

Religion or Relationship?

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Just a closer walk with you is what I long for and cling to. I journey through the seasons of my life and time experiencing, learning, growing, and knowing more of you. It is my prayer and my desire to seek your heart and not just your hand. Though blessed by your hand, I know of you by extension; for you reign on the just and unjust. But living for your heart, I'm in communion with you to share your love and to know you through layers, levels, and dimensions.

This is a short and simple expression to God; yet, profound in its position to move from the formality of religion to the fullness of relationship. There was a song we used to sing, "Have you got good religion?" The answer was "Certainly Lord". Assuredly, it is important to have "Good Religion" which supports and promotes consistency, commitment, dedication and loyalty. However, it's greater to not fall into the temptation of normality and ritualistic practice that suppress the sentiment of one's heart and override it with a false sense of duty and obligation. Duty should be a benefit of relationship rather than a form that denies the power.

We, as children of God, should seek intimacy with God which opens us up to spiritual revelation and mysteries unveiled. In I Corinthians 2:9-10 it states, "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." The Word also declares that which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of Spirit is Spirit; therefore, flesh cannot enter into the spirit realm.

It is imperative that we become lovers of God, the things of God, and the way of God in order for us to reach the fullness of our potential in God. Matthew 5:6 says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." The level of intimacy with God is often determined by the intensity of yearning progressively for God. As we strive to seek the more of God, we become accustomed to what pleases Him. Sought out discovery of what

God loves builds our character in Him and strengthens our relationship with Him. His desires become our desires, then, our desires become His. Jesus told us to seek first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto us (Matthew 6:33). It is through our earnest desire that we learn to communicate with an open heart. Through this realness and purity, God affectionately responds with an outpouring of manifested glory, favor, personal security, grace, mercy, an overwhelming and abiding love, as well as fruition of our requests.

A songwriter once penned, "And He walks with me and He talks with me: And He tells me I am His own. For the joy we share as we journey there, none other has ever known."

The desires of the heart speak volumes of what the hidden treasures are and what type of relationship one truly desires to have with God. Matthew 12:34 states that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. A genuine relationship is pure "heartship" with God which requires sincerity, vulnerability, and an unmasking of all faults and flaws.

One reality is that many want to build relationship but fear the effects and responsibility of what that means. It is a foundational truth for Christians that God knows us better than we could ever know ourselves. However, it is far better for many to accept what God knows rather than to accept the truth about ourselves to ourselves. With real relationship, the undercover persona is realized and revealed. We are, then, held accountable and forced to face where we are, where we need to be, who we are, and who we are to become. In real relationship, God challenges us to see ourselves the way He sees us. A real relationship with God is a love experience through every phase and aspect of our lives. It's through faith, hope, and trust that He will be there for us and that we will be true, dedicated and committed to Him.