

AO Devotional #17- “Spiritual Seriousness”

Today I want to talk about something a little more serious. To be more specific, being spiritually serious. As a younger Christian I found myself not really wanting to take anything too seriously and just have fun in life. Everything revolved around having fun. It wasn't until I got older as a disciple that I realized it was time to grow up. I want to help everyone today by going through some things I wish I had known early on as a Christian and give some ways we can take our walk with God more seriously.

The first thing I want to talk about is God's power. Everyone knows God is powerful, but it is one thing to read the statement “he is powerful” and it's another to read the stories of how powerful he is. One thing I think of when I dwell on God's power is all the Old Testament stories of God showing off his power. A humbling reminder is him smiting people who disobeyed his word. That in itself is enough to make me act right. He also delegated his power to man so that other men might believe in him.

Matthew 19:26

“Jesus looked at them and said, **with man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.**”

God is so much more powerful than we think. Growing up going to church meant that I became numb to talking about how good and how powerful God is. I think this can be said for many people in society as well. We've trained ourselves to dismiss scripture as inspirational thoughts rather than a description of reality. In essence we ourselves are limiting God's power by not meditating and reflecting on the power of the God we serve. When is the last time you have thought about God's power and reign over everything?

On top of understanding God's power, we also have to fear God. I think this is where a lot of Christians don't see the true weight of this statement. What does it mean to fear God? It means to have a reverence and awe for God. It means to be afraid of acting against his will, afraid of sin, and to have the utmost respect for him. To bind all of this together, it means to love him and cherish his word.

Isaiah 6:4-5

“At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook, and the temple was filled with smoke. “Woe to me!” I cried. I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

This verse of Isaiah shows his fear for God. Isaiah is in the throne room at this time and these crazy creatures called seraphim (translated to angelic burners with lightning) come down and the sound of their voices have the whole room shaking. Isaiah sees God and knows he is not worthy, and he even says he is ruined! Just by being in the presence of God he is saying he is ruined. He understood what it meant to fear God. This whole passage is crazy! These seraphim have 6 wings each and are guarding God in the throne room. This is the God we serve! Someone who could create these crazy creatures and have them in the throne room praising him! If you have not studied this chapter out before I highly recommend it. There is lots of stuff to explore here.

My next point I want to make is about being content with where you are at as a Christian. Being cyclical and stagnant as a Christian will ruin you. I feel like this applies to all Christians around the world. We all have this big aspiration to be closer to God but what stops us from achieving our goal? The answer

varies for each person, but in the end, it is all categorized under one word; sin. No matter what is holding you back from progressing in your walk with God, we can all recognize when we are falling short with God. I don't think it just happens to where one day you have this shocking moment when you realize you aren't close with God anymore. This is something you are most likely conscious of. So, if we know about it, why don't we change it? The answer is because we are prideful.

Isaiah 2:12

“The LORD almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled).”

This says it clear as day what will happen to prideful people. Do you really want to push God on humbling you? Do you want to play this cat and mouse game of seeing if you can get away with being prideful this time? STOP IT!!! The game you are playing has no winning option for you! You either get punished on earth, in heaven, or both, and I want none of that!

I know a lot of times when I am being prideful, I like to say I “have everything together.” This idea of “having everything together” is subjective though. It can be viewed differently by everyone. Wouldn't you rather look at the bible for your example of what it looks like to “have it together.” If you look in the Bible for your answers you will realize how far away you are from being fine. **Acts 2:42-47** is a perfect place to look for answers on our involvement with the church. This example shows us how we should be involved and unified as a church. It is hard to be unified when you don't have the same passion that your brothers and sisters in Christ have.

Lastly, I want to talk about the importance of people calling our sins out and why we should listen to them. It is hard for young Christians to hear that something they are doing is wrong or sinful because it is so contradicting to what the world does when they see something wrong. It is even hard for older disciples to hear their sins called out because of our ego's being hurt. We are taught in the world that we need to save face and attack back, but that is not what God calls us to do. I won't type it all out but the best passage when dealing with sin in the church is **Matthew 18:15-20**. I think Jesus specifically gave us the command to go to a person in sin individually because he knew about the pride that we would have. The fewer the people who hear we are bad or have fallen short the better, right?

I think another important element of the Matthew 18 passage is the ‘accepting that we are in the wrong’ part. Oftentimes people feel like they are being judged too quickly or that it isn't another person's business on what they do. That could not be further from the truth. Another excuse for someone not wanting to admit fault is saying that only God can judge, and it isn't right for people to judge. This is correct, but there is a difference in judging and calling someone out. After all, would you rather be called out by a person for a preventable sin or be judged by God? One of these is significantly worse than the other, and I will let you figure the answer out for yourselves.

I hope that you were able to learn something from this and be able to apply some of the things I wished I had known as a new disciple into your lives. I am still learning and improving every day, so in a few years I could sit down and write the exact same thing about things I wished I had known right now.

Study your bibles and please do not just go through the motions of being a follower of God. Commit your heart to this and take your walk with God seriously.

-Hunter