

\...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

## July 11, 2008—Atonement—Relationship Restored: Me With Me—Part IV

6:00 – 6:05	Coffee & Donuts Opening Prayer
6:05 – 7:00	<p>1) Are you prepared to be other than your image of yourself? If not, you will be in bondage to that false image.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>a) Consider Paul, 1Timothy 1:12-14</p> <p>2) Penetrating my false self</p> <p>a) Jeremiah 17:9</p> <p>I have trouble penetrating my web of self-deceptions and knowing this real me...The roots of our pretend self lie in our childhood discovery that we can secure love by presenting ourselves in the most flattering light...we learn to fake it, appearing as we think important others want us to be and ignoring the evidence to the contrary.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>There is no greater disaster in the spiritual life than to be immersed in unreality, for life is maintained and nourished in us by our vital relation with reality.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>With the self that is created in God's likeness rejected, our false self is the self we develop in our own likeness. This is the person we would like to be—a person of our own creation, the person we would create if we were God.<sup>4</sup> [Recall our definition of sin: a fundamental distrust of God by wanting to overreach my humanity—to be God—or to under achieve my humanity—be other than I'm created to be.]</p> <p>b) Jeremiah 17:10</p> <p>Spiritual transformation involves the purification of sight...We have to learn to see—and to accept—what is really there...To see God as God is—not who we want God to be—requires that we see our self as we really are. For the same cloud of illusions obscures our view of both God and ourselves.<sup>5</sup></p>

<sup>1</sup> Paraphrased from Richard Rohr in Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself*. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Merton, quoted in *ibid.* 62.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 80.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 63.

We do not find our true self by seeking it. Rather, we find it by seeking God.<sup>6</sup>

3) God deals only with our true self

a) Genesis 3:7-10

Every moment of every day of our life God wanders in our inner garden, seeking our companionship. The reason God can't find us is that we are hiding in the bushes of our false self. God's calling to us is gentle and persistent: "Where are you? Why are you hiding?"<sup>7</sup>

b) John 3:19

[The light of God] makes demands on us we cannot meet. Hence, a feeling of sinfulness and helplessness. We are invited to cast off our illusions and stand in truth. We hate this.<sup>8</sup>

c) Matthew 19:16-26

We all readily recognize that our psychic energies are limited. Attachments drain away the strength to pursue God in an effective way.<sup>9</sup>

4) The journey

a) Luke 9:23

As we continue journeying with Christ past the primitive, carnal-like early faith experience, we begin to feel bewildered, losing our taste for prayer and spiritual things. Our general state at prayer is one of confusion, darkness, boredom, and helplessness; the very opposite of what we expect progress to be like. This is the scandal, this is the crisis. Will we accept the disconcerting process and grow, or will we escape it...<sup>10</sup>

The *blood* of Jesus washes away sins, and the *cross* redeems, justifies, and atones, while his *resurrection* restores and gives new life. But it is our own personal daily taking up of *our own cross* which continues the necessary slaughter of the old man.<sup>11</sup>

Jesus laid down the stern requirements for discipleship. We must first say no to ourselves—not simply to pleasures or possessions, but to self—and then take up our cross and follow Christ daily. This means to be identified with Him in surrender, suffering, and sacrifice. You cannot crucify yourself; you can only yield

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 87.

<sup>8</sup> Burrows. 33

<sup>9</sup> Dubay. 140, 152.

<sup>10</sup> Burrows. 33.

<sup>11</sup> Sanford. 14. Emphasis in original.

<sup>12</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Lk 9:18). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

<sup>13</sup> Sanford. 15.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>15</sup> Benner. *The Gift of Being Yourself*. 29.

	<p>your body (Rom. 12:1–2) and let God do the rest.<sup>12</sup></p> <p>b) Romans 12:1-2...present your bodies as a living, holy sacrifice  c) Galatians 2:20...I [Paul] have been crucified with Christ  d) Gal 5:24...those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires</p> <p>That whole search to build something we can accept and rest in is the very thing which was to have died on the cross. Continuing to try to build ourselves is actually based on a flight from accepting what we are—as though we could just build something powerful or lovely enough, we might come to peace with ourselves and forget the search to overcome the hidden rotten core. The simple good news is that the search is already ended. We are already accepted, right where we are, as we are. The Lord's love is unconditional. <i>He</i> will build us...The Lord wants us to accept ourselves as we are, rotten and unchanged, and then let him express his goodness and righteousness in us through his Holy Spirit.<sup>13</sup></p> <p>e) 1Timothy 1:15  f) 1Peter 2:4-5  The call is not to build; the call is to die.<sup>14</sup></p> <p>5) Questions to ponder<sup>15</sup>  a) What have you learned about yourself as a result of your experience with God?  b) What do you know about God as a result of a genuine encounter with yourself?</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.  --Jesus (Luke 9:23)</p> <p>Every morning I must say again to myself, today I start.  --St. Anthony of the Desert<sup>16</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.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Burrows, Ruth. *Guidelines for Mystical Prayer*. Burns & Oates. 2007.
- Chambers, O. *My Utmost for His Highest: Selections for the Year*. Discovery House Publishers. 1993, c1935
- Dubay, Thomas. *The Fire Within*. Ignatius Press. 1989.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Benner, *Surrender to Love*. 75.

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- 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.