

For the Love of the Family Ministries

Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family

How Do You Measure Your Christian Life?

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Romans 6:12-19, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

As a Pastor for many years, I have had the opportunity to observe many Christians in different situations. One of the grave errors that Christians make in their life, which will affect their home, marriage, and children, is the lack of being controlled by the Spirit of God. This error is a very serious problem for each of us and we do not give this near enough consideration in our lives.

One of the things that the business world does is measure the progress of their business. They use different ways to measure their progress. God also wants us to measure our Christian life. Every day we have an opportunity to act and react. The unsaved person does not have the resource and ability of the saved person in this matter. When you come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ you now have to do some things differently, especially in **how you act and react.**

We know that the devil seeks to put outside pressure on our lives. The purpose is to get the Christian to react in a non Christ like way. The devil wants to reproduce his character in us. You have heard the statement many times "actions speak louder than words." That little statement is so true. **But do you know there is something that speaks louder than our actions? It is our reactions!**

Listen carefully; many people can discipline themselves to try to act like Christ. But it is more difficult to train your soul to react like Christ. When faced with unfortunate or difficult circumstances in life, it

is our reactions that reveal whether we are Spirit controlled, Ephesians 5:18, or soul controlled. Remember, God speaks to our Spirit and the devil speaks to our soul.

Ladies and gentlemen, if our relationship with the Lord is weak, we can clearly see such weaknesses not only by our own failures to act right, but also **by our consistently inappropriate reactions.** That is the way we measure our Christian life, by how we react when something difficult happens or something is not going our way. **I call this the point of impact.** We are going to get the opportunity to react every single day and many times a day. At the point of impact, when the devil puts outside pressure on our life, we will either respond by being controlled by the Spirit or allowing ourselves to be controlled by the lusts of the flesh. Proverbs 12:13-14, “The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble. A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompense of a man’s hands shall be rendered unto him.” Have you ever noticed at the point of impact how much trouble our mouth gets us in? We many times respond in anger or frustration when we are at the point of impact rather than being Spirit controlled. Have you ever thought about how your spouse or your children view that? We desire for our children to grow up and walk with God, but all too often they learn from us how not to be controlled by the Spirit when the day or circumstance is difficult.

James 3:10-17, “Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh? Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” This passage is written to Christians not unsaved people. How too often it is played out in the every day life of the Christian. When is this? At the point of impact! Folks, when each of us is not Holy Spirit controlled and led in our lives, our interpersonal skills go down the tube. In other words, in some ways, we have a poorly trained soul. A well trained soul is simply the definition of self discipline and is generally called character.

Folks, when something happens to us, and it is not good, if our reaction is to be angry or frustrated and to react mean to others, we are not showing good character in our life. Proverbs 21: 23-24, “Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles. Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.” Did you notice that our non Spirit controlled anger is because of pride? People who respond in anger, frustration, or with an angry spirit are not controlled by the Holy Spirit; they are being controlled by the devil. I hope you see how this affects our children and our spouse. Then we expect our children to grow up to have God’s power in their life and have a desire to walk with Him. When the child ends up in destruction, living like the devil, we wonder out loud what happened. Proverbs 13:13, “Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed...” The word despiseth means does not give proper attention to. Many parents who contact us here at For the Love of the Family do not understand the point at all. They are utterly confused about why their home is in the disaster it is in. Guess who is the author of confusion? It is not God. I find one of the hardest things for us as Christians is the fruit of the Spirit, longsuffering. When people fall short of our expectations for or them we exhibit, (longsuffering), an enduring temperament that expresses itself in patience with the shortcomings of others. Or we react quick tempered, with an irritability that negatively excites the passions (lust of the flesh.).

Did you react to any people or circumstances with irritability and anger this week? The measurement of spirituality: “whenever I am harsh or quick tempered, I am quickly aware that I am weak spiritually and not in tune with the Spirit’s leading. Many people seek to fake being right with God. They talk the talk, but when faced with adversity at the point of impact they immediately react in anger, frustration or irritability. We do not even understand this is not acceptable behavior with God. Most Christians believe it is okay to be angry. However, Ephesians 4:29-32 teaches that is definitely not the case. So, many Christians are violating a very important command of the word of God every day and many times a day, but expect to have God work in their lives and in the lives of their spouse or children.

Listen carefully; the right way for us to live our lives is not seek to **ACT** like Christ, but **YIELD** to Christ. When we teach ourselves out of habit or sure determining will power, how to act like Jesus would act, we think we are being holy. We are only making an attempt to do holy. His holiness is something we are asked to **be** not to **do**.”

Romans 6:11-13, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither **yield** ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but **yield yourselves unto God**, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”

When someone hurts your feelings, or corrects you, or is inconsiderate of you, what is your first reaction? Anger? Frustration? Excuse making? Evil thinking? Temper? Hidden anger? Rationalization? Contempt? Bad facial reactions? Yelling? Cussing? Criticism? You are showing your true spiritual condition. By sheer will power we seek to control that, but that does not work in the spiritual realm.

The devil’s management system is in I John 2:15-17. His system goes clear back to Adam and Eve. He has not changed it because it has worked very well. Through the world the devil seeks to get each Christian through outside pressure, (remember the pressure he put on Eve), to get us to live by three things: the lust of the flesh; getting us to desire to do; the lust of the eyes, getting us to desire to have; and the pride of life, getting us to desire to be. He desires to control our soul through his system and ultimately control our body, what we do.

We are seeking to do holy. We wonder why we fail so much.

Romans 6:12, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.” The reactions I described above are lustful soul control. What should be our first reaction? Romans 6:13, 16, 19 tells us to “**YIELD.**” Folks, when we are serving Jesus in our own power we can do some right things sometimes, but it does not mean we are yielding to Christ. It means we are living in self righteousness. The real love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, is found doing things the right way, **YIELDING!**

Living a life yielded to Christ’s leading is the only way to live a holy life. Of course, as long as we are human, we will fail to be holy sometimes. Just remember that when you are training yourself through sheer discipline, you may do a lot of things in a holy way, but that does not mean you have been holy. To be or even do with consistency that which is holy, it must emanate from that which is Holy within us. Remember the Bible says, “That in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” But in me, dwelleth the One to whom I should yield. **God wants us to yield not to react.** If we yield, He will act for us. If we react rather than yield He is rendered useless to that particular circumstance. That does

not please Him. God does not appreciate what He does not initiate.

I do not please God when I seek to act like Christ; I please God when I yield to Christ. The next time the point of impact happens rather than react in the lust of the flesh, say, "Lord, I want to turn this over to you." YIELD! As you practice yielding in your life rather than being anxious you will have peace and you will then have a real sense of the presence of God in your life. Rather than being angry and frustrated, you will be controlled by the Spirit of God. Ephesians 4: 29-32, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let **ALL** bitterness and **WRATH**, and **ANGER**, and clamour (public quarreling), and **evil speaking be put away from you**, with all malice (desire to hurt). And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." You do understand that seeking to act like Christ rather than yielding to Christ grieves the Holy Spirit. Today, our churches are filled with people who are seeking to act like Christ rather than yield to Christ. No wonder the church is powerless and the home as well is powerless. The Holy Spirit is grieved by this activity and many disasters are happening in the homes of Christians who believe they are walking with God, but in reality they have no joy, no sense of His presence, and no real, intimate, passionate relationship with Him. You can change that starting today by yielding to Him. II Corinthians 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." The change begins when we cleanse our selves from the filthiness of the flesh and the spirit. Many Christians are living in filthiness of the flesh and spirit, but do not even know it.

The measurement of the Christian life is how you react at the point of impact. How are you doing with what Christ wants you to do? YIELD! It will make all the difference in your Christian life and the lives of your spouse and children.

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