

Are You A “JESUS AND” Person?

J E A N N E M A Y O

1. Let me ask you a key question that relates to all of us as leaders: Are you a “_____” person?
 - a. C.S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters* talks about this as one of the Devil’s biggest traps in our lives. Screwtape trains his satanic protégé on a trap he calls “Faith in Christ AND...”
 - Faith in Christ AND our achievements; Faith in Christ AND a great family; Faith in Christ AND our reputation; Faith in Christ AND our prosperity...Faith in Christ AND a thriving ministry; or WHATEVER!
 - b. You see, almost all of us would quickly say that the answer to eternal life is FAITH IN CHRIST.
 - But unconsciously, along our faith journey, we begin to think that SOMETHING ELSE needs to be ADDED to MAKE US _____ in standing with Jesus.
2. Let me ask you a question you’ve maybe never thought much about: WHAT’S YOUR “_____”?
 - a. Maybe it’s one of the more common ones like THE DISEASE TO PLEASE; or WORKAHOLISM; or PERFECTIONISM. Or maybe YOUR ADDICTION is to PERFORMANCE; OR FOOD; OR the LONGING FOR BELONGING; or PORN; or WHATEVER!
 - b. “The loneliest moment in life is right after you’ve experienced what you thought to be the _____ in happiness...and then you suddenly realize THAT _____.”
—Warren Spector
 - c. What are you missing in life that prompts you to go after that particular addiction?

d. What are you really after...at your _____ level?

- It might be a Sense of Success; or Acceptance or Approval; a Sense of Family; or the Healing of a Father-Wound.
- Colossians 2:10, *"I am _____ in Him."*

e. "Whatever your heart continues to seek after, that is really your God...your _____." — Martin Luther

f. "All of our human hearts are, at their core, _____ - _____." — John Calvin

3. CONCLUDING STORY:

An old man was dying of cancer. The man's daughter asked the local priest to come and pray with her father. When the priest arrived, he found the man lying in bed with his head propped up on two pillows and an empty chair right beside him. The priest glanced at the chair and assumed the old guy was waiting for his visit.

"I guess you were expecting me," the priest said kindly.

"No, actually not," the old man said with embarrassment. "Will you forgive me and tell me your name? The medicine they give me for pain has really messed up my memory."

"Please don't feel embarrassed," the priest replied. "You're not supposed to know my name. I'm the new associate at your parish. When I saw the empty chair, I just figured you knew I was going to show up."

"Oh yeah, the chair," said the man quietly. "Would you mind closing the door? I'd love to share my secret with you. After all, you are my priest now." Puzzled, the priest shut the old man's door and sat down to hear what he was going to say next.

"You see," the old man said, "I've never told anyone this before, not even my daughter. But all my life, I could never figure out how to pray. At Sunday Mass I used to hear the priest talk about prayer, but it always confused me. I didn't feel like my prayers ever did any good. So, I finally gave up praying altogether."

"Then about five years ago," the old man continued, "my best friend said, 'Joe, prayer is just like talking to me, your best friend. I've got a suggestion for you. Why don't you sit down in a chair and place an empty chair in front of you. By faith, picture Jesus sitting in that chair and then start talking to Him. That's what prayer is. It's having a conversation with Jesus. It's not weird or anything

because Jesus promises in the Bible, 'I'll be with you always.' All you have to do, Joe, is talk to Him and listen back the same way you're doing with me right now.'"

"So I tried it," Joe proudly announced to the young priest. "And it's changed everything! As a matter of fact, I like it so much that I do it a couple of hours everyday. I'm careful, though. If my daughter ever saw me talking to an empty chair, she'd think the medicines were getting to me! So, let's just keep this our little secret."

The priest was deeply moved by the story and encouraged the old man to continue on his personal prayer journey. Before leaving, he prayed with Joe, anointed him with oil, and returned to the church. Two nights later, the man's daughter called to tell the priest that her father had died that afternoon.

"Did he seem to die in peace?" the priest asked lovingly.

"Yes," his daughter answered. "When I left the house around two o'clock, he called me over to his bedside, told me one of his old jokes, and kissed me on the cheek. When I got back from the store an hour later, I found him dead. But there was something strange, Father. In fact, really strange. Apparently, just before Dad died, he leaned over and rested his head on a chair beside the bed. Crazy, isn't it? Somehow he had a strange attraction to that old chair."

As a leader, you have an incredible opportunity! Every day you can have a personal conversation with the God of all gods, the King of all kings. Schedule in an "appointment time" with Him each day when it will be easy to develop a habit of consistency. Then pull up a chair and start the conversation! He's been waiting to hear from you. Even more, when you get lonely or times get tough, just learn to PUT YOUR SPIRITUAL HEAD ON HIS LAP. It's the safest place in the universe to rest.

Answers:

JESUS AND; GOOD ENOUGH; EMOTIONAL ADDICTION; ULTIMATE; IT JUST LET YOU DOWN; DEEPEST CORE; COMPLETE; FUNCTIONAL SAVIOR; IDOL-MAKING FACTORIES