

Following Through

Happy Sabbath to all.

This week, I have begun to read through the eighth and final part of the Letters to Rachel documents. Before I actually get into the content of that last letter, though, which I will probably do next week, I want to have a related, preliminary study in which I talk a little bit about commitment.

As I began to proofread Letter 8, I was struck by the first couple of paragraphs that I sent, and while I can't remember at this point the details of the emails she sent in reply, I can more or less tell the basic idea based on my own responses.

In the very first part of the letter, I encourage Rachel to write to me with any questions she might have about what she was reading. Of course, I had suggested she do this all along, but it was here – near the end, when I was discussing those particular passages that are critical to Adventism (e.g., Daniel and The Revelation) – that I was really hoping she would grab a hold of the “vision.” By that I mean, who she was being called to be in Yahshua, where she as an individual was to fit into the pattern of prophecy.

Everyone has a role to play in these last days, but we will remain ignorant of those roles, and we will be led astray by that ignorance, if we are not diligent to follow through on our commitments made to the Father and Son.

The reason why the eighth Letter to Rachel is the last is because very shortly after that, she stopped asking questions, and responding altogether. I do not remember the particulars of why she stopped studying with us, but one of the factors that heavily contributed was that she became distracted, caught up in the things of the world. Because she did not nourish her curiosity about spiritual things, praying for wisdom and understanding, that curiosity was taken from her, as surely as if it was a “talent” that she had buried.

We all know the parable from the Gospels – those who do not make use of, and improve, those gifts they have received from Yah will have them taken away. If asked, “What are your talents,” one might tend to respond with something obvious, easily seen, like singing, writing, speaking, teaching, and so on. These are all wonderful talents, and ought indeed be improved and refined for the Master's use... but equally important are those characteristics that directly contribute to the purification of our own souls. These include things like child-like faith, simplicity, and, as mentioned above, curiosity.

Curiosity about the things of Yahweh is one of the best gifts we have received from our Father. Why do I say this? Because it is not the natural state of the carnal man to be inquisitive about divine matters. We have read these verses before, but I quote them here for a slightly new take on the concept:

“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after Yah.” (Romans 3:11)

“Yahweh looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek Elohim. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” (Psalm 14:2, 3)

We have used those verses before in regard to the “once-saved-always-saved” doctrine, explaining that while this is the natural state of humanity after the fall, the knowledge of the Son of Yahweh gives mankind the ability to choose whether to heed the call to righteousness or not, for it is also written, with equal inspiration and truth:

“Seek Yahweh, and ye shall live; lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel.” (Amos 5:6)

The gift of spiritual curiosity is one of the evidences indicating the falsehood of the claim that human beings do not truly possess free will. While it is not “natural” to fallen man, because the things of the Almighty are “foolishness unto him,” (1Cor 2:14) those that hear the words of the prophets, and those who hear the words of the messengers – even to this day, are given grace to deny their flesh, and begin to walk in the Spirit. In Christ, because of Christ, human beings are free to choose. Yahshua Himself taught this, saying to His Father, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” (John 17:20, 21)

This is an exciting passage to me in this context of free will, because what this tells me, really, is that evangelists are more than just messengers of the Christian religion. Those who speak the Word of Yah to others are really agents of human freedom. What they bear is truly the “good news,” because it is in the very hearing of the words of the Gospel, that One died for us so that we can live, in those very words is the power to cast off the slavery of the flesh, and choose – for the first time – a destiny different than that which was written for us in Eden.

Even before one is fully born again, Yah calls to those who would be willing to walk the path of righteousness, and He reveals His grace “to all men.” (Titus 2:11) This is a matter for rejoicing.

Now, as I said, spiritual curiosity is one of the greatest gifts we have received from our Father, because it is practical evidence that one is receiving grace. It is curiosity that leads us to read the Scriptures for learning and not merely duty. It is curiosity that leads to sincere prayers for healing, for wisdom, for knowledge, for growth. It is our curiosity that prompts our Father to share new light with His people, leading to grace abounding more than sin.

The death of spiritual curiosity in an individual is the death of spirituality itself; therefore, let us never quench that spirit of seeking after the things of Yah. Let us not leave questions unasked, or desire for knowledge unfulfilled. And in all these things, let us nurture this great gift.

With regard to Yah's Remnant People, the principle here is one of following through. Curiosity is perhaps one of the clearer examples, but we ought to apply the same diligence, the same persistence, to every gift, and every opportunity for growth.

The Church, the living representative of Yahshua's Body on the earth, is self-evaluating, and self-correcting. It is the Body of Yahshua that is given wisdom regarding food and drink, holy days, and other religious observances. We have mechanisms given to us by the Master, such as Gospel Order, New Moon Days, and principles for reproof and exhortation, that aid us in the perfection of character. We will, in short, have the opportunity to correct ourselves when we err, and to facilitate the correction of others.

As we receive correction, and sanctified advice, it is our responsibility to accept these testimonies with a loving, teachable spirit, and then to act on them. But too often within Christianity – and I speak generally, not with particular focus on the CSDA faith, the response to receiving correction is, “I will pray about it.”

Unfortunately, this is often the end of the process. When something is revealed to us, it is indeed our responsibility to take it to the Father in prayer... but just like the nurturing of curiosity, we must also be diligent in our prayers until we receive an answer, healing.

It is not enough to say, “A brother has showed me this fault, and I have prayed about it,” and then leave it at that. This is especially the case if the offending behavior is repeated, but even if it is not, one or two prayers do not constitute genuine repentance for something that we have been convinced is contrary to the Faith of Yahshua. We are to pray until we are convinced we have been healed of our revealed defect, and then we are to go forward in faith, knowing that this thing has been put far from us. Anything less than that is not the kind of restoration that is truly in accord with the Born Again experience. When Yahshua heals us, we are healed indeed.

If one says to you, “Brother, sister, I see a fault in you, and I believe it is necessary for you to take this up in prayer,” this ought to be seen as the voice of Yah to us, and as serious as a doctor saying, “Take this medicine, for you are ill.” And, having begun in prayer, follow through until you receive what you need from the Almighty.

Now, I am not supporting the concept here that the healing of Yahweh comes after a slow, methodical process. When we lay claim to His healing in faith, at that moment we are healed. What we pray for, ultimately, is an understanding and knowledge of that healing, which is more obvious in some matters than others. By this I mean, if the defect is something that should be done, but is not, then the healing is immediately obvious... we begin to do that which we lacked. But if the defect is something that only appears occasionally, or under particular circumstances, then we would not wish to wait until the “opportunity” arises before we can testify, “I have been healed.” In such a case, the healing must be accepted by faith, as a result of diligent prayer, and then it is revealed when the behavior changes.

It is written, “So Naaman [the leper] came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, ‘Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.’

“But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, ‘Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Yahweh his Elohim, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean?’ So he turned and went away in a rage.

“And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, ‘My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, “Wash, and be clean?”’

“Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.”
(2Kings 5:9-14)

Sometimes, we must dip ourselves seven times in order to be healed. Yah has His own timing, and He will sometimes watch and wait until our souls are properly prepared to receive what He has for us. But for our part, we must make ourselves always available to receive.

Now, there are two ways to look at that. The nominal Christian position is that we keep praying about our sins, while committing them, and then maybe, someday, we will stop doing them. But in the Bible, Naaman did not leave the Jordan until he was clean. He remained in the place of Yah’s appointed healing, dipping himself all seven times, until he saw the change that had been promised. This is the proper model for prayers that ascend more than once. We remain “in the prayer” while we await Yah’s reply, and this gives Satan no opportunity to interfere.

So then, if we are walking in faith, we must nourish our curiosity about our Father, and be always seeking His Kingdom, His Righteousness, and His Light. If we are exposed to a defect in our character, whether it is neglect or an active habit, we must be diligent in prayer, laying claim on healing, until we know with perfect assurance that we are cured... and also walking IN that healing as we do so.

Now, these two matters – curiosity and prayers for healing – are related in more ways than the underlying principle. A single cherished sin, a single un-confessed or unhealed defect in character, is sufficient to shut us off from grace. Some have said, “Why is this so? Why would a loving Father turn away from His children for a single unresolved transgression?”

The fact of the matter is this, that single cherished sin, and that single un-confessed or unhealed defect in character, leads to shame... and shame kills intimacy. Look at how this played out in the very beginning, and with regard to a single unresisted temptation. Just after our first father had submitted to temptation and eaten the forbidden fruit, “Yahweh Elohim called unto Adam,

and said unto him, 'Where art thou?' And he said, 'I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.'" (Gen 3:9, 10)

If we are not diligent in prayer, if we are not assured of healing from every least blemish on our perfect reflection of Yahshua's character, then we cannot freely approach the Throne, but will hide from the Father, and this will, inevitably, kill our curiosity. As I have said, the death of curiosity is the death of the spiritual life... the death of seeking after righteousness.

Let us, therefore, commit ourselves to following through on our blessings. What gifts we have, let us nourish them in the service of our Father. When corrected, let us do more than simply accept the testimony, but let us take it diligently, resolutely, to our Savior, and let us, like the woman who caught hold of His robe, know that His virtue is dispensed from Heaven on our behalf, that we should be drawn near, and abide forever in acceptance, and everlasting glory.

Creation 7th day Adventism
flyinglecreature@hotmail.com