

Dangers To Devotion

by Dee Bowman

We are all devoted to something or somebody. To be devoted is to give or apply one's time or attention—even one's self—to something or somebody. Some folks are so devoted to their jobs they have no time for their family. Some are so devoted to a hobby that they have no time to spend worshiping and serving God. Devotion is a measurement of care, a sure sign of what we consider to be important.

Devotion is the essence of Christianity. Devotion is what caused Christ to give himself up for us (Phil. 2:5-8) and what caused God to send him in the first place (Jn. 3:16). Jesus' devotion to man's salvation drove Him to the cross. He died for our sins when He had none of His own because He was totally committed to God's will. He said, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (Jn. 5:30). Even as he prayed in the garden, anticipating his death on the cross, He prayed, "...nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done" (Matt. 26:42). All He did was on account of His devotion to His Father and His plan for man's salvation. He was totally devoted.

Our devotion must be like His. It must come before every thing and everybody in our lives. It must have first place or it has no place at all. It must supercede every other relationship, be prior to every other plan, be superior to every other inclination. Devotion to God must be complete or it is no devotion at all; it is merely so much theatrics.

Devotion is what causes us to spend our time with Him, give our attention to His commands, worship and serve Him. But devotion doesn't result in some harsh, difficult, and unenjoyable life. Certainly it results in our assuming a yoke, but it is one that fits, one that will not rub you raw, but facilitate your devotion and enhance your discipleship. To take upon ourselves the life of a Christian is to enrich our lives, elongate our hope, give substance to our philanthropy and bring joy even in the face of persecution. It makes sense to live this life of devotion because it makes sense to go to Heaven.

But the devil is active. He would like nothing better than to cause us to have a sort of half-hearted devotion, because if he can, he causes us to have no devotion at all. James says "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Jas. 1:8). We need to be aware of his devices (2 Cor. 2:11), and be prepared to withstand his wiles (Eph. 6:11) or he will subtract from our devotion and diminish our commitment. May I suggest some ways he is apt to do so?

Satisfaction. It's one of the most effective ploys the devil has. If he can make us satisfied with where we are, we are not apt to go anywhere else. That is, if he can make us think we are fine where we are, he can keep us from growing. Far too many folks are seduced into lethargy because they think they've done all they need to do (After all, "I've

been baptized,” they say). I am certainly not suggesting that we can earn our salvation, but we certainly must stay committed if we are to have heaven as home. “Give diligence to make your calling and elections sure,” Peter said (2 Pet. 1:10). Devotion is dedication. It is not time to rest. It is time to give the greater diligence, lest we be deceived into thinking that because we have done well so far, we’re all right.

Doublemindedness. We have noticed this problem already, but it is perhaps impossible to over-emphasize it. We can never be of two minds and be as devoted as we ought to be. We can’t pledge allegiance to the United States and some other government at the same time; and we can’t be devoted to God and the world at the same time. Be sure of this, you will serve one or the other, but you can’t serve both. Jesus said, “for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:21), and “No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24). Be not deceived, you are serving one or the other today and if you are not serving one, you are serving the other.

Comfortableness. If you would be devoted to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ, you will not very often be comfortable. In the beatitudes, Jesus said, “Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God” (Matt. 5:10). It is foolish indeed to allow your devotion to the world to make you comfortable for a short time here while neglecting the kind of devotion that can make comfort an eternal one. One thing is certain, if you would serve Him, you will be uncomfortable at times, but remember this: “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him...” That’s a pretty high thought, right?

Let today be a day of rededication. Let it be a day of devotion to Him, a day of caring—really caring—about His word and its influence in our lives. Let it be a day of worship and praise and let it bring Him the kind of honor that He so richly deserves.