

Worth Proven By Effort

- A. There is a general rule of human nature and economics that says that something of genuine value is worth the effort made to obtain it, and conversely, where little or no effort is required, the thing is of little value to its seeker or holder.
1. As such, the person who has to work to obtain something is much more likely to treasure that thing but the person who obtains something without working for it is much less likely to treasure it.
 2. This is true for material and relational desires. The value of the object of desire in the eyes of its pursuer or holder can be roughly determined by the amount of effort the pursuer or holder puts in.
 - a. If a single guy has an interest in an available single gal, he should not be surprised to expect objections or obstacles to his pursuit (for she may well be testing him to see if she is worth the effort to him).
 - b. Married couples who value their relationship will have to put in the effort needed to sustain and improve their marriage. Limp effort or no effort sends a negative message to a spouse and is likely to imperil the marriage.
 3. This principle also applies to spiritual matters.
- B. Israel would have been happy to be whisked out of Egypt immediately into an already purged Canaan but God didn't accommodate this fairy-tale scenario. **EXO 16:3; NUM 13:27-29; 21:4.**
1. A *good land flowing with milk and honey* (**EXO 3:8**) would be no more valued by indolent, fearful Israelites than it was by the Canaanites who had sinned away its benefits.
 2. Through all their wilderness trials, God was proving their love of Him and all the benefits He represented. **DEU 8:2-3.**
- C. Naaman the Syrian leper wanted healing on his own terms. **2KI 5:9-12.**
1. He wanted to be entertained but God wasn't accommodating him.
 2. He'd already been inconvenienced by coming all the way from Syria. Wasn't that enough?
 3. "The baptistries in Syria are much nicer!" or "My Mormon baptism should be sufficient!"
 4. Mind that what was required of him was actually minimal, though humbling.
 5. After consideration, he humbled himself and submitted to the appointed ordinance (**vs. 13-14**), not even questioning, "But why seven times?"
- D. The Christian faith which leads to life is via a *strait* (tight-fitting, making transit difficult) gate and narrow way, for which reason few strive for it. **MAT 7:13-14.**
1. Religion that pleases the flesh will tend to have many adherents. **JOH 6:26.**
 2. Sin is always easy but not righteousness which demands an intense longing. **MAT 5:6.**
 3. For every true house of God in distant Jerusalem, Satan will provide two convenient false houses of worship nearby. **1KI 12:25-30.**
- E. Jesus once healed a man "...blind from his birth" (**JOH 9:1**).
1. Christ could have healed him on the spot by His word. c/w **MAT 8:8, 13.**
 2. Instead, Christ smeared his eyes with spit-clay mud and sent him to wash elsewhere. **JOH 9:6-7.**
 3. The man received benefit from Christ on Christ's terms which didn't make things easy.
 4. "Humanitarian man" would say, "But if this Jesus was of God, why didn't he just heal him on the spot...What kind of compassion is this?... This is cruelty!"
 - a. humanitarian: One who affirms the humanity (but denies the divinity) of Christ.
 - b. Humanitarians tend to think like Naaman: compassion and charity should be according to man's ideals, not God's.
 - c. Humanitarians prefer a Christ that is only a "good man" and who would do things the way "good men" would do them. A Divine Christ repulses them.

- d. Such men would find the soft religion of Cain preferable to the rough religion of Abel. **GEN 4:3-4.**
- F. Christ called blind Bartimaeus unto Himself rather than speak a word at a distance or rush over to him. **MAR 10:49.**
- G. Christ similarly could have predicted the faith of the friends who brought the paralytic to Him but instead He let them show their mettle by conquering obstacles. **MAR 2:1-5.**
- H. Christ told a woman with an eighteen-year long debilitating condition to come unto Him. **LUK 13:11-12.**
- I. Mind that Christ is God and God thinks not like man thinks. **PSA 50:21; ISA 55:8.**
- J. All His saving works of flesh and spirit are acts of mercy towards sinners who deserve hell, not help. **ROM 3:23.**
 - 1. mercy: Forbearance and compassion shown by one person to another who is in his power and who has no claim to receive kindness; kind and compassionate treatment in a case where severity is merited or expected.
 - 2. If He expects redeemed sinners' output before His input, what is that to them?
 - 3. The redeemed ought to be thankful that He first moved towards them out of mercy. **ROM 9:14-16; 5:6-8.**
 - 4. Any other benefit from Him which requires our input is additional reward.
- K. God is a rewarder of them that *diligently* seek Him. **HEB 11:6.**
- L. Rather than just unburdening believers by His sovereign power, He calls them unto Himself. **MAT 11:28.**
- M. True faith feels its blind way to the pool of Siloam without griping about the hassle and, receiving the benefit, worships the One Who gave it. **JOH 9:35-38.**