

A BALANCED LIFE

SERIES: LIFESTYLE ISSUES IN THE CHURCH

Doug Goins

I heard a new beatitude recently: "Blessed are the balanced." It's hard to maintain our spiritual equilibrium in the moral and ethical chaos of the world that we live in. But Jesus called us to balance in relationship to the world. He said we're to be in the world, but not of the world (John 17:15, 16). We're to live a life of positive influence on the culture that we're placed in, but we're not to allow that culture to shape us and mold us, to negatively influence us. We don't withdraw from the world in some sort of cloistered isolation, but we also don't sell out to the world's value system. We don't live life out of fear-driven, legalistic control, trying to manage all of our circumstances to protect ourselves; but we also don't live out of reckless abandon, driven by licentiousness or selfishness in the name of freedom. There is a graceful balance in living out a life of freedom in Christ that guards us from dangerous extremes.

Christians have struggled with this balance since the time of Jesus and the apostles. In all three pastors' conferences in Romania that Rich Carlson, Danny Hall, Brent Becker, and I were involved a few weeks ago, our brothers were concerned about activities that could lead to compromise in our relationship to the world, misuse of the liberty we have in Jesus Christ. We talked about what the church's perspective should be on the use of alcoholic beverages for believers. We talked about wearing potentially suggestive forms of dress. They raised the issue of listening to certain kinds of music. The issue of tobacco came up. There was concern about playing games that involved gambling of some sort. They were concerned about women's wearing makeup and jewelry. And finally, because the lottery has become very big in Romania, there was struggle over what Christians' attitude should be toward a legalized lottery system like that.

In 1 Corinthians 10:14-11:1 Paul is going to conclude a discussion that has gone on through three chapters on this issue of spiritual balance, on what identity in Christ means in relationship to the world, on what kind of restraints we legitimately place on the freedom that God has given us.

Paul mentioned the specific problem the Corinthians were wrestling with in 8:1: "Now concerning things sacrificed to idols...." Then again in 8:4: "Therefore, concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols...." Most of the meat that was sold in the meat markets in Corinth came from sacrificial animals that had been slaughtered at pagan temple ceremonies. That was the best meat in town. So the question was, did these rituals somehow automatically taint the food? Could Christians buy it for use at home? Could they eat it if it was offered to them in the homes of non-Christian friends? And did they have the freedom to attend the various social events that were held in the temples, such as weddings, parties, organizational meetings (the temples had the best banqueting facilities)? And finally, was a Christian free to attend an overtly pagan worship service, with sacrifice involved? What if a non-Christian friend invited them to be part of one of those activities?

The immediate concern of these Christians was this: If a Christian ate meat offered to an idol, were they somehow participating in the worship of that idol? Was it sinful? Some of the younger Christians in the church said it was sinful to eat that meat. The meat was tainted by its idolatrous identification. But some of the stronger Christians in the church said it wasn't a sin to eat it. These stronger Christians were demanding the right to attend banquets at the pagan temples in Corinth. They wanted to eat whatever food they wanted, when they wanted. They had a lot of theological knowledge about their freedom in Christ.

In chapters 8-9 Paul told these stronger Christians that he agreed with their theology of freedom, but the problem was that they had become arrogant and selfish. The real evidence of spiritual maturity, or Biblical

understanding, was not knowledge but *agape* love, the willingness to live sacrificially for other people in the body of Christ. Paul asked these more mature believers in Corinth to exercise the freedom they had in Christ in a loving and sensitive way. They ought to be concerned for the brothers and sisters in the body who had a weaker conscience with regard to eating food sacrificed to idols and attending events in the pagan temples. So the call to these stronger Christians was to give up their legitimate rights for the sake of the gospel that was at work in the body and in their community.

The first half of chapter 10, which we looked at in the last message (Discovery Paper 4526), dealt with the reason that we hang onto our rights and demand that life work the way we want it to. We looked at the history of the nation Israel, and we were warned of the dangers of ingratitude, discontentment, dissatisfaction with the circumstances that God has given us.

The passage before us, beginning with 10:14, begins with the word "therefore." What follows is a summary of everything that Paul has been discussing in chapters 8, 9, and the first half of 10. The passage falls into two major sections. In verses 14-22 there is a warning. The issue of our identity is involved here. He talks about the danger of compromising with idolatry, and there is a strong imperative in verse 14: "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry." And the word that closes that section in verse 22 is the rhetorical question, "Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?" Then 10:23-11:1 counter-balances that. In a wonderfully positive way it talks about the opportunity we have to use our freedom to God's glory, for the good of other people. "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do," he writes in verse 31, "do all to the glory of God."

FLEE IDOLATRY

First let's look at the warning in verses 14-22, where Paul focuses on the danger of idolatrous compromise. He is unequivocal in verses 14-15:

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say.

The prohibition here is absolute. Paul says to shun the worship of idols. Now, he's already made clear that meat sacrificed to idols was morally neutral. But now he's saying that to eat it in the context of explicitly pagan worship services was always wrong.

Literally the command is to keep on fleeing from idolatry. It was a temptation they would face over and over again, because there were a thousand temples and idols scattered around Corinth, most of them to the Greek goddess of sex. The potential Paul saw for new believers to be drawn back into the immorality involved with these pagan temples was really powerful. As a loving father, he was warning these young Christians not to get drawn back into anything associated with idolatry and immorality in those temples. As we saw in the last message when we studied the history of the nation Israel, just the fact that you're one of God's chosen people is no guarantee that you're not going to fall back into idol worship. The pursuit of false gods and their worship was a constant temptation to Israel, and Paul says it would be a constant temptation to the believers in Corinth, and to us as well.

Now, we're probably inclined to say that we're not the least bit attracted to Corinthian idolatry. We know that the hand-carved representations of deity don't have any life. We have no spiritual interest in the Greek pantheon. If we traveled to Greece, we might take pictures of the statues as tourists, but we're not about to bow down and worship them.

But the spiritual reality is that we're just more sophisticated idolaters in the late twentieth century. Idolatry includes much more than paying homage to a physical image. An idol is any false god, object, idea, philosophy, habit, occupation, sport, or anything else that has our primary concern and loyalty, and as a result decreases our trust in the Lord Jesus, our focus on him, our loyalty to him. Obviously, any practices that are inherently immoral or illegal or destructive are dangerously idolatrous. But there are many neutral things and even things that are potentially good that really can become immorally idolatrous. Drinking alcohol can lead to drunkenness. Work can turn into workaholicism. Involvement in gangs can lead to victimization or criminal activity. Parental respect can border on ancestor worship. Patriotism can become

the idolatry of the state. TV-watching can replace productive activity. The desire for clothing and shelter can become materialism, having to have the best things possible. Taking medication can become addiction. If anything besides God gets our best thoughts, energy, and feelings, we're idolaters.

THE DANGERS OF IDOLATRY

This issue is very serious, and Paul gives these Corinthians three warnings about the nature of idolatry. The first one is in verses 16-18. Any kind of idolatrous involvement contradicts our identity in Jesus Christ.

Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we, who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar?

Here Paul shows how the communion table is a symbol of our relationship with Jesus Christ, who is the very source of our spiritual life. He is also the source of the unity that we have as brothers and sisters in his body. So when we partake together of the elements at the communion table, the bread and the wine, Paul says it involves a sharing, literally *koinonia*, a spiritual fellowship with the Lord Jesus and also with our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.

The same dynamic, he says in verse 18, was at work in ancient Israel as worshipers ate sacrificial meals in the temple in Jerusalem. They communed with the Lord through the forgiveness associated with those animal sacrifices. So both believing Jews under the old covenant and followers of Jesus Christ under the new covenant are defined in terms of spiritual identity by what they eat together. And those meals aren't just religious ritual. It's a picture of their relationship with the Lord of the universe.

So symbolically, when we come to the Lord's table, we are saying in essence, We eat this just as we live by it; Jesus is our source of life and strength. This sacred meal defines who we are in Jesus Christ. We have died to sin with him, and we have been resurrected to new life because of his resurrection life.

Now Paul is going to contrast eating at the Lord's table with eating meals in the pagan temples. In this second warning Paul shows how this dynamic applies to the temple feasts in Corinth in verses 19-21. It is a frightening reality that all idolatry is driven by demonic evil.

What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

The point he's making is that while the meat that was partaken of in these pagan sacrificial meals had no spiritual nature, no spiritual power, and neither did the physical idol to which the meat was sacrificed, the meal did represent satanic evil. Demons are the spiritual force behind all idolatry, religious or otherwise. And the Biblical reality is that Satan is a liar and a destroyer of people and relationships. All idolatry, no matter how innocent we may think it is, is built on destructive lies about ultimate fulfillment and purpose in life. So Paul is warning these Christians that even unwitting involvement in pagan idolatry can draw a believer into participation with Satan and his demons. And it's clear in the Scriptures that just because we're Christians doesn't mean we're immune from Satanic influence in our lives.

In verse 21 Paul makes a strong statement-it isn't just good advice-about a fact that Jesus pointed out in Matthew 6:24 when he said that we cannot serve two masters. It's not just that we shouldn't serve two masters-it's impossible to do both at the same time. It's got to be one or the other. In Jesus' words, "...Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other." If we fellowship with the Lord Jesus, we cannot also have fellowship with the demonic, and vice versa.

Some people in the church in Corinth were attempting to do that, but their worship was hypocritical. Farther on in this letter when we study the Lord's supper specifically, Paul will say that some in the church

were actually getting sick, trying to live with the hypocrisy of pursuing idolatry and the Lord Jesus at the same time. The reason is that involvement with idols cuts us off from the life of Christ. We don't want to accept that as believers. We want a little bit of God to make our lives work, but we still want permission to pursue our pet plans and projects, our own agendas. All of us would love to somehow be idolaters and yet be totally faithful to the Lord. But Paul says it is impossible. It's either the lordship of Jesus Christ, or it's idolatrous self-rule. And again, the frightening possibility is that gradually, the idolatrous attachment will displace the love that we have for Jesus and our connection with him.

The third warning is in verse 22. We're going to have to deal with God if we pursue idolatry.

Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?

Any form of idolatrous involvement provokes the jealousy of God. All through the Old Testament he identifies himself as a "jealous God." But his jealousy is not like ours. His is pure. It's totally committed to what's best for us. It's the jealousy that comes from his loving ownership of us. He loves us too much for us to get away with whatever rebellion or idolatry we're pursuing. He will intervene; he will crash into our life and it will be painful. He will do whatever it takes to get our attention, because the answer to the question is, we are *not* stronger than he is. No matter what the rebellion is or how entrenched it is, he is more powerful.

Now these three warnings are very clear: Idolatry contradicts our identity in Christ. It is driven by demonic evil. And it provokes the holy wrath of God. We need to hear this today, because we live in a religious climate that is increasingly pluralistic or syncretistic. There are world religions that have been created to combine the table of the Lord and the table of demons. The best example is the Bahai religion, which tries to combine the best of all the world's ideologies. The apostle thunders, "You cannot!" In our own country, more and more people are creating their own patchwork quilt of religious beliefs, trusting that by combining the essential doctrines of different faiths, they will come to know the true God of the universe and live with him eternally.

I just saw an advertisement in the *San Jose Mercury News* yesterday about a lectureship on religion and community coming up at Stanford University. Diana Eck, a professor from Harvard is speaking on "America's new religious landscape: negotiating identities, negotiating differences." She is a professor of comparative religions and Indian studies at Harvard and is the author of a number of books, one entitled *On Common Ground: World Religions in America*. She is also the head of a religious pluralism project at Harvard. She is going to talk about how we are increasingly a multi-religious entity in the United States, and how we need to come to grips with that and basically relax into it and accept it.

Marvin Olasky is an editorial writer for *World* magazine, and he teaches religion at the University of Texas. In a recent editorial, he pulled out a number of things that undergraduate students at the University of Texas had written in the last two years. He said he had taught religion to fifteen hundred students. He summarized their approach to faith as a "slice-and-dice approach to the Bible." He says they have many theologies at work. Let me just excerpt a few things that today's students are saying about their view of faith:

"I believe in Jesus, but I do not believe the Bible is the word of God. It's the word of man, imperfect, judgmental, and over-zealous."

One wrote about liking Christianity in small amounts.

Another said, "I have nothing against God. I just don't believe in religion."

A fourth believed in "taking bits and pieces from several religions, and in that way making up my own personal religion."

Another student said he affirmed Christian principles, but the bottom line was, "I believe in me."

One student wrote that he did not want to "trust the old myths anymore." So he would become "one of the

new priests, birthing a new culture with its own myths, rites, and rituals." (1)

But this paragraph in 1 Corinthians forbids any attempt to combine Biblical Christianity with Hinduism, Buddhism, or any other religious expression. And there's a lot of pressure in our culture to recover what some people call the devalued spiritualities that need to be embraced again-paganism, earth worship, Native American religions, astrology, goddess worship, white witchcraft. But Paul says in our passage, behind every one of these religious expressions is demonic evil. Don't be seduced.

A GUIDE FOR USING OUR FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Now we come to the good news in 10:23-11:1. Paul talks about the opportunity to use our freedom for God's glory and for the good of other people. No matter what we're doing, we're to do it all to the glory of God. It's interesting to me that Paul refuses to lay down rules for practice that will apply to every Christian in every cultural setting, under all circumstances. Instead he summarizes spiritual principles that we must work out in our own setting where God has placed us. He gives us wonderful insights into making decisions about the gray areas of life and spirituality-some of the issues that our brothers in Romania struggle with in the life of their churches and in being salt and light in their culture. In verses 23-30 Paul summarizes four principles in a kind of guide for using our freedom in Christ for God's glory.

The first point is in verse 23: Edification is more important than our personal gratification.

All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.

As Christians we really do have essential freedom in matters of morally neutral things. But our behavior must be tempered with concern for others in the body of Christ. If our freedom is going to be expressed through Christian maturity, it's going to be concerned with the spiritually benefit to others. That word "edify" means to build up or strengthen. It's a word from the vocabulary of the construction of buildings. Paul uses it in his letters to describe the strengthening of Christian character in ourselves and other people. So when we're faced with a decision about a particular practice, first we've got to ask ourselves if we have the right to do it. I would say if it's not forbidden by Scripture, absolutely we have the right. But the next question has to be whether it's profitable and edifying-will it build people up, both ourselves and others? And again, if the answer is yes, then we can participate with full abandon.

The second principle in verse 24. Our freedom is going to express itself in serving other people.

Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor....

A more literal translation is "...but that of the other...." In his counsel not to seek our own rights but the good of the other, Paul uses a very precise colloquial expression that doesn't mean neighbor, or the person near me or like me. Rather, it literally means the one who is not like me, the one with whom I am most likely to disagree. This is the person whose good I am to consider above my own, putting it ahead of my own needs or concerns. You see, for me to give deference to a friend, somebody who is like me and who likes me, is not a great stretch spiritually. But to place limits on my actions to help a weaker brother, or somebody who differs from me on various issues-that's hard. And it really isn't within my power to treat them that way, apart from the work of the Lord Jesus as he expresses his life through me. Philippians 2:1-11 speaks of having the same spirit of willingness Jesus had to live sacrificially, to give up for the sake of the other, to consider other people more important than I am in the body of Christ.

Look at the third principle in verses 25-27. The good news is that liberty in Christ will always triumph over legalism.

Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience' sake; for the earth is the Lord's, and all it contains. If one of the unbelievers invites you, and you wish to go, eat anything that is set before you, without asking questions for conscience' sake.

This section brings a wonderful balance to the first two principles. The true welfare of other people ought to be our first concern. But their religious scruples or standards shouldn't rule everything we do. Yes, as much as possible, we ought to keep from offending the weak conscience of fellow believers, but we shouldn't go to the legalistic extreme of making big issues out of everything we do. Paul says it doesn't matter what we eat, including food offered to idols, because neither the taking of it nor the abstaining from it will have any effect on our relationship with God. All food is a gift from God. So Paul says to enjoy life, to not be overly scrupulous.

In verse 27 he implies that living out this freedom means that we're going to have evangelistic entrée into people's lives. There are nonbelievers who will invite us into their homes, and we have complete freedom to eat with them, whatever they put before us. To the extent that we're willing to do that, we're reflecting the life of Jesus, who ate with "tax-gatherers and sinners" (Matthew 9:10-11). But if we are legalistic, uptight, self-righteous, self-protective Christians--"holier than thou" types--our non-Christian acquaintances won't want anything to do with us anyway. We're not even going to get invited to their homes. But if we live a life of freedom and openness, that will attract them to Jesus.

Let's read the fourth principle in verses 28-30. Self-sacrifice on our part will triumph over any kind of condemnation, either self-condemnation or judgment by others.

But if anyone should say to you, "This is meat sacrificed to idols," do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience' sake; I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?

What Paul is doing in verses 28-29a is raising a hypothetical situation in which you've been invited to a non-Christian friend's home, and one of your Christian friends is there as well who has a weaker conscience. And they are offended or confused by the freedom with which you're indulging: "Didn't you know this is idol food? Are you sure you ought to be eating this?" Paul suggests that we might decide to refrain from eating the meat so as not to risk leading that younger brother or sister in Christ into sin or confusing their conscience. Paul is very clear in Romans 14 that if we cause somebody to violate their conscience, we've done them a horrible disservice in terms of their relationship with Christ.

But Paul makes clear that even though we may choose to modify our actions for the good of the weaker brother or sister, we are not to adjust our own conscience. Their weakness ought to make us very gracious, merciful, and sensitive toward them. But the legalism of the weaker one shouldn't make us feel condemned or influence us toward legalism in our own lifestyle.

In verse 29b Paul again defends his freedom to partake of any kind of food, especially food that he knows is a good gift from God, and receive it with gratitude. He also says he refuses to be fearful about what other people think of him. He's not going to be controlled by that.

I have a hero in church history, the great British preacher Charles Spurgeon. He went to Metropolitan Tabernacle in London when he was twenty-two years old. Over the next thirty years the church grew to more than five thousand people. Spurgeon was a giant in nineteenth-century expository preaching and evangelism. He was a prodigious writer. He developed a seminary and Bible college. He was an amazing man of God.

But one thing Spurgeon loved was cigars, which sort of unsettled some American Christians. (To his defense, this was 120 years ago, when nobody knew about the link between cancer and tobacco. Hopefully he would live his life differently today.) There is a story about how one of his seminarians came into his study, and there was Spurgeon with his Bible and Greek lexicons, just immersed in the word, puffing on a big cigar. And it was so unsettling to the young man that Spurgeon looked at him and said, "My young friend, can you smoke a cigar to the glory of God?" The young man couldn't say anything, and Spurgeon said, "Well, if you can't do it to the glory of God, then leave them alone."

But when the British tobacco industry took Spurgeon's picture and used it to advertise tobacco, he stopped

smoking and never smoked another cigar, because he didn't want his freedom to affect young people. To me, that's a wonderful example of the balance, the freedom that is controlled by love for the other, seeking the good of the other.

DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD

Verses 31-32 again talk about the purpose of our freedom in Christ.

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God....

The aim we ought to have in using our liberty carefully and selflessly is to glorify God. These two verses wrap up everything we've been looking at in the preceding verses. We're to use our eating and drinking to bring glory to God, not to cause conflict, to honor a demon, or to undermine the faith of weaker brothers and sisters. Paul's desire was to live out his freedom in Christ, partly because of its evangelistic potential for the sake of the Gentiles and the Jews who didn't yet know Christ, and partly so he could have an influence on the church of Jesus Christ as an apostle. His concern was having an attractively inoffensive lifestyle of freedom. Paul spoke earlier in the letter about the fact that the gospel in and of itself is offensive to some people. But he didn't want his own life to bring offense to the gospel in the eyes of anybody, Christian or non-Christian. The real fear here was that legalism, being controlling, would somehow be the offense that would keep people from the Lord Jesus. His desire was to try to live without offending in any direction, always thinking of both honoring Christ and affecting other people in how he lived. That's what Jesus himself modeled. In Luke 2:52 it says, "...He kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." And Paul always looked in both of those directions.

I was thinking of the testimony of one woman on our staff at PBC, Lynne Fox, a pastoral counselor who also teaches Greek and Hebrew and disciples women. Lynne came to Christ more than twenty-five years ago when she moved into the neighborhood of Craig and Chris Duncan in Mountain View. Lynne was running from God; she had no interest in Christianity and was negative toward Christians. She found out quickly that Craig and Chris went to church and were religious people. Lynne told me that if Chris Duncan had begun telling her about Jesus, she would have gone the other direction as fast as she could. But, she said, "I watched Chris Duncan, the way she treated her husband, the way she treated her children, her generosity and hospitality toward the people in our neighborhood." And Lynne says in spite of her resistance, she was drawn into the circle of Chris' love. There was an inoffensiveness, a freedom that Chris had with her time, energy, and resources that Lynne said, "I didn't know anything about. But it was so attractive." Because of the love that Chris showed her, she was eventually drawn into relationship with Jesus Christ and came to saving faith.

That's what Paul is talking about with regard to the purpose of our freedom in Jesus Christ.

MODELING FREEDOM IN JESUS

He closes the section in the last two verses with an unsettling invitation. We could ask ourselves, Could I issue the same invitation Paul does? He says that his own life is a pattern of freedom in Jesus Christ, and he invites other people to imitate him. Verses 10:33-11:1:

...Just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved.

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

Paul doesn't mean that he was a man-pleaser or that he really cared what people thought. He wasn't ingratiating himself with people so they would like him. His concern was that his life would be attractive so that they would be drawn to Jesus in him.

Then he calls his brothers and sisters in Corinth to imitate him. This is the second time he's done so in the letter. Back in 4:16 he said, "I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me." For him, as an apostle or

representative of Christ, it wasn't just a matter of preaching and teaching. It was a matter of living out the truth that he taught. And in many of those cities Paul went to, he would be the first and only Christian they would see. So watching him live his life was very important for them to understand the reality of the gospel.

One of the implications of Paul's invitation in those two verses is, "If I don't follow Jesus, then don't follow me. If I don't walk my talk or practice what I preach, then don't give any credibility to what I say."

I heard a story not too long ago of a young man named Jim Johnson who was converted to Christ in a small town in the Midwest. In his zeal as a new Christian, he bought a bunch of gospel tracts that explained the plan of salvation. He went out on the main street of the little town and handed out tracts to everybody who came by. He was so excited, and he didn't know how to talk about his faith, so he was handing out these little tracts. He offered one to a man he didn't recognize. The man took the tract, looked at it, looked at Jim and said, "Aren't you Jim Johnson?"

And he said, "Yes, I am."

The man handed the tract back to him and said, "I can't read, so your *tract* won't be much help to me. But I know who you are, and I'll be willing to keep an eye on you and follow your *tracks*."

In a sense Chris Duncan left tracks for Lynne Fox, although not consciously. And Lynne was able to follow her tracks into relationship with Jesus Christ. We are called to model Christianity as the apostle Paul did.

Paul is asking every one of us through this entire passage, "Do you want to know what it means to live a consistent Christian life? Do you want to properly balance freedom and restraint? Do you want to be in the world and not of the world? Do you want to have a positive spiritual influence in your community, but not allow that community to mold you so you compromise what's true and what's right? Do you want to live a balanced life, not being driven by the extremes of legalism or its opposite, selfish license? If you do, then watch me, follow me, live with me. I may not be perfect, but I try to imitate the selfless life that Christ lived. I want to glorify God in what I say and what I do and in the attitudes of my heart. To the extent that I succeed, then the good news is that you can, too."

That's our invitation. Jesus wants to express his life through us--the same selflessness, the same freedom and spontaneity and flexibility, the same attractiveness, so that other people will be drawn into relationship with him.

NOTES

1. Marvin Olasky, "I Believe in Me," *World*, May 9, 1980.

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