

FINDING FULFILLMENT

“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...” —ACTS 2:38

The Christian life can be very frustrating and disappointing when nothing seems to come alive. We may have been raised in a Christian family, attended church, read the Bible, but it simply isn't working. Even our prayers seem to hit the ceiling and bounce off the floor. Why can't we get excited like everyone else?

Feeling like this is a very slippery slope that will eventually cause us to seek fulfillment elsewhere. We may find a temporary fix in being free to live the way we want, but the enjoyment of that will lose its appeal. After a while, what we are engaging in will become as shallow as we feel inside. We'll begin to think the Christian life we grew up with had something valid after all. So we go back and try even harder, but still it isn't working.

I have counseled many folks whose Christian lives have never come alive, and the problem has been in a lack of repentance. Repentance is an ongoing day to day disposition of turning from sin and living in humble dependence upon God. Some have actually never been born again, because they haven't come to that place of recognizing their need for repentance. Their motivation for coming back to the Christian faith turns out to be the same as leaving it in the first place. They are seeking fulfillment, happiness, freedom, and it all centers around themselves. If we want to feel alive in Christ, then we can ask Him to come into our lives, not as our servant, but as our Lord.

We first have to deal with the barriers that have kept us from experiencing Christ. Engaging in sin and a sense of self-sufficiency and independence are barriers that need to be lifted. We have to ask ourselves: What are we really desperate for? Is it for God or for fulfillment? If there is no evidence that we are concerned in meeting God's requirements of confessing our sin, and acknowledging our insufficiency, it may well be that we are more interested in pleasing ourselves than in pleasing Him.

God is never the One who isn't doing His part. There is absolutely nothing that will ever cast a shadow onto His integrity and faithfulness. God is never at fault, and those who are lacking a vital, living relationship with Him are the ones who need to turn things around. We are never closer to the heart of God when in humility we confess our sin, and are turning our lives around to live in dependence on God and for His purposes. That's where we find true and lasting fulfillment.

PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, keep me from being self-serving. Give me a heart that seeks to please You, and lives everyday dependent on You. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I living in humble repentance before God?