

Doing or Being?
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Editor's note: John wrote the following essay for a reader who was questioning what was his duty toward God. Jan Antonsson

We've been conditioned by institutionalized Christianity to try to BE the kind of Christian we should be by DOING the things we ought to do.

But doing springs forth out of being, for "He (God) is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (I Cor. 1:30, RSV). The eternal act of God has placed us in Christ and placed Christ in us.

Being in Christ means that all He is and does accrues TO us and He in us means that He is being Himself IN and AS us. We all "live and move and have our being" in our Father and Savior and we will all be fully awakened to that reality "in (our) due time" (Acts 17:28; I Pet. 5:6) I want to hug you and say, relax dear brother, relax in your own humanity that was sanctified in Christ.

For many of us, we have to go through a transitional season where we practice thumbing our noses at the nagging question of what should we do or be doing to make this whole Christian thing work for us, because it is so difficult to be weaned from a performance-based perception of relationship to God.

God isn't expecting anything from us, His expectations are focused on Himself in us, "for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13, RSV). And if what He does in us depends on what we let Him do, then, in the final analysis, the whole thing depends on us and we'll have to depend on ourselves, and we end up hoping to be able to enable God to do what He'd like to do if only we'd let Him do it.

As I've written somewhere else, that thought makes an angel blush more than seeing pornography. Could the answer be (especially for

this season of your life as you recover from having your soul raped in the name of saving it) for you to stop and smell the flowers; for you to not fear letting go of God in your mind, because YOU are not holding onto Him, HE is holding you?

It might be that you need, in order to reverse the unnatural spin that has become part of your mindset toward God, to become free to, for instance, enjoy His goodness in the face of your wife and children, and in the beauty of God's creation? We were created in the image of God.

That means that we were created in Christ, for Christ "is the image of the invisible God" according to Colossians 1:15. And yet we try to escape our creatureliness.

If I were you, I would avoid, like the plague, any nagging questions, such as, "Should I be reading my Bible now instead of....(whatever)?" "Should I be tithing or giving more to(whoever)?" "Shouldn't I be occupied, thinking about what God wants of me to do?" "I wonder if I'm too rebellious, too uncaring about the things of God, too..... (whatever)?"

I assure you dear one, that the kingdom of God will not falter; no one will go to hell; nothing outside of God's will, will come to pass because you weren't worried enough about the things of God (Eph. 1:11).

The following pertinent words of two songs by Beatrice Bush Bixler have ministered to me for 49 years. I share them with you:

"Though in this world I found no rest;
My soul was dark, my heart oppressed;
One day I saw the Savior's face.
Now I am resting in His grace.

Oh restless soul, by breakers tossed.
Find perfect peace at Jesus heart.
Leave there your sins, Oh soul distressed.
Come unto Him, He'll give your rest.

Resting in Jesus, struggling is o'er
Resting in Jesus, I'm safe forever more"

"I was so lonely for lack of a friend.
One came and offered me love without end.
Love that is mighty to strengthen and save.
Love that can triumph o'er death and the grave.

I was so poor, not a penny had I.
Clothing or food for the journey to buy.
One came and whispered, "Leave that to my care.
Wealth of a kingdom with thee will I share."
Jesus Himself, Jesus Himself

With unfeigned love, John

Stay tuned for future, serious, seminal samplings

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