

## Radical Christianity Part 2

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Sunday, 24 August 2008

The buzzword in many circles today is radical. Be radical for Jesus, Live a radical lifestyle. But I have found that when you sit down with those who proclaim the radical lifestyle, many times they can't even define what it is they mean by living radical. Therefore they not only can't live radical themselves, they can't give others a track to run on in their quest to be radical. But radical is exactly what Jesus asks of us. For real. Let's take a few moments and look at what God calls radical, shall we?

### LOVING GOD ON GOD'S TERMS

Jesus, the most radical man that ever lived, defined loving God as living your life deeply rooted in a spirit of obedience. Beloved, there is no such thing as loving God without seeking to obey His Word. Loving God requires more than singing to Him or having sentimental feelings about God.

15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments"; 21 Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he is who loves me"; 23 "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word"; (John 14:15-23)

We must love God on His terms (not on our terms). A core issue at the end-of-the-age is whether we will define love on God's terms or by the humanistic culture that seeks love without reference to obedience to God's Word. Jesus wants love that allows Him to totally control our lives.

There is no substitute for giving God our whole-hearted, voluntary love. I have met many over the years that give God their time and money because they think if they do that He will somehow allow them to continue living in a state of compromise. What God esteems as greatest and most radical is the voluntary response of love that obeys Him with our time, money and talents.

There are many definitions of love, liberty and freedom in the culture of the Church in our nation. Beloved, God is not a hippie. His definition of love is not about being "laid back", "chilled out", or just "going with the flow".

Jesus describes five "grace-releasing activities" in our devotional life that position our hearts to receive divine might or strength. Our heart receives more grace as we consistently and secretly serve and give (charitable deeds: giving service and/or money (Matt. 6:1-4, 19-21), pray (Matt. 6:5-13), bless our adversaries (forgiving, Matt. 6:14-15; 5:44) and fast (Matt. 6:16-18).

Our devotional lives are the means of appropriating God's free grace, not of our earning it. We cannot earn grace. What we can do, however, is position our "cold heart" before the "bonfire of God's enabling

“so that we are in a position where we can receive the Spirit’s empowering to walk out the beatitudes.

The fullness of God’s power that He desires to release in and through us is found only in the context of pursuing 100-fold obedience. There are powerful dynamics that occur in our heart when we soberly aim at walking in total obedience. 98% pursuit obedience has a limited blessing on it. The last 2% is what separates the proverbial “men from the boys” and positions us to live with a vibrant heart. Jesus said that a small piece of dust in our eye can result in our not being able to function properly (Matt. 7:3-5).

Over the years I have heard, time and time again, leaders talking about the high cost of obedience to God, almost like they are trying to talk people out of obeying God. Beloved, it is not obeying God that has the high cost associated to it. The high cost is found in not being a disciple of God, that is where the high cost lies.

Now, I have to say here so that there is no misunderstanding that what Jesus requires is the pursuit of 100% obedience, not the actual attaining of it. The pursuit of full obedience is different than attaining “sinless perfection” in this life. When we sin, we repent (change our mind about what caused us to sin) and renew our resolve to war against the sin we just stumbled in. We “contend” for complete obedience and rely on God’s grace to empower us to “attain” it.

Grace gives us confidence that God enjoys us and will bless us even after we stumble (when we repent) and that He will discipline us in His love (if we do not repent). When we neglect to thoroughly confront sin and compromise in our life we are not loved less by God but we do suffer loss in several significant ways. We minimize our ability to experience the joy of salvation, we reduce our capacity to receive the spirit of revelation, we minimize godly fellowship and we lose eternal rewards.

## RUINED BY GOD TO LIVE RADICAL

I have watched many friends over the years who for a season were “pressing in hard” or “going for it” only to eventually “cool off” and return to a less than radical lifestyle. What they didn’t understand is that it is not about doing something “unusual” for a few months or a few years; it’s not about behaving in an extreme way in a revival meeting. It is not about retreating from difficulty and hard work into “selfish isolationism”; so we are not bothered by the problems of others.

Jesus isn’t looking for an “on again/off again” Bride. He is looking for an equally yoked “eternal” companion who is faithful every moment of every day, not just when it is convenient or just when it feels good.

To take our position as His equally yoked, radical Bride and companion, we must first of all be energized by intimacy. We have to live a lifestyle of encountering God on the heart level. Christianity is not a religion, it’s a relationship; an on-going love encounter with a real Person. Possessing fierce dedication and making radical choices for righteousness and a strong commitment to a noble cause to change a city or nation will not keep us steady unless we encounter love.

The labor of "doing" will make us emotionally weary without the consistent stirring of love in our emotions by the Spirit.

We cannot be so busy doing "the work of the Lord, that we have no time for "the Lord of the work!"

We must not only be energized by intimacy, we must also be sustained in times of difficulty. But we will find it difficult to be sustained in times of difficulty if we have been lazy or fainthearted before the difficulty. As an example, if you are going to try and set the world's record in weightlifting, it is probably best that you start training before the tournament, what do you think?

To live as a radical, we have to have lifestyles that are maintained in secret. It is imperative that we have a secret history in God, when no one is looking. It is not about gaining notoriety in ministry, it is all about living before an audience of One. It is not about the size of our impact on others. The stage of our life is where we perform for the eyes of our Beloved. We prove where our heart is every day on that stage. Everyone is as close to God as they choose to be.

Our love is best expressed to Jesus in the mundane. Being a friend of the Bridegroom, being the equally yoked Bride, living a radical lifestyle, is more than the pursuit of novelty to escape spiritual boredom and to just have something new and exciting going on. Worshiping God is more than good music and lighting at prayer meetings or big Christian events. Worship isn't what you do, worship is who you are.

Being radical is all about living a life that is anchored in eternity, with a heart full of confidence of eternal reward (Heb. 11:6).

6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

If we want to be faithful to the end, it is imperative that we are enriched in community. We are strongest, safest and happiest when we pursue God together. You will go further if you go with others who are going in the same direction. I suggest finding eight or ten brothers or sisters who are hungry for God and desirous of going for the prize. And make sure one of them plays the guitar. Then get together, often and long, to worship, pray, study the Word and seek the Lord together.

One more thing; to be a true radical, you must stand for truth. Truth isn't about a cause or a creed — truth is a Person. You have to courageously embrace truth and the stigma of standing for what most other men (even many professing believers) reject.

## TO BE RADICAL IS TO LIVE ABANDONED TO JESUS FOR DECADES

God isn't looking for a shooting star; He's looking for a shining light. Sustaining a fresh walk with God through decades is the bottom line definition of living radically before God. We are not radical because we do something "unusual" for a few weeks or a few months.

Daniel sustained his prayer life with passion for decades (from about the age of 16 to 82 years old).

10 &hellip;Daniel&hellip; got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. (605-539 BC or 66 years) (Daniel 6:10)

2 I will ponder the way that is blameless. Oh when will you come to me? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house;  
3 I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless&hellip;4 A perverse heart shall be far from me; I will know nothing of evil&hellip;6 I will look with favor on the faithful&hellip;that they may dwell with me; he who walks in the way that is blameless shall minister to me. (Psalm 101:2-6)

David set his heart to live radically by pursuing full obedience (Ps. 101:1-6). To walk in our house with a perfect heart (v. 2) is to obey God in our most familiar setting. David refused to set anything wicked before his eyes (v. 3; Job 31:1). He sought out leaders with this heart (v. 6)

Beloved, wild clothes, green hair, tattoos, piercings, strange lingo, bizarre lifestyles don't make us radical. Radical is being a lover of Jesus, someone who loves what He loves, hates what He hates, and then lives like it is true &ndash; for years and years.

And what is the result? You get Him. Forever!

Let me encourage you, it is legitimate to seek the Lord above all else, above family, friends, vocations, ministry, reputation, possessions, money. It is OK, if you live a radical, sold out lifestyle of prayer, fasting, worship, living in the Word. It's Ok.

Go for it!