

Have you given Jesus the right to intrude into the corners of your heart to identify the motivating factor for why you do what you do?

Do you feel pretty impressed with yourself because you keep the external commands yet have never given Jesus the right to examine what you worship?

Are you willing to allow God's spirit to use loving friends to ask you the hard questions to show you the sin behind your sin?

3) The invitation: Surrender every treasure that stands between you and God. (v.21-26)

You never know what your idols are until Jesus asks you to give them away. What treasure is Jesus asking you for that is standing between you and God?

Which pattern best describes your use of finances: Spend, Save, Give or Give, Save, Spend?

4) The inversion: Jesus promises only the losers win. (v.27-30)

How does the promise Jesus gives in v.30 change the way you view this life?





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Will you finish first or last?

1. Do you find yourself envying those who are younger, richer, and more prominent?
2. Do you expect others to think of you, listen to you, and change their plans to accommodate yours?
3. Are you easily annoyed when the imperfections of others create difficulty for you?
4. In conversation, do you keep talking about yourself rather than ask questions to draw out others?
5. Do you take every available opportunity to inform others of your miseries, pains, and heartaches?
6. Do you speak negatively of others as a way of making yourself look better?
7. Do you find it difficult to verbally honor others in private and in public?
8. Do you expect to be recognized, thanked, or honored for ways you sacrifice?
9. Are you willing to let others less qualified, experienced, and talented than you receive recognition while you and your abilities are forgotten or unnoticed?
10. Do you come to church to be served or to serve?
11. Can you humbly submit to those with whom you disagree without creating drama or quitting?
12. Are you a team player or must you be the coach?
13. Do you regularly give portions of your income that you could use to make your life more comfortable to elevate the cause of Christ?
14. Are you willing to suffer any inconvenience, expend any effort, part with any possession in order to properly elevate Jesus to his right place of preeminence in your life, taking your proper position behind him as he leads and you follow in joyful submission?
15. Do you find yourself wishing I would stop asking these questions?

Additional Scripture:

1 Timothy 6:17-19

