

## **LOOKING BENEATH THE SURFACE**

True Christian relating & fellowship looks beneath the surface in other's life. We tend to look at the surface of people's lives instead of looking at the battles within.

### **1. It is easy & apparently natural to look at life on the surface.**

**1Sam 16:7 for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.**

Samuel, with the job of anointing the next king of Israel was led to the house of Jesse to be shown who God wanted to anoint. Even Samuel, the greatest prophet of Israel got caught up into the outward appearance, the externals, the circumstances, and the materialistic view.

- It is our tendency and temptation to look at the outer appearance of a thing, rather than its cause or purpose – we seem to be most affected by the material world.
- Even those who are spiritually advancing tend to see the outside and neglect the inside.

**(1 Cor. 4:5) Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.**

- Stop judging – comparing different leaders, speakers, ministries; focused on the exterior – Apollos was the more attractive & better speaker.
- Judging, evaluating ministries based on visible results – numbers
- Motives – the realities beneath the surface – inner reasons for our outside choices

God evaluates us based on the inside, not how we look on outside or what people think

**(2 Cor. 5:12) We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, that you may have an answer for those who take pride in appearance & not in heart.**

- Those who value outward appearances of success, not what is in the heart.

**(2Cor 5:12-16) seeing Christ & others according to the flesh – materialistic, human view**

- We previously knew/viewed Christ according to the flesh – saw Him as a man

**(2 Cor. 10:7) You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we. NIV – looking only at the surface**

- Outward/human focus = war by the flesh, speculation, oppose God
- Opposite of every though captive to Christ – captive to self/pleasure

### **2. God arranges the outside of our life to transform the inside – our hearts**

(Rom 8:28) God causes all things to work together for good – all things

(Jam 1:2-4) See your adversities as opportunities to grow

- a. Misunderstanding – God arranges our circumstances (good/bad) because of what we deserve based on our behaviors.
- b. Misunderstanding – our circumstances are determined solely by sowing/reaping

- God's plan includes sowing/reaping but transcends normal human life
- c. Having bought our debt, pronounced us +R, adopted us into His family, placed us in union with Christ and made our bodies His temple, God has placed us in a realm that transcends deserving or not deserving – transcended deserving
- d. Beneath the surface of the circumstances of our lives, God is using everything to transform us into a person who believes, thinks, feels and behaves like Christ.
  - Uses relationships to reveal sin patterns that need to be changed – marriage
  - Uses finances to reveal fear based beliefs that need changing – we believe that financial prosperity is a reward for being faithful – not for anyone in NT.
  - Use health issues to reveal our mortality & fear of death
- e. God's grace, forgiveness & provision in any/all circumstances reveals His heart
  - Learning His word & watching Him honor is the belief system of NM in Christ.
  - Relationships reveal our idolatry (dependence on people over God), so that we can repent of it and make God our first priority – NM love for God.
  - Adversity reveals our OM beliefs to be removed & then is the opportunity to practice believing the NM, habituating the Christ like life.

**3. Fellowship/Christian relating to achieve its intended goal must go beyond the surface to connect with others based on the battle within.**

- a. Battle within – break habitual use of OM beliefs that puts temporal, people, material, circumstantial life first ahead of God, replacing OM with NM that puts God and His values as first in our life.
  - Everything God does in our life is about empowering us to win this battle
- b. Christian fellowship looks beneath the surface in the life of fellow believers to their battle within, seeking to edify and help them.
  - Fellowship is in contrast with social interaction which is legit related to details

**4. Christian Fellowship is part of God's provision for us to win the battle within (Ephesians 4:15) but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.**

- a. Speaking is the work of all the gifts, every believer, not just PT.
- b. Truth reveals the lies we have believed and shows us life beneath the surface
- c. As we serve one another by speaking truth, we help each other grow into intimacy with the Lord, enabling us to put/keep first things in their rightful place.
- d. As we serve one another, we are built up individually and collectively.