



*In His Presence: Avoiding Obstacles in Cultivating Spirituality*

**WORSHIP:** Hosanna by Hillsong/ Praise is Rising by Breton Brown/ You are Worthy by Hillsong/Draw Me Close

**WELCOME:** Bomb Shelter  
Make a list of 5 things you would store in your bombshelter. Next to each item write down what that item symbolizes for you. Why is it important to you?

**WORD:**  
*"For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."* Psalm 1: 1- 6

- Verse 6 highlights the theological basis presented in this Psalm. God does not just know the righteous, the emphasis is on knowing the *way of the righteous*. The word "know" is better translated as reckons, or approves. The approval of God should take precedence over everything else in our life. When we understand this and then look at verses 1 – 2. When we seek the Lord's approval we will take delight in the Lord and in doing His will.
- We have to remember that the approval of God is more important than the applause of men.
- The most important thing in our Christian life – is for us to please God. It is not enough to know Him and to serve Him, we must start by believing in Him, loving Him and having a relationship with Him. It is out of that love relationship that service, leadership and faith will flow.
- There are 4 kinds of faith
  1. Believing that God CAN – He can do miracles, He can heal. This is not faith, this is theology.
  2. Believing that God WILL – God will heal, God will do miracles. The danger in this is that we presumptuously think that God will. . . not knowing if this is God's will for us.
  3. Believing that God MUST – God must heal, God must answer my prayers. Thinking that because I am serving God, because I am doing this for Him, He must answer my prayers. This is carnality.
  4. True faith is Believing GOD IS. He is good. He is faithful. He is in control.

ultimate importance. When our soul's desire is to please Him.

- It is when we begin to understand that it is not the many things that we can do for God that matters, but rather it is our desire to please Him, to do whatever He asks us to do to fulfill His purpose for His glory.
- We must learn to practice the remove and replace principle. We REMOVE our baggages, hang ups and obstacles that can hinder us from spiritual growth and REPLACE these with spiritual disciplines that will help us grow and mature in the Lord.

Obstacles in our Spiritual Growth:

1. WE ACCEPT CHRONIC SPIRITUAL INFANCY AS THE INEVITABLE NORM.
  - We think that accepting the Gospel is enough, we do not continue to grow. We are content to be infants in the faith, when we should be developing into deep individuals founded in the doctrines of our faith.
  - We have contented ourselves to become above average, to be better compared to others. When we compare ourselves to ourselves we become proud, when we think we are better than others. Or insecure or intimidated because we think we are not as good as others.
  - But God wants us to have substance, to have depth and He calls us to rise above being above average.
2. WE ARE UNWILLING TO COMMIT DUE TO THE TIME PRESSURE.
  - We live in a confused society where we tend to put "second things first". It is important to prioritize and putting first things first.
  - When we try to makes sense of the clutter of our everyday life, we end up cutting off to manage our time better. The key is not to cut down on our activities but to find out what God wants us to do

There is a need for us to walk in a discipleship where we are able to pursue God .

*"The greatest need you and I have – the greatest need of collective humanity – is the renovation of the heart."*

Dallas Willard

- The heart is renovated when we are directed, when we know that the approval of God is of

and then dedicate our time to doing what He asks of us.

3. WE ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH THE EXTERNAL TO THE NEGLECT OF THE INTERNAL.

- a. It is relatively easy to live by the external.
- b. It is simply natural to live by the external.
- c. Living by the external is highly contagious.
- d. Living by the external is spiritually unwise.

It is easier for us to gravitate toward the external world because of our carnal natures. But if we only live by the externals, we will come to a point that we will burn out, feel empty. We will continue trying to prove ourselves, and become restless instead of rested in the knowledge and understanding of God's love and His purpose for our lives.

4. WE FAIL TO AIM FOR TRANSFORMATION.

- We have a tendency to do "touch ups" or renovations in ourselves to soothe our guilt but God does not want a simple touch up. He wants us to undergo a radical transformation. A complete renewal, a deep transformation.
- Knowledge and information does not automatically cause transformation. It is when we live out the truth that the transformation begins.

5. WE NEGLECT THE DAILY, PERSONAL INPUT.

- We are content in weekly disciple training and forgotten that it should be a daily affair. It is important that we commune with God on a daily basis. That we spend time with Him, read His word and listen to Him.
- A good way to practice daily personal input is journaling.

6. WE DON'T SEE DEEP SPIRITUALITY MODEL AT THE LEADERSHIP LEVEL.

- Above championing the vision of discipleship, we must first and foremost personify the values.
- It does not matter how many people you have reached out to, what matters is the quality of time invested in the few.

7. WE LIVE UNYIELDED LIVES WITH UNRESOLVED BAGGAGES, UNCROSSED AND UNFOUNDED FEARS.

- Often times we live our lives with reservations. We carry anxieties and fears and choose to hold back from what God is asking us to do in our lives. In essence we are "driving with the breaks on" not allowing God to take a hold of our lives and drive us to where He wants us to go.

8. WE FAIL TO SEE SPIRITUAL FORMATION DIACHRONICALLY THROUGH THE SEASONS OF LIFE.

- There is a tendency for us to live synchronically meaning that we live in the now, in the present but we fail to see that spiritual formation should be seen in a long term view. That spiritual formation must be lived through life.

Psalms 1 reminds us that we must strive to seek the approval of God in order to become pleasing to Him. And the key to please Him is to follow Jesus Christ, to become more like Him. To preoccupy ourselves with God's words and to prioritize His will and purpose in our life.

Discussion: What kind of Christian are you?

There are 4 kinds of Christians:

1. "On the road" Christian – preoccupied with so many activities, always on the go. We keep ourselves busy and forget to anchor ourselves in God.
2. "In the rut" Christian – we drown ourselves in routines and rituals that we lose passion and end up in spiritual dryness. We have to find our passion and vitality in God.
3. "Through the roof" Christian – those who are restless, short tempered. We must learn to find calmness and rested-ness in Christ.
4. "By the cliff" Christian – we find ourselves at a crossroad, not knowing where else to go. We need to desperately cling to God for direction.

**WORKS:**

After the discussion, meditate and pray for enlightenment. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is my road block? What holds me back from growing spiritually?
2. Make a list of your priorities. Spend time in prayer and ask God what He wants you to prioritize. What is His plan in your life? In what direction does He want you to go?
3. Commit yourself to having a daily personal journal.

Spend time in prayer and reflection, seek God and in repentance receive God's empowering grace for sanctification. Ask your Dgroup and your accountability partner to pray with you and to keep you accountable over the commitments you have made as a result of this discussion.