

General Topics :: The Deeper life. Interview with Tozer on the subject. (Part 1)

The Deeper life. Interview with Tozer on the subject. (Part 1), on: 2010/5/18 21:03

Why aren't we seeing the power of God demonstrated today as in the first century? This and other equally pointed questions asked frequently in Evangelical Christian circles augur well for the future of evangelicalism, in the opinion of one of America's staunchest champions of the "deeper life,"

Dr A. W. Tozer, outstanding spokesman of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, author of the Pursuit of God and other books, editor of the Alliance Weekly and pastor of the Southside C&MA Church in Chicago, answered questions for Christian Life regarding the future of evangelicalism.

Question...Dr Tozer, what significance do you attach to the growing discontent of evangelicals with the present spiritual depth of believers?

Tozer : I believe it is a healthy revolt against cold textualism characteristic of evangelicalism for a quarter of a century or more. You see several converging forces met to determine the attitudes and temper of evangelicalism. The strong emphasis on dispensationalism, for instance, which started out to "rightly divide the word of truth," ended up by creating an army of cookie cutter believers, all repeating each other without any independent thought and without much need for the illumination of the Spirit.

The French naturalist, Faber, told of his starting a number of army worms around the rim of a jar. They followed each other blindly for days, each one dimly seeing the one ahead of him and following without question. After days of getting nowhere, they began one at a time to fall off the edge of the jar and perish. Evangelical leaders, like these army worms, have for decades been following each other around their own little jars, each one afraid to step aside or hunt any new direction for himself, each slavishly following the other. And so it happens that the emphasis has been away from the "deeper life," the Spirit-filled life, the life hid with Christ in God. The spiritual content of evangelicalism has been lowered. But, encouragingly, some people are growing discontented and are demanding bread instead of a stone. If there are enough of such people and if they speak out, it could mean healthy revival in the Church of Christ.

Question : You mentioned that the current emphasis is away from the "deeper life," Dr Tozer, exactly how would you define "deeper life."?

Dr Tozer : It means a spiritual life with the intensity of purity and fruitfulness far in advance of the average Christian life. It involves complete separation from the world, not only in practice but in spirit, and a full devotion to God without reservation.

Question : How is the deeper life obtained ?

Dr Tozer : I believe it is the result of crisis rather than a slow growth in grace. The emotional content of this crisis varies with the individual. However, the main point is not the degree of the emotional experience, but the fact that the experience actually has taken place. A fine Old Testament example may be found in the life of Jacob. He met God in the waste, howling wilderness. His encounter was real and to some degree satisfying. Then after wandering for 20 years, during which time he was up and down, sometimes victorious but mostly in defeat, he met God again at Peniel. This second crisis resulted in a complete moral and spiritual transformation that stayed with him for the remainder of his days.

Question : Dr Tozer, what specific steps would you suggest for the earnest seeker after the "deeper life."?

Dr Tozer : I have never been much for steps in the Christian life, though they may be useful to some people. For the most part, my method has simply been to plunge in on the promises of God and let God take care of the "steps." I would however, make a few recommendations to anyone seeking a more satisfying and more God possessed life than he now enjoys. First, determine to take the whole thing in dead earnest. Too many of us play at Christianity. We wear salvation as a kind of convention badge admitting us into the circle of the elect, but rarely stop to focus our whole lives seriously on God's claim upon us. Second, throw yourself out recklessly upon God. Give up everything and prepare yourself to surrender even unto death all your ambitions, plans and possessions. And I mean this quite literally. You should not be satisfied with the mere technical aspect of surrender but press your case upon God in determined prayer until a crisis has taken place.

place within your life and there has been an actual transfer of everything from yourself to God. Third, take a solemn vow never to claim any honor or glory or praise for anything you are or have or do. See to it that God gets all the honor and all the time. Fourth, determine not to defend yourself against detractors and persecutors. Put your reputation in God's hands and leave it there. Fifth, mortify the flesh with the affections and lusts. Every believer has been judicially put to death with Christ but this is not enough for present victory. Freedom from the power of the flesh will come only when we have by faith and self-discipline made such a death an actuality. Real death to self is a painful thing and tends to reduce a man in his own eyes and humble him into the dust. Not many follow this rugged way, but those who do are the exemplary Christians.

Question : What do you feel would do most to awaken the church from its complacency?

Dr Tozer : A great Christian of nearly 300 years ago, Nicholas Herman of Lorraine said that in his early Christian life he determined to cut through the tangle of religious means and " nourish his heart on high thoughts of God." I have always treasured that expression. A cultivation of God through prayer, humble soul-searching and avid feastings upon the Scriptures would go far to awaken the church. As long as God is considered to be very much like the rest of us, except a little higher and a little greater, there won't be any great amount of holy fear among church people. In my opinion, the great single need of the moment is that light hearted superficial religionists be struck down with a vision of God high and lifted up, with His train filling the Temple. The holy art of worship seems to have passed away like the Shekinah glory from the tabernacle. As a result, we are left to our own devices and forced to make up the lack of spontaneous worship by bringing in countless cheap and tawdry activities to hold the attention of the church people.

(Keys to the Deeper Life, A.W Tozer)

Re: The Deeper life. Interview with Tozer on the subject. (Part 1) - posted by JB1968 (), on: 2010/5/18 21:46

Very good!

Re: , on: 2010/5/19 0:57

Part two coming shortly (just as soon as I type it :)