

APRIL 2017



Courage for God's Men

In The Arctic

GOD'S WAY

MY FAMILY ALL BECAME SICK at the same time this winter. The Lord's provision allowed for my good health and privileged me to care for them. I genuinely wanted to serve them out of compassion and meet their needs. However, I found my heart not in it for long. After about a day of crazy sick kids and a disengaged wife, I heard myself say, "Okay, I did my act of service. I'm done now."

What an attitude change! I felt betrayed by my emotions because I thought my actions were heartfelt and pure. I began to realize my actions sourced themselves in selfishness that looked for approval from others rather than from a pure heart of love. This realization hit me hard. I usually give my emotions and feelings a good bit of credit, but wondered, *Can I really be this self centered that I will not truly serve my family in their time of need?*

God began to dig in this area of my life and allowed His Spirit to unearth the manure beneath the fake flower patch I call my heart. "Who sits on the throne of your heart, Jeffrey?" God asked. I thought I did good things and for good reasons but my heart attitude showed otherwise. God revealed, after much prayer and pondering, that I trusted my heart more than His Word, even though Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it."

Really, I took "my way" instead of "God's way." I began to see how unconfessed "little sins" along the way hardened my heart to the point where the Spirit's voice grew still. I pushed His conviction aside for so long that I grew spiritually deaf.

I grew up in a Christian family, went to Bible School, became a missionary, and attended all the weekly church services. I see how I started to operate from head knowledge, not heart knowledge. I look back and see how all that knowledge of Christ, the Bible, and church-life allowed me to build a false sense of control without God. Oh, I came to God, prayed, and sought wisdom, but then went my own way without the application of His Word or the pursuit of HIM.

One quiet morning, alone in my rocking chair, I again heard God's voice call me to a close walk with Him. He called me to submit myself, my control, my "knowledge." He whispered into my heart, "I am all you ever wanted and all you ever need. Come to Me." I remembered John 4:14, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

I want that water, I want that well within me, but I know I need help to get it. A constant walk with the Lord allows His Spirit to guide our spiritual growth. Bethany, my sweet wife, and I now find ourselves in a time of spiritual growth as we allow God to refresh and reshape our hearts and minds.

A missionary in a remote village in Papua New Guinea told of a native man who recently received Christ as Savior. This baby in the faith told the missionary, "I feel like there is a battle within me... two dogs fighting! I always feel this battle within me and I keep wondering who wins."

The missionary solemnly asked the man, "Which dog do you feed the most?"

John 15:4 says it best, I think, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches."

Lord, I desire to abide in You daily. Please change my heart and renew my mind with Your words. Help me, Lord, to walk with You and let You lead. Please apply Your Word to my life today.

Jeffrey Spang
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