

Don't Leave Home Without Him!

Refuse to Leave Your Savior Behind!

I know that might sound basic but I have to say it! Why? Because it's our nature to try and boil everything down to just a few principles. We want some kind of 'System' or 'Check-list' that we can work in our own strength to live this Christian life... but God won't give us one! He didn't design the Christian life to work that way. We actually do need Him!

But people keep trying to live the good life instead of the God life... and it won't work... not for long... and it wears you out. Another description of it, or label for it would be 'Exhausted Christian Living.'

John 15:5 tell us "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

- In what way(s) have you been guilty of trying to live the Christian life without Him?

- When are you most guilty of forgetting Him and leaving Him behind... even in the midst of your spiritual disciplines (like Bible reading or Scripture memory, etc.)

Mark it Down! Biblical principles divorced from the God of those principles will not produce the results we're looking for. And you can knock yourself out in the flesh... and work, work, work, work, work but it won't make up for the absence of God in your life.

Wayne Brown describes the problem this way...

"I am similarly convinced that trust in the security of Christian principles is being confused with faith in God. Rather than engage a faith that requires, well, a little too much faith (not to mention the inherent wrestling), we find safe harbor in the surrogate stability of Right Christian Living. To allow God's uncontrollable ways to work their power in our lives is so much more refreshing and inspiring and, yes, less predictable. This is the way of faith, which is the very heart of the Christian's journey.

In the guise of good stewardship and sound thinking, our faith is fashioning for itself a well-oiled hamster wheel. Though secure and productive (it spins well), the

contraption leaves little to the imagination. Granted, for the harried traveler nothing is more calming than the hum of a spinning wheel. But nothing is more numbing.

To let go is to lose control, to be eaten alive, and that is not acceptable. But let me state it clearly: the impulse to control - to get it all lined up - is often a manifestation of fear, not faith.

We might pump up the principles and send them floating overhead like the Goodyear blimp with the words Right Christian Living branded bold and tall on its shimmering skin. But the fiery sparks of real life always bring it back to earth, sometimes in a nose dive, Hindenburg fashion. The beguiled Christians falling from the spiritual dirigible as it tilts, groans, and bursts into flames, often land on my couch. 'Why didn't it work?' they ask. 'Right Christian Living was supposed to keep me aloft...freed from my childhood hurt, rising above my bent toward sin, successful in my marriage and employment.' I usually wait a few sessions before suggesting that perhaps the ship's pilot was someone other than God.

It didn't work, I then tell them, because principles - Christian or not - will always fail you. At some point, your 'decency' will spring a leak; your 'good parenting' will buckle under the weight of human frailty; the shocking crack in your 'best intentions' will reveal a darker motive. You have been looking to these things to save you, not guide you, I say. Sometimes they understand this, and sometimes they don't. And sometimes they ask for a book on how to get the blimp up and running again." *Water from Stone*, M. Wayne Brown, pp. 103, 104 & 105

- Has your 'blimp' of 'right Christian living' crashed yet? What were (are) the circumstances that brought it about?
- What do you think God wants you to learn / understand about this?
- What changes do you need to make in your thinking and actions to avoid living this way in the future?
- When are you most tempted to try and get the 'blimp' back up in the air again?