

Pursuing a Deeper Life

By Pastor Marvin R. Barham

Job 2:3 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.*

In the complete submersion of the will to the Spirit of God, compromise, a lack of self control or lack of discipline are despised in one's personal life in Christ. There must be a personal goal and desire to live a life of the most upright heart and to guard it above all else. In our men's Bible Study we spoke of Integrity. We said that there is no such thing as 98% integrity, and God would require nothing less than 100% in His Kingdom. This denotes that integrity is more than just being completely honest all the time or never telling a lie or simply always doing the right thing. Instead, **it is a matter of consistency of character that brings credibility to one's life.** It is consistency of not just practice and outward behavior, but a consistency in the motives and intents of one's heart. It is consistency of righteous living that the heart in pursuit of God truly desires. It is consistency of Christlikeness that God desires in us. It is consistency of holiness that is the life that God lives. This is the deeper life.

A.W. Tozer tells us, "No one ever walked out of the house of God because they did not want God – but because **they found something they wanted more than God.** I refuse to deceive and damn people by teaching that you can be a Christian and love this present world. You cannot be a genuine Christian and love the things of this world. The Holy Spirit never enters a man and then lets him live just like the world that hates God. That is the reason most people do not want to be filled with the Holy Spirit – **they want to live the way they want to live** and merely have the Holy Spirit as a bit of something extra. The love the Bible enjoins is not the love of feeling: it is the love of willing, the 'willed tendency' of the heart."

The Apostle Paul writes with joy to the church of Thessalonica in **2 Thessalonians 1:3-5** ³*We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;* ⁴*So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:* ⁵*Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:*

So often, **in order to fill our empty seats we offer a salvation and grace that is cheap. We offer the promises and blessings of the Kingdom of God to people without any responsibility and accountability. We offer it as if it were our Kingdom to offer at our price. We fail to remember the high cost of the price that was paid for a Kingdom that cannot be assumed with presumptuous intent.** Recently while I was in Mexico we had several who gave their lives to Christ. However, as God prophetically revealed the heart of one young man and I asked him if He would like to surrender his life to Christ, he was indecisive. After I explained to him what it meant to make Christ "Lord" and Savior -- to change his way of living for self and give up sinfulness -- he was sure that he was not ready to make such a commitment. Some might say, "At least he was honest." The tragedy here is that he failed to understand what he was really saying "no" to; he could not really perceive what he was giving it up in exchange for. **His honesty lacks any bearing in light of a life without Christ that will be judged before the Word of God and condemned for eternity.** The one right does not negate the tragedy of a life of wrong. The same applies to every Christian's life. **Growth denotes consistent change for the good and towards life instead of death.** At some point in your life in Christ there must be changes that are taking place and are consistently transforming every part of you and your life. **The Word and Spirit of God**

should be developing some sense of consistency in the precepts and principles of God evident throughout your life, from the way you think to the motives and intents of your heart, your understanding and the way you conduct your life. **If there is no consistency of righteous living developing in your life, then there is no righteous living. You cannot say you are living in righteousness and yet continue to live in sin any more than you can taint the truth with a lie and still call it truth.** I see so many public figures today representing Christianity in an aggressive front against those who seek to oppose Judeo-Christian foundations in our society. I thank God for those who boldly speak out for truth and transcendent moral values. In fact, we need more of them. However, where so many of these same contenders get blind-sided in the presentation of their message, is that there is often a lack of consistency of the principles of God in their motives and intent, or at least it is perceived in the delivery of their message. In other words, speak the truth but in love. **Let your love speak truth louder than your articulation of it.** Jesus said truth will be offensive enough to those who hate it. If you speak truth in an attacking manner, you are like sounding brass. **You cannot negate the motive of the law of love in order to make an aggressive argumentative point or you muddle the message of truth.** The same applies in how you live your life daily. Every attitude counts.

Proverbs 11:18-20 *18The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. 19As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death. 20They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.*

A life that continually sows in righteousness shall also reap in righteousness. **Occasional righteous living does not bring life.** The good intended living is not righteous living and does not bring life. But the life that is upright walks before God and in all its ways considers His righteousness. This is righteous living that produces the rewards of living as God lives. **Righteous living 'sometimes' is not God's desire or intent.** Enoch is a perfect example.

Genesis 5:24 *And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*

Hebrews 11:5 *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

According to Tozer the pursuit of the deeper Christian life consumed by the Spirit of God means "a life with an intensity of purity and fruitfulness far in advance of that of the average Christian life. It involves complete separation from the world, not only in practice but in spirit, and a full devotion to God without reservation."

The life of righteous Kingdom living is not one that seeks what it can and cannot do. For this heart has not come to understand the heart and intent of Father's ways. Instead, it is to seek to please the Lord and acknowledge His grace, His mercy and His ways in everything. It is to bring glory to Him in all that we say and do, with every intention and desire, not just the ones that He requires.

Micah 6:8 *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

You might say, "Brother Marvin, you speak sayings that are hard to hear." I speak to you as a man approved by God, entrusted with His gospel, not to please men but to please God who tests my heart. **(1 Thes. 2:4)** I admonish you my dear friend, **consider the alternative to a life of complete 100% surrender to God's way of living. Any measure of living for self is too much, justified or not. It is complete denial of self that Christ sought in the garden that He might fulfill the complete will of God.**

Again, A.W. Tozer states, "The mercy of God speaks louder than the voice of justice. A prayerful, face-down meditation of the life of Christ will show us how to oppose with kindness and reprove with charity."

In conclusion, know that the Lord is gracious and merciful, or you and I would not be sitting where we are today. His love is faithful, amazing and enduring unto the end. Consider my motive and intent: to please God with my life and present you before Him as a Bride without spot or blemish is my life's purpose and responsibility as a prophet, a pastor, a servant of God. With all my heart and love for you, I beseech and exhort you by the Lord Jesus Christ as did the Apostle Paul in **1 Thessalonians 4:1, that as ye have received of me today how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more in the righteousness of Christ, in Kingdom living, in the heart of Father, in the deeper life.**