

## The New "Life Spiral"

Thoughts on Service, Relationship and Obedience

With quotes from "My Utmost for His Highest" by Oswald Chamber.

"The key to the missionary's work is the authority of Jesus Christ, not the needs of the lost. We are inclined to look on our Lord as one who assists us in our endeavors for God.

Yet our Lord places Himself as the absolute sovereign and supreme Lord over His disciples. (Chambers, October 14<sup>th</sup>)

We in the Christian Church have too often thought that the application of our Christian faith must come as the priority of our faith. These thoughts have come from scriptural references such as James 2: 18-26 on the subject of Faith and Deeds. The unfortunate thing is that for all of the generations of the Church, we have always looked for a "formula" that would show us that we have faith; a set of good stuff to do that will prove to God that we are good enough to get His approval. The irony here is that God does not desire our work...in fact He doesn't even need it. I would go so far as to say that if your only intention is to "impress Him" or "buy Him off" with all that you do, God actually finds this offensive and would rather that you STOP!

"We actually slander and dishonor God by our very eagerness to serve Him without knowing Him." (Chambers, October 3<sup>rd</sup>)

If that is true, then what does God want from us?

God wants us to be actively involved in loving service to others (ministry). I believe it so profoundly that I desire to make it my life work to encourage all those who have the freedom of Jesus Christ coursing through their veins to be fully engaged in the ministry that God has created them for. BUT, I believe that God wants MORE from us. He wants so much more than just our service... He wants a RELATIONSHIP. Service, not for the sake of earning our salvation or even for successfully doing good things for other people, but service that comes out of a free relationship, a deep and intimate relationship, a personal relationship, a relationship where Jesus says, "I am your best friend" and you KNOW He really means it.

"Jesus Christ is saying here, 'Don't rejoice in your successful service for Me, but rejoice because of your right relationship with Me.' The trap you may fall into in Christian work is to rejoice in the fact that God has used you. Yet, you will never be able to measure fully what God will do through you if you do not have a right-standing relationship with Jesus Christ." (Chamber, August 30<sup>th</sup>)

"...Jesus said in effect, 'Don't rejoice in successful service - the secret of joy is that you have the right relationship with Me.'" (Chambers, October 27<sup>th</sup>)

It is out of this relationship that we are then sent to do work for God. Out of this relationship comes the direction and it is then our responsibility to be OBEDIENT to Him. Obedient to both the general, and even more so, the specific directions that God offers to us as a result of the friendship relationship that we have with Him. He will and does tell us what to do, if we are consistently listening to Him.

"The goal of a missionary is to do God's will, not to be useful or to win the lost. A missionary is useful and will win the lost, but that is not his goal. His goal is to do the will of the Lord" (Chambers, September 23<sup>rd</sup>)

"The great controlling factor [of our service] is not the needs of people, but the command of Jesus. The source of our service to God is behind us, not ahead of us." (Chambers, October 26<sup>th</sup>)

So, what does this mean for us, those who are feeling led to launch out in new directions of service for our Lord Jesus Christ? We MUST maintain the right focus!

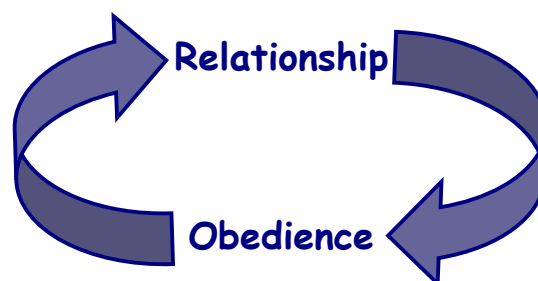
"Our tendency is to put the emphasis on service. Beware of the people who make their request for help on the basis of someone's usefulness. For the saint, direction and guidance come from God Himself, not some measure of that saint's usefulness. It is the work that God does through us that counts, not what we do for Him. All that our Lord gives His attention to is in a person's relationship with God - something of great value to His Father" (Chambers, August 30<sup>th</sup>)

Speaking on John 27:17,

"Jesus is saying, 'Identify yourself with my interests in other people', not, 'Identify Me with your interests in other people.'" (Chambers, October 18<sup>th</sup>)

It is really so profound that it is simple...

- **Relationship** - Our understanding of God must come from our intimate and personal relationship with Jesus Himself through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Obedience** - The application of our faith in Jesus comes from the guidance and direction we receive from Jesus through our relationship and our daily compliance with His leading.



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