

Living Your Faith in a Secular Culture

by Julie R. Wilson

God will always relate to you on the basis of your choice. He has utmost respect for the free will He has given us. Sometimes His commitment can seem both a blessing and a curse.

We will have in our lives what we have chosen. We will *be* in our lives *whom* we have chosen. If our lives are chaotic or inconsistent, they only reveal the double-mindedness we have chosen in our hearts.

Read the following Scriptures:

- Romans 1:18-32
- James 4:1-5
- Matthew 6:24; 10:37-38
- Mark 8:34-38

The Scripture says God's invisible qualities are *evident* and that men are without excuse. So our problem of living in obedience to God is not a problem of uncertainty, regarding who He is or even what He wants. No, our problem generally has more to do with our not liking the paths He chooses or submitting to His absolute lordship.

Read Hebrews 3:12-19 and Psalm 78:9-42.

Challenge: According to these two passages, why did the Israelites *really* fail to enter God's rest? Find the answer

and you
will have discovered a great secret.

If we want to know why we struggle to live wholeheartedly for God, we must ask Him to probe the root issues and divided loves of our hearts. Always the matter will boil down to what we love. Always we will follow—and serve—what we *love most*.

So what do you do if you realize that your choice for God is not clear and that you are battling with warring desires? The answer is very simple: Cry out to God. Be honest in your heart with God and tell Him the truth. If you are unsure what the truth is, ask Him to show you. And then repent for not loving Him.

When asked what the first and greatest commandment was, Jesus replied, ““You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind”” (Matt. 22:37, NLT). All our psychological and physical needs are met in the first commandment. And at the bottom of every sin is a breach of this same commandment. All sin begins in the failure to love God more than self.

We were made to love God. Loving God wholeheartedly is the deliverance from all addiction and the one need that will straighten out your entire life. Loving God will solve all your problems with obedience. Jesus said, ““If you love me, obey my commandments”” (John 14:15). So what is your struggle? What do you love? Whom do you choose? Take time

to ponder these questions.