

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

Earlier this month Wm. Rick Singer was arrested and charged with unethically and illegally influencing admissions into several prominent colleges and universities on behalf of over 750 families. He pleaded guilty and assisted the FBI in identifying numerous co-conspirators in the scheme. Charges included bribing university staff members and paying to have test scores inflated. Parents involved in the scandal include prominent business people and well-known actors and actresses. Singer and his two businesses were paid more than \$25-million from 2011 to 2018.

Graduating from a prestigious university can give you a distinct advantage in landing a high-paying job. You might think it shouldn't matter all that much, and you might be right about that, but the fact is a degree from Harvard or Yale carries more clout than one from podunk college. So we understand why parents want their children to attend respected institutions of higher learning. But that doesn't excuse cheating and putting other students at a disadvantage. A basic understanding of fairness tells us that the same rules ought to apply to everyone. My child shouldn't receive special favor because I have enough money to bribe the admissions officer.

Now, what does all of this have to do with us? None of us paid Mr. Singer to inflate our child's test score to get him into Harvard. So why do we need to talk about this other than to reaffirm our belief in common decency and fairness?

Here's my point. Being admitted to a highly-esteemed university may be a real feather in one's cap, but being admitted to Heaven ought to be our absolutely highest priority. And there will be no cheating, no bribery, no inflating of test scores, or anything else of the kind. Admission standards are the same for everyone. God the Father has appointed Jesus to be the judge, and He shows no partiality.

Admission to heaven will not be based on how much money you have. Whether you have much or little, the Lord's concerns as revealed in His word are three: how did you get it (honestly or dishonestly), how are you using it (selfishly or selflessly), and what is your attitude toward it (trust in it, or trust in God).

Admission to heaven will not be based on test scores. Not that Bible knowledge isn't important, but you will never know enough to earn or merit your admission to heaven.

Unlike college admissions, there is plenty of room for more to be admitted to heaven. Harvard or Yale may have only a certain number of slots open, so even well-qualified students may be turned away. But the Bible says, "Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

Admission to heaven depends on your relationship to Jesus Christ. Jesus is "the way, the truth, & the life" – no one comes to the Father except through Jesus (John 14:6). Salvation is "in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:10). And the Bible teaches that we get into Christ by obeying the gospel – putting our trust in Him as the Son of God, repenting of sin, confessing Him as Lord, and being immersed into Him (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27).

Now some would like to change the admissions policy. How about just saying everyone gets in except maybe serial murderers and terrorists? In the first place, you and I don't set policy. That's God's business; it's above our pay grade. Besides that, even people who aren't serial murderers or terrorists are still guilty of sin, and until that sin is cleansed by the blood of Christ, a holy God cannot admit them to heaven.

People are understandably outraged that some rich people tried to get their children into big-name universities dishonestly. But how much more important is it for us to tell people the truth about their relationship with God? Never water down the gospel. It will end only with disappointment.