

## No Accidental Christians

What is your intention with regards to spiritual matters?

We have many intentions in life, but sometimes our intentions are just dreams. We mix the idea of *wishing* with the idea of *intention*. We might pass by a nice house and comment about how good it would be to live in a house like that; but there is no real intention of buying a house like that. We might come into contact with a person with good insight and think about how good it would be to possess similar insights; but there is no real intention to pursue the means of achieving that insight. We might observe the behavior and attitude of a Christian and note an obvious level of spiritual maturity, but . . . .

What is your intention with regard to spiritual matters?

Many people talk about and think about religion, salvation, and spirituality. Some just talk. They are interested in possessing the good things offered in a spiritual life. They are interested in the final outcome of eternal life. But is it more of a wish or a real intention?

The question before every individual: What is your intention regarding spiritual things? Within the word *intention* is the idea of purpose. Christianity is not a stroke of luck like some sort of door prize. There is thought combined with a determined will. There is a consideration and understanding of the benefits as well as the costs.

Jesus tells the parables of the treasure in the field, and the valuable pearl (Matthew 13). In the first parable, the treasure was stumbled on quite by accident. The one finding the treasure sells everything to buy the field and possess the treasure. The second parable described a merchant who was already searching for a great pearl. He also sold everything in order to possess a treasure when it was found.

In both parables the treasure represents the kingdom of God or eternal life. And, though the treasures were discovered in different ways, both individuals recognized the value of their treasure. Then with determined intent each one set out to obtain the treasure. Every Christian should be able to identify with one of the two men in the parables.

Jesus demonstrated the right attitude in the Garden of Gethsemane before his death. He asked God if

there was another way. His submissive response was, "Not as I will, but as You will." (Matthew 26:39) His submissive will demonstrates his deep sense of purpose, to continue his mission to seek after those who were spiritual lost. He did not waiver, but walked the path straight to the cross. (Philippians 2:8)

Jesus did not come to earth and then *chicken out*. His purpose was so strong and his intent so keen that he was already walking toward the cross before he took on human form. (1 Peter 1:18-20) Before God created us, the plan was already in place.

Some Christians act as if they have purchased salvation and possess it as a packaged object. It takes little effort to keep a possession. However, our salvation is not an object. It might be compared to a marriage. It is true that the wedding ceremony is wonderful, but it is only the beginning of the marriage. Likewise, the point at which a person becomes a Christian is a wonderful occasion. But there must be a genuine intent of becoming spiritually mature. It is here that we understand Paul's words to the Christians in Philippi: "Work through your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12)

Each Christian must have a genuine intention of seeing things through to the end. It is the idea of *being like Christ* all the way through to the completion of life on earth. The mind will be engaged at all times with an awareness of opportunities as well as obstacles.

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith . . . . (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Jesus stands as our example. He demonstrated by his life how to live each day and he demonstrated how to bring life to its conclusion. May each of us *intend* to be like him.

Mark Stinnett, Minister  
Ellisville Church of Christ  
[www.simplychristians.com](http://www.simplychristians.com)