



**August 21, 2023**

### **Who We Rely on Matters**

One of the few scriptures I can readily quote is Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and don't depend on your own intelligence (what you think you know). Seek God's will in all you do and He will show you the right path to take." Oh, if only I had really lived my life this way! Instead I realize I have lived much of my life as what could be called a practical atheist. What does this mean? It means living as if God does not have anything to do with my day to day life. It means living according to the self-sufficient, independent code of our culture. Here's what I read in a devotional recently: "Every time we buy into the lie that we are self-sufficient beings apart from God, we believe that we do not need God's empowerment or lordship over our lives." The root of this belief is PRIDE with a capital "I".

Does this mean that I am to remember God's loving presence all day long - whether I'm taking a walk, shopping, answering emails and calls, working or whatever it is that I spend my time doing?! And if I'm able to live this way at least some of the time, what difference will it make? Will I actually experience God working in and through me? Will I be more aware of God's constant gifts of grace and wonder and love? Will I come to hear his still small voice directing, guiding and protecting me? Absolutely yes! I have been starting the day praying these words from Ps.143:8 "Let this morning bring me word of your unfailing love, Lord, for I put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life."

The real challenge comes in breaking the habit of a lifetime of self reliance when it comes to the choices and decisions I make throughout the day. Yes, I've asked God to guide me, but I still have a free will and my natural will is toward doing what I want and doing it my way. The Bible makes it clear that I need a pure heart and transformed mind otherwise I will default to my old ways. God's part is to give us the Holy Spirit who wants to live within you and

me to help us remember and obey God's will. We also have the words of God in the scriptures which are meant to be daily spiritual sustenance and we have the example of Jesus Christ to follow. It's up to me to invite God's Spirit into my life and to be in control, to read and study and personalize the Bible regularly and to talk with Jesus throughout my day. Just like anything else in life it takes intention and practice to break old habits.

This is the purpose of what are called spiritual disciplines or practices. I'm not a very disciplined person-so I am going to make myself accountable to God and to you who are reading this to make some changes in my life that will help me do what Colossians 3 encourages us to do: "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God...Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

One of the changes I'm making is slowing down and taking more time for silence and solitude. I sense God is wanting to prune away much of the busyness and constant activity I sometimes get caught up in. I'm recognizing that less is more. Less distractions and noise allows for more quality time with God and the people in my life, more ability to really listen and reflect. This message from God was confirmed to me by Pastor Anne's 8/13 sermon on silence.

I also see that I have spent much of my life making every effort to stay in my comfort zone, attempting to only do what I can safely handle or control. Thus I've rarely given God the opportunity to show me His great power and personal availability. I'm wondering, could it be that God allows us to go through difficulties that are out of our control to demolish delusions that we are self sufficient and in control? Is this why James 1:2 tells us to be joyful when we face trials?

Let me close by sharing a few prayers for a busy day that might help each of us to remember that "apart from God we can do nothing" (John 15:5) because who we rely on really does matter:

- Thank you for being with me
- You are so good
- Help me to love
- Let me hear your voice
- Erase my worries
- Let my words be uplifting
- You are in control

~Written by Marilyn Whisner

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