

# Experiencing God Adjusting Your Life

Luke 9:23

August 27, 2016

## Today

We are coming to the end of our series on Experiencing God. Last week we discussed Crisis of Belief and how faith is most clearly demonstrated through obedience / action. The crisis of belief you face may be very easy. The hard part comes when you have to actually adjust your life and be obedient to the call.

This week we will explore action a little bit more.

### Action = Surrender, Adjustments, Obedience and Dependence.

As you walk with God and begin to surrender and adjust your life to Him, He gives you the power to become obedient to Him. You cannot continue life as usual or stay where you are and go with God at the same time.

### EXAMPLES:

- **Genesis 6** – Noah could not continue life as usual and still build the ark.
- **Exodus 3** – Moses could not stay in the desert and go to Egypt too.
- **Genesis 12:1-8** – Abraham could not stay in Ur and go to Canaan.
- **1 Samuel 16:1-13** – David had to leave his sheep in order to become king.
- **Matthew 4:18-22** – Peter, James and John have to leave their fishing boats to follow Jesus.
- **Acts 9:1-19** – Saul/Paul had to completely change the direction of his life in order to preach the gospels to the Gentiles.

They all had to make huge adjustments in order to be obedient to God.

The most significant story of surrender, adjustment, obedience and dependence is the story of Jesus.

He had to empty Himself of the prerogatives of the King of the Universe, give up the praise of angels and become obedient to the will of His Father (even death on a cross) in order to redeem you and me. Talk about adjustment!!

Anytime you go from where you are to where God is working, from your way of thinking to God's way of thinking – a MAJOR adjustment will be required. And yet, despite all the adjustments Jesus made for us, we still feel like we don't have to adjust our lives to Him.

I am not talking about adjusting your life to a set of doctrines or beliefs – that's easy to do and not at all costly. I am talking about adjusting your life to God. That is not easy and can be VERY costly because He will likely ask you to give up things you hold dear – possessions, family, friends, opinions, etc. – anything that is a barrier to your relationship with Him and anything that prevents you from participating with Him in His redemptive plans has to go:

- **Ellen White {ST, Nov 21, 1892 par 4}**: We cannot retain self and yet be filled with the fullness of God. We must be emptied of self. If heaven is gained by us at last, it will be only through the renunciation of self, and the receiving of the mind of Christ. Pride and self-sufficiency must be crucified, and the vacuum supplied with the Spirit and power of God. Are we willing to pay the price required of us for eternal life? Are we ready to sit down and count the cost, and conclude that heaven is worth the sacrifice of dying to self, of having our will brought into perfect conformity with the will of God? Until we are willing, the transforming grace of God will not be manifested upon us. When we present our emptied nature to God, he will by his Holy Spirit supply the vacuum made by the renunciation of self, and give us of his fullness. The Lord would not have us perish. He would have us consecrate to His service all there is of us; for he desires to bless us more than we desire to be blessed. He would have us abide in Christ, receive his blessing, and diffuse it to others while we live, that we may enjoy a blessed eternity. Life is short, but eternity is endless.
- **Dietrich Bonhoeffer {Cost of Discipleship}**: Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price for which the merchant will sell all that he has.... It is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him.

Such grace is costly because it calls a man to follow and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin and it is grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of His Son: 'ye were bought with a price' and what had cost God so much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for your life.....

Costly grace confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus; it comes as a word of forgiveness to the broken spirit and contrite heart. Grace is costly because it compels a man to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him; it is grace because Jesus say: 'My yoke is easy and burden is light.

- **JC Ryle {HOLINESS}**: In conclusion, let every reader of this paper think seriously, *whether his religion costs him anything at present*. Very likely it costs you nothing. Very probably it neither costs you trouble, nor time, nor thought, nor care, nor pains, nor reading, nor praying, nor self-denial, nor conflict, nor working, nor labour of any kind. Now mark what I say. Such a religion as this will never save your soul. It will never give you peace while you live, nor hope while you die. It will not support you in the day of affliction, nor cheer you in the hour of death. A religion which costs nothing is worth nothing. Awake before it is too late. Awake and repent. Awake and be converted. Awake and believe. Awake and pray. Rest not till you can give a satisfactory answer to my question, "What does it cost?"
- **2 Corinthians 11:22-33** Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. <sup>23</sup> Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. <sup>26</sup> *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; <sup>27</sup> *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. <sup>28</sup> Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure upon me *of* concern for all the churches. <sup>29</sup> Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? <sup>30</sup> If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. <sup>31</sup> The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. <sup>32</sup> In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, <sup>33</sup> and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.

Sometimes obedience to God's will lead to opposition (maybe even death). Obedience is costly.

If you want to be a follower of Christ you have no choice. You must be willing to leave where you are or what you are doing to follow Him. Those adjustments may be major or minor, but it will require surrender, obedience and dependence.

**God is not looking for ways to make your life difficult; however, He intends to be the Lord of your life – He requires absolute surrender.**

- **Rich Young Ruler (Luke 18:18-27)**: The rich young ruler desired eternal life, but he didn't want to make any adjustment to Jesus – he refused to do what was necessary to obtain it. His wealth and position were more important.
- **Elisha (1 Kings 19:15-21)**: Elisha was asked to leave his career and family in order to follow the call of God. Elisha was so committed to make those adjustments that he burned his farm equipment and killed/cooked his cattle, which fed the people of his community. As a result of Elisha's obedience God worked through him to perform some of the greatest miracles in the Old Testament.
- **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**: "On the morning of the day between 5 and 6 o'clock the prisoners..... were taken from their cells and the verdicts of the court marshal were read out to them. Through the half-open door in one room of the huts I saw pastor Bonhoeffer, before taking off his prison garb, kneeling on the floor praying fervently to God. I was most deeply moved by the way this lovable man prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer. At the place of execution, he again said a short prayer and then climbed the steps to the gallows, brave and composed. His death ensued after a few seconds. In the almost fifty years that I worked as a doctor; I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God"
- **Oswald Chambers**: There is a chapter in the book about his life called, "Dark Night of the Soul". In the chapter the writer recounts a period in Oswald Chambers life when he experienced a great struggle over his life's work, the direction God wanted to take him, and the surrender of his life to God. This period lasted for 4 years – "*Finally, the long night was over and peace had come. The citadel of his heart had fallen, not to a conquering Christ, but to the gentle knocking of a wounded hand..... Chambers crisis of full surrender to God in 1901 profoundly altered his life. The things he once held dear were willingly sacrificed and traded for complete reliance upon God. "all I have to do is come as a spiritual pauper, not ashamed to beg, to let go of right to myself, it is never Do, do and you'll be with the Lord, but be, be, and I will do through you. It is a case of 'hands up' and letting go, and then entire reliance on Him"*"

**It is impossible to underestimate the power of one life that is completely surrendered and obedient to God.**

This brings us to the truth that all that God is asking of you is not something that He is asking you to do independent of Him.

- **John 15:5** - I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
- **1 Corinthians 15:10** - But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.
- **Galatians 2:20** - I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

**Remember, the God who calls you is the same God who will enable you to do His will. This is where the relationship becomes vital. It is through relationship that you come to rely totally on Him.**

- You desire transformation.
- You surrender your life to Him.
- You believe that He has promised to complete in you the work He has started.
- You understand that apart from Him you can do nothing.
- You understand that through your relationship His plans and purposed will be accomplished in and through you.

It is only because of the relationship each had with God that I could read the above quotes to you. Without adjustment, obedience, surrendered and dependent lives, we would have never heard of Ellen White, Dietrich Bonhoeffer or Oswald Chambers. But because they chose adjustment, obedience, surrender and dependence on God those three people alone have impacted and changed and challenged MILLIONS of lives. Through their fidelity to God MILLIONS of people have come into a saving relationship with Jesus.

God does not want blind, deaf or mute followers. He wants people who have counted the cost of following Him. Who have decided that to live without Him is too high a price to pay and that whatever the earthly cost may be is well worth eternity. It will require adjustment, obedience, surrender and dependence. Those things come as we become intentional about our relationship with God.

**Is it worth it? You have to answer that question for yourself.**

**I hope your answer is yes and that along with that great cloud of witnesses spoken of in Hebrews 12 you can say:**

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, <sup>9</sup> and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, <sup>10</sup> that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; <sup>11</sup> in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. <sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained *it*, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. – **Philippians 3: 7-12**