

Respect – Admire – Emulate

As humans we are all engineered to want to have someone who we can respect, admire, and emulate. We love patterns and we love following leaders that we believe will take us to better places. We strongly desire to learn and keep learning. We believe that our best source of learning is those who are ahead of us in some respect. The proof of our admiration is our emulation.

We can learn from information sources. We can study information about life and how it can best be lived. But all of us learn best by experience. On the job training is the most effective training available. And in essence finding someone who we respect and admire and following them and their example is the most effective way to learn.

We get into trouble, however, when the one or ones we respect and admire and try to emulate are not the ones who set the right example. And we are tainted by our cultural bias of our family and friends of our inner circle from birth. Normal is assumed to be that which we first learned in our formative years.

Respectable and admirable are subjective and relative to interpretation based on our own desires. We typically respect and admire those who do and say the things that we want permission to do and say. We follow their example to the “T”. We hope that in so doing we will become like them because it is our vision or dream or fantasy to be like them.

As Christians, we believe that the highest calling would be to respect and admire Jesus and emulate his example. Most Christians almost turn themselves inside out trying to do what Jesus did and say what Jesus said. The problem with this is that we humans are incapable of doing what Jesus did and saying what Jesus said all of the time. This is because we do not have the capacity to love others so much more than ourselves that we would give our lives in order to save their's even if they were doing us and others wrong.

Since we cannot achieve the ultimate as mentioned above, yet the Bible indicates that we should be able to love like Jesus, we must take another approach. The Bible indicates that Jesus prayed to the Father that we would love like He did. Yet Christendom by and large has no clue how to make this happen. Christendom by and large is not doing this. This is due to a gross misunderstanding of what it means to be a Christian. We do not understand what imputed righteousness means. And we do not understand the dynamic of how Galatians 2:20 becomes flesh and blood for us.

All of this is best understood as modeled by a love affair in human terms. Typically the only person who gets a sacrificial other-caring expression from another is one who is in a marital (or higher order of) relationship. Obviously this is not always the case and probably is the case in the smaller percentage of marital relationships. But there's something that happens when a human being falls in love with another human being that compels them to do romantic, other-caring things for another person. Granted there's often some selfish motivation in the marital relationship situation where each partner is trading favors with the other to get something they want from the other party.

As dirty as that kind of marital "exchange transaction" is, it's the closest thing we can come to understanding the love of God.

The good news about the love of God, is that God is capable of other-caring to the extent that He would sacrifice His only begotten Son and let him die a humiliating death because He had other-caring, deep enough for you, to do that. God knew that He would get his only begotten Son back. But the pain of the forsakenness and the breaking of relationship with His Son on the cross proves conclusively and irrefutably that God is capable of loving like no human being is capable of loving.

The best news is that when salvation occurs, the Spirit of God, which is capable of other-caring, which is superlative to self-caring, actually becomes resident in the human heart. Instead of empowering the human selfish spirit to be other-caring to the sacrifice of self, God implants His perfect other-caring Spirit within us. The essence of this is that the Christian life then becomes an opportunity to exchange my life choices for God's life choices by letting His Holy Spirit within me make the choices of my every moment.

The term that I use for this is the "Exchanged Life." The reason I believe this is essential to our understanding in order to be fruitful with respect to the fruit of the Spirit, is that only the Spirit of God can produce the fruit. In order then for my life to resemble Jesus' life, I must get out of His way. Whenever I insist on control, I get in His way. He wants my release of all control to Him so that he can do whatever He pleases with me. Then and only then will my life exude the fruit of the Spirit and also be fruitful in bringing people into the kingdom of God.

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Terms of endearment:

IMPUTED == God's sovereign authority and justice applying the innocent and perfect life of Christ to me such that in God's eyes "I am" as perfect as His Only Begotten Son.

(See scriptures: "Abraham believed God and it was IMPUTED to his as righteousness." James 2:23; Romans 4:3; Galatians 2:23) & "ALL of my righteousness is as filthy rags (literally translated: soiled menstrual rags.)" Isaiah 64:6)

JUSTIFICATION: declared NOT GUILTY in a court of law regardless of actual guilt or innocence

(Justification is not to be confused with innocence. Justification is not to be confused with forgiveness. Justification "in Christ" is the particular satisfaction of the law regarding crime and punishment wherein either the guilty party must pay the due penalty under the rules of law or the penalty must be paid by an innocent party. [ATONEMENT is this particular substitutionary payment of penalty under law. And it was AT-ONE-MENT that Jesus affected for us on the cross, where He, as the ONLY INNOCENT of relationship crimes, paid the penalty (SEPARATION FROM A HOLY GOD) so that we, as the fully guilty of relationship crimes, could be in the PRESENCE OF

GOD without guilt, shame or fear. In other words, the PERFECT LOVE OF GOD is that which CASTS OUT ALL FEAR (of recrimination, of guilt, of shame).]

(See scriptures: Acts 13:39; Romans 3:20,24,28; 4:2; 5:1; Gal. 2:16-17; 3:11)

SANCTIFICATION: Set apart, consecrated by God, declared holy by God:

(This is NOT a process that occurs as we "mature" in Christ. All 3 verbs in the this definition are "present tense" and "point of action" (aorist tense). When the secular definition is used, "achieving a life of sinless perfection" SANCTIFICATION loses all meaning as therein is a logical tautology wherein the state of sinless perfection does not occur in this life and once we go into the after-life GLORIFICATION usurps both JUSTIFICATION and SANCTIFICATION.)

(See scriptures: 1 Corinthians 6:11)

GLORIFICATION: Making something ordinary into something magnificent.

(We cannot do this to God. Only our surrender for His use makes our ordinary life into a magnificent one. And it is only this "kind of" magnificence that brings God glory. The Glory of God is in the earth because we are in it and come to Him in absolute surrender to His love for us.)

MAGNIFICATION: Making something appear larger or easier to see

(We cannot do this to God. Only our surrender for His use makes our lives added to the size of God's life to enlarge the world's vision of Him.)

SIN: Anything that denigrates or destroys relationship.

(This is not to be confused with "hurting feelings." This is every only always about the attitude of and motivation for any expression as to its delivery or receiving. Specifically, if ones motive is to help or encourage rather than to criticize or tear down, it is not sin even if the recipient's feelings are hurt.but In other words, your motive is determined by your spirit not theirs. However, if the recipient considers your motive to be ignoble when in fact it is noble, they have committed sin by breaking relationship with you when you had no malice toward them but beneficence alone when you expressed yourself to them.)

(See scriptures: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Prov. 27:6 "Iron sharpen's iron." Prov 27:17 (Be advised, an iron sword cannot sharpen another iron sword if kept in its sheath. Neither can one man sharpen another without striking blows to the other man's pride. It is pride and pride alone that keeps us from one another and from God Himself.) Exod 20

HOLINESS: EVERYTHING IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP.

(HOLINESS: Is NOT about behavior. Is NOT about rule keeping. Is NOT about obedience. Although all of these will be better in our lives when holiness exists.

When your motive is selfish and degrading to relationship, you are not HOLY.

HOLY is WHOLLY GIVEN TO INITIATION AND PROMOTION OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP.)

* * * * SUMMARY STATEMENT * * * *

The objective of God in both creating mankind and enabling us to procreate generation by generation is to expand (exponentially) the number of beings who can love like God such that the 3 persons in the trinity can share their immense love with millions instead of just 3.

The reason most Christians remain infantile, while being puffed-up about what they think is "Christian maturity" for themselves, is their resistance to change or believing they already excel those around them, and insistence on control. Neither resistance nor control can in any way assist the process of surrender. Particularly in relationship these two things guarantee that relationship cannot be established. These two things are the bedrock of all quarrels, conflicts and, on a larger scale, wars!

When and only when we have developed a furious love affair with God (Jesus) will we resonate with change rather than resist change. In the state of honeymoon love with God we actually embrace change and anticipate it, as it is the very essence of relationship and the spice of life. In God and God alone can you ever be at peace in the midst of every storm, find good in every bad, find healing in every harm, find magnificence in every mundane and have a reason to pray for blessing even for your enemies.

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The seeming contradictions of James' words that justification comes by works is that we have misunderstood what James was saying. (Even Martin Luther argued against James being included in the canon of scripture over this misunderstanding on Luther's part.) James is all about relationship as he was the brother of Jesus and failed to recognize Jesus as God until after the resurrection. The Greek language more accurately interpreted is that if "proclaimed" faith does not have the resulting actions of that faith, it is useless. It also implies that even works that may look like they are produced from faith, can be counterfeit acts as they are empty of the love which autonomically produces them. In other words, as the Apostle Paul states clearly in 1 Corinthians 13, magnificent words and works in the absence of love are useless.

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Understanding that our misperceptions of God have stunted our Christian growth and allowing God to correct the misperceptions is not a threat to one's faith or denomination. The truth will simply set you free from guilt, shame and fear that Jesus took with Him onto the cross. Allowing the "unconditional" love of God to saturate your soul is the only solution to the sin problem after Salvation. "The greatest deterrent to wrongful behavior is an incredible affection for the one I might otherwise do wrong." — Rabboni In order to find the peace of God in all things consider this: "The comfort (peace) of God is wrapped in my release of my control over my life and the lives of others." True surrender is only achieved when control is given to another. Hopefully you will choose to give that control to the Spirit of Jesus which resides in your heart!