

Radical Christianity: What Is It?

I. THE CALL TO BE RADICAL

- A. We seek to live in a radical way before God. What does it mean to live radically? Jesus defined this in the Sermon on the Mount by calling us to live perfect by seeking to walk in all the light the Spirit gives us. We are to have a sustained reach in our spirit to live in comprehensive obedience. Walking perfect in obedience is relative in this age and absolute in the age-to-come.
⁴⁸ ***You shall be perfect (walk in all our light), just as your Father is perfect. (Mt. 5:48)***
- B. The pursuit of “complete obedience” includes ***bridling our speech*** (Jas 3:2; Eph. 4:29-5:4), ***disciplining our physical appetites*** (1 Cor. 9:27), ***managing our time*** (for service and prayer with the Word) ***and money*** (to increase the Kingdom beyond our comfort and honor; Mt. 6:19-21) and ***making a covenant with our eyes*** to refuse to look on anything that stirs up lust (Job 31:1) as we engage in ***communing prayer*** with the indwelling Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).
- C. To live in “perfect or complete obedience” is defined by the 8 beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12). We are poor in spirit as we see our serious dilemma in seeking “perfect” obedience (Mt. 5:48). We then mourn so as to be desperate enough to pursue it regardless of the cost.
³ ***Blessed are the poor in spirit...4 those who mourn...5 the meek...6 those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...7 the merciful...8 the pure in heart... (Mt. 5:3-8)***
- D. Power in our life is found in pursuing 100-fold obedience. There are powerful dynamics that occur in our heart when we soberly seek to walk in total obedience. The 98% pursuit of obedience has a limited blessing. The last 2% positions us to live with a vibrant heart.
- E. A sustained reach for 100% obedience is different than ***attaining*** “sinless perfection” in this life. When we sin, we repent and renew our resolve to obey with confidence that God enjoys us. When we neglect to thoroughly confront sin in our life ***we are not loved less by God*** but we do suffer loss in minimizing the “full gift of our love” from this life to Jesus on the last day.
- F. Scripture presents two aspects of being complete before God. First, we are ***instantly*** made complete in Christ in our ***legal position*** (justification). Second, we ***progressively*** become “complete in obedience” in our ***living condition*** before God (sanctification).
¹⁰ ***You are complete in Him... (Col. 2:10)***
- G. Different terms for the same truth of being ***complete*** in obedience (2 Cor. 13:9, 11; Phil. 1:6; Col. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:17; Heb. 13:20-21; Jas. 1:4); ***perfect*** (Mt. 5:48; 19:21; Jn. 17:23; Gal. 3:3; Eph. 4:13. Col. 1:28; 1 Thes. 3:10; Jas. 2:22; 3:2; 1 Pet. 5:10; Rev. 3:2); ***mature*** (Phil. 3:15); ***blameless*** (Lk. 1:6; 1 Cor. 1:6-8; Phil. 2:15; 1 Thes. 3:13; 5:23; 1 Tim. 3:2, 10; 5:5-7; 6:14; 2 Pet. 3:14; ***without spot*** (Eph 5:27); ***Worthy*** (2 Thes. 1:5-12; Lk 21:34-36; 20:35-36; Col. 1:9-10 Mt. 10:37-38; 22:8; Rev 3:4-5; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27; 1 Thes. 2:12); ***Stand*** (Lk. 21:36; 1 Cor. 10:13; 16:13; Eph. 6:10-14; Phil. 4:1; Col. 4:12; 1 Thes. 3:8. Rev. 6:17).

- H. From God’s point of view, the main objective in our life is to be able to present the testimony to Jesus (at the end of our life) that our obedience was complete, thus our love for Jesus was complete. Enoch received the testimony that his life responses were pleasing to God. Abraham, Daniel and David received this testimony (Dan. 12:13; 1 Chr. 28:4).
⁵ *By faith Enoch...before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. (Heb. 11:5)*
¹⁸ *Perfect love casts out fear...he who fears has not been made perfect in love. (1 Jn. 4:18)*
- I. Our primary calling is to live in a way that expresses love to God by comprehensive obedience. In other words, to establish a history in living in deep agreement with the Spirit so as to give Jesus a gift of our love on the last day. This is the inheritance that Jesus died for.
¹⁰ *When He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints...¹¹ Therefore we pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling... (2 Thes. 1:10-11)*
¹⁸ *that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. (Eph. 1:18)*
- J. Paul’s main objective in his life was to win the prize of presenting the testimony to Jesus on the last day that his obedience was complete, thus his love was complete. Paul’s paradigm of his life was one long race to obtain this prize (v. 24). Our race is against darkness (not against others).
²⁴ *Those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it...²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty (lack of focus)... ²⁷ I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest... I should become disqualified. (1 Cor. 9:24-27)*
- K. Paul had not won the prize of the crown of righteousness until his life long race was completed.
⁸ *There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness...on that Day... (2 Tim. 4:8)*
- L. Towards the end of Paul’s life, he had not yet attained it. The prize of the upward call of God is to receive the highest dimension of one’s calling in the age-to-come (2 Thes. 1:11).
¹² *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected...¹³ I do not count myself to have apprehended...¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God... (Phil. 3:12-14)*
- M. The supreme value of living with a sustained testimony of “complete love” was understood.
⁹ *This also we pray, that you may be made complete. (2 Cor. 13:9)*
²⁸ *We preach warning every man and teaching every man...that we may present every man perfect (mature) in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor... (Col. 1:28-29)*
¹² *Epaphras...always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. (Col. 4:12)*

- N. We are to ask the Lord for insight into areas where we lack complete dedication to Him. We ask the Lord to shock us now with insight into our lack of dedication instead of at the Judgment Seat of Christ. We sit before the Lord like Mary of Bethany to worship, to receive revelation of His beauty, to intercede for others and to gain insight into what we lack in our dedication, etc.

³ *The testing of your faith produces patience (endurance). 4 Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing (in our obedience)... 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask...and it will be given to him. (Jas 1:3-5)*

²⁰ *The young man said, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" 21 Jesus said, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (Mt. 19:20-21)*

- O. 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)

² *I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. 3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes...4 A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness.... 6 My eyes shall be on the faithful...that they may dwell with me; he who walks in a perfect way, he shall serve me. (Ps. 101:2-6)*

II. LOVING GOD ON GOD'S TERMS

- A. Jesus called us to live perfect in our obedience by seeking to walk in all the light the Spirit gives us in the details of the 8 beatitudes. That is "what" we are to do. Jesus tells us "why" we are to pursue complete obedience. It is the arena in which we show our love to Him.

'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart...and with all your mind. (Mt. 22:37)

- B. Jesus, the most radical man defined loving God as being deeply rooted in a spirit of obedience. 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, keep My commandments....21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me...23 If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word... (Jn. 14:15-23)*

³ *This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. His commandments are not burdensome. (1 Jn. 5:3)*

- C. Denying our lustful desires is the theatre God chose for us to express our love to Him. Each of us has a different struggle according to our personality and circumstances. Thus, we each have a different "assignment" from which we offer our gift of love to God. Saying "no" to sin gives us an opportunity to express our love. He takes it personally as we resist sin because of love.

- D. 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.

- E. What is your greatest dream for your life? Is it to be empowered to live out the 8 beatitudes? God remembers and rewards our small expressions of love expressed in our obedience. Jesus will express His deep love in rewarding us in ways that cause us to be near Him.
- F. The greatest calling we have is to love Him and thus to impact His heart. We move His heart by every movement of our heart to show love to Him by obedience. It is the most extreme lifestyle. Do you know the way that you move Him? Each time we repent of compromise it moves Him.
- G. Jesus will confess one's name before His Father and His angels. This is not a reference to being saved but of Jesus speaking about our love in showing obedience before the Father. The story of our loving devotion to Jesus will be manifest and retold by Jesus and other saints (like when we enthusiastically retell the story of others after we read their biography).
⁵ I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (Rev 3:5)
- H. Our rewards in heaven are His response of love to us for loving Him and desiring to be with Him where He is. Eternal rewards will be expressions of our love responses to Jesus while on earth. Every movement of our heart in loving obedience to Jesus is seen and thus is not in vain.

III. RUINED BY GOD: REFUSING TO LIVE WITHOUT PURSUING 100-FOLD OBEDIENCE

- A. *Energized by intimacy*: lifestyle of encountering God. Christianity is an on-going encounter of love with a Person. The labor will make us emotionally weary without the consistent stirring of love in our emotions by the Spirit. Stirred emotions in love are very powerful!
- B. *Sustained in difficulty*: it is not laziness that retreats from difficulty and hard work.
- C. *Maintained in secret*: it is not about gaining notoriety in ministry but living before an audience of One. It is not about the size of our ministry impact on others.
- D. *Expressed in the mundane*: it is more than the pursuit of novelty to escape boredom. It is more than good music at prayer meetings or expressing ourselves with energy in a worship service.
- E. *Anchored in eternity*: with confidence of eternal reward (Heb. 11:6)
- F. *Enriched in community*: we are strongest, safest and happiest when we pursue God together
- G. *Stands for truth*: it courageously embraces truth and the stigma of standing for what men reject
- H. *Sustaining long term*: it is what we do for decades not something unusual we do a few months. Daniel sustained his prayer life with passion for decades (from about age 15 to 82 years old).
¹⁰ Daniel...knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. (605-539 BC almost 70 years) (Dan. 6:10)