

The PURE Conference May 1-3, 2009

Apathy in the Christian Walk

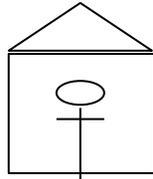
“Those who believe they believe in God, but without passion in the heart, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, without doubt, and even at times without despair, believe only in the idea of God, not in God himself.”
20th Century Spanish author, Miguel de Unamuno

<p>Apathy, A lack of interest, enthusiasm, & concern; No deep internal response</p>	
<p>Laziness, Unwilling to work or use energy, a lack of effort, freedom from worries or problems</p>	
<p>Dullness, Lacking interest or excitement, feeling bored or dispirited</p>	
<p>Disillusionment, A feeling of disappointment resulting from the discovery that something is not as good as one believed it to be.</p>	
<p>Drifting, To digress or stray to another subject; To move passively or aimlessly into a situation or condition. Distraction, When things prevent you from giving your full attention to something else, often causing extreme agitation to the mind and emotions</p>	
<p>Doubting, A feeling of uncertainty or lack of conviction; Includes cynicism, skepticism, and mistrust</p>	
<p>Rebellion, The action or process of resisting authority, control, or convention</p>	

ILLUSTRATION OF HEBREWS 3:2-6

Verse 2: “He (Jesus) was faithful to Him (God) who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house.”

God’s House



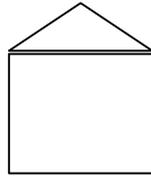
Moses faithful *in* God’s house

Verse 3: “For He (Jesus) has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house.”

Builder

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House



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Jesus

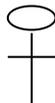
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Moses

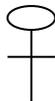
**He is not saying that Jesus is the builder and Moses is the house, he is drawing a simple analogy to help us see the difference in purpose and role of Moses and Jesus*

Verse 4-6: “For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. 5 Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; 6 but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house — whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.”

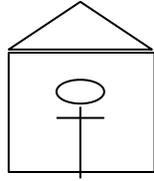
God = Builder



Jesus = Head of the house, God’s son



God's House = Kingdom of God, His people



Moses servant *in* God's kingdom

Understanding God's Rest

Read Hebrews 3:11, 18-19, 4:1-11

These verses can be very troubling if we don't understand what he is referring to when he says "rest". Now we know from scriptures that once we put our faith in Christ we can never lose that salvation. We are sealed and promised that those who believe in Him will be saved. So if he is not talking about salvation or heaven, what is he talking about?

One of my favorite authors, Henri Nouwen, wrote a book to people living in urban, secular cultures, such as New York City, in order to encourage them to continue living their lives by faith. He saw that there were many living in the city who were God's chosen people but failing to live in the blessing of being God's people here on earth. Instead they were living according to the ways and ideas of the world and were suffering because of it, missing out on the joy that can be theirs through following Him.

He writes, p.73 of "Life of the Beloved"

"I tell you all of this because I know how moody you and I can be. One day we feel great, the next we feel miserable. One day we are full of new ideas, the next everything looks bleak and dull. One day we think we can take on the whole world, but the next even a little request seems too much for us. These mood swings show that we no longer hear the blessing that was heard by Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Leah and Rachel, and Jesus of Nazareth and that we, too, are to hear. When we are thrown up and down by the little waves on the surface of our existence, we become easy victims of our manipulative world, but, when we continue to hear the deep gentle voice that blesses us, we can walk through life with a stable sense of well-being and true belonging."

That is what it means to enter God's rest.

- Nouwen is saying that if as a Christian you are living a life that feels unstable and volatile then it is because you are not choosing to live in God's blessing here on earth.
- Hebrews calls this blessing "rest". And it is not just a physical, outward rest, it is mostly an inward state of trusting God, understanding the place of the world

in the bigger picture of God's plan, finding joy in being His, seeing His hand in your life, not allowing your circumstances to change, sway, and manipulate you.

- Rest is living in God's earthly blessing by living as He tells us to live. This is not works-based-faith but living in our faith, which we are commanded to do!

Personalize The Lesson

Use these questions and suggested exercises to lead you as you process what we have talked about and seek to understand it and apply it to your life.

1. Fill in the chart on the first page with the ways that you see apathy in your Christian walk. Ask God to lead you and show you how you are struggling with this. Once you have filled out the chart spend some time giving these struggles to the Lord, telling God how you feel about it, and asking Him to help you fight it. Ask for His guidance and strength. Read Philippians 4:13
2. Read Colossians 3:1-3. What are practical ways that you can fix your mind on Jesus throughout your day? What distracts you most from being focused on God?
3. How are you currently engaging in Christian community? If you are lacking in it, how can you find authentic fellowship and community? If you have it, are you acting as an encourager to others and also allowing others to encourage you? Do you allow pride, shame, fear, or self-protection to keep you from benefiting from community? Confess these things to God and journal how you might cultivate real community.
4. Re-read Hebrews 3:7-12. How you have sensed your heart getting hardened. God speaks to us constantly, spend some time in prayer asking God how He has been speaking to you lately, maybe even journal your thoughts as they come to you.
5. In the past, when have you felt most alive in Christ? Make a list of the ways that you were engaging in your faith that were "life giving" Now make a list of what spiritual practices you do now. Do you see any discrepancies? Journal about this and how you could incorporate more life giving spiritual practices into your life.
6. Hebrews 12:13 refers to a verse in Proverbs 4 to encourage the people to be active in their faith. Read Proverbs 4:20-27. Pray through these verses in light of your own spiritual life and where you desire to grow. Below I have paraphrased it, try to do this with your name in it or maybe pray it as a your own prayer to God.

Cling to God's word
Find your strength there
Pay attention to what it says
Keep it in your heart
Don't let it out of your sight

Look straight ahead to Jesus
Don't look to the side, comparing your life to others
When you are faced with hardships or your own failings, do not
look down in despair and sorrow
But look forward to where you are headed, to the prize that is
waiting for you in
the end, eternity with God through Jesus...it is yours.

(Proverbs 4:20-27 paraphrased)

Recommended Books:

Celebration of Discipline by Richard J. Foster, *Sacred Rhythms* by Ruth Haley Barton, &
Spiritual Disciplines Handbook by Adele Calhoun