

Paraklēsīs : Obstruction

Hello folks,

I was walking with a friend not too long ago and he said something like, "I've found that when I get out of the way, **that's when God shows up.**" How is that possible? I cannot imagine my small being impeding the progress of God's immense existence. But amazingly, I notice that it does happen, and often. My thoughts, actions, and attitude are **able to inhibit God from moving** – flowing – in my life.

Throughout the scriptures, there are images and examples of good things flowing from God:

A river of the water of life flows in Revelation 22:1 and:

*"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" (John 7:38)*

God's children living in unity is like the precious flow of anointing oil (Psm133)

Talk about precious flow... Blood and water flowed from Messiah in John 19:34

I have imagined for years that God's spirit that He gives me is my connection to Him – like an internet connection. Remember dial-up? The first time I had a computer with an internet connection was an amazing experience – after configuring the modem and getting an Earthlink account, I dialed a number and listened to the sounds of my PC negotiating a communication channel with the world wide web. Oh, the limitless possibilities! But, I have long since upgraded my connection to "high speed broadband." From DSL, to cable, and now fiber optic, the connection keeps getting better and faster. This is the continuous improvement that I seek with my connection to God through His spirit. And, while things like viruses, malware, competing downloads, and other bandwidth hogs can adversely affect my internet connection, **there are things that obstruct God's flow in my life.** No surprise there, right?

My heart is the valve that controls the flow of His love and spirit.

*But whoever has the world's goods, and **sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him**, how does the love of God abide in him? (1 John 3:17)*

*Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life. (Proverbs 4:23)*

So according to these scriptures in 1John3 and Proverbs4, we need to open and protect our hearts. We need to be **cautiously vulnerable**, open our hearts to God and His way, but not let anything in that that would pollute the pristine springs of life. Whatever it is that we cherish, we store in our heart. My heart is the center of me, my most intimate part, and only what is extremely valuable, desirable, and **TRUSTED** should dwell there.

*"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for **where your treasure is, there your heart will be** also. "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and wealth.** (Matthew 6:19-24)*

*Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2)*

If you read Ezekiel 14:1-11, you will get a flavor of God's promise to us for not purging our hearts of idols – or at least trying to, wanting to. We are weak in the flesh, but I believe that **what is in my heart is more important and more powerful than what is in my flesh**. God is perfectly forgiving of my flesh when it stumbles over obstacles – but, for that to happen, I, in my heart, need to desire purity and perfection, I need to be truly repentant, **I need to have a circumcised heart** when I ask Him to forgive me.

*"Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all? (Ezekiel 14:3)*

How do I act, specifically? What do I do in my everyday life to ensure that I am being "cautiously vulnerable?" **How do I identify idols in my life** and how do I prevent them from entering (or evict them from) my heart?

*Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)*

My idolatry acts as an obstruction, and God's flow is slowed or stopped. If God's presence in my life, His love, His spirit, require a channel to flow through, then **my idolatry and disobedience will act as a kink in the hose**, corrosion in the pipe, a restriction, a blockage in the artery.

We are instructed and warned to not put an obstruction, or stumbling block, in the path of a believer. This is with respect to judging others. But, **what about judging ourselves?**

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. (Romans 14:13)

A circumcised, broken, and contrite heart are needed for us to be vulnerable to God's influence, and for self-examination. **A soft heart allows us to be honest with ourselves** and identify things that should not be dwelling in there. We need to judge ourselves.

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. (Psalms 51:17)*

Jesus says that simply setting one's mind on the things of man instead of the things of God create an obstruction to the flow.

*But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for **you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.**" (Matthew 16:23)*

*Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2)*

*See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. Rejoice always; **pray without ceasing**; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:15-18)*

Don't send up gallon jugs of prayers, let your prayers flow like a river.

Peace to you and Glory to God!

-Nate

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