

Embracing God's Working Through Me

Sunday September 4, 2021

Series: Authentic Ministry

I Can Fight God or I Can Follow Him!

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” James 1:2–4 ESV

“For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:10 ESV

Authentic Ministry Requires I Embrace God's Working Through Me

I. Focus on Being Faithful to God's Word

“I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 12:1 ESV

My Priority

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” Matthew 6:33 ESV

My Responsibility

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” 1 John 4:1 ESV

II. Focus on the Essentials of My Christian Faith

“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows.” 2 Corinthians 12:2 ESV

“and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.” 2 Corinthians 12:4 ESV

Ministry Essentials

“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.” Colossians 1:28–29 ESV

(Also Luke 23:43; Revelation 2:7)

“Caught Up”

“Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:17 ESV

III. Focus on Being Honest with Myself, Jesus and Others

“On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses—though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me.” 2 Corinthians 12:5–6 ESV

Three Life Practices

1. **Boast Only of My Weakness**
2. **Always Speak the Truth (in Love)**
3. **Let People See a Real Christian in Me**

IV. Focus on Embracing My Life Challenges

“So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.” 2 Corinthians 12:7 ESV

(Also 1 Corinthians 5:5)

First Response

“Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.” 2 Corinthians 12:8 ESV

“And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.” 1 John 5:14 ESV

God’s Three Responses to My Prayer

1. **Yes**
2. **No**
3. **Grow**

“But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” 2 Corinthians 12:9 ESV

(Also 2 Timothy 2:26)

Will I Embrace What the Lord is Doing in My Life?

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