



## Athlete and Soldier

Think about an athlete. He most likely had an example of someone that he looked up to from a young age. Perhaps he thought back then: I want to be a champion like that; I'm going for the gold! But there is a lot of training to be done. In order to reach that far there are lots of difficulties to be overcome. The goal is the gold medal with honour and fame, even though you must give your all in order to obtain this. With such a great reward before you it is possible to pay the greatest sacrifices.

A soldier who is called up to fight against the enemy seeking to occupy the nation must be trained. He has to let go of everything which is dear to him. Consequently he heads off to the battleground because he is fighting for a higher cause than his own life. Many soldiers fight for the freedom of their country, knowing that they could die. Yet they are willing to pay this sacrifice because they know that their loved ones at home, and possibly their own nation, will have a better future ahead.

## Leaving Everything Behind

Jesus came down from heaven to earth in order to announce and demonstrate God's Kingdom. He had a clear task to carry out when He came to earth. Jesus came to save mankind, to redeem them and to give them eternal life. He left everything behind him in heaven, namely the presence of the Father and His glory. He was even willing to give up His own life in order to reach His goal. Just like an athlete or a soldier, He had to give up everything which would hold him back in order to fulfil His calling.

## What did Jesus Give Up to Achieve His Higher Goal?

Heb 12:2

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## The Rich Young Man

Matt 19:16-22

What goal did the rich young man want to achieve?  
How did the young man think he could achieve this?  
What did the young man have to do in order to obtain his goal?

Leave everything behind to gain the treasure: the Kingdom.  
Imagine that a young couple decides to get married. The man is very rich but the woman does not own much. Imagine that the man says he wants to get married but all of his things will remain his property. The lady can live in a very small house near his mansion. This would be very strange. After all we are talking about a relationship in which love and being faithful to each other are very important. In such a case you share everything.

Jesus gave up everything because He had a higher goal before Him. That higher goal also exists for His disciples. In order to reach that goal He asks His disciples to live as He did and give up everything which could hold them back from the Kingdom.

The rich young man thought he could enter the Kingdom by keeping the rules. He did not understand that it (the Kingdom) was about a relationship. His possessions were more important than a relationship. Jesus asks a relationship with you. Then you can enter the Kingdom of heaven.

In this text we see the same principle. Imagine that a newly married man is continually called up by his mother. The mother keeps telling the man what he must do and what is good and what isn't.





This would cause a lot of friction between the two partners. The wife does not want to take second place in her husband's life.

Jesus asks of you that nothing is more important in your life than Himself. He knows all too well that hobbies, having many possessions and even people can hold you back from having a good relationship with Jesus. A relationship with Jesus can have a positive effect on all the other relationships in your life because the Kingdom of God then becomes visible through you on earth.

If people in your family are against your decision to follow God then it can be really difficult to keep choosing Jesus. If money, sports or hobbies are more important than Jesus then it becomes more difficult to follow Him and love Him. Jesus seeks you as His disciple. He gives you His grace so you can enter that Kingdom which is free. But He does require of you that He has first place in your life and that costs you everything.

### **EXERCISE:**



*Make a list for yourself of all the people and things which are very important to you. Ask yourself if these people or things are standing in the way of your relationship with Jesus. If they are, what could you do about that to change it?*



*Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in this. Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and listen to what He wants to tell you.*



*Read together with your mentor Matt 13:44-45. Discuss together what the meaning could be. Imagine yourself as the man who buys the treasure. And imagine God as the merchant who buys the pearl.*



*Talk through with your mentor which areas you want to let go of in order to follow Jesus whole heartedly.*

### **PRINCIPLE 15**

***Jesus gave up everything because He had a higher goal before Him. That higher goal also exists for His disciples. In order to reach that goal He asks His disciples to live as He did and give up everything which could hold you back from the Kingdom.***

**Heb 12:2**

<sup>2</sup> Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Matt 19:16-22**

<sup>16</sup> Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" <sup>17</sup> "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." <sup>18</sup> "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, <sup>19</sup> honour your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbour as yourself.'" <sup>20</sup> "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" <sup>21</sup> Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." <sup>22</sup> When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

**Luke 14:25-33**

<sup>25</sup> Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: <sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? <sup>29</sup> For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.' <sup>31</sup> "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

**Matt 13:44-45**

<sup>44</sup> "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. <sup>45</sup> "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. <sup>46</sup> When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

