

The Living God Ministries

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YOUR IMPORTANCE TO GOD

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Far too many of us tend to negatively discourage ourselves. We view ourselves as of little or no value to God - - we are nothing more than a hunk of flesh. It is absolutely true that OF AND BY OURSELVES we are of no real value either to God or ourselves. No matter how "important" any person might become through his or her own "accomplishments," when that person dies he or she is of no value to self or to God *unless he or she has learned and fulfilled the very purpose of human life!* "It is appointed to all men once to die and after that to face judgment" and "He will come and bring salvation to those waiting for it"(Hebrews 9:27). Even the most successful or "notable" person dies and ceases to exist and no amount of wealth or fame can change that fact or enable him to live on.

For example, this is being written just after the death of Johnny Carson - - the comedian. He has achieved much fame and wealth but none of that wealth or fame will do him any good at this point. He is dead and in his grave. If there is no Almighty Creator God then he will merely cease to exist for all eternity and his fame and success will net him absolutely nothing in any supposed "afterlife." Throughout history famous and wealthy people have striven to assure their own "immortality" through monuments, statues, endowments and other forms of personal acclaim. Thus that "notable" person soon becomes nothing more than a distant diminishing memory that fades away. For example, the "great" pharaohs of ancient Egypt became nothing more than a mummified corpse. And their corpse is not a very pretty sight to see. And any influence they might have once had has long since ceased.

Inadvertently we can diminish our own personal value as we realize that death is the dividing line between the here and now and any possible "afterlife." A funeral service for the dead person takes on real significance in that it SHOULD call attention to this present temporary life and why we have life in the first place - - the questions of WHO WE ARE AND WHY WE ARE! This then goes to the very heart of THE PURPOSE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE. If there is no Almighty Creator God with a specific purpose for humans then we can merely eat, drink and be merry (cater to the desires of the flesh) for soon we die and cease to exist - - UNLESS THERE IS A DIVINE PURPOSE AND PLAN FOR OUR LIVES (I Corinthians 15:23, Luke 12:19-21 and Ecclesiastics 12:13-14).

HOW IMPORTANT ARE YOU?

What about you and me? Just how important are we? We may be among the poor of this world. We may not have a great education in worldly matters. We may be among those

who barely exist on this earth. Perhaps I Corinthians 1:26-29 describes us quite well. Perhaps you did not realize it but God has seldom chosen and called the "mighty" and the "educated" of this world. God knows that a weak and powerless human being can take no credit for anything God does through him. Too often the wealthy, proud and boastful human will hog the credit and claim greatness within himself. God makes it crystal clear that He chooses those who are HUMBLE AND OF A CONTRITE SPIRIT AND WHO TREMBLE AT HIS WORD (see Isaiah 66:2).

Thus, it is mandatory that we view our personal existence FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW - - not our point of view or by what we possess or "accomplish." We who consider ourselves followers of Christ too often look at people set apart in the Bible such as Abraham, David, Job, Daniel and many others and envision them as people on some kind of "spiritual pedestal." We regard these people as "great" and tend to minimize our own status before God. We reason "Well, I am not an Abraham, a David, a Daniel, a Job, etc." But is that the way God views us? Does God have as negative a view of us as we tend to have of ourselves? Does God say, "Oh, I cannot use that person because he (or she) is poor, weak, frail, in poor health, etc.?" STOP! Evaluate what I just said! Does God actually regard us as "unimportant" in the purpose He is working out here on this earth?

We can look about ourselves and see others whom we believe have more talent, money, power, prestige etc. than we have and we can begin to feel sorry for ourselves and even despair and become discouraged. If you have ever done this then you are actually SLAPPING GOD IN THE FACE AND TELLING HIM THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HE IS DOING BY CALLING YOU! You are telling the great God of the universe that His Holy Spirit cannot work in you as effectively as it did in Paul, Job, Moses, David, Abraham, etc. You are in reality LIMITING A LIMITLESS GOD! And you are showing TOTAL DISRESPECT TOWARD GOD AND THE PURPOSE HE HAS FOR YOUR LIFE! *And you are sinning greatly by such an attitude!*

OUR SELECTIVE MEMORY

Though the accounts found in the Bible were written and preserved FOR OUR LEARNING AND OUR BENEFIT (1 Corinthians 10:11), we tend to view them through colored glasses by saying or at least thinking "Since I am not a David, Daniel, Abraham, etc. then obviously I am not important to God." We tend to overlook or bypass the many "average" or even "below average" people who served God throughout history with great distinction. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews lists a number of people FROM MANY WALKS OF LIFE who served God with great distinction. Some of those listed in that chapter were rather "lowly" people *by human standards*. Yet, the Almighty God says that these so-called "lowly" people are on such a high plain with God that the "great of this world" are not even worthy to be compared with them (Hebrews 11:38). Now note verse 39 which states that many of these PEOPLE WHO ARE GREAT IN GOD'S SIGHT wandered in deserts and mountains (HOMELESS) and lived in caves and holes in the ground. Yet they were all GREAT before God because God looks on the heart and character of the person and not on his "outward appearance!"

As you study the Bible, make a note of how many "average" people served God during these many ages. Keep in mind that Peter was NOT a college professor but was a smelly

fisherman who most likely used foul language. Did God say, "Oh, I could not possibly use such a vile person?" But note especially Acts 4:13 where we find that those "learned" people who heard Peter and John speak REALIZED THAT PETER AND JOHN WERE UNLEARNED AND IGNORANT MEN (unschooled in man's schools) yet they were shocked and astonished at the words they spoke and the power with which they spoke. Though unlearned and uneducated in the schools of this world, Peter and John were imbued with the Holy Spirit and *given power* from God so as to perform the work of the mighty God they served. We could cite many examples of people who had little natural talent, money, position or status in this life whom God used mightily to accomplish His will. Yet, having come from the southern United States, I have known gray headed snuff dipping grandmothers who had lost their natural teeth yet became powerful and effective witnesses for God in their communities despite their former weaknesses and frailties.

CONSIDER A PROSTITUTE

To adequately consider the type of person God uses, we need to first carefully study Romans 8:20 and its meaning. Here God states powerfully that "The creation (all human beings) was subjected to frustration (the futility of human life without God and His purpose) NOT BY ITS OWN CHOICE BUT BY THE WILL OF THE ONE [God] WHO SUBJECTED IT IN HOPE THAT THE CREATION ITSELF (all humans) WILL BE LIBERATED FROM ITS (human) BONDAGE TO (physical) DECAY AND BROUGHT INTO THE GLORIOUS FREEDOM OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD." You and I did not choose to be born AS WE ARE but God intends to take us as we are and then TRANSFORM US INTO WHAT HE WANTS! It is God who works in us. It is not our natural abilities that will net us God's blessings and salvation!

Every human being ever born fits into this description and category. Out of the BILLIONS of human beings who have been born the Mighty God selects a few individuals during this present lifetime to train and qualify for His family (study Matthew 13:10-17). Study also John 12:40; Romans 11:7; 2 Corinthians 3:14 and 4:4. Christ taught clearly that NO ONE CAN COME TO HIM UNLESS AND UNTIL GOD THE FATHER CALLS THAT PERSON (John 6:44). As Romans 8:19 states, the whole creation is anxiously waiting for the spiritual sons of God [THAT'S US) to be delivered from the confines of this weak mortal flesh (see also verses 21 and 22). Then, as verse 23 states, even we who are called and chosen now [GOD'S FIRSTFRUITS] groan and travail within ourselves as we strive and wait for the redemption of our mortal bodies. Our calling is not an easy one but what God offers us is definitely worth the struggle.

But let us now consider a prominent prostitute whom God used mightily and whose life God recorded in the Bible. This prostitute is none other than "Rahab the harlot" mentioned in the book of Joshua. Rahab had heard of the miracles wrought on behalf of Israel, and HAD BECOME CONVINCED that Israel's God was the true God (Chapter 2:10-11). When she met the spies she decided [MADE A CHOICE], at the RISK OF HER OWN LIFE, to cast her lot with Israel and their God. We find that she eventually married into a leading family of Israel. Therefore, UNBEKNOWN TO HER AT THE TIME she became an ANCESTRESS to Boaz, DAVID AND THEN OF JESUS THE CHRIST. (study 1 Peter 2:9-10 and Hebrews 11:11). Do you believe she ever entertained the slightest notion that Jesus the Christ would come through her lowly

background? She was a "NOBODY" in a country going nowhere with no future. Yet, she became the ancestress of the Christ. This is truly a SUCCESS story that should encourage us all! What has God planned for you and me.

Compare your status with Rahab the prostitute. Yet look at what God did BY AND THROUGH HER once He gave her the chance to join His "called out ones!" It is clear that, LIKE ABRAHAM, once God revealed Himself to her she BELIEVED GOD [carefully study James 2: 25 where God reveals that her BELIEF AND TRUST in the God of Israel was COUNTED AS RIGHTEOUSNESS TO HER THE SAME AS ABRAHAM'S TRUST AND BELIEF WAS COUNTED AS RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIM (compare Galatians 3:6-11)]. and that Rahab's belief and trust in God not only spared her human life (and the lives of her family) but also enabled God to use her as an ancestress to the Christ. It also enabled her to be counted as one of God's elect and named among the saints of God. Do you think for a moment that her life would have become what it did if she had said "Oh, I am nothing but a lowly prostitute and just worthless?" Would God have used her as He did if that had been her attitude? How can God use you or me if we develop such a negative attitude?

This supernatural change FROM HUMAN TO DIVINE; FRM MORTAL TO IMMORTALITY; FROM PHYSICAL TO SPIRITUAL (study 1 Corinthians 125:50-58 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The clear message from the Bible is that God is taking weak and frail and sinful human beings and purging and refining them so that they can go from this temporary human existence into GLORIFIED SONS OF GOD, HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH JESUS CHRIST (Romans 8:14-17). If you are a weak, frail and flawed human being then you are definitely a candidate God can use to develop into one of His SONS IN HIS KINGDOM (HIS FAMILY). What God wants from each one of us is a yielded and submissive attitude and spirit that TREMBLES AT HIS WORD (Isaiah 66:2).

What God does NOT want from us is a doubting, fearful and negative attitude (see James 5:3-8). Then as verse 9 states, the person "in humble circumstances" is to take the right kind of spiritual pride in HIS HIGH POSITION (*his high calling from God*). As verses 10-11 show, the rich should realize that their earthly riches will all perish and are of no value spiritually. Then, as verse 12 shows, we WHO STAND THE TEST will receive the CROWN OF LIFE - - immortality in the kingdom of God.

Once Rahab was given the chance to accept the God of Israel, she renounced her former life and country and followed God. That is exactly what God expects of each of us. He calls us at this time regardless of our status or condition in life. Let us take special note of the fact that God inspired James to use the example of Rahab IN THE SAME LIGHT AS Abraham (study James 2:20-24). Then verse 24 shows clearly that Rahab's FAITH AND BELIEF AND TRUST in God PLACED HER IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS ABRAHAM. Because of his faith and belief, Abraham was called "GOD'S FRIEND." (vs. 23). Obviously Rahab also became "GOD'S FRIEND" because of her faith and belief. Did not Jesus state that WE TOO ARE CALLED "FRIENDS" (John 15:12-17).

If you are a FRIEND OF GOD, IF YOUR FAITH AND BELIEF ARE COUNTED AS RIGHTEOUSNESS (as was Abraham and Rahab), and if you are a SON OF GOD, AN

HEIR OF GOD AND A JOINT HEIR WITH CHRIST then *why would you ever allow discouragement to get you down?*

It is certainly probable that before God called and used Rahab, she most likely considered herself of little or no value. Her life consisted of selling her body for enough money to buy food and clothing - - A VERY DEAD END JOB WITH NO FUTURE!

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

What about you? Is your faith in WHAT YOU ARE AS A MERE HUMAN BEING? Or, are you concentrating on The Almighty God and the purpose He has for your life? Do you actually see THAT IT IS GOD WORKING IN YOU BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO HIS PLEASURE? (see Philippians 2:13). Now read verse 14 which says: "Do everything without complaining or arguing, SO THAT YOU MAY BECOME BLAMELESS (COUNTED AS RIGHTEOUS) AND PURE, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, IN WHICH YOU (are supposed to) SHINE LIKE STARS IN THE UNIVERSE."

God does not rate one human being above another. Christ died for ALL regardless of their status in life, their race or country of origin. For example, I am privileged to work with brethren in Kenya, Africa and am overjoyed to remind them that they have access to that great God of the universe no matter how meager their circumstances. That it is not in this temporary human life that we have hope BUT IN THAT GLORIOUS LIFE THAT IS TO COME IN AND THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. I believe this to the very depth of my being but must trust God to reveal these great truths to His people through the Holy Spirit. I am only a flawed human being and must rely on God to grant those He is calling to grasp and understand these spiritual things. I can close my eyes and envision those few brethren there in Kenya hungering and thirsting for the words of God. I trust that all of you reading this also hunger and thirst for these truths and that you will see that you personally and individually have so much to be thankful for in this calling.

We may be considered weak, flawed and foolish by the "intelligent" people of this earth. But our wisdom is from God. We have been blessed with the understanding of the truths and purpose of that Almighty Creator God. The rich and the mighty of this world are not worthy to be compared with what God is doing in and through us. Remember that it is NOT God who considers us foolish. God has already invested millions of years in this purpose of equipping us for His family. *If God's Holy Spirit is enabling you to grasp and understand what I am saying here then you are extremely important to God. You are important enough that He sent His son, Jesus Christ, to die a horrible death to pay for your sins (and mine) so that we together can become members of His family. That is how important you are to God the Father and to Jesus Christ.*

If you allow yourself to become discouraged and begin to disdain your calling then you are repudiating God and Christ and what they are doing for, in and through you. If you allow yourself to become discouraged and live in despair then you need to throw yourself on God's mercy and implore Him to help you grasp the MAGNITUDE of your calling. An example of this type of disdainful attitude is found in the bad example set by Jonah (see the book of Jonah). Jonah obviously never did get the picture. He never was satisfied with his calling and his responsibility from God. He did not like it when God showed

mercy on the people of Nineveh. Most likely he resented the fact that God forced him to carry out this mission even after he had made it plain to God that he did not like the task. The lesson for you and me is that there is no indication in the entire Bible that Jonah ever repented of his lethargic, complaining and negative attitude toward God and His commission or his lack of compassion for the people of Nineveh. God clearly shows that the "UNBELIEVING" are in the same category as the cowardly, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic (sorcery), idolaters, and all liars (Revelation 21:7-8). Note that such people qualify for the lake of fire which is the second (final) death. Thus, if we hope for salvation and eternal life we must overcome these human tendencies toward negativism, defeatism, discouragement and despair - -we are to ask God or the help we need!. Thus, as God states through James, we DEMONSTRATE OUR FAITH BY AND THROUGH OUR ACTIONS AS DID ABRAHAM, RAHAB AND ALL THE OTHERS (James 2:20- 24). A person cannot claim to have this type of faith UNLESS his ACTIONS back up his claim. As verse 20 states, "FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD (USELESS)!"

What is your attitude toward the tremendous calling God has given to you? Do you truly appreciate the fact the great God of the universe has taken a hand in your personal life? Do you actually realize that God is giving you the opportunity to JOIN HIS FAMILY AS A SPIRIT BEING? Have you grabbed hold of this calling with all your might? How long has it been since you carefully studied the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews to see how your foregoing spiritual brothers and sisters accepted their calling and excelled in it? Do you truly appreciate that the great God has RESCUED YOU FROM YOUR EMPTY AND MEANINGLESS HUMAN LIFE BY GIVING YOU THE CHANCE TO ENTER HIS FAMILY (see 1 Peter 1:13-19)? How are you showing your appreciation for this calling? Do you SEE GOD in your calling even though you might not be considered "important" by other humans?

This article is going to people in several nations representing different races of people. Each person receiving this is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO GOD even if you personally do not realize this importance at this moment. You may live in a hut in Africa or a run down farm in Australia or a slum in New York. But you are still just as important to God as was Abraham, Daniel, David and all the others. God placed Rahab the prostitute in the same category as He did Abraham, as we have seen. He said that Rahab's FAITH AND TRUST in God was counted as RIGHTEOUSNESS with God. Your faith and trust in God will also be COUNTED as RIGHTEOUSNESS with God as was the case with Abraham and Rahab.

Why then do you become discouraged and despair of life? Why then do you complain that your life is just too much for you to handle? Could it be because YOU are trying to carry the load by yourself rather than allowing Christ to carry it for you through the power of the Holy Spirit? If you are discouraged and frustrated with your calling then obviously you do not see how important you are to God and thus do not actually understand your calling. You need to go to that private place of prayer and fall down before God and ask Him to give you that understanding and that faith to trust Him. The holy people of old met the tests they faced because they realized that any suffering in this physical life that involves our calling is not worthy to be compared with the GLORY

THAT IS TO BE GIVEN TO US WHO GROW AND OVERCOME (Romans 8:18-27). You should also carefully study Romans 8:14-17. You should understand that God FOREKNEW YOU AS A PERSON and that he PREDESTINED that you be in His spirit family and then He called and converted you and sanctified you and will GLORIFY YOU as a SON OF GOD (see Romans 8:28-30).

What shall we think then? If God is for us - - *and we have seen that He is* - - then WHO CAN STAND AGAINST US OR DEFEAT US? (Romans 8:31-34). Who then can separate us from the love of God? Is there any power in heaven or on earth that can take us out of God's hands (Romans 8:35-39)? All the BELOVED PEOPLE OF GOD WERE STILL **LIVING BY FAITH WHEN THEY DIED** (Hebrews 11:13). As a result of their LIVING BY FAITH God was not ashamed to be called their God (vs. 16).

Oh, brethren, the Great God of the universe is holding out to us a reward and a future that totally defies human description or understanding. Abraham saw this so clearly that he was willing and able to immediately go where God led him without question or hesitation. Jesus said in John 8:56 that Abraham DESIRED TO SEE CHRIST'S DAY (the salvation that comes through Christ) AND HE SAW IT AND WAS GLAD. Abraham was able to grasp a vivid IMAGE of what God was holding out to him and was able to totally respond to God. Do you personally ENVISION the salvation God holds out to you as did Abraham?

Daniel saw it so clearly that being thrown into a lion's den did not cause him to lose faith. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego saw this calling so clearly they were willing to face that fiery furnace and come out without a singed hair on their bodies. Yet, on the other hand God allowed literally thousands of others to be martyred through horrendous deaths as He equipped them for this great reward - - so they could receive a BETTER RESURRECTION (Hebrews 11:32-38). Some were so destitute (if you think you have a meager existence) they wore sheepskins, goatskins and were DESTITUTE, PERSECUTED AND MISTREATED and WANDERED IN DESERTS AND LIVED IN MOUNTAINS AND CAVES AND HOLES IN THE GROUND (vs. 36-38). But they were all COMMENDED FOR THEIR FAITH IN GOD (vs. 39).

I encounter people who admit to me they are barely able to hang on - - and they do not do that very well. Some try to cut off all contact with those who can help them spiritually in their efforts to survive and overcome. Brethren, if you are converted and if you have God's Spirit (Romans 8:9) then you will understand that we are all in this struggle together. We are brothers and sisters to each other and Christ is our elder brother who lived this life and understands our struggle and has promised never to allow us to be tested beyond what we can stand (see 1 Corinthians 10:9-13). He intercedes for us (see Hebrews 7:22-25 and chapter 2:17-18 and chapter 3:1-3).

Please brethren, if you are one of those struggling then contact us and ask for the guidance you need in facing these trials. Believe me when I say I have been there and know your struggles - - as Christ knows them. God does work through human instruments to help other humans. You perhaps could use a little guidance from a fellow human being in going to God through Christ (our high priest) to receive grace to help in that time of need (see Hebrews 4:14-16).

My sincere prayer is that each one of you reading this can and will understand just how important you are to the Almighty God and that you will be able to go to Him and trust Him for your needs - - especially THAT TRUST AND FAITH. If I can help you further do not hesitate to contact me. I will be happy to join you in your quest for this grasp of who you are and how important you are to God.

In closing let me ask you point blank "JUST HOW BADLY DO YOU WANT SALVATION?" If you carefully and prayerfully study the scriptures contained in this article and the accompanying sermon you will readily see what God REQUIRES of you and me. God does not change. What He required of holy men of old He also requires of us. Romans 12:1 explains this in brief by saying that WE ARE TO PRESENT OUR BODIES TO GOD AS LIVING SACRIFICES. Elsewhere in the Bible we learn we are to learn to LIVE BY EVERY WORD OF GOD. We are to LIVE AS JESUS LIVED. We are to GROW AND OVERCOME in our daily lives. We are to put God FIRST AND FOREMOST in our lives and in our thoughts. We are to learn to go to God to overcome our NAGGING HUMAN PROBLEMS. God will provide everything we need BUT WE MUST GO TO HIM IN FAITH BELIEVING THAT HE WILL KEEP HIS PROMISES (James 1:2-8).

Brethren, as a minister of the Mighty God, my heart goes out to those of you who are so troubled by the cares of this life. All I can do is assure you that God is real and that He is concerned but that YOU MUST MAKE THE MOVE TO GAIN THE HELP YOU NEED TO OVERCOME. Note that even Christ could NOT overcome on behalf of Peter BUT COULD ONLY PRAY FOR HIM ASKING GOD TO STRENGTHEN HIM IN FACING THESE TESTS (see Luke 22:31-32). But note verses 33 and 34 where Peter was trying to face these trials ON HIS OWN STRENGTH and he fell totally short. We must individually and personally learn that our strength and power COMES ONLY FROM GOD AND NOT WITHIN OURSELVES. I had to learn this THE HARD WAY, as did Peter and so many others. It is God who WORKS IN US BOTH TO WILL AND DO HIS PLEASURE. We must remember this at all times. May God help each of you do this, brethren. That is my solemn and sincere prayer. God be with each of you wherever you may be on this earth. AMEN!

. Please remember that God inspired Paul to explain that many of God's people are ". . . weak, and sick and a number of you have fallen asleep " because they take the Passover symbols in an unworthy manner by NOT FULLY DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY AND BLOOD. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32). Let us all resolve to throw off all the weights and shackles that drag us down and too often defeat us. God be with you!]

I am truly thankful for being used to help you gain a more intimate knowledge of the great God we serve. "NOW THIS IS ETERNAL LIFE, THAT THEY [you, brethren] MAY KNOW YOU [God the Father] THE ONLY TRUE GOD AND JESUS CHRIST WHOM YOU HAVE SENT" [John 17:3].