

# What's In Your Basket?

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

## Introduction

Have you ever stopped to think about how *fussy* we are as shoppers sometimes? We carry our baskets through the grocery store searching for exactly the right item, examining each ingredient, hoping to make the best possible purchase. There's now a peanut butter for every shopper! Chunky or creamy, with corn syrup or "all-natural," almond or cashew, even peanut butter with swirls of jelly mixed in. With so many choices, it's a wonder we ever make it to the checkout line.

We're continually adding to our spiritual shopping baskets as we live our lives each day. What we choose to put in the basket says volumes about the kind of people we are and what we value. At that great "checkout line" called judgment one day, God will look at everything we've selected and "ring us up." Did we think about our choices? Did we choose wholesome things that nourish and satisfy us? Or is our cart full of Twinkies, sugary soda, and empty calories?

Let's look at a few stories of people in the Bible who added to their spiritual baskets. Their good choices should motivate us all today to ask the critical question: "*What's In Your Basket?*"

## Courage - Stand Strong

Pharaoh ordered that all Hebrew boys were to be thrown in the river and killed. In Exodus 2:3-6, a woman gives birth to a son and hides him for three months. Fearing for his life and realizing she can no longer hide him, she puts the baby boy into a basket and sends him down the river. The boy's name was Moses!

What an incredible act of courage and trust in God she displayed. How hard it must have been for her to tuck him into that basket and let him go. She had no idea what would happen to him, but God took care of the boy. And he raised him up to become the savior of his people from slavery!

We need to add *courage* to our baskets today. While fear can paralyze us and make us ineffective, we're not facing life's difficulties alone. God will provide for us and bring us to victory in our troubles, but we have to be courageous enough to act. That challenging conversation you need to have with a friend about falling from the faith. A painful relationship breakdown that needs mending. The backlash from the world when they find out you're a believer. These are all opportunities to stand up, stand firm, and be courageous for Christ!

Yes, it's hard. But it's also not optional. John said that the "cowardly" (among many others living in sin) would be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 21:7-8). So will you stand firm, do the hard things, and trust in God even in life's most difficult circumstances? Have you put *courage* in your basket?

### **Collaboration** - *Work Together*

After Saul (later named Paul) was converted, the Jews were hunting him down to kill him. When he found out, he hatched a plan to sneak out of the city over the walls at night. At the right moment, a few disciples lowered him over the wall in a basket, and he fled for safety (Acts 9:23-25).

Paul couldn't have done it alone. He needed help to make it out of the city safely. Fortunately, there were others concerned enough about him to step into a dangerous situation and help.

We need to add *collaboration* to our baskets today. Working together with our brothers and sisters in crisis is one of our great responsibilities in the church. Unfortunately, sometimes rather than helping, we excuse ourselves from stepping in. "It's none of my business." "It's their problem." "They got themselves into that mess, and they can get themselves out." But it is our business, we can bear their burdens, and we can be the ones to help them get out of trouble!

Paul was continually partnering with others to lend a hand in troubling times (Philem. 17-18). He reached out to heal broken relationships, deal with trials, and build up the church. And we should follow his example today too. Will you work together with your brothers and sisters to do the work of God today? Have you put *collaboration* in your basket?

### **Compassion** - *Love Your Neighbor*

When Jesus saw a great crowd of people coming to him in the desert, he realized they needed food and stepped in to help. Mark records Jesus' reason for doing this, as "*he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd*" (Mark 6:34-44). Miraculously, he multiplied five loaves of bread and two fish into a meal big enough to feed them all. And once the meal was over, the disciples found enough leftovers to fill twelve baskets!

Jesus loved them enough to help provide for their physical needs. Amazingly, he even knew they would just come back for more the next day (John 6), but he still fed them anyway. Helping the needy was a common theme throughout Jesus' teaching, and here he shows what it looks like in practice.

We need to add *compassion* to our baskets today. Loving our neighbor enough to step in to help is even something that will be used to determine whether or not we'll be saved in judgment! As Jesus said, "*Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life*" (Matt. 25:44-46).

Jesus has offered you abundance, not so you can hoard it or become rich, but so you can share with others in need! Will you love them enough to help? Will you give as freely as you've been given? Have you put *compassion* in your basket?

### **Concealment?** - *Show God's Glory*

Hopefully, by now we've put three nourishing and sustaining things into our baskets: *courage*, *collaboration*, and *compassion*. But like one box of Twinkies can ruin the whole shopping trip, there's something we can put into our spiritual baskets that's far more damaging to our spiritual health: *concealment!*

Jesus said, "*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven*" (Matt. 5:14-16).

We need to get over our false modesty, our shame, and our fear of standing out. Instead, we need to let our lights shine! It's not about *you*, either. It's not, so people will see *you* or honor *you* - it's all about bringing God glory! All our efforts to carefully curate our lives will be for nothing if we hide from the world as Peter said, "*Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation*" (1 Peter 2:12).

So are you willing to stand out and let people see God's glory reflected in your life? Or have you also added *concealment* to your basket?

## **Conclusion**

Discipleship doesn't come with coupons or discount codes. It's not a bargain hunter's game. And despite putting many positive things in our baskets, if we've tucked away a few "guilty pleasures" for our moments of weakness, it's all going to be revealed at the "checkout line" of judgment! Give yourself entirely to God and live a wholesome and satisfying life of service to your King today!