

## *"Not I, But Christ"*

Misc.

### *Celebrating the Centrality of Christ in the Local Assembly*

Most of us have a prescribed way of doing things; the route we take to work, or school, or church. All of it is memorized. Often we do our routines without a moments thought. How many times have you arrived at your destination without even realizing all the stop lights, stop signs, intersections, and turns you made. In fact sometimes you are tempted to get out and look under your car to see if anyone is stuck underneath. Well, this is how we live our Christian lives. We put our relationship with God on autopilot and exist without a second thought about what He is doing in us and through us to those around us.

As believers we are called upon to resist sin. My intent is to encourage those within our fellowship who name the name of Christ. There are several truths that must be kept in mind as we consider this idea of personal discipline and cultural adaptation as it relates to our union with Christ and the ministry that lies before us. Today's study is topical and not textual.

Problems are a part of everyone's life. Life is problematic. I am always drawn back to eleven bedrock truths. Seven (7) of them are addressing how we believe and the last four (4) are addressing how we behave.

- I. All that you are and ever hope to be is as full now as it was the day you got saved (1 Cor. 1:30).

Salvation and all of its resultant activities (i.e., justification, sanctification, and glorification) are a total package. As a New Testament believer you are fully identified by the righteousness of Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). There is a sense in which we live in an already/not-yet world. You are already complete in Christ (Col. 2:10), but you still wait for the future installment of this glorious truth.

- II. The only way the Christian life is lived is by resting in His life (Rom. 6:1-11, Gal. 2:20, Col. 3:3, 4).

Whether or not we understand this idea will not affect the outcome. What it will affect is your ability to rest in Him and enjoy His ministry in you and through you to those around you.

- III. The continuing existence of our old Adamic nature guarantees that clutter will happen (Rom. 6:12, 13, Eph. 4:22-24, Col. 3:5).

As long as we are abiding in our flesh, we will have woe. Failure, however, is not fatal. Do not focus on what appears to be the problem. Chances are what you think is the problem is a fruit and not the root.

- IV. Your emotions follow your will, but your emotions will not always reflect your will.

This says that you can believe something without feeling different. You can choose the right and still feel like doing the bad. Thus it is possible to choose and/or do the right thing and still feel lousy. It is important to know what your emotions are. Despite how you might feel, there is always hope, healing, and wholeness in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

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V. God is in control of the details in ways that are unexplainable (Ps. 115:3, 135:6).

My intellect, will and emotion are working out God's purpose. If I do not lay hold of this truth, then at the end of the day I will not be able to let go.

VI. God is completing His work in you and through you even when the experiential evidence would appear to be otherwise (Rom. 8:28, Phil. 1:6, 1 Thess. 5:23, 24).

Even when we feel and look like slaves, we are still free. Because this is true, there is a purpose behind all the details that make up an individual life (Rom. 8:28). Since God is in control of my individual life there are no wasted moments or events.

VII. The call to put off is a call to embrace what we know to be true, not what we feel to be true.

We cannot allow our emotions to lead us. We must let the truth lead us and by so doing our volition and emotions will follow. As noted earlier there are four (4) activities that will strengthen your resolve against sin. They will reinforce the mind renewal that is taking place right now in your life.

VIII. Declare your dependency on God through prayer.

Prayer is not an act of discipline as much as a declaration of our dependency on Him. Prayer says, "God I need you." God has chosen to work through prayer in the accomplishing of His will. Lean heavily on Him through this channel of grace.

IX. Renew your mind through the study of His Word.

God's mind and perspective is clearly stated in and through His Word. God gives wisdom freely, and the primary way in which we hear His voice is through His Word.

X. Be thankful for who He is, for what He has done, for what you have, for who you are, and for where you are at.

The Scripture does not call us to thankfulness based on how we feel; the call is to make a choice. Understand that where you currently are is not where you will end up.

XI. Surround yourself with the people of God (Ps. 73:16, 17, Heb. 10:25).

When we find ourselves struggling against sin one of our natural tendencies is to stop going to church, cut ourselves off from the people of God, and absent ourselves from ministry. Friend, perhaps one of the worst times to miss church is when you find yourself struggling against sin.

These 'eleven' truths are not works to be achieved as much as fruits to be enjoyed. These are the qualities God is working in and through His people. We do not merit or earn them, they exist only in Him and He works them in us and through us to those around us. Our "labor is to enter into His rest (Heb. 4:11)." The struggle is to not work like Martha, but to rest like Mary. Our natural inclination is to 'get busy' and 'work for Jesus.' Friend, let us "Be still and know that He is God" (Exod. 14:13, Ps. 46:10). Please do not look at these ten areas as tasks to be checked off on your daily task list. Relax, slow down, enjoy, and see God. Today, may you find in the study of Christ a release. There is hope and healing and wholeness in Christ. He is yours for the taking. May it please the Father to open your eyes to the glory of grace.