

Call to Obedience #368
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And Jacob Was Left Alone

Genesis 32:24

That is what we need, all of us: to be left alone frequently, with God.

One measure of a man's spirituality is that he has learned the necessity of being alone. No man can become much like God, accomplish much for God, be intimate with God, be used of God, unless he has learned to be much alone with God.

It puts us modern Christians to shame when we try to compare ourselves to the pre-Pentecostal saints who had no Bible, no religious literature of any kind, and yet they obtained perfection in the eyes of our Lord. Look around your church and tell me whether with all the religious books, CDs and programs we have, there are any that have come up to the stature of Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Noah, etc.

Remember, there was no printing press until the 15th century. Until then, the majority of people never saw a book or learned to read. All their knowledge came by observation, exposure, experience, oral transmission (Ps. 78:1-8); and being left alone to meditate, to commune with God. The fact is that God Himself has been and always will be the greatest source of information, inspiration, transformation and fellowship. Hence the picture of our first parents walking with God in the cool of the day still serves as a model to be imitated. It still stands in strong contrast to the picture of man today, continually chasing after something amongst the clutter of too many voices ignoring the real source of all his needs.

Take another picture. Take that of young Isaac meditating in the fields in the evening, *and he lifted up his eyes and saw ...* (Gen. 24:63). Out of this being left alone with God came seeing. What is the difference between seeing and not seeing? In our quiet moments with God alone, God sets before us the most marvelous gifts and delicacies which are hidden to the hurried man. In these moments the saint begins to see what God has for him. Then seeing often brings us to an experience of transformation, as in the case of Jacob (Gen. 28). And indeed, this is the only way to experience personal transformation. All other efforts to obtain renewal will be as fruitless as casting seeds upon the wayside.

We purchase books on how to get transformation. We invite speakers, invent programs and make noise as the prophets of Baal did to get God's attention. Perhaps at best we get a splash of what we are looking for, for a day or two. But on the following prayer meeting, we often look in vain for just one of the new converts who were at the altar last Sunday. Too often once again we are forced to say with Jeremiah: *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.* (Jer. 8:20). **Enduring transformation seldom occurs unless a man has a personal, private, protracted encounter with his God on a regular basis.**

What made the first Christians willing to become martyrs was to a great degree being left alone with God. They too had no literature, but they met with God like their predecessors. They *met*, they *saw*, they *became* like Him, willing to go on to be crucified. The Holy Spirit was their instructor, their library and their seminary. When our new converts and the older ones don't want to meet with God, there is something fundamentally wrong. Dear one, time about God never replaces time with God. Bible reading does not replace holy intercession.

Jacob was left alone with God. How did this happen? Who made him do it? Jacob made Jacob do it! Stay away from those who say that "everything has already been done" in Christ, there is "nothing left for you to do today". Wrong!

And when he [Jesus] had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone (Matt. 14:23). No matter how many times you read your Bible through, no matter how much theology and doctrine you put into your head, you will never get to know God until you learn to send things away to meet with God alone. God is very jealous of you. He wants personal time with you. If you don't give it to Him, you will eventually die, forever. Jesus sent the multitudes away. How many are there in a multitude? Oh, my friend, if you are not willing to turn away people who have needs and wishes, you will never walk with God.

You say Jesus never turned anyone away who had a need. That is good theology but it can kill you. It is true now, as Jesus is in heaven, but it was not true while He was on earth. Here we have to deal with limits. Here we have to learn how to say "no" as Jesus did when He was with us. Many of the people who came to Jesus traveled for hours or days to get to Him to have their needs met. Would Jesus disappoint all these people? Are you with me? Jesus sent them away so He could pray.

Again, whenever you want to get alone with God you have to send something away: relatives, friends, schedules and opportunities. Many times you have to send your reputation away, what people think of you. Many times people will be hurt by your doing so. That was true with Jesus. Many were offended by Him. Jesus did not let "people pressure" run His life. His life was al-

ways governed by His Father. And He said: *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?* (Matt. 10:24, 25).

There is a cross in this. Are you going to bypass the cross or take it up and follow Jesus? We are at a point of conflict here, aren't we? Again, **stop living to meet the expectations of men.** Don't become a slave to man but start living to meet the expectations of God. You cannot have it both ways. If you do the latter, streams of living water will flow out of your innermost being to those in need. You will have power with God. God will reveal to you *treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places* (Isaiah 45:3).

Oh, what a classroom you will find yourself in! You will not become a photocopy of other Christians because there will be no one in the classroom but you and Him. In a church service you can say, "This is not for me, perhaps it is for someone else in the sanctuary." You can't say that in this classroom of private prayer. The whole class time will be custom-designed to meet you with your particular needs, to equip you in your unique calling. Here God will fine-tune you. Here He will draw all the foolishness, jesting and frivolity out of you. Here He will slowly mold you into His likeness. He may start with a chisel but eventually will only need sandpaper to make you into what you should become.

In this classroom He will teach you how to hear His voice. Jesus said: *my sheep hear my voice, and they follow me.* And here, by your being left alone with Him, He will teach you what hinders you from hearing His voice. He will teach you as quickly as you surrender all to Him, yet slowly enough for you not to miss a lesson. He will teach you what it means to be yoked together with Him and to walk at His pace and in His time.

Of course in this effort of your getting alone with God each day, the devil fights you every step of the way. Practically every time he will give you a rational, even a somewhat religious excuse to delay it. Resist the devil! Remember the devil is a deceiver and a liar. It should be understood that if you go this way, many people will not understand you, many will be upset with you. But God will be happy with you and He will grant you the joy of obedience, the joy of intimacy and the joy of anticipation for the great marriage feast of the Lamb.

Finally, if you missed the last 10, 20 or 40 years of your life in meeting alone with God on a daily basis, start doing it now. Because of this neglect, some of you have lost your children and grandchildren to the world. Some of you have endured many hardships and disappointments. Some of you have suffered financial crises and marital breakup because you did not meet alone with God. There is a high price to be paid for neglecting God. Some of your lives revolved around church, around reading, around getting ahead instead of around God. Friend, beloved friend, repent and Jesus will be glad to forgive

you. Start doing the right thing now. You will never regret it. *Jacob was left alone...with God.*

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