

# Doing Life With God, Not Just For God: What Partnership With God Really Looks Like

There is a difference between doing things for God and doing things with God. It sounds subtle, but it changes everything. One leads to exhaustion. The other leads to freedom.

## What Is the Kingdom of God?

Jesus opened His ministry in the Gospel of Mark with these words:

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." - Mark 1:15  
English Standard Version (ESV)

So what exactly is the kingdom of God? Luke gives us a clear picture. When Jesus stood up to read in the synagogue, He declared His mission:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." - Luke 4:18-19 English Standard Version (ESV)

This is the kingdom of God. It is good news for the poor, freedom for the captive, sight for the blind, and liberation for the oppressed. And Jesus did not keep this work to Himself.

## Did Jesus Expect His Disciples to Do the Same Things He Did?

Yes. In Matthew 10, Jesus sends out His apostles with a clear charge:

"And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons." - Matthew 10:7-8 English Standard Version (ESV)

He connected the kingdom with action. He expected His followers to do what He was doing. And these things are still happening today. There are people who have been healed of physical disease. There are people who have been set free from spiritual bondage. God is doing these things, and He is choosing to do them through people who are willing to partner with Him.

## Are You Doing Things For God or With God?

Many people live their entire Christian lives doing things for God. Serving, giving, trying not to sin, showing up. All of it offered up in hopes of earning His favor or repairing a broken connection.

But that posture is exhausting.

You can be incredibly busy for God and still live most of your life apart from a conscious dependence on Him. Doing life on your own for God will never be enough. You cannot serve enough, pray enough, give enough, or become impressive enough to earn His love.

The gospel is not "do enough for God and perhaps He will accept you." The gospel is that God has come for you in Jesus. Because of what Jesus has done, He counts you as worthy, clean, and spotless.

## **What Does the Weight of Doing It All Yourself Feel Like?**

There is a character in the Disney film Encanto named Luisa whose gift is strength. She carries everything for everyone around her, and her worth is tied to her ability to keep carrying. She reaches a breaking point and sings about the pressure that never stops, the fear of being worthless if she cannot be of service.

That image captures what it feels like to live the "for God" life. The pressure builds. The load gets heavier. And eventually, something gives.

This is not what Jesus intended for His people.

## **How Did Jesus Model the "With God" Life?**

Jesus is the model. And He modeled full dependence on the Father as a human being. He said:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise." - John 5:19 English Standard Version (ESV)

And again:

"I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me." - John 8:28 English Standard Version (ESV)

Before Jesus chose His twelve apostles, He withdrew and prayed through the entire night. He was not making that decision alone. He was asking the Father who to pick. That is the with God life in action.

If Jesus, the Son of God, lived in complete dependence on the Father, why would we think we can get by with anything less?

## **What Does Jesus Say About Living Apart From Him?**

In John 15, Jesus is direct:

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." - John 15:5 English Standard Version (ESV)

Apart from Jesus, you can do nothing. That is not a discouragement. It is an invitation to stay connected.

And in Matthew 11, Jesus describes what that connection actually feels like:

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." - Matthew 11:28-30 English Standard Version (ESV)

Walk with Him. Work with Him. Learn from Him. That is the invitation.

## **Is the Kingdom of God Here Now or Only in the Future?**

Both. The kingdom of God is already here, but it is not yet fully here.

Many Christians have been taught to think of heaven as a distant place where saved souls go after death. But Jesus never came to help people escape earth and go to heaven. He came so that God's heavenly authority would invade, transform, and renew the earth.

In Revelation 21, Jesus says, "Behold, I am making all things new." Notice He says "I am making," not "I will make." This is not only a future promise. He is renewing lives right now. He is setting people free right now. He is establishing union with His people right now.

And He is doing it through partnership with His people.

## **What Does "Not Everything Happens for a Reason" Mean for Christians?**

The phrase "everything happens for a reason" is often meant to comfort, but it is misleading. It tries to place God behind all things, including abuse, trafficking, and suffering. That is not right.

Romans 8 tells us that God works all things for the good of those who love Him. But that is not the same as saying God is behind all things. Where God is not reigning, darkness moves in. There is a reason behind suffering, but it is not always from God. Sometimes it is because people have chosen to operate apart from Him and in partnership with darkness.

## **How Do You Begin Living the "With God" Life?**

Partnership with God flows from relationship with God. Here are two practical starting points:

- Move from one-way prayers to two-way conversations. Instead of only throwing requests upward, begin listening. Ask God what He wants. Ask where He is moving. The more you practice this, the more natural it becomes, and the more clearly you will recognize His voice.
- Pray over your domain. God has given you authority over your home, your family, your relationships. Pray over them out loud. Invite Jesus in. Speak His name over your children, your marriage, your work. This is not superstition. This is partnering with God over what He has entrusted to you.

## What Is the Goal of All of This?

Union with God is the goal. Jesus prayed for it in John 17. He asked the Father that His followers would have the same union with God that He Himself has with the Father.

That union is available now. Not after you die. Not after you get your life together. Now. Because of everything Jesus has done, you have full access to union with Him. But it is only through Jesus. There is no other path.

## Life Application

This week, take one concrete step toward the "with God" life. When you get home today, pray out loud over your home, your family, and everything under your care. Invite Jesus to reign there. Surrender what you have been carrying on your own and ask Him to show you where He is already at work so you can join Him.

Ask yourself these questions as you go into the week:

- Where have I been trying to live for God without actually living with God?
- What am I exhausted by because I have been carrying something Jesus never asked me to carry?
- What have I been striving to earn that Jesus has already purchased for me?
- Am I having a two-way conversation with God, or am I only talking at Him?

The kingdom of God is closer than you realize. Healing, freedom, and restoration are available now. And you are invited to partner with Jesus to bring that kingdom into the world around you.