

Disconnected

Each Christian must battle with the feeling of being disconnected from Christ at times. These are better thought of as seasons that each Christian goes through in which Christ seems so distant.

It is important to know that these distant times are linked to responsibilities Christians have to themselves. Responsibilities to self include prayer, fasting, and meditation and are more commonly called spiritual disciplines. Nonetheless, these responsibilities may be conveniently swept under the rug by a believer. What is more, these are inward disciplines which are easy to hide from others. It is easy to *claim* to follow Jesus Christ; however, to truly follow Christ, one must connect with Him on a daily basis. Further, one cannot be content on a decision that was made to serve Christ years earlier. Instead, it should be an active commitment by the one who has given his or her life to Him. These three disciplines help to regulate a person so that he or she will be in tune with Christ. Moreover, these are what a Christian is responsible for in his or her spiritual growth. Consequently, if a Christian is not growing spiritually, then it is likely that these daily exercises are not being performed, either for lack of time, or simply consciously neglected. Again, prayer, fasting, and

meditation are being swept under the rug by many Christians. In other words, the house may look clean, but it's really not since the dirt is only hidden. As a result, it is highly recommended that those who desire to know Christ on a personal level should follow this Scriptural roadmap for growth in Christ. These are a means to plug back into Christ.

Plugged in by Prayer

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

The Apostle Paul spent only a short amount of time in Thessalonica which caused these early Christians to have more questions than answers about doctrine. These new Christians, who were "babes in Christ," were on their own facing much suffering and persecution for the sake of Christ. Nonetheless, they were hanging in there with Jesus. Paul was concerned about all that they were to face without a spiritual leader, or father in Christ. In other words, they were going to be outside of his influence because they were truly going to be on their own. This would lead to the danger of feeling disconnected from the Lord; therefore, at the end of this letter to the Thessalonians, Paul gives quick, and to the point, advice for surviving on their own as Christians. Moreover, he is concerned that they remain plugged into Christ. Consequently, he says, pray, give thanks, and be joyful always. It seems that thanks and joy surrounds the practice of prayer. If there is no thanks and joy

in a person's life, then there is no prayer either. Christians must stay connected with God through prayer. This is even more important when Christians feel as if they are on their own. Prayer helps Christians to face problems.

Plugged in by Fasting

Joel 2:12-13

This is an Old Testament passage that explains to the Jews that God desires their hearts and not their rituals. In other words, God wanted them to plug into a real relationship with Him, which was why the Jews were being judged by God. They had not been plugged into His will, or Him, for a long time. No doubt they sacrificed at the Temple, but God was not fooled, and He knew their hearts were not submitted to Him. It is a reminder that God's people plug into God through brokenness. Besides, fasting brings the fruit of humility which is important since God hates pride. Nonetheless, many take sin lightly much like these Jews did. It is understood that sin will unplug Christians from healthy relationships with God. Practicing fasting for repentance before God seems to be an outdated ritual to many in the Church, but Keith Drury writes, "Fasting shows God that we are serious about sin and do not treat it casually" (17). In addition, fasting also reminds believers of their dependence upon the Creator who supplies every need. Drury also reminds Christians that "Doing without something makes us

appreciate the very thing we've done without" (19). Besides, understanding this concept will bring zest back into prayer before each meal. Fasting is also a good practice of self-denial. Self-denial is a spiritual practice that believers have swept under the rug for sometime. Fasting plugs the believer into Christ and eliminates feeling disconnected.

Plugged in by Meditation

Psalm 104:34

This Psalm is about God and His creation. It was likely written while the Jews were in exile. Since the Jews were away from their homeland, meditation must have been a way to stay connected with God. In addition, meditation has a cleansing effect upon those who think upon God's Word. Christians are still called to renew their minds. Yet, this responsibility gets swept under the rug as well. It is simply disregarded because of desire to meditate upon the pleasures of life. When the mind is focused upon pleasures then God's will is ignored which also brings disconnect. It is imperative that followers today plug back into God through this avenue of cleansing the mind.

These are important responsibilities for Christians. Many would agree that if these things were not swept under the rug so frequently, then the Church would hear from Her God. In other words, the Church will be connected with the Living God. These

practices fall by the wayside because of self, which is under the influence of the pleasures of life. When these are swept under the rug, and there is disconnection between Christians and God, then frustration sets in. Maintenance of these three disciplines is the lifeline between Christ and His people. It is time for Christians to take time to maintain themselves spiritually by not sweeping prayer, fasting, and meditation, under the rug.

Works Cited

Drury, Keith. Unveiled Faces. Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2005.