

***Fanning it into Flame***  
**Sunday, October 31, 2010**  
**The Heart of the Father**

Last week we talked about our need to work and that it was always part of God's plan for mankind. As a kid I thought we had to work because Adam and Eve blew it, but that is not the case and can be seen in Genesis during the creation when God said, "there was no man to work the ground." God wanted us to participate with him. This theme runs straight through the New Testament. Our problem is that we can easily misunderstand the emphasis of work and think that it is the prime objective and it is not. God is the prime objective.

Our culture is permeated with a performance orientation. We are rewarded for our actions. Many relationships can feel like that. The measure of someone's affection is in proportion to what we do. That is not the case with God. His love is dependent upon his very nature. He loves us because he is love. The apostle Paul writes in Romans 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* (NIV) God did not wait for our behavior to change. He took the initiative when we were in the midst of our sin.

In the OT the Israelites wanted a king to rule over them because they wanted to be like other nations. 1 Samuel 8:6-7 *But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.* (NIV) The heart of the Father was always to be in relationship with us. We can try, like the Israelites, to do things that fit a traditional religious paradigm only to find that we are just scratching our own itch and not fulfilling God's desire for us. We know we need to read God's Word and pray so we endeavor to make it part of our lifestyle. There's nothing wrong with that. As a matter of fact, it's a great thing. It only becomes a problem when we become more consumed with our routine than the reason for it.

For example: Let's say you're reading your "5 chapters" and midway through an inspirational God moment hits you, but you feel obligated to finish reading because that's the plan. NO! The plan is to have an encounter with God. It's at those moments that we need to stop what we're doing and dialogue with the Lord. Ask him about why you were touched the way you were. He's longing for communion with us. We were made by him and for him. That's his heart. He will respond and bring us from glory to glory and from faith to faith. So this week, plan to start or continue your spiritual disciplines, but make sure the goal of your faith is to walk in intimate relationship with him. Then ask him what he would like you to do. He does want you to work in his kingdom and produce fruit, but he wants to be right there with you enabling you to do what you do and being filled with the glory of his presence. Jesus lived an exciting life filled with joy in doing the Father's will and he wants us to enter into that same joy. The more time we spend in learning to respond to those "God moments," the more we will be experiencing life as he intended it to be. God is speaking. Be sensitive to the different ways he is speaking to you, e.g. a body sensation, an inner impression, a loving thought, a dream, an inspiration, etc. This is certainly not an exhaustive list, just some suggestions to help us to be ready to respond to those spontaneous introspective moments.

Expect God to speak. He is expecting us to reply.