

What are you willing to do for \$10,000,000?

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There is a fierce battle going on for America's soul, and it's not between left and right or black and white. It's between the worship of mammon and God. As a nation, we're in love with things, and those things are becoming a substitute for healthy relationships and moral values.

Some time back, researchers asked Americans, "What are you willing to do for \$10,000,000?" The answers form an interesting picture of our changing values. 25% would abandon their entire family. 25% would abandon their church. 23% would become prostitutes for a week or more. 16% would give up their American citizenship. 16% would leave their spouses. 10% would withhold testimony and let a murderer go free. 7% would kill a stranger. 3% would put their children up for adoption.

In times like these, we need people who will stand in the gap on our behalf. We need saints.

Who are the saints? How many can you name? Saint Peter? Saint Stephen? Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? Saint Paul? How about Saint Francis of Assisi or Saint Augustine? One of my favorites is Saint Barnabas, because his name means, "Son of Encouragement".

What is it that makes a saint in the first place? Is it personal virtue and discipline? Or is it concern for the poor and the outcast? Is a saint pious and austere? Or is a saint merry and outgoing? We have had examples throughout history of both.. The Roman Catholic Church has a long list of those who have been canonized - usually some two hundred years after their deaths, and after a careful scrutiny of their lives, work, and continuing influence. Even with all of this, I doubt that we could get together as Christians on a list of the top ten saints, especially if we omitted the original twelve Apostles.

According to the New Testament, the saints are not a select group of persons with haloes around their heads. They are simply the members of the Christian fellowship, men and women who live by faith in Jesus Christ and in whose lives the Holy Spirit is at work.

A saint leaves the world a better place because he or she has been here. I love the way Frederick Beuchner once put it, "In his holy flirtation with the world, God occasionally drops a handkerchief. These handkerchiefs are called saints."

A saint doesn't have to go to Calcutta like Mother Teresa, or Africa like Albert Schweitzer. But neither are they a part of the "Me" generation. They take life seriously, but not themselves. They know that life is too short to sit around and fret over little things. A saint is an important part of his or her church. An important part of his or her community. This points out the fact, however, that we too should be candidates for sainthood.

A common day saint's faithfulness in service, sacrificial giving, and loving devotion has formative influence on lives around them and provide open channels of opportunity for service.

Let us, then, resolve to take the high road with our lives, the saintly road. Let us dare lay claim to our heritage as God's children. Let us not be afraid or ashamed to join Abraham and all the saints of all the ages in launching out toward the land God has promised we can possess.

As Easter approaches, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."
(Hebrews 12:2)

