

Volume 2 – Day 15: Married or Living in Adultery

You may have been often told the facts of the cross, the facts of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. The fact that your sin (relationship crimes) are the reason you need a savior. You may have been given a *sample* prayer that you prayed to receive Jesus as if it were a formula. All of this can be done in an intellectual way. It can be done in the mind without ever producing salvation. Salvation comes only through relationship, a marital commitment of the entire being to another. It is a capitulation of one's will to the will of another.

Just as in marriage, two people are joined to each other, to put each other's needs and desires ahead of their own. Such marriages thrive and flourish. Marriages which lapse into selfish pursuit and demanding from the other things that we want for our selves, destroy the relationship and often bring separation and divorce. You have probably experienced separation or divorce in numerous relationships in your life. Salvation only occurs at the point in time when I am willing to abandon all I have and follow Jesus.

What Jesus asked the rich young ruler to do was exactly that. He was requiring this man or any man who would be a disciple of Jesus, to forsake all of his own agenda, all of his own possessions and all of his own dreams and aspirations and take up the dreams and aspirations of God. The prayer for Salvation is not groveling in guilt and shame. It is rather a surrender of one's entire being in a prayer like this, "Father, I will do what you want me to do. I will put my plans down and follow your plans. I give you the rest of my life." Salvation not only gives us a new eternal destination, but also the new birth gives us a whole new agenda for living life on earth.

My Confirming Scriptures:

My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Vol 2 – Day 16: Imagine God in the Middle of Every Mess

The imagination that is *devoted to* and totally *focused on* God is imagination that in every event of my day includes God in the thought. Imagine how God is going to **live** this moment. I don't have to **live** it myself. Imagine how God is going to burst forth in this situation and show Himself glorious. Imagine God in every moment of your day. He is interested in even the mundane things.

Brother Lawrence's experience of God is revealed in the book, "The Practice of the Presence of God." He developed a deep intimacy with his God and with Jesus through focusing every thought on the Lord, Jesus Christ, "bringing into captivity, every thought to the obedience of Christ." And he included God in every single moment of his day. He felt no difference in praying over his pot sink in the kitchen or praying before the altar in the sanctuary.

If my affection for God is great and my imagination is focused on God, there will be no things in my day that will trouble me. I will know that God is in them and God will show Himself glorious in them. That is my desire. And that is His desire. So imagine God in every moment and let Him show Himself fully competent to handle every situation. He is not only capable, He is magnificent!

My Confirming Scriptures:

Aligning Experiences:

Volume 2 – Day 17: Intimacy Invigorates the Mundane

My surrender to God is a purposeful, continual activity and attitude of the soul. For many years, as a Christian, I would seek God's will. I would ask for His guidance. I would want to get answers quickly. When they didn't come, I assumed that He either wasn't listening or He was saying, "No." I later discovered, that many times, He hadn't said, "No," when I thought He had. Rather, He was saying, "Yes, but in the **right time**." And, to be sure, most of the time, my time was not the same as God's time. His was always perfect!

My impatience was probably one of the biggest hindrances to a life of surrender. Once I began to practice the presence of God and think of Him being interested in each and every situation, I became more aware of His feelings and thoughts. I tried to think of Him on a moment by moment basis. It was no longer just a daily, weekly, or at certain quiet times, morning and evening pursuit. I began to practice pausing in each decision moment, several each day, to consider God's possible purpose in them.

I stopped making emotionally charged or purely logical choices. I began to decipher that absolute surrender of each decision was the key to personal peace. I also noticed that God wants to be included even in my most mundane activities. Anger, anxiety and fear subsided as even mundane things became meaningful. In this way the commonplace became uniquely interesting and invigorating. The simple truth is that intimacy in relationship makes every moment with the one I love pleasurable.

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

Volume 2 – Day 18: Obedience to the Spirit, not to Religion

For most of my life I was devoted to my church because I strongly believed that my church believed in God and interpreted the Scriptures correctly. I later discovered that many things I had been taught as Biblical truth were only the doctrines and dogma of my particular religion. It was as though we lived by the letter of the law and believed that it was also the spirit of the law.

When confronted with Jesus' words to the Pharisees, "Why do you use your rules to play fast and loose with God's commands? God clearly says, 'Respect your father and mother' and, 'Anyone denouncing father or mother should be killed.' But you weasel around that by saying, 'Whoever wants to, can say to father and mother, What I owed to you I have given to God.' That can hardly be called respecting a parent . . . Frauds! Isaiah's prophecy of you hit the bull's-eye: These people make a big show of saying the right thing, but their heart isn't in it. They act like they're worshipping Me, but they don't mean it. They just use Me as a cover for teaching whatever suits their fancy." — Matthew 15:3-9 MSG,

I was forced to rethink most of what I believed. I had heard and preached many sermons about the 10 Commandments as rules for good relationships. But, somehow that had not helped me to be better in relationship to others. I started paying attention to how my motives either helped or hindered relationship. **When I truly love another person, my actions will be in compliance with God's laws as well.**

Many Christians who have been extremely devoted to their convictions are relationally mean and destructive. God **is** Love. His love alone solves broken relationships. His love enables us to love even those who have treated us abusively.

My Confirming Scriptures:

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**Volume 2 – Day 19: Love God More
Than Your Most Significant Other**

Most of us pursue God avidly in a very conscious and purposeful way. Unfortunately, in so doing, we are limiting God by our preconceived notions of what we believe Him to be and think He wants us to be doing. This is truly immature. If you look at your relationship with your spouse or your most significant other, you will realize that a lot of your actions or attitudes toward that individual are way below the conscious level. You just do them as a matter of course, as a matter of affection, as a matter of kindness to them in ways that you don't even think about.

But with God, you may tend to put Him always in this conscious mode where you are doing this and that for Him. If you approached your most significant others with that same attitude and that same way of doing things, your relationships would deteriorate and end up broken. God wants a relationship with you wherein you are so fully in love with Him, energized by Him and delighted to be in His presence that you don't even think about the things that you're doing for Him. You simply do what you have come to know that He desires.

Your actions are a by-product of your feelings for others. “Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn’t know the first thing about God, because God is love—so you can’t know him if you don’t love. ... This is the kind of love we are talking about—not that we once upon a time loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as a sacrifice to clear away our sins and the damage they’ve done to our relationship with God.”—1 John 4:8-10 MSG

My Confirming Scripture: My Aligning Experiences:

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan

**Volume 2 – Day 20: Pray for What God Wants
Not Your Own Sympathy**

Praying is most often different from praying in the will of God. Even when we end our prayers with, "... if the Lord wills" does not make our prayers **in His will**. Most prayers are stimulated by our misery or our own desire to help others or to be somehow useful to God. Such prayers have associated with them, a personal sympathy. Even if I am praying for something good to happen in another's life, that may not be God's **perfect** will in the situation.

Most of the time what God wants in the circumstance is not at all what we are praying for. The primary reason for this is that most people are not intimate enough with God to really know what God wants. Most prayers are selfish in that they satisfy **our human** sympathies. The key to praying **in the will of God** is to know for certain what that is.

If you desire to offer up effective prayers, you must become intimate with Him. When I am intimate with another (even God) I truly know what he or she desires and I am consumed with pleasing them. If God's purpose in bringing cancer into the middle of my mess is to draw someone to His love, then I will pray that the family and friends of the one inflicted, will come closer to God. If the martyrs of the faith had been **praying for humanly good outcomes, they would not have sacrificed themselves!**

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**Volume 2 – Day 21: Dutiful Work or
Spontaneous Expression of Affection**

My service for God is not service in the usual sense. It is not service based on an obligation or a duty or a payback. My service is simply the natural expression of my affection. When I pondered my relationships, my truest friends, my dearest relatives, I realized in retrospect that nearly everything I have done for them for their sake has been expressed out of love for them and a desire to bring them pleasure. Those are the things for which I will be remembered fondly and the things which have encouraged and enlightened them and made their lives more pleasant.

God created us specifically so that He might express Himself in myriad ways. God is so, so large and so in charge. He doesn't need us for service and He doesn't want to support **our projects or ministries**. He does not need us. He desires us. And when we fall in love with Him and allow His life to be expressed through our beings, then He receives great pleasure and great glory.

So when you're thinking about doing some service thing **for** God, or looking for some specific calling of ministry **for** God, stop right there, go no further. Instead, just look into the eyes of an adoring God. Simply love Him back. Just love on Him until you are more satisfied with His love than with any lover you've ever experienced physically. It is only passionate love for God that pleases him and brings Him glory.

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