

How Much Is All?

The short answer is - each and every element or article within clearly defined limits. In scripture and everyday conversation, the word "all" expresses quality or quantity from an included few to the entire whole of something. "How much does all include?" must be determined by the context or way of using the word. Modern translations of the Bible replace the word "all" with a more descriptive synonym like everything. If the context or extended context in one version does not make the meaning clear, compare several translations and paraphrases. Consulting different versions will help make the meaning clear.

One very clear text which contains the word "all" is Mark 12:41-44. Jesus compared the riches some cast into the Temple Treasury to the near nothing a poor widow gave. She only put in two copper coins (copper being the lowest value behind silver and gold) and the smallest size coin available. Jesus said, *"Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in **all she owned, all she had to live on.**"* By giving two small coins, she had no more money to give or to buy food.

However, what did Peter mean when he said to Jesus, *"Lo, **we have left all, and followed thee**"* (Matthew 19:27 ASV)? Peter and his brother Andrew, along with James and John, owned a fishing business in Galilee, which they apparently expected to return to (John 21:3). Peter also had a house in Capernaum (Matthew 8:14), and possibly one in Jerusalem. The implication of "all" is replaced by the word "everything" in the New American Standard Bible. *"Behold, we have left everything and followed You"* (Matthew 19:27 NASB). In this case, Jesus explains what all and everything means in this text. *"And everyone who has **left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms** for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life"* (Matthew 19:29 NASB). The disciples that followed Jesus left their homes, families, and business to devote themselves to learning the gospel.

Referring to one who followed the Lord, David said *"When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, Because the LORD is the One who holds his hand. I have been young and now I am old, Yet **I have not seen the righteous forsaken Or his descendants begging bread**"* (Psalms 37:24-25). When we consider our brethren scattered about the world, our family, the family of God's children, is more extensive than any earthly family. The principle of brotherly love (Romans 12:10) ensures that brethren take care of brethren so that we will not miss what is left behind.

Based on the second part of Peter's question, the disciples were still looking for some reward. *"What then will there be for us?"* (Matthew 19:27b). Today many people ask, "If I go to church, what is in it for me?" Or "If I live as a follower of Christ, what do I get in return?" When some religious organizations move into a new community, they survey the residents and ask, "what can we provide for you?" These community churches are often willing to change their teaching and worship to please the people rather than the Lord. At least the rich young man (Matthew 19:16) began correctly by asking Christ, "What must I do...?" Many seek a group or person that will tell them what they want to hear rather than what they must do to be saved. Church to them has become a low-cost country club, providing friends and entertainment.

When we accept employment, we expect to get paid. Often, healthcare and a retirement plan is also part of the compensation. But to get the pay and benefits, you have got to give up something.

Sometimes it may be just a few hours each day. Other times it might mean leaving home and family to move to a different city, state, or country. The question of "what's in it for me" becomes personal. The reward must exceed the loss. The details of the employee's commitment are often specified in an employment contract. The employee is then committed to give up some personal freedom and go to the place where the work will occur.

One of Jesus' parables, found in Matthew 20, tells of men who accepted a "contract" to work for a day's wage. The landowner hired some early in the morning and others at intervals throughout the day. Every man agreed to a day's wage for his labor. When the workday ended, they each received a single coin. This parable's point is not about the contract or the dissatisfaction of those that worked all day. The point is that there is only one reward for God's workers. When the end of our labor comes, there is only one heaven, and that is ALL that is necessary for a faithful child of God for eternity. In the parable, a single coin for each worker was all the landowner had for them. (Matthew 5:3, 10, 12), all list "The Kingdom of Heaven" as the reward for the faithful.

What have you left to deserve the heavenly reward?