

Finding the Father

by T.D. Jakes

AFTER SPENDING ALMOST 30 YEARS OF MY LIFE traveling around the world, I have not found a perfect church-not Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal or apostolic. Yet God is still God. Whether a big church or small, there will always be some tempter or temptation lurking in the corner ready to take advantage of the saints.

But the miracle of God is that He doesn't need the body of Christ to be perfect to reveal Himself to those He has called. He can step into flawed situations such as a blemished church, a dysfunctional family or a disfigured society and still reveal Himself.

I hear people say, "I can't grow in this church," or, "I can't be used in that setting," but the devil is a liar. If you have a gift-and everyone does-you can be used anywhere. You don't have to be in an ideal setting to do what God has called you to do.

There is so much pressure in the church to act like you know the Lord. The number of people who know all about God but aren't saved would surprise you. There are countless people who get excited about God but have not experienced a life-changing, vibrant, mind-renewing relationship with God.

The old folks said it best: "Everybody talking about heaven ain't going there." It's true. Religious tradition does not ensure knowledge of the Lord. That's why we must begin to pray for the generations that follow us. We don't want them to fall into the same religious ruts.

Today's youth are faced with a flurry of options. For them it's like walking into a room with many doors. They're not new options; young people have not invented new sins. But who

would have ever imagined that the pornography once available only behind brown paper wrappers is now on your TV screen and on the Internet?

As if it were not enough that young people must deal with raging hormones and a myriad of temptations surrounding them every day, television provides even more negative exposure. The media have glamorized the choices available to our youth. There's perversion, drug abuse and the like. If they don't know how to do it, television can show them how.

And when they come to church, there are options lurking in the corners and crevices, on the boards and among the volunteers. Predators sneak in with a wink and a smile, talking the talk but not walking the walk.

If you were an uncalled, unmarked person you could come to church for years and not necessarily find God. In fact, there are people who have lived almost literally in the church, only to die never knowing Him. But when God has marked and predestined you, you have a role to play that no one in the entire world can fulfill except you.

Why do we want young people to know God? It's not just that they will find moral repair. That's important, but it's not the only reason. It's not just that they will find integrity in the arms of God. The greatest reason for searching for God is that when we find Him we find ourselves. We find the answer to the question: Who am I really (because how will I know if I am successful if I don't know what I was created to be)? This is an important question whether you are 9 or 90.

When God got ready to create light, He stepped into gross darkness, and His Word was still effective enough that none of the darkness could stop the light from breaking loose. Finding God gives you direction; without that you're vulnerable to anybody's touch, anybody's drug deal and anybody's disease because you don't know what you were created to be or to do.

The Bible doesn't talk about the prodigal son finding God; it says he came to himself. Isn't that the real journey, to come to yourself? To wake up and discover why you had to go through what you had to go through to get where you are today?

A man with the unanswered question "Who am I?" hanging over his head walks in confusion all the days of his life. Finding God makes sense out of the madness that is in your life. It answers your question. It puts you on a path called straight. This is what finding God is all about.

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