

**Finishing Well**  
***A conversation about living for Jesus on the back nine of life***

**Conversation Five: Spiritual Formation & Spiritual Maturity**

**Spiritual Maturity Assessment**

**Note:** This is NOT a graded exercise; you do not have to “hand in” your assessment. Your assessment is between you and God. The purpose of this exercise is for you to reflect on where you are in your own spiritual journey with Christ. You are not in competition with anyone else in the class or at church. There is no incentive to imply that you are more spiritually mature than you are. Though we will discuss some of these issues in class, you will not be asked to share anything in class that you don’t want to share. The purpose of this exercise is for you to take a “timeout” and honestly evaluate, with the Holy Spirit’s leading, your current level of spiritual maturity. Ask yourself: “Am I where I want to be spiritually?”

**1. Some Practical Suggestions**

- a. Give yourself permission to simply relax, slow down, take a deep breath and enjoy this learning and time of reflection.
- b. Pray. Ask God to meet with you as you read through and think about this assessment. Pray and expect that God will meet with you. Trust him to do so.
- c. Ask God to give you a verse, a theme or some attribute of Himself that you can use to stay focused on Him, and hear from Him during this time of reflection.
- d. Give yourself a 2-hour block of time to go through this assessment.
- e. Take some notes on your time. Journal your ideas so you can reflect back on them later.
- f. At the end of your time, write out an application for you or some notes about your time
  - What has God revealed to you?
  - How are you doing in you spiritual or devotional life?
  - Do you need to take any specific (measurable) steps? If so, when? Put it in your calendar.
  - To whom will you be accountable in following through with your application? When?

**2. Some verses to reflect on and pray about**

**James 4:8** Come near to God and he will come near to you...

**John 7:37-39** On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup>Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." <sup>39</sup>By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

**Philippians 3:7-11** But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup>What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. <sup>10</sup>I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

**Matthew 11:28-30** Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

**Isaiah 55:1-3** Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. <sup>2</sup>Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. <sup>3</sup>Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.

### **3. Taking a Spiritual Inventory – by R. Dwight Hill, *Facts of the Matter* (September 27, 2007):**

#### **TAKING A SPIRITUAL INVENTORY FROM JOHN 15**

Chapters 13-16 of John's Gospel take place between Christ and the Twelve Disciples the night before the cross. In this portion of Scripture the Master is preparing them—and us—to assume the responsibility of carrying on the ministry of the Gospel to the nations. It is important to understand the passage from this perspective.

**Cleansing:** "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you." (v.3) Question: Am I exposing myself to the word of God in such a manner that it is instructing, convicting and cleansing me from the inside out? (See Jn. 17:17; Eph. 5:25 – 27; 1 Pet. 1:22)

**Obedying:** "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love...You are my friends if you do what I command." (vv.10,14) Question: Am I truly experiencing the love of Christ as a result of uncompromising, and immediate obedience to the word of God in every area of my life? (See John 14:15, 21; 1 Jn. 2:6; 3:24; 5:3)

**Pruning:** "[God, the gardener] cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful...If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned." (vv.2,6) Question: Am I submitting to God's discipline in allowing him to cut away the unhealthy and unnecessary growth in my life so that I am becoming increasingly fruitful? (See Matt. 3:10; 15:13; Lk. 8:13; 13:6-9; Heb. 12:1)

**Abiding:** "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you...If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full..." (vv.7,10,11 - NKJ) Question: Am I enjoying sweet communion with Christ as I walk through my day? Am I learning to allow the Holy Spirit to control my every thought and action? (See Jn. 14:21, 23; Col. 3:16; 1 Jn. 2:5; 3:24; 5:3)

**Rejoicing:** "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." (vv.10,11) Question: Do I have the joy of Christ settled deep within my heart? (See Lk. 15:5, 9, 23, 32; Jn. 16:24; 17:13; Rom. 15:13; 2 Cor. 1:24; Phil. 1:25; 1 Thes. 5:16; 1 Pet. 1:8; 1 Jn. 1:4)

**Loving:** "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends...This is my command: Love each other." (vv.12,13,17) Question: Is the love of Christ flowing out of me to others? Am I selflessly serving others in the Name of Christ? (See Jn. 13:34, 35; Rom. 12:10; Eph. 5:2; 1 Thes. 3:12; 4:9; 1 Jn. 2:9, 10)

**Asking:** "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you...You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name." (vv.7,16) Question: Am I

petitioning God for answers to prayer that focus on his glory? That result in fruitful ministry? (See Psa. 37:4; Prov. 10:24; Jn. 14:13; 1 Jn. 3:21, 22)

**Fruit-bearing:** “Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing...This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples...You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last.” (vv.4, 5, 8,16a) Question: Does my life manifest the fruit of the Spirit? (Gal. 5:22, 23) Are people's lives influenced toward Christlikeness because of me? (See Prov. 11:30; Jn. 12:24; Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:10)

**Glorifying:** “This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” (v.8) Is the fruit of the Spirit evident in my life in a manner that is drawing people to Christ? (See Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 2:12)

#### 4. A Spiritual Inventory – by R. Dwight Hill, *Facts of the Matter* (April 2, 2008):

##### A SPIRITUAL INVENTORY

**Where is my primary focus?** “*Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits at God's right hand in the place of honor and power. Let heaven fill your thoughts. Do not think only about things down here on earth.*” (Col. 3:1, 2) (See Psa. 17:14; 73:25; 2 Cor. 4:18; Philip. 3:20; Heb. 11:13)

**Do I have a real, secret inner life with God?** “*For you died when Christ died, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.*” (Col. 3:3) (See Jn. 17:21,23; 2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:11-14; 1 Pet. 1:8; 4:1,2)

**Am I taking prudent steps to avoid sexual sins?** “*So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires...*” (Col 3:5a) (See Psa. 119:9-11; Pro. 4:14, 15; Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 1 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 5:16, 24; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Pet. 2:11)

**Who is winning the battle? Contentment or greed?** “*Don't be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry.*” (Col. 3:5b) (See Psa. 119:36; Mi. 2:1,2; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 10:2-8; Eph. 4:19; 1 Tim. 6:6; 1 Pet. 2:11)

**How am I dealing with anger, impure speech, and dishonesty?** “*But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds.*” (Col. 3:8,9) (See Psa. 37:8; Matt. 5:22; Eph. 4:29, 31,32; 5:4; 2 Pet. 2:18; Lev. 19:11; Jer. 9:3-5)

**What practical steps am I taking to renew my inner life toward knowing Christ more intimately?** “*In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you.*” (Col. 3:10) (See Psa. 51:10; Ezek. 18:31; 36:26; Eph. 4:22-24)

**Is my life characterized by love, as evidenced by mercy, kindness, humility, patience and forgiveness?** “*Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness. You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony.*” (Col 3:12-14) (See Matt. 18:21-37; Lk. 6:35-37; Jn. 15:12; Rom. 12:9,10; 1 Cor. 13; Rom. 15:1,2; Gal. 6:2)

**Does Christ's peace rule in my heart – as evidenced by a thankful heart?** “*And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are all called to live in peace. And always be thankful.*” (Col. 3:15) (See Psa. 29:11; Isa. 26:3; Jn. 14:27; Rom. 5:1; 14:17; 15:13; Phil. 4:6,7)

**Is the word of God alive in my heart – as evidenced by my joyful sharing of it with others?** *“Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.”* (Col. 3:16) (See Dt. 6:6-8; 8:18-20; Jer. 15:16; I Cor. 4:26; Col. 1:28,29)

**Do my actions reflect the very character of Jesus?** *“And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.”* (Col. 3:17) (See 1Chron. 31:20-22; Col. 3:23)

**Am I cultivating a secret life of prayer?** *“Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.”* (Col. 4:2) (See 1 Sam 12:23; Psa. 55:16; Lk. 18:1; Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6,7; Col. 1:19; 4:12; I Thes. 5:17,18)

**Am I prayerfully and wisely seeking to win the lost to Christ? And am I praying for others of like mind and heart?** *“Don't forget to pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to preach about his secret plan—that Christ is also for you Gentiles. That is why I am here in chains. Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should. Live wisely among those who are not Christians, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and effective so that you will have the right answer for everyone.”* (Col. 4:3-6) (See I Cor. 2:4,5; 2 Cor. 2:14-17; 4:1-3; Eph. 4:295:25-32; 6:19, 20)

**In my pilgrimage, am I deeply engaged in a community with followers of Christ?** (Col. 4:7-18)

#### **5. “Spiritual Speed Bumps” and “Spiritual Circuit Breakers” – thoughts by Pat Morley**

The purpose of a “speed bump” (called a “sleeping policeman” in Jamaica) is to slow you down before someone gets hurt. **“Spiritual speed bumps”** are events and movements of the Holy Spirit in our lives that begin to tell us to slow down. Perhaps the best speed bump of all is a time out, finding a quiet place, and beginning to reflect on where we really are and to allow the whisper of God to come into our hearts and minds.

The purpose of a “circuit breaker” is to prevent overload on an electrical circuit. A circuit breaker is to break the circuit before the electric flow gets out of control and starts a fire. **“Spiritual circuit breakers”** are warnings that we are about to go into overload—about to lose control.

Answering the types of questions that are asked above is a good way to start. Spending time in prayer and seeking the face of God are ways we can slow down and begin to hear the whisper of God in our lives. That whisper will remind us that we are the “beloved.” That whisper will remind us “This is the way; walk in it” (Isaiah 30:21).

Has the Holy Spirit been speaking to you about something lately? Are you listening? Are you taking the appropriate action? Or are you rewiring the circuit breaker so you don't have to listen?

#### **6. A Time of Praise – make this praise your own (Praise by Ruth Myers):**

I exult in the free, confident access You have provided, so that I can come into Your Presence for warm fellowship, for refreshment, for mercy when I've failed, for grace when I'm in need....What a joy to know that I can draw near to You at any moment, wherever I may be...that I can come boldly to Your throne of grace, assured of Your glad welcome—not because I am worthy, or because I've served You, but because You're a God of grace, a God of unmerited, unlimited favor—not little dribbles of favor reluctantly measured out, but overflowing, super—abundant favor....I'm so glad that You welcome me “just as I am,” simply because Jesus is my risen Savior, and I am alive with His life and righteous with His righteousness!

Eph 3:12; Heb 10:19-22; Heb 4:16; Rom 5:17; Phil 4:6; Ps 62:8;

Is praise an important part of your devotional life? What are you praising God for at the moment?

### **7. Tending the Garden of Your Soul – from Gary Thomas, Sacred Pathways**

There's a story of two women planting a vegetable garden. Planted on the same day, one woman carefully tended her garden day after day and the other woman neglected her garden. Months later what was the result? Obviously, the woman who tended her garden had a rich harvest, the woman who neglected her garden had a poor harvest.

The moral of the story: "Both women planted, but only one tended."

Some of us live with the mistaken impression that our faith needs only to be planted, not tended. Becoming a mature Christian, some think, is like becoming six feet tall—it either happens or it doesn't." (p.216)

If we tend our garden, we'll have plenty of food with which to feed others. If we give our garden just cursory attention, we may have enough to feed just ourselves. If we completely neglect our garden, we're going to be so hungry we'll become 'consumer' Christians, feeding off others. (p.220)

We were made to love God. Think about that for a minute—we were made to love God. Like the two gardeners mentioned at the start of this chapter, each of us stands before an open plot of land. God will search heaven and earth to provide us with what we need to plant and maintain a beautiful garden of love, intimacy, and fellowship with him. Not a second of our existence passes without God thinking about how to turn our hearts toward him. Not a single second.

The almost unbelievable joy is that you can enjoy a relationship with God that he will have with no one else. And God eagerly, passionately, yearns for that relationship to begin. God is just as eager to love and know you as he was to know Moses, David, and Mary. You are not less precious to him than were these heroes of the faith. But each one of these saints—Moses, David, and Mary—spent time cultivating and growing their relationship with God. Each one made knowing God the chief passion of their heart. Will you respond to that invitation today?

How are you doing at tending the garden of your soul? Are you where you want to be spiritually? Are you working on a plan to get where you want to be spiritually?

### **8. Focusing Types of Prayer – from Gary Thomas, Sacred Pathways**

**The Jesus Prayer:** "Historically, contemplatives have made great use of the 'Jesus Prayer,' a very simple prayer that runs like this: 'Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' Sometimes an even shorter form might be used. Cassian, a famous fifth-century monk, used the prayer, 'Come to my aid, God; Lord, make haste to help me.'

"The purpose of the Jesus prayer is to practice the presence of God, and its usefulness has been proven through the ages." (pp.182-183)

**Dancing Prayer:** Allowing God to lead our prayers. "Vigorous intercession, wrestling in prayer, and laying our requests before God all have a place. But allowing God to speak and place requests before us also has a place. Dancing prayer is prayer in which we allow God to lead; it is presumptuous to assume that we even know what most needs to be prayed about; how necessary it is, then, to let God take the lead.

“This means our prayer time leads us to repentance, celebration, intercession, introspection, or any number of things. The important element in dancing prayer is to be still enough so that God can lead, like a good dancer, as we pray.

“To nurture my relationship with God, I must learn to hear his voice, learn to adopt his concerns, and seek to know his perspective. There are times when I absolutely must pour out my heart to him, but I never want my prayer life to lapse into a monologue.

“Sit with this image; dancing with God—and let the Holy Spirit lead you as you pray.” (pp.184-185)

**Centering Prayer:** “In general, however, centering prayer works like this: Choose a word (Jesus or Father, for example) as a focus for contemplative prayer. Repeat the word silently in your mind for a set amount of time (say, twenty minutes) until your heart seems to be repeating the word by itself, just as naturally and involuntarily as breathing. As your mind is filled with thoughts of Jesus or the Father or another appropriate subject (love, joy, or peace) you are protected from outside distractions.

“It is hard to describe this to the Western mind. We think, ‘Well, what do I do next?’ But centering prayer is a contemplative act in which you don’t do anything; you’re simply resting in the presence of God. Focusing on God the Father, Son or Holy Spirit, or the beauty of the Trinity, helps you to have a centering anchor for your contemplation, so your thoughts don’t race around looking for more stimulation. As thoughts drift, you simply repeat the word in your heart, centering once again, to bring you back to focus...

“The purpose of centering prayer is not to cultivate feelings or create a ‘spiritual experience;’ it is simply to rest in and enjoy the blessed presence of God. For those who question this, we need merely look to the human example—the deepest kind of love is often that which allows you to rest in another’s presence without saying or doing anything, just enjoying being together.” (pp.185-186)

**Prayer of the Heart:** Moving beyond the purely intellectual side of prayer. “When we Westerns think of ‘prayer,’ most of us think of us talking to God. Other Christians have found, however, that there is a prayer of the heart that, while not replacing prayer of the mind, is an essential ingredient of a full life of prayer.

“God created us with more than intellectual or cerebral faculties, yet we do little to develop the emotional element of our being. One writer describes it this way: ‘Never would we come to true peace and fulfillment if only our cerebral faculties were involved in conversing with God. And yet it is a fact that, in comparison with the overwhelming rational and cognitive training, we receive very little education in our emotional growth...’

“Prayer of the heart does not call us to abandon our mind; that would be as silly as much of our praying that abandons the heart. But it does call us to use the mind to focus on our heart. What are we feeling in God’s presence? Is our adoration centered on God or something else? Are we content to enjoy the presence of God or are we too restless to quiet the mind for just a few minutes?

“That our faith must not be ruled by our feelings does not mean that feelings are irrelevant or even unimportant. God created our emotions for a purpose. It is true that we cannot entirely trust them, but it is also true that we shut off part of our true selves if we entirely ignore them.

“Prayer of the heart then, like centering prayer, is more ‘being’ prayer than ‘doing’ prayer. Its aim is not to get an answer from God, make a request known to God, receive an insight from God, or even express our commitment to God. Rather, the prayer of the heart focuses on emotional attachment to, or adoration of, God. It develops and matures the affective faculty of our souls that is so frequently crippled in our society. Its aim is to love God, to have our hearts enlarged so that God owns more and more of us. Centering prayer focuses on being with God, and aware of God.” (pp.186-187)

How is your prayer life? Do you find maintaining a consistent prayer life easy or hard?

## 9. An Amazing Night

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) the French mathematician and scientist had a deep spiritual experience on the night of November 23, 1654. During his life he did not discuss the experience, but at his death, the following account,

written on parchment, was found sewn into his jacket. Apparently for a number of years he carried it wherever he went. It is now known as “the Memorial.”

“From about half past ten at night to about half an hour after midnight,  
FIRE.

GOD of Abraham, GOD of Isaac, GOD of Jacob

not of the philosophers and of the learned.

Certitude. Certitude. Feeling. Joy. Peace.

GOD of Jesus Christ.

My God and your God.

Your GOD will be my God.

Forgetfulness of the world and of everything, except GOD.

He is only found by the ways taught in the Gospel.

Grandeur of the human soul.

Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you.

Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.

I have departed from him:

They have forsaken me, the fount of living water.

My God, will you leave me?

Let me not be separated from him forever.

This is eternal life, that they know you, the one true God, and the one that you sent, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ.

I left him; I fled him, renounced, crucified.

Let me never be separated from him.

He is only kept securely by the ways taught in the Gospel:

Renunciation, total and sweet.

Complete submission to Jesus Christ and to my director.

Eternally in joy for a day's exercise on the earth.

May I not forget your words. Amen.”

Have you had an “amazing” night with God recently? Do you expect to have such a night?

#### **10. A Puritan Prayer – from The Valley of Vision, edited by Arthur Bennett**

##### **Spiritus Sanctus**

“O Holy Spirit,

As the sun is full of light, the ocean full of water, Heaven full of glory, so may my heart be full of thee.

Vain are all divine purposes of love and the redemption wrought by Jesus except thou work within,  
regenerating by thy power, giving me eyes to see Jesus, showing me the realities of the unseen  
world.

Give me thyself without measure, as an unimpaired fountain, as inexhaustible riches.

I bewail my coldness, poverty, emptiness, imperfect vision, languid service, prayerless prayers, praiseless  
praises.

Suffer me not to grieve or resist thee.

Come as power, to expel every rebel lust, to reign supreme and keep me thine;

Come as teacher, leading me into all truth, filling me with all understanding;

Come as love, that I may adore the Father, and love him as my all;

Come as joy, to dwell in me, move in me, animate me;

Come as light, illuminating the Scripture, molding me in its laws;

Come as sanctifier, body, soul and spirit wholly thine;

Come as helper, with strength to bless and keep, directing my every step;

Come as beautifier, bringing order to confusion, loveliness out of chaos.

Magnify to me thy glory by being magnified in me and make me redolent of thy fragrance.” (pp.50-51)

## 11. A Six-Point Formula for Spiritual Failure in Ministry – from Pat Morley, Surrender

“Here is a six-step, fool-proof formula for spiritual failure. Look for yourself in these six steps and perform some self-diagnosis.

- a. **“Go with the Natural Flow of Life.** To be a successful failure requires that you not give much thought to knowing Jesus more intimately on a day-to-day basis. Think of Him more as a distant relative than a close friend. Let life’s natural currents take you where they may. Don’t look for a spiritual rhythm and tempo to daily life. Presume that spiritual growth will occur naturally. Don’t expend too much time in reflection, examining life’s larger purpose and meaning.
- b. **“Immerse Yourself in Christian Work.** One of the great secrets to finding spiritual disillusionment is to give yourself fully to the busyness of Christian life. Be there every time the church doors open. Cook the pancakes, balance the budget, call on all the first-time visitors. Spend your time doing the work of God, and don’t bog down in the Scriptures and intercession for the saints. It’s okay not to know your spiritual gifts because you can employ your natural abilities for service.
- c. **“Do More for God Each Year.** Measure your value to God by results. Keep records of your spiritual production. If you spent one hundred hours in Christian service last year, then make one hundred twenty hours your goal for this year. Make performance the acid test of your spirituality. Don’t listen to idle chatter that faithfulness is more important than production.
- d. **“Look for Feedback from Friends.** Measure your spiritual value by the feedback you get from other people. Depend on the appreciation and affirmation of the brothers and sisters. Savor the comments of your friends; turn them over and over in your mind. Believe what they say. Let their strokes provide energy, strength, and encouragement. Gain your identity in your accomplishments. Derive your self-worth from how others value your achievements, possibly in commerce, but especially in ministry.
- e. **“Build a Reputation.** Pick service to God that is high visibility. Build a spiritual ministry. Gain a reputation. Don’t be satisfied being a servant; become a star. If you can become somebody important, you can make a bigger contribution. Don’t think much about doing service for the glory of God. He can manage His own glory. Do your service in such a way that you are noticed. This is an excellent way to advance to bigger and better opportunities to serve God.
- f. **“Concentrate on Work that Helps People.** People really are very needy, you know, and if you position yourself correctly, you can become like a mini-Mother Teresa. Keep telling yourself that working for the betterment of mankind is worth it—it is a worthwhile goal in and of itself. Convince yourself that you will leave the world a better place. Believe that the issue on Christ’s mind is easing the pain of life alone, not seeking and saving lost sinners. Don’t focus on the distinction between showing human sympathy and confronting lost sinners with the loving claims of the gospel.

“The other way—the way to spiritual success—is opposite of what the world would prescribe.

“With Christ, success is not performance; it’s surrender. To succeed is to surrender your motives, ambitions, and priorities to Christ. Seek to know Him more personally. Measure your worth and gain your identity by faithfulness to Christ, not by production. Let your service come from the overflow of a vital communion with the living Lord.” (pp.48-49)

How are you doing with surrender to our Lord Jesus?

Have I allowed my love of \_\_\_\_\_ (you fill in the blank) to replace my love of Christ?