

Everyman



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Everyman The medieval period was one that was well known for its insistence on the maintenance of morality. Morality plays served the purpose of teaching good morals through religious motifs, allegory and symbols. The eponymous character in “ Everyman” is an exemplar of all humanity. One of the lessons that can be learnt from him has to do with material wealth.

Prime among how material wealth is depicted in “ Everyman” is that it is depicted as a hindrance that reduces the level of intimacy that can exist between humans and their creator. This is particularly reflected at the beginning of the text when God laments that the attention of human beings has been turned away from what they should pay attention to. “ I perceive, here in my majesty/How that all creatures be to me unkind/Living without dread in worldly prosperity./Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God” (Donaldson 2121)

It is an irony that the material wealth, which God said has come between him and his creatures, is not able to buy salvation for Everyman. Material wealth is also unable to win his friends over to his side even to the point of death. Of course, he must have affected the lives of fellowship, kindred, cousin, material goods and knowledge who all neglect him when he needs them the most. In spite of the fact that “ money maketh all right that is wrong” (Donaldson 2131), Material Goods is unable to buy everyman salvation. Only good deed stays with him. Hence, the impression one gets is that the best money can do for any individual is to enable them make friends that will not stay during their time of trials and tribulations.

However, it is not the case that material wealth is depicted in no good light in the text because the reader, through the character of Everyman, is made

to realize that Knowledge about what to do and what not to do will help one from making the kind of mistake that almost leads to the doom of the eponymous character. When one gets knowledge, others like discretion, strength, his five wits, and beauty will come.

At the end of the entire play, despite the fact that Everyman could have been followed by others, only Good Deeds follow him into the heavenly expanse. The bottom-line that is presented in the Morality Play, “Everyman”, is that all things might desert one (even wealth), only good deed will remain. Therefore, humans are encouraged not to give premium to material wealth over and above good deeds. This is despite the fact that material wealth can be used to enhance one’s good deeds.

Work Cited

Donaldson, Talbot. “ Everyman.” The Norton Anthology of World Literature. Ed. Sarah Lawall. New York: Norton, 1984. 2119-2141. Print

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