

You Are Important To God!

Do you remember what it was like when someone you esteemed of great importance wanted to spend some time with you? A most lasting impression was when my tenth grade World History teacher asked me to stay after school one day to talk to me. I sat at my desk as this lady of dignity walked over to me and with tears in her eyes, said, "Jonathan, what are you doing?" She began telling me the potential she saw, but warned that what I needed in life might not be attained if I did not pay attention and behave. As I look back, I admit I was a cut-up. I was getting attention but not always the right attention. Mrs. Phillips attention captured my imagination. From that time on, when she spoke, I hung on her every word.

My dad admired the preaching of Dr. Robert G. Lee as much as any man alive; therefore, as a young preacher, I was not satisfied to just listen to him or read after him. I wanted to get to know him. I'll never forget the day he invited my young wife and me to his house on Stonewall Street in a beautiful old section of Memphis, Tennessee. After being in his house on a couple of occasions, I felt I knew him. And because I considered him important, his company made us sense signification.

I am going to be very honest with you - most of the time when I am talking to our people at Christchurch, I am in awe of you. I am astounded that you are spending time with me. I am impressed with who you are and what God has made of you. Never does a child grace our platform at handshake time that I fail to be amazed with each and every individual wonderful child.

Let your heart leap with understood significance as you read these words God spoke to His servant, David, *"For I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another. Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying, Why have ye not built me an house of cedars?"* (I Chronicles 17:5).

The great and mighty God of the universe is saying to David through Nathan, you need not build me a house; I have been dwelling in temporary dwellings and I have been satisfied to be with and near you. In other words, you don't have to try to impress me with your building abilities. There is none more important than God and He has raised the importance of man by desiring to be with him. Your presence with Him is more important than places we provide in which to "house" Him.

1. God reveals your importance to Him by being transient.

In our household, the older you are, it seemed the more importance was attached. One of the great matriarchs of our family was my Grandma Edwards, my maternal grandmother. I never knew her to travel out of her home state, Arkansas. As a family growing up we made the vigil once or twice a year (at least) to see her. One sunny, late afternoon in central Florida, my uncle drove up. We were expecting him. The table was set for him, his wife and little girl. Mom was listening for their car. In those days hardly anyone had air conditioning and all the big windows were open as well as the front door that led to a fully screened-in porch. When my uncle drove up, Mom turned off the burners and hurried outside to see my uncle, aunt and cousin. To our surprise my Aunt Ruby lifted her head from behind the back seat. We were stunned, because you see, my aunt was mentally challenged and she never went anywhere without Grandma. This appearance was welcome, but did not make sense until I noticed Aunt Ruby was obviously frustrated as she exited the car. Her head was constantly turning to answer some barking orders. As I look back, the relationship between Grandma and Aunt Ruby was at times comical. They were inseparable and due to my aunt's affliction, she really never grew up and so when my dear Grandma had to correct her, it became a benign (and humorous) scene. Sure enough, up pops my concealed grandmother's head from the back seat! She was telling Ruby that she probably spoiled the surprise, "... now you might as well let me out", she said.

We could not believe it - there she was all the way from Sylvan Hills in North Little Rock. Four feet, eleven inches of hillbilly dynamite! I see her in my mind to this day. Smiling, arms extended and the cutest laughter you would ever want to hear. I don't know why, but her way of greeting relatives went something like this, "Come here to me, you crazy outfit you!" And if you knew what was good for you, you would get to her as soon as possible.

For Grandma to travel all that distance made us know we were important. Very important. I envision her sitting at our table, eyes sparkling, head back, laughing while Mom said, I can't believe you're here. She was there, and we were all made to feel so special. Because she was deemed important, we felt important by her presence.

God said to David, *"And I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked..."* (I Chronicles 17:8). God's willingness to be transient in His manifestation is a sure token of His unconditional love for us. God loved us so much that He left His glorious Heaven for a humble abode on earth and exited through the cross. Now through His death, burial and resurrection, He is willing to dwell within the heart of the believer. He reminds us in the New Testament, *"...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Hebrews 13:5).

2. God reveals your importance to Him by assuring you that you are included.

In I Chronicles 17:5, God says, *"Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel..."* The telling word that assures you of your importance is a small word with a big meaning. It is the word "all." The children's song says, *"Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red or yellow, black or white, all are precious in His sight; Jesus loves the little children of the world."*

God not only wants audience with David, He wants audience with all Israel. We read God saying to Joshua, *"...as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee"* (Joshua 1:5).

"For there is no respect of persons with God" (Romans 2:11). We did not earn God's love. God said to Israel, *"The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people"* (Deut. 7:7).

In this life we may at times feel as though we have been handed the smallest piece of life's proverbial pie. We may have felt rejected by other people, but what great comfort to know that to God, you are important!

The famed evangelist, D. L. Moody had a difficult time accepting God's unconditional love to mankind. While in England he had promised a young minister by the name of Henry Moorehouse that if he were ever in Chicago, he should look him up and Moody said, "I'll let you preach." Moorehouse came and he preached. For seven nights he preached. For seven nights he preached from one text, John 3:16

At the close of the final night, J. Gilcrest Lawson records Moorehouse's closing words: "My friends, for a whole week I have been trying to tell you how much God loves you, but I cannot do it with this poor stammering tongue. If I could borrow Jacob's ladder and climb up into heaven and ask Gabriel, who stands in the presence of the Almighty, to tell me how much love the Father has for the world, all he could say would be, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'" Lawson went on to say, "Moody's heart was melted within him as he listened to the young preacher describing the love of God for lost mankind. It gave him such a vision of the love of God as he had never seen before, and from that time forward, Moody's preaching was of a more deeply spiritual character." Every time I enter the massive auditorium of Moody Church in Chicago, I am reminded of that story when I see those words emblazoned on the wall in the front of the auditorium, "God is Love." John 3:16 tells us that although we are unworthy, we

are included by God's mercy and grace!

You are important to God! Don't let the devil, the world, or your flesh tell you otherwise. God's plan for you is bigger than the sky. He left His home in Heaven and through His atonement make you His home. Sometime quote John 3:16 and exchange the word "whosoever" for your name. You are included. You are loved! You are important!

- Pastor Pope -

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