

CHAPTER 8

IN PROCESS

Considering all that has been said, why do so few of us shine like Jesus or Paul? Why are so few seen as examples of Christ? Why do we Christians look more like lightning bolts, shining brightly one minute and gone the next? We have moments of greatness where others see his face in ours and then, as if a light were switched off, we have nothing to offer.

I believe this seeming contradiction happens because we are in process. No great masterpiece ends the way it starts. We are not all that we were designed to be. The Master is at work as we speak. Problems start when we get uncomfortable or impatient with the process, thinking it is taking too long or going the wrong way. We don't like where we are or who we are because we don't see what he wants us to be. We start to look around and compare ourselves with others, trying to find out what they have or do that has gotten them "further" than us. This is poison straight from the enemy. You can't compare yourself with others. They are not the mirror for you to look into. You are his masterpiece and so are they, but with completely different

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purposes. Giving in to this pattern will cause you to either try to succeed on your own or give up, thinking the goal is impossible.

It boils down to the question we all have to answer: “Do I trust him?”

God is patient. If we get uncomfortable and back out of the process, he will wait, ready to pick it up again when we are ready. He is the Author of the process. It doesn't happen overnight or at the snap of a finger. In a microwave culture where everything we want is a click away, it is getting harder and harder to embrace God's long-term process.

David is one of many examples of the Master showing mercy and grace. Like David, you are more than able to have a great relationship with the Lord *if* you are “after his heart.” David made mistakes that would have doomed him today. He would have lost his ministry, heck, his life, when it was made clear that he committed adultery and then had the women's husband murdered (2 Samuel 11). When is the last time you hired a hit man to cover up your mistakes?

Yet we find our Daddy calling David back because deep within David was a desire to please the King. When our heart is bent on pleasing God we cause him joy and excitement even when we stumble. David's son Solomon learned this when he penned the proverb a righteous man falls seven times, and yet gets up (Proverbs 24:16). If Jesus loved us before we even tried to do right, how much more so when we turn to him, accept what he has done for us, and live to be who he asks us to be? If you

find yourself in this place, get up, repent, and move on in the love of your Daddy.

Masterpieces cost an incredible price and take time to create. It took Michelangelo more than four years to paint the Sistine Chapel. It cost him his eyesight and agonizing back pain because he had to paint bent over backward. Mount Rushmore took fourteen years to finish, and when there was a problem they destroyed eighteen months' worth of work so the masterpiece would look exactly as the master intended. What do we do when the Master seems to be going backward in our lives?

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The cost was absorbed by the master in these examples, and so it is with us. Our Master has paid the price to make us great in him. And yet the enemy of our souls has done a great job of getting us to focus on the process instead of the Author. The Master says we must simply set our eyes on him (Hebrews 12:2). Just look at him.

He died for you!

He lives for you!

His whole desire and affection is set on you!

Everything that is in your Master's heart for you is greatness, success, hope, and beauty. He wants to fulfill all of our dreams and ideas as they line up with what he has fashioned us for (Psalm 37:4).

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Enjoy the process. He does. He looks down with joy and excitement as you commit to walking in a relationship with him. Embrace the walk, not focused on the results of it but the course itself. He wants to share life with us, not just stand by molding us and making us until one day he can finally love us or embrace us. It is called grace, and we walk in it. It empowers us to be all the Master has called us to be. It is there for us *if* we fail, not so we have an excuse to fail.

With a slight twist of the Word we have taken the bait of the enemy and focused on all the have-tos and missed out on the reasons why we do what we do. Scriptures like “He must increase, but I must decrease” have been twisted to mean we must be poor and bankrupt to really honor God. Instead of seeing the life and joy that comes as we focus on our relationship with the Master, all we see is the price. With our sight blurred and our focus off, all we see are the

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rules and regulations we are to obey instead of the love relationship we are to live in. We look at things that have

to be endured or given up, and we don’t really see value because we have been blinded to the love and care of our Master.

What if nature started doing this? If the caterpillar said, “Hey, this process takes too long and I kinda like this crawling thing. I can get where others can’t. I’m not going to go through this transformation; I’m going to stay just like I am.” He doesn’t realize the greatness

and beauty that await him on the other side of the metamorphosis.

It seems ridiculous, but that is exactly what we do when we accept the lie of the enemy that the price is too high. When we focus on the things we have to give up or miss out on, we are blind to the love of our Daddy, which is beyond anything we have ever seen or imagined.

Some, out of duty and requirement, have given up things and “missed out” on life, but they regret it and blame God for holding them back from their dreams and desires. Just like the son who stayed with his father in the parable we call “The Prodigal Son.” Never understanding that everything the Father has is at their disposal.

Come on, get this! You have access to all the Father is and all he possesses. It is his pleasure to give us the kingdom. The Master has a desire for us to soar.

When we embrace the process, then words like *we are crucified with Christ and yet we still live* take on another meaning altogether. We no longer stop at the cost but see the result, namely, that we are alive again because Christ lives in us (Galatians 2:20). God is not focused on the dying that has to take place but on the life that comes forth through it. That is why Jesus says, How can a grain of wheat bear fruit unless it first falls to the earth and dies? (John 12:24). After all, how can a masterpiece that is dead be put out on display? If death is the process to his life, then far be it for me to try to redefine it. We are to be crucified so we can live a resurrected life, an abundant and lavish life, full of the love and the power of the Master himself.

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In the following chapters we will go over the process itself. But far too often we focus on it and play right into the hand of the enemy by adding a bunch of regulations to our lives without reason or explanation. It's critical to adjust our focus back onto God and his love and care before mentioning how we are to be. Please note I said "be" not "do." We are to be Christians, Christ-like, not do religion through duties or actions. Jesus walked and talked with the Father; he didn't leave us here to do it some other way. Everything we will discuss will come down to our Daddy doing everything to teach us how to walk and talk with him. He is so good to direct our steps and love on us even when we are not aware he is doing it.

We don't give up anything compared to what he has given for us. He made us able to come and lie back against our Daddy. We are his kids and he would do it all again. This is not some guilt trip to get us to conform but the reality of how blessed we are. Anything our Father demands of us is for our good. Anything! I pray that God opens hearts to receive the truth no matter what the cost. Bottom line—he is worth all of it.