

...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembly together...but encouraging one another.  
Heb 10:24-25

Share the teaching  
Guard the sharing

# Male Call

## June 20, 2008—Atonement—Relationship Restored: Me With Me—Part II

6:00 – 6:05	Coffee & Donuts Opening Prayer
6:05 – 7:00	<p>Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.” (Gen 1:26)</p> <p>But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2Corinthians 3:18)</p> <p>I [Paul] have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. (Galatians 2:20)</p> <p>1) What does it mean to be made in the image and likeness of God? a) Being “as God” or being truly human...</p> <p>When Jesus replaces us, he does not superimpose his own being in such a way that we are type-stamped, like cookie-cutter gingerbread creatures. Rather, his nature is still such a death of himself for us, that he fills out what we are to be, which is uniquely and gloriously us. We are not robbed of anything we have been by our own personal crucifixion. We are fulfilled.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>2) How do you see yourself...in the showroom or on the factory floor? For I [Paul] am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)</p> <p>How you view your [yourself] and what you think about discipline can help you stay calm and use healthy routines when things get tough. Imagine a car dealership where a man named Martin works in the showroom. Martin sells cars to prospective customers. If he sees a car without a door, he’s surprised and upset. He doesn’t expect to see defects. Cars in the showroom are supposed to be finished.</p> <p>Bill, on the other hand, works in the factory and inspects cars for flaws and missing parts. It’s his job to find problems and fix them. In fact, Bill is prepared with a number of routines depending on the nature of the problem. If a door is missing, Bill doesn’t get upset; he just goes through his routine of obtaining a door and putting it on.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Sandford, 112-113.

Bill knows that when a car is on the production line it requires continual work. Doors are added, pieces are put together, and workers are continually looking for ways to improve the product.<sup>2</sup>

3) The nature of journey to find ourselves in Christ...not always carefree and happy!  
Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)

- a) “Narrow”—Gr. *thlibo* [**thlee**-bo]. Trouble, afflict, narrow, suffer tribulation; has the sense of a being pressed upon as a grape in a grape press.

Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, or Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (2Corinthians 10:8-10)

When they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples. (Mark 4:34):

Jesus does not take us alone and expound things to us all the time; He expounds things to us as we can understand them. Other lives are parables. God is making us spell out our own souls. It is slow work, so slow that it takes God all time and eternity to make a man and woman after His own purpose. The only way we can be of use to God is to let Him take us through the crooks and crannies of our own characters. It is astounding how ignorant we are about ourselves! We do not know envy when we see it, or laziness, or pride. Jesus reveals to us all that this body has been harboring before His grace began to work. How many of us have learned to look in with courage?

We have to get rid of the idea that we understand ourselves, it is the last conceit to go. The only One Who understands us is God. The greatest curse in spiritual life is conceit. If we have ever had a glimpse of what we are like in the sight of God, we shall never say —‘Oh I am so unworthy,’ because we shall know we are, beyond the possibility of stating it. As long as we are not quite sure that we are unworthy, God will keep narrowing us in until He gets us alone. Wherever there is any element of pride or of conceit, Jesus cannot expound a thing. He will take us through the disappointment of a wounded pride of intellect, through disappointments of heart. He will reveal inordinate affections—things over which we never thought He would have to get us alone. We listen to many things in classes, but they are not an exposition to us yet. They will be when God gets us alone over them.<sup>3</sup>

- b) Consolation<sup>4</sup>

- i) Consolation is when we are caused to love God more. When we shed tears of love for our Lord, whether out of sorrow for our sins, or for the Passion of Christ, or because of other things directly connected with his service and praise, we are in consolation. Consolation is every increase of hope, faith, and charity, and all interior

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Turansky, Scott and Joanne Miller. *Good and Angry, Exchanging Frustration for Character in You and Your Kids*. Shaw Books, 2002. 231-232.

<sup>3</sup> Chambers. *My Utmost for His Highest*. January 12.

<sup>4</sup> Wakefield, 178. St. Ingatius’ Rules for Discernment, Rule 1.3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 178. Rules 1.4 and 1.9.

<sup>6</sup> Sandford, 109, 110.

	<p>joy which call us to heavenly things, giving us peace in our Creator and Lord.</p> <p>c) Desolation<sup>5</sup></p> <p>i) Desolation is all the contrary to the [previous] rule, such as prevailing love for all things low and earthly, the unquiet of different temptations, lack of confidence in God, when we love not God, when we find ourselves all lazy, tepid, sad, and as if separated from God.</p> <p>ii) There are three principle reasons why we find ourselves desolate. The first is because we are lukewarm, lazy, or negligent in our spiritual exercises; and so through our faults, spiritual consolation withdraws from us. The second is a time of trial and shows us how much we participate in Christ's service because of our love for him, rather than our love of consolation. The third is also a time of trial and it teaches us that it is not ours to get or keep great devotion, intense love, tears, or any other spiritual consolation. All consolation is a gift from God our Lord. We cannot work hard enough or be smart enough to earn a sense of God's loving presence.</p> <p>d) Me in the belly of the earth with Jesus  [F]or just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:40)</p> <p>Death of a portion of our self initiates a convulsion or deep shudder throughout our interior being. We undergo sadness, confusion, disorientation, despondency, heaviness, sleepiness, or turmoil. In that time, death is happening throughout the subterranean regions of our motives and practices. Truly we also, like Jesus, spend our three days in the belly of the earth... That time of inner death cannot be hastened. Like Jesus, we need our "three days in the belly of the earth," however long or short that may be.<sup>6</sup></p> <p>4) What has your journey been like so far with God?</p>
7:00	<p>Closing Prayer</p> <p>If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">--Jesus (Luke 9:23)</p> <p>Every morning I must say again to myself, today I start.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">--St. Anthony of the Desert<sup>7</sup></p>

Further reading:

- *The Bible*
- Benner, David G. *Surrender to Love*. IVP Books. 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_ *The Gift of Being Yourself*. Eagle Publishing. 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Desiring God's Will*. IVP Books. 2005.
- Chambers, O. *My Utmost for His Highest: Selections for the Year*. Discovery

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Benner, *Surrender to Love*. 75.

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House Publishers. 1993, c1935

- Neuhaus, Richard John. *Death on a Friday Afternoon*. Basic Books. 2000.
- Sandford, John & Paula. *The Transformation of the Inner Man*. Victory House. 1982.
- Wakefield, James L. *Sacred Listening: discovering the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*. Baker Books, 2006.