

# “WORKING TOGETHER WITH GOD”

{LESSON NUMBER 1} {7/25/2010}

## “WHEN GOD BECOMES INTERESTED IN OUR DESIRES”

- I. When a believer wills to do the will of God in his or her life, great things will begin to happen.
  - A. Yes, something strange happens as that person enters into the intimacy of friendship with God.
    1. God becomes interested in their lives, and He begins to work to renew their minds in order that their desires will come to pass. Why?
    2. Because God is interested in our lives and considers us His children and desires to share a part in our lives.
    3. Our responsibility is to invite God to co-labor with us in order that we may make this a better world.
  - B. By now I hope that most of you understand that the normal Christian life is a partnership between God and each one of you.
    1. It was the Apostle Paul who in 2 Cor. 6:1 F.F. translation implied that we are co-laborers with Christ: **“And working together with Him, we also encourage you not to accept the gift of God in vain.”**
    2. We are partners in the work of heaven on this earthly sphere.
    3. The problem as I see it is that many Christians have a one-dimensional perspective of this idea of co-laboring with God.
      - a. They think it’s a robotic interplay between themselves and God in which their will is moved down to zero and His will completely overtakes their thoughts and desires.
      - b. They see themselves as some type of remote controlled being, totally under the control of a God who sits in heaven and works out their lives.
    4. The truth is, this is exactly the opposite of what the Bible says.
      - a. In fact, our ideas and desires and dreams have a monumental influence on how God carries out His plan in this world.

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- b. It’s important that we see that we are co-laborers, meaning that apart from Christ our work is not complete, and at the same time, amazingly, His work on earth is not complete without us.
  - c. God looks to His children as contributors to what He is doing, not just robots carrying out His ideas.
  - d. I submit that God is actually interested in your desires and dreams and has opened up His plan on this planet to your input and influence.
5. To the religious this sounds almost blasphemous.
6. Many of us, including myself, have prayed prayers in the past that say, “Oh God, take over my will!”
- a. I totally agree with Bill Johnson who said, *“That is easily one of the stupidest prayers anyone can pray.”*
  - b. It totally devalues our will, which is one of the greatest things God ever created.
  - c. Your will is so valuable that He wouldn’t violate it even at the cost of His own Son.
7. You and I are the pearls of great price. Think on this, without an independent will, we become animated playthings, dolls, programmed toys.
- a. But with a free will, we become lovers of God and willing co-laborers with Him.
  - b. And when we co-labor with Him, our ideas can literally change the course of history.

***{LESSON NUMBER 2} {8/1/2010}***

## “WHEN MEN CO-LABOR WITH GOD”

C. The Bible shows us how co-laboring works.

- 1. God made His people to **“be fruitful and multiply,”** and He did this through the new birth.

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- 2.** In John 1:12-13 the Word states “**...children of God...who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**”
    - a.** It would be very difficult for me to try to explain just how special this is, but I will tell you what it encompasses.
  - 3.** As Son and Daughters of God, He intends for us to establish His Kingdom on this earth, and is willing to co-labor with us in doing so.
    - a.** God could easily take dominion of this earth in a moment, but His glory and love are most fully expressed when His rule is extended through His covenant relationship with those He made in His image.
  - 4.** When God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden, He commissioned them to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it (Gen. 1:28).
    - a.** There can be no doubt, two people were not enough to rule the planet.
    - b.** God wanted the earth filled with those made in His image who would co-labor with Him and bring the earth under the influence of the King and His Kingdom.
  - 5.** At the creation God let Adam name all of the animals (see Gen. 2:19).
    - a.** Names in those days were more than just cute labels given to distinguish the creatures.
    - b.** Names were assigned according to character. They indicated what kind of being this would be.
  - 6.** When God gave Adam the privilege and responsibility of naming all of the animals, He was inviting him to assign character and nature to those creatures he would spend his life with.
  - 7.** God created it all; Adam added his creative expression by giving the animals certain natures. That’s co-laboring.
- D.** Moses presents another example of a man who co-labored with God.
- 1.** Here was a man who had a very intimate relationship and fellowship with God.

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- a. He experienced God face-to face, even mouth-to mouth.
2. Let’s look and see how that relationship worked?
  - a. In Exodus 32:7-10 we read; **“Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’... I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.”**
  - b. Moses responded, **“Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, ‘He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom you swore by Your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.”**
  - c. God’s response? **“So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people (Exodus 32:14).**
3. This story is a breathtaking interaction. God wasn’t playing some psychological game. He wasn’t using reverse psychology to steer Moses to the right conclusion.

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- a. What was happening? He was interacting with Moses as a friend.
  - b. This was a conversation between intimates, not servant and master.
  - c. Jesus affirmed that we have this kind of relationship with God throughout John 14, 15, and 16: **No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you (John 15:15).**
  - d. **If you ask anything in My name, I will do it (John 14:14). If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you (John 15:7).**
4. Servants aren't co-laborers, friends are. There are major differences between the mentality of each.
- a. A servant is task-oriented, wanting to know exactly what is required so he or she can do it.
  - b. But the servant doesn't know the master's business from the inside.
  - c. This is hard for us to understand because we don't have servants today.
  - d. But imagine that you did have people living in your household who served you and carried out your will.
  - e. A servant would know certain things about you, like your hobbies, whether you liked going to baseball games or out fishing, what you liked for dinner, what time you wanted coffee in the morning or evening,
  - f. But a servant would not share personal times with you.
  - g. He wouldn't comfort you in your down times; you wouldn't invite the servant in to discuss family problems or major business decisions, or even minor ones.

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5. God has elevated us from servants to friends.
  - a. He invites us into a relationship that goes beyond employer-employee interactions.
  - b. He is willing for us to engage Him...to change His mind, to direct His ideas, to share in His unfolding creative work.
  - c. He doesn't lack for ideas. He just enjoys our participation.
6. The way I see it is that when servants become friends of God they don't lose their humility and obedience, but something does change and that is their relational perspective.
  - a. Let me explain; there is a point in our relationship with God where obedience is no longer the primary issue.
  - b. To some of you that probably sounds blasphemous, but it's really a deep truth God wants to reveal to his children in the church.
  - c. The truth is, there are levels of relationship and fellowship with God that many of us have not conceived, much less experienced.
  - d. And, until we do, our co-laboring with Him will be more limited than it needs to be.
7. Please remember, communication with the Spirit was the secret to Christ's ministry, and it is the secret to ours.

***{LESSON NUMBER 3} {8/8/2010}***

## **“RADICAL OBEDIENCE”**

- II. When we learn to co-labor with Jesus we bring Him on the inside of us and that brings victory inside of us, because it replaces un-renewed patterns of thinking and behavior with those of the Kingdom.
  - A. This promotes “radical obedience” and this is the perspective that enables us to hold nothing back from God, to live passionately and sacrificially in our daily lives, just as Jesus did on this earth.
    1. Unless we are walking in radical obedience, we will not make radical efforts in battle. We will back out of them.

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2. There are a few reason that the Church does not need to fail in their efforts to work together with God.
3. First we need to remember that the apostle Paul indicated to the church members at Corinth that they were **“laborers together with God.”** (1Corinthians 3:9a)
  - a. To that same body of saints, in his second epistle he said, **“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain”** (2 Corinthians 6:1).
4. I submit to you that it is indeed a great privilege to be regarded as **“laborers together with God,”** and to be counted as His friends.
  - a. And further, it behooves us to be found still laboring with God when Jesus returns, so that we will have, **“...receive not the grace of God in vain.”**
5. The last thing we should want as the New Testament Church is for God to consider it a waste that He entrusted us to be His co-laborers.
  - a. For that not to happen, it will take **“radical obedience”** on our parts in doing His Will.
  - b. What is that will? On earth as in heaven!
6. Believe me, it will take **“radical obedience”** on our parts to bring heaven’s reality on this earth.
  - a. This kind of thinking will bring victory inside of us. Why?
  - b. Because it replaces un-renewed patterns of thinking and behavior with those of the Kingdom.

### **“DAVID WAS A DREAMER OF HIS DESIRES”**

- B.** King David was a man after God’s heart and he had one of the most extraordinary examples of dreaming and co-laboring with God of anyone in the Bible.
1. He wanted to build a wonderful temple for God in Jerusalem.
  2. David was not allowed to build the temple but without David it would

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not have been built by Solomon.

3. I Kings chapter eight recounts the building of the temple, which was one of the most significant events in the Bible.
4. At the Temple’s dedication, Solomon said, **Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David, and with His hand has fulfilled it, saying, “Since the day that I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house, that My name might be there; but I chose David to be over My people Israel.”** Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple for the name of the **Lord God of Israel (1 Kings 8:15-17).**
5. What was God saying here? God was telling the world, “I didn’t choose a city, I chose a man, and the temple was in the heart of the man.”
  - a. It’s like He was saying, “The Temple wasn’t my idea. David was my idea.”
  - b. This is incredible! David’s creativity and desires wrote history because God embraced them.
  - c. This concept is absolutely foreign to most of our way of thinking.
6. Religion has taught us to wait for instructions and work hard to suppress our own ideas.
  - a. Religion has so brain washed us that we now think any thing we do for God must flow directly from the Throne and be carried out to the letter, as if from a heavenly instruction booklet.
7. God’s approach to His children is different than the above ideas.
  - a. He has made Himself vulnerable to the desires of His people.
  - b. History unfolds according to what we do, what we pray, what we don’t do and what we don’t pray.
  - c. Jesus gave us Kingdom principles, and it is these principles that set up our parameters.

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- d. Our new parameter states: “Dreamers! Come! Let’s dream together and write the story of human history.”

### “DESIRE”

C. Christians sometimes get the idea that if they “desire” something, it must not be of God.

1. Religion has brought us to the place as if we serve a barbaric God who wants to wipe out anything that springs from our own hearts.
  - a. On the contrary, God is excited when it comes to your desires.
  - b. He wants to see what makes you tick. Yes, He made you and knows everything about you, but He can only commune with you as you open yourself up in fellowship with Him.
  - c. This is where pleasure is derived for Him, when dreams and desires spark dialogue and interaction, and the co-laboring begins.
  - d. Psalms 37:4 supports this idea: **“Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”**
2. Bill Johnson made the statement: “Like many pastors, I foolishly taught that if you delighted yourself in the Lord, He would change your desires by telling you what to desire.”
  - a. God doesn’t mean that at all!
  - b. That verse literally means that God wants to be impacted by what you think and dream. God is after your desires. He is after intimacy with you.
  - c. He has opened Himself to the desires of His people. He likes going back and forth with His children, throwing out His idea and waiting for your response.
  - d. To support his idea I want you to remember, Jesus even said, **“Whoever you forgive, I forgive.”**
  - e. Co-laboring is a huge aspect of ministry that many of us simply do not understand, because true friendship with God is so foreign to us.

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3. The Church’s misunderstanding of this idea seems to manifest because they don’t know which of their desires are from God and which are carnal.
  - a. Maybe I can shed some light on this. The very word *desire* is made up of the prefix *de* meaning “of,” and *sire* meaning “the Father.”
  - b. Desire is, by nature, of the Father.
4. The problem as I see it is, before we come to Jesus, our desires are corrupted and spring from what we commune with.
  - a. In the natural state we sometimes commune with greed, and naturally our desire will be greedy.
  - b. If we commune with pornography, our desires will be perverse.
  - c. If we commune with anger over a past hurt, our desire will be for revenge.
5. Why is it this way? Most people fail to realize that thinking about something is inviting the essence of that something into their experience.