

Chapter 6

Staying In Christ

So the very practical question arises, how do we remain in that place of fellowship with Him so as to attain to the fullness of what God would have for us? We will here try to uncomplicate this process, for I know from whence I came and how difficult it is to reach that place. Not that I have obtained it as Paul says but clearly there are guidelines to follow to help us remain in Him.

Let us look at the definition of eternal life for some starting point on this subject. John 17:3 says this;

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou sent.”

The word *know* here is the Greek word *Ginosko*, and it means; a deep intimate knowledge that can only come through a cultivated relationship. First of all we see that this relationship that we desire to keep alive must be cultivated. That will take some time and effort on our part.

I recall in the earlier years of the ministry that one of the worship team members came to me and asked me to help them become a worship leader. I explained to this person; I can teach you the chords, and I can teach you the practical aspects of the ministry, but if you want to know how to hear His voice, that is something that needs to be cultivated between you and God, I can't help you acquire that ability.

Yet there are some general guidelines we can use from a practical aspect that can help us. One basic principle that I learned early on was that if I was going to help people enter into the presence of God, I was going to have to go there myself and I was going to have to do it often. You can't be a guide if you don't know how to reach the destination that you are bringing them to.

The second was equally as simple; you can't be trusted to follow the **voice of God** if you can't carry out **the written principles** that he brings before you in His word. 1John 2:3 says;

“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.”

And again in 1John 3:21;

“Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.”

According to this it says we need to be in touch with our own heart, something I went over in a previous chapter. Once we know the word in our hearts we need to follow it so that our hearts do not condemn us and we feel confident to stand before Him.

Yet the best way to stay in fellowship with him is to desire it, always have it at the forefront of your mind. The following is a quote from the amplified bible that shows that desire in the heart of the apostle Paul. It is taken from Philippians 3:7-10. I quoted it almost in it's entirety because it has such a superb description of the heartfelt desire that the apostle had. Notice how nothing else, including his ministry got in the way of his desire to know and be with Jesus.

But whatever things I had that I might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as (one combined) loss for Christ's sake.

Yes, furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage):

I must interject here because Paul is about to give the answer to his quest, the ultimate goal of his seeking, the final sum of everything that he is after. Let us not miss this because this is what we are all looking for .

of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly].

Progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, understanding Him more clearly? Wow what a quest. That seems to be a message that has been buried underneath a lot of other stuff of less importance in this day and age. For every time Jesus spoke of obtaining heaven He related it to knowing Him or His father. Lets see what level of importance Paul puts on this quest of his?

*For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ (the Anointed one), and that I may [actually] be found and known as in Him, **not having any [self-achieved] righteousness that can be called my own, based on my obedience to the law's demands (ritualistic uprightness and supposed right standing with God thus acquired),***

Wait you mean there is a ritualistic uprightness and supposed right standing with God. If I can be fooled into thinking that I have this, then what am I looking for? Lets read on.

*but possessing **that (genuine righteousness) which comes through faith in Christ (the Anointed one), the [truly] right standing with God, which comes from God by [saving] faith.***

There it is that genuine righteousness which comes through faith in Christ. That is what we are looking for. So in what way did Paul assure himself and his hearers of obtaining this righteousness? Let us see where he put his efforts.

[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately

acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His person more strongly and more clearly],.

That sounds like a man that is after God, it's no wonder the man wrote two thirds of the New Testament. His main desire was to know Jesus. Sometimes that gets lost in our quest for ministry or our personal goals or even our need to provide for our families.

So how do we stay in that place with Him? We pursue Him with all our heart and soul. James 4:8 says if we draw near to Him He will draw near to us. You see it's Him we are after, it is Him that we should be striving to know better. I heard a good math equation once that has helped me keep my God given ministry on track and my eyes on Jesus and not get side tracked with other things that seem right and it goes like this;

Jesus + anything doesn't = Jesus anymore

You see once you have Jesus, if you begin to add anything; program, work, ministry, goal however good it may be, you can as Paul said; "try to finish in the flesh what you began in the Spirit". And it becomes so easy to put our efforts into other things and make our relationship with Him not as important.

You see it's all about our hunger level for Him and for Him alone for God is seeking such to worship Him.