

Discipleship series

Being before doing

We are so conditioned to do – to achieve – in this world that we often can't keep up with expectations on us i.e. expectations put on us by others as well as expectations we put on ourselves. Doing before being is like a car driving on an empty tank of petrol, or watering a garden from an empty water drum. The resources needed to do what needs to be done are soon exhausted and we can go on by sheer will power eventually leading to a lack of fruitfulness and burnout.

John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

1) Saved to be children of God

- We are primarily saved for relationship – to be children of God
 - There's a common, but false, belief that everyone is a child of God.
- Being children of God includes all that we are in Him and all that we've derived from him
- When we are born of our natural parents, we inherit their genes and, along with those, many of their natural traits – good and bad.
 - Many people need generational curses, which they inherited, broken over their lives
 - In the natural who we are comes with a lot of baggage
- When we're born again of God we inherit all the goodness of God that frees us from our past baggage
 - We have died to our old nature and born of the new divine nature – the nature of God – dwelling in us
 - 2 Peter 1:3-4 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.
- He has made us to be something completely new
 - 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
- Our state of being has changed in Christ
 - We are now children of God
 - We are no longer citizens of the kingdom of darkness, but citizens of the kingdom of God
 - We are no longer considered sinners, but now we are called saints
 - We were under condemnation, but we're a forgiven people accepted by God
- As children of God we don't have to strive to earn God's favour. We merely rest in it
 - We don't fear condemnation as there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus
- Our state of being children of God removes the pressure to work for God's acceptance and approval
 - We rest in God's grace
 - We abide in His love
 - We draw our spiritual resources for life from Him

2) Our being is of God and not ourselves

- John 1:13 ...who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
- Even the original idea of us being born children of God didn't come from ourselves, but came from God Himself.
 - In the same way a baby can't create itself, grow in the womb without attachment to the mother, and give birth by itself, so no one can give rebirth and become children of God themselves.
 - A dead person can't make themselves alive. Only God can do that
- God created us, gave us new birth, new life, new hope, new assurance
- When He calls us to Himself He makes us into what He wants us to be
- The analogy of God being the potter and us being the clay is used a number of times in Scripture
 - Isaiah 64:8 But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.
 - Jeremiah 18:2-6 "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.
Then the word of the LORD came to me: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.
- Besides making us His children, God is making us – forming us – to be vessels to be used for His glory
 - 2 Timothy 2:21 If anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

3) Doing from who we are

- From this state of being children of God being formed by the Potter to be vessels for His use we can now do what God wants us to do in the world
- Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
 - First comes the salvation that is of God's doing, not our own
 - Then comes the forming of us – God's workmanship
 - Finally comes the doing of good works
- The world gets the order wrong
 - Do – have – be
- God's order is
 - Be – have – do
 - We are children of God
 - We have His divine nature
 - We do the works of Him who sent us
- We work from a place of rest in Him as the branch of a vine bears fruit merely by being embedded in the vine