

“WITH”: REIMAGINING THE WAY YOU RELATE TO GOD

A STUDY OF “WITH” BY SKYE JETHANI

LESSON 5: A LIFE FOR GOD

I. Introduction

- A. The problem is – we all believe that “God is disappointed with me because of my ongoing struggles with some behavior. He expects more from me. And He cannot use me to accomplish His work in the world until I clean up my act.” (p. 81)
- B. What matters is – “not God’s love for us, but how much we can accomplish for Him.” (p. 82)

II. Characteristics of the “life for God” posture

- A. Typically, ministries focus on moving folks from a posture of living from God (lazy, consumer type Christian) to living for God. Turning consumers into servants. Changing the church from an inward – focused group to an outward focused church.
- B. Accomplishing the mission of God becomes central. Consider the core of Christian living in each of the postures:
 - 1. Life under God: Divine will is at the center
 - 2. Life over God: Natural laws/principles are at the center
 - 3. Life from God: Self and selfish needs are at the center
 - 4. Life for God: Accomplishing the mission is at the center
- C. Whereas “effectiveness” was the product of the life from God, accomplishment is the product of life for God.
- D. We want to control God by making Him “beholden to us.”
- E. Performance trumps relationship. Consider Samuel’s encounter in 1 Sam. 15.

III. Concerns

- A. Even the pursuit of accomplishing or doing the mission of God cannot replace a relationship with God himself. We need to be filled with the “fullness of God” (see Eph. 3:14-19).

We cannot confuse our calling with our treasure (to be united with Christ).
- B. If we are not careful, we will run right by the warning of Matt 7:22-23.

- C. Remember, even our “mission” can become an idol. Definition of an idol: Anything (good, medium or bad) that takes our worship away from God.
- D. Our “spiritual self esteem” cannot be focused on accomplishment. What was Paul’s accomplishment in Acts 16? What was he doing of great value?
- E. Missionalism
“Missionalism starts slowly and gains a foothold in the leader’s attitude. Before long the mission controls almost everything: time, relationships, health, spiritual depth, ethics, and convictions. In advanced stages, missionalism means doing whatever it takes to solve the problem. In its worst iteration, the end always justifies the means. The family goes; health is sacrificed; integrity is jeopardized; God-connection is limited.”
- F. Consider the role motive plays in our spiritual service.

IV. Bottom line: Our work for the Lord can (and should) be accomplished in “perpetual communion with God” and must not be motivated by a fear of insignificance. Nor should it be motivated by a desire for rewards.

Consider the other brother in Luke 15. Consider the role of grace.

Discussion Questions

1. For many, “performance” is a kind of disease. What are its characteristics? Why doesn’t it please the Lord? Do you struggle with this?
2. What’s wrong (if anything) with moving Christians from “consuming to serving?” What’s the key to godly service?
3. Who or what is your treasure?
4. In what practical ways does grace impact your life?