

WELCOME TO THE GREATER RENO CHURCH OF CHRIST

S E R M O N O U T L I N E & B U L L E T I N

Sunday, February 20, 2022



Today's Study Focus: Discovering True Devotion - What Christians Are Missing Part 7 When we stop to remember that God exists — that He created all that is from nothing; that He sustains everything we know, moment by moment, with just a word from His mouth; that He governs every government on earth; that He entered into his creation, taking on flesh, enduring weakness and temptation, suffering hostility to the point of death, even death on a cross, all to shower us with mercy, cleanse us of our sin, and secure our eternity with Him in paradise — it is stunning, isn't it, that we ignore and neglect him like we do. It is stunning, amazing, and perplexing, and yet so painfully familiar. Everyone who has followed Jesus knows what it is like to be distracted from following Jesus. Now, let's discover what true and unrelenting devotion to Him really is!

☑ **devotion** (noun) religious fervor; stressing zeal and service - **devotion** and the verb **devote** come from the act of taking a vow, **devoted** refers to one's commitment to another through love and loyalty. Miriam Webster

☑ **submission** (noun) the condition of being submissive, humble, or compliant. **synonyms:** compliance, conformity, obedience, subordination. Miriam Webster

The Divine Design Of Devotion Is Strength Through Submission James 4:4-10 - Your Father Shows Favor To The Humble

- 22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Ephesians 5:22-24 (NIV)
- 22-24 Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your support for Christ. The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his church, not by domineering but by cherishing. So just as the church submits to Christ as he exercises such leadership, wives should likewise submit to their husbands. Ephesians 5:22-24 (MSG)

"Christ is the head of the church":

"the church submits to Christ as he exercises leadership":

☑ **"God resists the proud":** At the same time, James reminds us that this grace only comes to the humble (in submission). Grace and pride are eternal enemies. Pride (independence, separation) demands that God bless me in light of my merits, whether real or imagined. But grace will not deal with me on the basis of anything in me – good or bad – but only on the basis of who God is. James used a powerful word in the phrase, 'resists the proud': "Sets himself in battle array against him." Enduring Word Bible Commentary

True Devotion Between You And God Is The Two Of You Becoming One Psalm 65:1-4 - Chosen And Brought Near

- 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church – 30 for we are members of his body. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32 This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Ephesians 5: 25-33 (NIV)

"just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her":

"the two will become one flesh'...this is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church":

☑ The constant struggle to have an intimate relationship with God exists because we are unwilling to accept God 'as is'. EA Gardner

Scripture Passages For Further Personal Study: Isaiah 55:1-13 Seek the Lord while He may be found. 1 John 4:7-21 We love because He first loved us.



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Steps for Discovering God's Will for Your Life Crosswalk.com

Through our lives, we are given the option and choice of paths to follow. Many of these paths are ones that we take the pen and orchestrate, craft, or push to attempt to make what we would like to occur, but even the most thorough of plans often will fall apart, leaving you disappointed, frustrated, or desiring more than the life you have written. The alternative path is following the Will of the Lord. What this means is coming before the Lord and allowing Him to author your life, believing what He has in store is part of something far more significant than yourself, and there is goodness to experience. The question then arises, how can I know God's Will for my life?

1. Get Your Heart Correct Before God

It is an honor to stand before the Lord in prayer. He is the Creator of all that is, all that was, and all that will be, and yet He still wants us. He still opens the door of invitation to us to come before Him and invites us to know Him through intimate relationship with Him. When we come before God, we must enter His presence with the respect and reverence He deserves. **Hebrews 10:19-22** explains it as, *"Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."* When we draw near to Him with genuine hearts, confess our sins, and earnestly desire to be with Him, then we can stand before Him to be in a place to receive understanding. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10)*, but fear in this context means holding Him in the honor that He is indeed the Highest God and that He is worthy of all praise and worthy of our obedience forward.

2. Lay Aside Your Motives

Standing before the Lord to come into receiving what He has for us also requires us to set aside our own ambitions, motives, and guesses of what He is going to say. This is easier said than done, for often, we come expecting a specific answer. God is not a magic eight ball with a few predetermined answers; instead, He is Lord of infinite knowledge, understanding, and truth. Don't put words in God's mouth, and don't get ahead of Him in what He gives through direction. Humbly come before Him knowing what He gives you next is what you need to know in this very moment. Recall the words of **Jeremiah 33:3**, *"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."* God can answer in a moment what people may never understand in a lifetime of their own searching.

3. Journaling, Listening Prayer, Walking with God

Romans 8:26 explains that even our tears are prayers to God. The Holy Spirit can translate into words of prayer what we may not be able to articulate in our sighs of pain. In the same way, God can translate revelations, understanding, and messages in a way that resonates with us in a very specific way. Whether journaling with God in prayer, contemplative listening prayer, or even a walk in the woods is what brings you closest to God, glean from what He brings you in your set aside time with Him. It is important to keep good records of what you hear from the Lord or what is explained to you through metaphor, for example. As much as we would like to think that we will always recall such things, we often forget. Having it written down will serve later as reminders of what God promised you, what you're walking towards, and as proof of testimony of how His Word came to pass.

4. Test the Spirits

In this world, there is an enemy who seeks to hinder the plans of God, to confuse us, and to thwart the will of the Lord, and because of this, it is vital and imperative to test the spirits. If you feel that you have received instruction or a message connecting to God's will for your life, it is your duty to test that word. **1 John 4:1** explains it as such, *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God."*

You can test the Words in a few simple ways to start. First, the word must be in alignment with the Word of the Lord. It will never be counter to the truth found in the Bible. The Word of the Lord through revelation will never contradict the Word of the Lord in the Bible. Second, ask the Lord to help you know His voice of truth solidly and to give you discernment of any false voices. God's voice, though at times may cause us to be stunned, will always be met by the peace of the Lord and a discerned knowing within of what is truth. Consider **John 10:10**, *"my sheep know My voice."* Do not be led astray by things you know deep down are not of the One True God. Lastly, don't hesitate to call in Godly allies for support. Together, you can seek what is of the voice of truth over your life.

5. Partner With Godly Allies

Partnering with Godly allies is a great asset to your walk with the Lord in seeking to understand the Will of God in your life. These people will not only claim to be Christians, but it will be evident of the fruit of their lives that they are living a life surrendered and honoring to God. Jesus offered in **Matthew 7** that you will know His followers by their fruit, and that stands true. Are those around you harvesting fruits of the Spirit such as kindness, gentleness, and love? Inviting those you know to be God's children to pray with you can also serve as a place of confirmation or further seeking what God has laid before you. Partner with those who partner with God.

