



Mark 12:28-44 | Nate Alcorn | February 26, 2023

Our deepest human desire is to be fully seen, loved, and accepted. But oftentimes we look for attention and affection in all the wrong places. We want to impress others by being the smartest person in the room, by having the best title, the most money, the most followers, or by pleasing people. But this path leads to broken relationships with ourselves, God and others.

**The truth is our need for attention is ONLY satisfied in receiving God's Affection**

The teachers of the law were searching for attention and recognition through their titles as the moral and religious authority of the Jewish people. Because their hearts were off, they were unable to see Jesus. They felt threatened by him and tried to prove him wrong.

Up to this point, many of the teachers of the law allowed their convictions to become crystallized codes, solidified institutions, and petrified dogmas. The prophet became a priest of the establishment, charisma became office, and love became routine.

**They became more focused on behavior modification rather than heart transformation.**

In verse 28 a teacher of the law asks, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

Jesus answers to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

But the hearts of the Teachers of the law had been corrupted; they could not see Jesus for who he was. So, Jesus calls them out in verse 38:

"Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."

One of the jobs of the teachers of the law was to care for the widow. Widows were especially vulnerable in an agricultural/patriarchal society. The scribes acted as lawyers assisting people with financial and spiritual affairs. Devouring widows' homes was like elderly abuse today.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29

At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

Isaiah 10:1-2, Acts 6:1-7, James 1:27

Caring for widows the least of these was like a thermometer, an indicator of the spiritual health of the church and the leaders.

Next, Jesus observes the time of offering:

"Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

The time of offering was a public event. People could hear the coins drop in the offering boxes and knew if you gave a lot or a little. The poor widow was publicly humiliated by only giving two coins. As Mark points out this poor widow is just as much a victim as a hero.

Jesus told his disciples:

"Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

The poor widow PUBLICLY demonstrated her love and complete trust was in God. She loved God with all her heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Isn't that what Jesus did for us on the cross. In complete vulnerability and humiliation, He hung naked on the cross and PUBLICLY declared His love for us.

Are you still trying to climb the ladder, looking for attention in all the wrong places?

Remember **our need for attention is ONLY satisfied in receiving God's Affection.**

Another indicator of the condition of our hearts is our giving. The poor widow demonstrated sacrificial giving.

'Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

**Giving is not a deprivation of money, but an expression of my trust in Jesus.**

Here is a plan to help with our giving:

- Give something
- Give a percentage
- Give a tithe 10%
- Give extravagantly

God does not need our money; He wants our hearts. Giving is between us and God.

Let's surrender our hearts and remember that we are fully accepted and fully loved in Christ. It is from this place of security and acceptance that we live generous lives.