

Chronicles of Diversity

Your leadership weekly



St. Paul's Mission in NE Washington

Loving Living Personality

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So what kind of answers did you get for your home work questions last week?

As opposed to many other questions of this nature, in this case there is a right answer. At least when it concerns someone trying to grow as a Loving Living Personality. That answer is found in the Bible in Romans 8:1: *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

So is that the answer you received in your prayerful quest? If it is then you are just where God has designed you to be on this particular day. This answer might not seem all that glamorous. Great job, boring job, too little time, too many hassles, way too many distractions to serve the Lord who created the universe.

Just because you are where you are at this time, doesn't mean that you will continue in this drudgery forever. One night you might wake up short of breath, and in less than a month you might have your aortic valve and your ascending aorta replaced.

Then there is a missionary to China, who is now home with an undisclosed ailment, affecting her very life. Oh, to know just what it is, and what can be done to fix it. To get back to the work you love, the calling that now seems beyond earthly possibility.

Hebrews 4:1-10 is just one of the passages that deals with the necessity of the redeemed child of God to live continually in the present, allowing for tomorrow to be ordered by God for His glory, and your growth and edification. For the Loving Living Personality this concept of the Sabbath rest is not just an ideal concept for the future world of heavenly pleasure, it is a concept that must be rescued from the tension of personal desires, and mundane activities.

My mother, at her funeral, requested they sing the song "*One Day at a Time, (Sweet Jesus).*" Until her funeral, I suppose I never really looked at her life as requiring that kind of strength. But

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following her moving to the eternal world, I have gained a new appreciation, of that concept, that there is more than enough today, and not focus too much on tomorrow.

There is the concept taught in much of evangelicalism that has its roots in eastern mysticism, or at least mysticism. That is the concept of **“let go and let God.”** God did not create mankind to be fatalistic. To follow the winds of good, or bad karma. God created mankind to work with Him in the development of your individual life, and the lives of others, family, friends, and even enemies. Some days, that may seem easy, sometimes difficult, occasionally impossible.

Relationship is a term that much of the church uses, to signify redemption, or saving faith found in Jesus Christ. Do you have a relationship with Jesus? That is the question as it is often ask. In the world of absolutes, everyone who has ever lived has a relationship with their Creator. The question is really whether that “relationship” is positive or negative. No matter which is the case, better adjectives apply, except in our politically correct society.

How an individual relates to God is much more complex than relationship, or friendship, because it is based on a covenant established by God. Therefore, it in part has the potential for close intimacy, but that intimacy is based upon legal parameters established by God, and not our decision to seek Him, for whatever reason we have been indoctrinated to believe. The word of God, the Bible is very clear on this topic, even if the teaching of the church was, and continues to be muddled.

This points to the requirement about knowing the truth. Truth doesn't come from our inherit knowledge, nor from what makes us feel self assured. It comes from the inerrancy of scripture. To truly be without condemnation before God, one must first become aware that the Bible contains a statement such as this. But even in this statement notice the qualifier, *“who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”*

This points beyond your potential feelings, to the goal that God has more for your life than what you are now experiencing. Are you living your life according to your own knowledge, will, and understanding? Living in the Spirit means that you are continually aware that every moment of your life has been ordered by God, you are in the process of being recreated into a Loving Living Personality. More than any other way to achieve that understanding in the soundness of discernment, is by filling your life, with the Word of God. Period.

If the pastor doesn't teach that in some way every Sunday, in the worship service, it is time to find another church. If you are the pastor, then as God has determined in His infinite plan you will either amend your ways and find a fresh understanding of God and His word, or He will allow you to continue to seek your own self destruction while being burdened with your parish responsibility .

But what I am trying to convey in this week's presentation, is that God is in control, and extremely active in the lives of all people in this world. The difference is that for some this path leads to destruction, for others it leads to eternal life and great blessing, today and forever.

The problem is, not where God has you, the problem is that the church has neglected its responsibility to connect you with others in the body of Christ, with similar interests, aptitudes, and gifts. Not only on Sunday, but in your secular calling as well. Part of that stems from an individual self centered worship service in which the covenantal understanding of God's unfolding plan of redemption is absent. We will deal with that next week.

However, much of it comes with accommodation to the world, by not understanding the complex community of believers that God has assembled, waiting for the church to activate. But the church never does, nor does she even grasp the diverse power of her community.

For example, to show my own lack of understanding. Just before my heart problem surfaced, the renters of one of the properties I inherited from my mother, fell into arrears. For the last couple of months this is not a problem I wanted to deal with, nor was this something that I really could deal with, except in prayer.

The day I got home from the hospital, I got a letter from the town stating that if payment for the water, which is paid by the renters, was not received by the 12th, they had no choice but to shut off the water. I called the city and explained that I just had my aortic valve, and my ascending aorta replaced, but I still wasn't in any place to really follow up on this situation. After apologizing for sending out this courtesy letter, **“in my condition,”** I was able to get a little glimpse of what was

happening with my renters in this small town. I was assured that in the past, at the last minute, they always were able to get the money to forego termination.

The 12th came and went, and I assumed that this situation had been taken care of. However, last Friday, I got a call from the Pastor of the local Presbyterian church, describing what really had happened. The water had been turned off, the renters both had disappeared for parts far away, sticking their nephew for a large sum of money without paying the bills.

Fixing up this house for rental, really is not something I can do in my condition at this time, and it is something that I feel, would definitely take away from the work I believe the Lord has for me to do this year.

The pastor recommended this nephew, as a definite cut above the renters, and if I was willing to let him stay, he was willing to work with the nephew, to get things back in order. He also said that the nephew worked in construction, was making good money, and if I would allow it, he wanted to stay in the house.

Shortly after I talked with the pastor, the nephew, Jason called and said that he really wanted to stay. After talking with him for a period of time, I ask him to send me a proposal to see what he could do and continue to live in the house. I haven't received this proposal yet, but I can see that the Lord had been working on these things even when I was unable and had no knowledge of what to do. This gives me the confidence that this will all work out and that I can continue to focus on rebuilding my strength and trying to get this ministry on a firmer foundation.

As I have heard many times in the last couple of months, this "lucky" encounter was not luck at all, but part of God's divine work in the lives of His children. It is my contention that the Bible says in its emphasis on moving beyond a salvation experience into the recreation of the believer into a likeness of Jesus Christ, that each person can become more aware of these opportunities, and to actively participate in them.

We will begin, in a more applied way, this emphasis on complex community building after we look at the Sunday Worship Service next week. This emphasis will focus on "Beyond the Gold" or beyond what riches and rewards this world has to offer, but at the same time maintaining and restoring the operational structure of the church within creation, in opposition to a worldly system of what's in it for me.

Seeds for Prayer.

I was able to drive to church for the first time last Sunday. I am also strong enough to function throughout the day, but my stamina is still not what it once was. Wednesday marks five weeks after my operation, and I have received many compliments on how well I look and how well I am getting along. Someone mentioned that one of the witnesses of a Christian is not the operations he may go through, but how rapidly they heal after such an endeavor. I suppose there is some merit to those thoughts. Right now the healing of my incision seems to be the limiting factor, which is probably as it should be.

I have been working on this concept of beyond the gold, to some extent since I came out of surgery. It is an attempt to integrate health, wealth, work, and mission. Actually, in the bigger picture I have been trying to put together a concept like this for many years. The place, time, and circumstances have just not seemed to come together until now. Please intercede for this development.

Also intercede for a smooth process with this rental house. If this process with Jason does not work out satisfactory, there will probably be a couple of months of work required to redo and rent, or sell the property. Such an undertaking will definitely require time that I would feel would be better spend in ministry development.

The war in Iraq is now proceeding like a war. Many expectations have been crushed with the loss of self righteous glory. Given that the Iraq power structure may be as evil as any in history, we should not be too concerned that it is not dissolving without some intense fighting. In that respect, there will be repercussions, not only on the battle field but as God allows elsewhere in the world. Intercede for those directly involved in the struggle, their family and friends, Also pray that the Lord would raise up the banner of His righteousness in the church, that men and women everywhere may see, that these times are part of God's plan for eventually restoring creation and the hearts and minds of all of God's children.