



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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Spirituality - Does It Make a Difference?

We have all likely heard it at one time or another. Perhaps we have even quoted it our self. It's from Star Wars, the movie. "May the force be with you." "Use the force!" "The force is strong with this one." The "force" - that ill-defined, mystical power, with both good and evil potential, that exists within and around us. How we love these kind of concepts! They have a supernatural, spiritual flair that allows us to reach beyond the everyday limitations of our human existence and tap into something greater than our self.

Indeed, spirituality has received much attention in recent years. Sadly, however, it often is presented as simply another human experience, a journey within to heightened awareness and peace. While this approach to spirituality can be positive, it lacks the thrill of "the force", and has none of its power. On the other hand, we have also witnessed the destructive power of those willing to kill and die for religious and spiritual convictions.

So is that all there is to spirituality - a peaceful, temporarily altered human state, or the experience of terror? Hardly! Spirituality is not just a label, an act, a positive piece of life, or a way to retreat from life. Rather, it is the heart and soul of life itself, the "brand" that defines and directs each moment of life. It is not just experience and

emotion, but also faith, beliefs, and meaning. Let's consider, for example, Christian spirituality and its potential impact, not on life after death (though that is significant), but on how we live our lives day to day.

First of all ... four basic recognitions of Christian spirituality.

1) We recognize the existence of the eternal Creator God, the spiritual being who exists beyond, among, and within us, His creation. This point is crucial, since spirituality without the Creator God is robbed of its power and limited to only what we can imagine or create on our own. The power of Christian spirituality is that it is not bound by our humanness, but connects to the power and presence of the Almighty.

2) We recognize our spiritual state - that our relationship with our God has been broken, and that we are condemned because of our defiance and rebellion.

3) We recognize our God's love and desire to re-establish a relationship with us and to rescue us from (spiritual) "death row" by having Christ take our punishment instead.

4) We recognize our need to accept this freely offered substitution and then live lives of humble freedom and gratitude.

In a nutshell, that's it. But what difference can this spirituality make in

day to day living? Let's note four areas.

1) Significance / Self esteem - Who decides what we are worth - our self, others, our God? Knowing there is a God who declares our great value releases us from having to prove it. We are then free to be drawn by higher motives.

2) Meaning / Purpose - The higher motives we speak of help define the focus of our life. Once we are free to look beyond our self, we can focus on making a positive impact on the world through lives that please and glorify our God.

3) Core Values - The values that guide our decisions and shape our behavior are the values that reflect the character of our God - compassion, service, humility, and justice. As we embrace and live out these values, we move away from selfishness into respectful communion with God and our world.

4) Security / Confidence - The world can still be an unfriendly, frightening, and stressful place. That's why it is reassuring to know that our ultimate well-being is in the trustworthy hands of a compassionate God who has His plan for our life, and who guides and empowers us. Peace is available amidst turmoil. Joy presents in everyday life.

Spirituality *does* make a difference in our lives. But the type of spirituality determines the quality of its impact.

"Choose wisely, Young Skywalker!"



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work..

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2-D or 3-D Humanity

"How are you doing?" We've all asked the question. We've also likely received a variety of answers - everything from the generic "Oh, just fine", to the extended "organ recital" of physical ailments or improvements. We've probably even heard about some emotional conditions, such as "I'm so worried about ...", or "It was such a relief to find ...", or "I'm so happy / sad that ...". But how many of us have received or shared information about our spiritual condition?

There are things we can share about this third part of our being - things like "I had such a glorious time with God in my devotions this morning", or "I feel like my spirit has dried up and blown away". But we tend not to. Why is this?

While our own answer lies within each of us, perhaps fear plays a part in our reticence to spiritually share - fear of offending, being judged, sounding stupid, appearing weak, seeming "radical", presenting as pious, starting an argument, or being too vulnerable.

As we become more comfortable with our own spirituality, let's challenge our fears and honor our spirit by opening it to those around us. It could be the beginning of a whole new level of relationship.



"Fear imprisons, faith liberates; fear paralyzes, faith empowers; fear disheartens, faith encourages; fear sickens, faith heals; fear makes useless, faith makes serviceable."

-Harry Emerson Fosdick