

What Was God Thinking?
Chapter 2: The Power of Relationship
(by John Henry Alan; edited by Bob Clarkson)

Powerless Relationship

Communications between two beings are generally intended to share understandings or to affect changes in one another's point of view. Mere words may not suffice and might be assisted by body language and tone of voice or intensity of delivery. Yet when all is said and done, if all that happens is to exchange information which neither improves one's life nor one's view of God, such communication is of no more value than reading the newspaper or encyclopedia.

Unfortunately, much of the reading of the Word of God, the Holy Bible, provides little more than historical information. As a result of treating God's Word as a means by which we avoid making the mistakes of those written about, or using it as a playbook of rules by which we play religious games, church by and large has reduced the potential heights of spirituality to a mole hill. Yet, the Scriptures were written to enable us to explore the lush valleys and majestic peaks of relationship with God.

In our religious gatherings we pass words, utter prayers, deliver lessons, pass offering plates, and perform musical programs primarily to impress and gain the applause and approval of each other, essentially building

for ourselves solid reputations in the church community. Such abuse or misuse of the words of faith in the Bible, serve none of God's purposes as they do not promote God's love or His kingdom. Similarly, using such activities and expressions as a means to modify each other's behaviors, produces only temporary changes in the external manifestations of the soul and affect no permanent, positive changes to the quality of life or the quality of relationships. In many respects our religious traditions and sacraments actually hide the beautiful relationship with God which each of us has been offered.

When religion imposed changes are only affecting the symptoms (behavior) and not the disease (motive), people are not fundamentally changed at all. Christians who have these motives are actually identical to the man who has no interest in God at all. It is basically a race to the top by means of a bolstered ego or personal pride. It is often the case that a religious man simply disguises his vice and is no better than the irreligious. Self living unreduced and likely unsuspected within his soul, while producing no fruit for God, such a man might rise to the highest leadership in the church laity. He may even have significant influence with respect to how his religion is defined for his entire generation. While doing the opposite he claims to be worshipping God in order to lift God's reputation high.

Be aware that many irreligious persons accuse worshippers of hypocrisy while not recognizing that they themselves are hypocrites with respect to other activities which they consider noble and selfless which they perform mostly for self promoting reasons as well. Hypocrisy is then not limited to people in religious circles. It is common to all. The truth be known, it is not likely that we are truly deceived about our own hypocrisy. We simply deny it to be true of ourselves while we accuse others of it in order to shift the blame away from ourselves.

“Friendship is the mutual accommodation of self need. If I have something that you want, then I can be your friend. If you have something that I want, then you can be my friend. However, if either of us stops giving what is wanted or needed, the friendship breaks. We sometimes talk about falling in love and then falling out of love.”^{2wj}

The point here is that when we treat God like we treat most humans, making trades of what we want from each other, all we have with God is some kind of business transaction sequence.

The creature may change habits and actions and even vocabulary, while essentially unchanged in heart. The gift element of salvation in the Gospel is widely accepted as its exclusive content while the transformative power of the Gospel is totally ignored. It

is often treated as a religious magic providing access to heaven. This is a very dangerous view. It could cause some to “believe” that they have been saved when in reality they have not. Even Satan and his minions know the facts of the Gospel, but that is not enough to save them. Faith without an attendant change or shift in the motives of the heart is only a mental ascent to the information of the Gospel, not an experience of salvation.

Powerful Relationship

“Can a man become a believer in Christ and be no better than he was before? Does the Gospel offer no more than a skillful lawyer to get the guilty sinner off free? Self righteousness is an effective block to God’s favor because it throws the sinner back on his own merits and keeps him from the imputed righteousness of Christ. The power of the Gospel changes a man and shifts the basis of his life from himself to Christ.” ^{lawt}

This gives him a new direction and power center for living.

When a man truly receives Christ as Savior (dear friend and mate) there absolutely **will be** a change within him; a change in desire and motivation. Yet many who have been saved fail to appropriate the love, joy and peace of Christ’s Spirit within. This is due to an incorrect understanding regarding the source of the man’s

holiness. The source of holiness can only, ever, always be God (Holy Spirit) as man cannot conjure up any from within himself. Then, rather than trying to imitate Christ (words or deeds), by allowing the Spirit of Christ within him to love others as only Christ can do, that love will actually manifest the choices, feelings and actions of Christ Himself. This is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” ^{3HB}

Faith is the gateway of access to eternal hope and to personal relationship with God.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.
He that comes to God, must believe that He is
and that He rewards those who diligently seek
Him” Hebrews 11:6 ^{3HB}

When one is joined in a deeply personal relationship with another, there is a shift in allegiance and motivation regarding the other. So it is with the Divine. Faith in God is not about morality in any way. Faith in God is what causes Him to apply (impute) God’s own righteousness (that of His Son, Jesus) to the man. It manifests itself like this:

“The strongest deterrent to wrongful behavior is
a genuine and deep affection for the one I might
wrong.” ^{4jha}

There also comes the question of faith itself and just how much faith it takes to believe unto salvation. Obviously it takes a great measure of faith to commit one’s secrets to another human in relationship. So also, with God, it is

about what we trust Him to be. Instead of asking God for more faith, we need to realize that we have enough already. Jesus said that "...if we have faith the size of a grain of mustard seed, we can say to the mountain be moved into the sea and it will happen." ^{3HB} We all have faith the size of grain of mustard seed. So did Abraham, the icon of faith. So Abraham's faith is what is needed for salvation. "For Abraham believed God and it was imputed (applied) to him for righteousness." ^{3HB} So what did Abraham believe in a mustard seed amount that granted him forgiveness and salvation?

Abraham believed that **God is a perfect father** and as such would do everything in His power to make Abraham the best son he could become. Abraham also believed that God is a **perfect mother** and as such would comfort him and coddle him tenderly. He also believed that God is a **perfect sibling** and as such might argue with us, but when any would come against the family, He would lock arms with his siblings in order to protect the family unit. He believed that God is a **perfect friend** in that He could be trusted with his secrets and his life. And Abraham believed that God is a **perfect mate** and was in an intimate, soul-mate relationship with Him. So if you are asking God for more faith to believe, remember this. All have been given at least a mustard seed amount of faith, so ours is only to place that faith in the **most perfect relational being** in the universe and **trust Him to be perfect** for

us. He actually proved it by introducing Himself into humanity in the person of His Son, Jesus, in order to communicate clearly and irrefutably the Absolute, Unconditional Love of God for His human children by way of God Himself, in Jesus, suffering the penalty of man's sin on our behalf such that any who would simply believe can be restored to God.

A tiny size of faith == a mustard seed

A divine quality of faith == a God quality

An absolute essence of faith == a trust of
abandon essence ^{4jha}

“No man who knows the depths of his own wickedness would dare to appear before the ineffable presence with nothing to recommend him but his own character.” ^{1awt}

Nor would any Christian want his acceptance by God to depend upon any degree of holiness which he might have attained by his own righteous activities.

“All our righteousness is as filthy rags. . . . For by grace you are saved, through faith, and that faith not of yourself, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man boast.” ^{3HB}

We, who are saved, were before ordained to good works which are ever, only and always the “unconditional love” of God and the “whole-hearted acceptance” of Jesus, as God in flesh, as demonstrated by the grace in our lives which is dispensed as prolifically through us as

through Christ Himself. It is this “love” and “acceptance” which gives others the sense of “worth” and “security” in a relationship with us and God. A simple way to put this is LAWS: Love, Acceptance, Worth and Security are basic needs of all mankind. And LAWS are achieved in and through Jesus Christ and faith in Him alone. Christ came to free us from the bondage of our own egos and selfishness.

“For sin’s human captives, God never intends anything less than full deliverance. The Christian message rightly understood means this: The God who by the Word of the Gospel proclaims men free, by the power of the Gospel actually makes them free.” ^{lawt}

Released from any moral position, the redeemed Saint (Christian) can stand consciously on another soil, under another sky, and breathe another air. Life motives are changed NOT TO FORCE OTHERS TO BELIEVE, BUT TO DISPENSE GOD’S LOVE TO ALL, INVITING ALL TO BELIEVE, AND TO BECOME UNITED IN MARRIAGE TO CHRIST, AND TO ENJOY HONEYMOON BLISS WITH HIM. Man is thereby released from the bondage to the terrible task master, “their own self,” driven to achieve social approval of human beings rather than God Himself!

“The desire to please men is behind all socially acceptable acts from the highest civilizations to the lowest places where human

life is found. Each draws his peace from the thought that he enjoys the esteem of his fellows though each will interpret the whole business in his own way.”^{1awt}

Unless and until we have God, and our esteem is drawn from His approval alone, we worship the idols of the applause, indulgence and the worship of other men. How can we shift our motives from pleasing men to pleasing God? It is a process of transformation accomplished by Jesus Himself by way of exposing our wrong motives and understandings so that our mind is gradually renewed affecting the transformation of faith within our hearts. In other words, my change in beliefs, which coincide with God’s beliefs, transform my relationship with God and all others. It is a repetitive cycle of exposure of weed after weed of our pride, tearfully pulling the weeds with God’s help until the soil of our heart and soul is devoid of self and full of Christ and God. Such faith:

== “begins with desire for God”

== “progresses with truth from God”

== “finishes by abandon to God”^{4jha}

The three temptations of Christ in the wilderness can be boiled down to these three things. Satan tempted Jesus with:

Self indulgence (“give me”)

Self promotion (“see me”)

Self worship (“serve me”)^{4jha}

Jesus did not have to be tempted in millions of ways and times in order to be “tempted in every way as we are,” Every temptation of the human soul is one of these same three things by which Satan tempted Jesus. It is only the “other-indulgence” of God, the “other-applause” of God, and the “other-worth” of God that rescues any man from himself and eternal separation from God.

Credits: 1awt; 2wj; 3HB; 4jha; 5lg

- 1 Aiden Wilson Tozer
- 2 Wayne Jacobsen
- 3 Holy Bible
- 4 John Henry Alan
- 5 Louie Giglio