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Posted by revrandy - 2009/01/05 21:53

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Hi Folks:

During my trip to North Carolina I was pretty busy going from place-to-place and doing little projects for my parents and Lee's Dad. But I did get a little time to think about challenges and opportunities for the New Year. I asked myself a question because we can sometimes learn much from a properly framed question. Here's what I asked. For 2009 what is the one word I should use to give focus to my relationship with Christ? The question was barely beyond the "fog" of my jumbled thoughts before I got an answer. Submission!

In 2008 the times when I got out-of-kilter with God were the times when I operated on my own understanding without submitting that situation to an all knowing and all loving God. The times that were met with success were those that invited God before the event or situation. God taught me every day during the past year and I plan to try to be a submissive servant during 2009. Next question, "How do I do that?"

Proverbs says to "Refrain from leaning on my own understanding." So the first thing is to admit God is smarter than me and to apply God's Word to my daily activities. What would God have me do in each situation?

Matthew 6 reminds me that my heart will follow the things I believe are of value. For hearts follow the things we treasure. Maybe this is asking me another question. "What do I really care about?" If these are Godly things I need to place my time, my prayers, my energy and my resources in the place that submits them to a God that will multiply them for my benefit and for the benefit of His Kingdom.

Submission to God means we must submit to the authorities God has placed into my life. So maybe I need to go the speed limit (I'll try my best). And I need to become submissive to the authorities within my church. I know you are saying, "But I know those people! They make mistakes. How can I trust their decisions?" My response is simple and I hope you are listening. Our leadership structure, praying to God and seeking His guidance, placed these people in leadership. Let's help them. Let's offer our hands, our feet and our hearts. Let's support the decisions made by the local and foreign missions people, even if their decisions may not be where we are called to serve. Let's make sure Ms. Dayna has all the help she needs for Joy Club on Wednesday (there are 80 kids, many seeing Christ only through our efforts, by the way, she is short on help and cannot do this ministry without you). Let's support Angel Food, Fuller Center for Housing, Usher Ministry, Sound Booth helpers, and, even, your pastor. For it is through our unity that God's work is accomplished through mistake-prone, sometimes inept, sometimes stumbling but sometimes wonderful people like you and like me. Get behind the next sermon series and ask friends to come and see what God is doing at Good News. Support Michelle in her music and tell her how you appreciate her. Pitch in to help Josh with our Youth. Help Jo by answering the phone or just manning the "ship" when she and the staff are doing other ministry activities. Give in all the ways God calls each of us to give.

Finally, submit your attitude to God. Don't say what you think. Say what will build the Church and edify God's people. Say what is hard when an "I'm sorry" will bring healing. When you get the "feeling" that you won't participate because it doesn't fit your template, lighten' up! Satan will use many things to destroy unity and peach and if you let him he'll use you! Have an attitude of peace that is truly beyond understanding.

I don't claim to know all the answers. I don't claim to even know all of the right questions. But here's what I do know. I know God has an expectation that we will become a place of peace and comfort in turbulent times. We will do this as we are immersed in passing the tests God is giving us. We can express our knowledge of God and our maturity in that knowledge and thus we can become different (the Bible uses the word "peculiar"). For God desires that in times like these His people will become those that express the blessing of truth, the attitude of peace and one final thing, love! Paul says it this way, "Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below - indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

That's what I believe! What about you?

In Christ's Love, Randy

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