

Heiligman: Connect the dots from faith to relationship, action and fulfillment

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I wonder if you have ever walked away from a church service on Sunday morning and thought to yourself, “There has to be more to it than that” The music was good, the sermon was interesting, the discussion in Sunday school was engaging. But at the end of the day, your worship experience seemed to be, well, lacking something. And to be honest, maybe you couldn’t even put your finger on what was missing.



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Unfortunately, this is a reality for many believers. They go through all the proper motions. They check off all the right religious boxes. They engage in everything they had been taught should provide a satisfying and unmistakable encounter with God. But still, there was a desire for something more.

One of the reasons so many people in our churches are unfulfilled is because we have been conditioned to approach our relationship with God

with the wrong perspective. Many Christians arrive at church on Sunday morning with the mentality of a spectator. There is this self-centered focus that says: “It’s all about me. My wants, my desires, my preference, my comfort and my convenience are at the top of the priority list. And as long as those conditions are met, then I will approve of the event.”

Obvious problem

The problem with this approach should be obvious. Our relationship with God was never supposed to be a spectator sport. The God of the universe didn’t send his Son to die for our sins so we could observe and critique and then maybe give a thumbs up to the Sunday morning “performance.”

Jesus came to earth to open the door for men and women to have a personal relationship with their Creator that would influence and affect every single area of their lives—not simply the two hours blocked off on Sundays, as long as there isn’t a better offer on the table that weekend.

What happens on Sunday morning should be the culmination of a week spent pursuing our Savior with reckless abandon.

If we simply come to church on the weekends, sit in a pew, listen to what God’s word tells us to do and leave and fail to apply any of it, then we never are going to experience any of the limitless joy, overwhelming peace and abundance of life Jesus promised us. If we want our faith journey to have a lasting impact on our lives, we have to be *applying* our faith on a day-to-day basis.

Spectator faith

James the brother of Jesus addressed this issue directly. He wrote a letter to a group of early believers warning them of the danger of having a spectator faith. He challenged them to pursue Christ in such a way that their lives would be discernibly transformed. He advised them against

compartmentalizing their faith as an additional component of their lives. Instead, they—and we—should allow our faith in Christ to infiltrate every facet of who we are, so that it influences every thought, every action, every relationship and every endeavor in our lives.

Listen to what James said in chapter 2:17: *“In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”* With perfect clarity, the brother of Jesus wants us to know our relationship with Christ is about more than going to church on the weekends so that we reserve a spot in heaven someday.

Life-long pursuit

It’s about a journey that starts the moment we embrace who Jesus really is. It’s about a life-long pursuit to look more like Jesus and less like us. It’s about treating people we come into contact with every single day the way Jesus Christ would. And it’s about doing more than just listening to the word of God, singing a few songs on a Sunday, sitting through a Sunday school lesson or having a spotless church attendance record.

Our relationship with Christ is the most important relationship we have on this planet. And within the context of that relationship, we can find more joy, more excitement, more love, more reward and more of life when we are willing to put into practice the example given to us by Jesus.

So, if you have ever walked away on a Sunday feeling like there is something lacking in what you are currently experiencing, then ask yourself this question, “Is my relationship with God a footnote in the story of my life, or is it the prevailing theme that holds everything else together?”

If we want more than what we are experiencing now, the truth is, there is more available—so much more.

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