

Religion vs. Relationship

Living in the Land of More than Enough

Once again I have diverted from my series on confession and freedom. Actually I haven't totally abandoned the series; the format has just changed a little.

Do you ever have those times when a truth becomes so real to you it is almost tangible, almost like you can taste it? Praise God I had one of those encounters with Him recently.

Around *Growing in Grace (GGM)* we believe in the supernatural. We believe the power of the Holy Spirit dwells inside of every believer and we are to live out ALL of the great commission found Mark 16:15-18. Miracles, signs and wonders are for today. Yes, you read correctly, today, like as in 2008! The point of this article is not to prove the existence of the supernatural, healings, miracles, etc. I know the idea of the supernatural stretches some of you, it certainly stretched me. For more on living in the supernatural I would urge you to listen to the current *GGM* study.

My hope is this article will be a baby step of faith for some of you. For those of you who are seeking something more than just adequacy. For those of you desiring an abundant life this article will point you in the right direction with the ever present aid of the Holy Spirit, the ultimate Teacher. Once again, I am out to expose the lies of the enemy. I pray this writing sets at least one person free and draws many more into a more fulfilling relationship with Jesus Christ.

The sacrifice of Christ dying on the cross for our salvation is something I don't think any of us can wrap our minds around in this lifetime. I am no theologian and will not attempt to explain to you the complexity of this ultimate gift of life. What I do know is Christ's death on the cross for our eternal security would have been adequate. To have given us a second chance at life would have been enough...but friends, we serve a God of more than enough! Our God wants to lavish us abundantly with gifts beyond our highest expectations! See Ephesians 3:20. Our loving Papa wants us to walk in victory, freedom, truth and life- NOW. He wants us to experience His glory, NOW! He wants us to live with hope and joy, NOW!

In my circles I **currently** know of people dealing with the following issues: drug/alcohol addictions, adultery, a parent with life- threatening illness, a child with cancer, lost

family members, financial crisis, debilitating illness, job loss, life altering false accusations, teenage pregnancy, cutting, the list could go on...

When talking with one of these people I made the comment, "I wish they would return to their faith." (The person in reference is struggling with life changing health issues and there is not a current relationship with Christ.)

The person to whom I was talking with responded, "what difference does that make? I don't know what you mean by that."

I responded, "You know, faith. Our faith gives us hope. When everything else seems to be falling apart we can cling to our faith in God."

They said, "I don't know why you say that, it (faith) doesn't change their circumstances."

It was at this point my heart broke for this person. With clarity as clear as pure water, I saw what this person had was religion, not a relationship with Christ. Sure, this person is "saved"... I don't doubt that. Their salvation is merely a means to an end, not something they rely on in their everyday life. Church is something they do because it is what "good" Christians do. People living in religion cannot serve God with any effectiveness, because they themselves are dry and empty. We are to serve out of the overflow of our heart and when the cup is empty there certainly isn't any overflow to share.

Relationship is what makes the difference. Clinging to the promises of God and knowing Him so intimately that His truth becomes part of our being. Knowing He will do what He promises and accepting His ways are not our ways. Taking life on faith, when the circumstances are telling a different story. Religion will keep you living in the land of adequacy, relationship will take you to the land of more than enough.

Signs that you are living in the land of adequacy might be:

- Passing the days, weeks, months and years away without hopeful anticipation of what the Lord has in store for you.
- A never ending feeling of defeat. This is the way I am and there is nothing I can do to change it.
- This is my cross to bear and so I must bear it, false humility.
- Living in a cycle of abuse.
- Lack of joy, laughter and enjoyment of life. An inability to enjoy others in fellowship.

- A feeling that something or someone is missing in your life, which could manifest in an acquisition of material wealth, or the pursuit of a significant other to fill the "void." "If I only had this or them I would be happy." Inside a marriage this could be the beginning of infidelity, thinking the grass is greener on the other side of the fence.
- A lack of desire to grow in your relationship with Christ.

There are undoubtedly more, but I think you get the point. After reading over this list I don't think any of us would admit we desire this kind of life, but how many of us have actually settled for just that?!

Brothers and sisters, I use to be there, the above list is one of personal experience. Then my eyes were opened to the complete and finished work of the cross. Christ died for me so I could have life and have it to the fullest, NOW! His kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven! Is there sickness, torment, depression, despair, etc in heaven? NO!!! As a believer my body lives in this fallen world and in and of myself I am a fallen creature, but through the blood of Jesus Christ, I am an over-comer! I am pure, sanctified, made holy as He is holy, a new creation, a daughter of the King, His friend, His lover, redeemed, transformed, complete, adopted into the family of God, made whole...Praise God! Are you getting this? This is shouting material!

I pray the scales have fallen off the eyes of your heart and you are hearing truth to the core of your being and you would chose today to start living in your inheritance, the land of more than enough, NOW!

To those of you unfamiliar with such a relationship your mind is probably thinking, "BUT, she doesn't know my circumstances." You are right, I don't, but God does. There is **nothing** the death of Jesus Christ on the cross didn't cover, **nothing**. I've heard it said, "stop telling your God how big your problem is and start telling your problem how big your God is!" We lose sight of how big our God is when we elevate our problem over Him.

Is it hard at times, yes, but never impossible. Before you go making the conclusions that I am the consummate Pollyanna I have a confession to make... (you know, I'm into those.) In my last article, I wrote I had *almost* fallen into the ditch over the whole situation with my middle school daughter. I spoke to soon. Right after the article was posted I landed smack dab in the ditch. Me, self pity and despair were quite cozy in the ditch for about 24 hours. Cozy and yet at the same time miserable! I had made my problem bigger than my God. Light and dark cannot inhabit the same space; because of my relationship with Christ, light prevailed and darkness had to flee... but it was always

my choice. I allowed myself to fall into the ditch and I purposed to believe truth and allow the Holy Spirit to bring me out of it. Instead of mourning the time I spent in the ditch, I am praising God for the opportunity. I see the situation as fruit of my relationship with Abba Daddy because each trip to the ditch is getting shorter. Why? Because I have hidden His Word in my heart and it has become alive and active there!

For many of you it's not the ditch, but the pit. You have sunk so low in your despair you can't see the light at the top; it's called hopelessness. God is reaching down into your pit and is ready to pull you out of it. It must be your choice. **Purpose to follow Him, seek Him and fall in love with a God who desires for you to live in the land of more than enough.**

If you are ready in faith to surrender to God and come out of the pit and trade religion for relationship I would love to help you know what that looks like. For prayer, encouragement or simply to comment please contact me at amydover@growinginrace.cc