

Why Does the Church Settle for Partial Revival?

Pursue God for more than personal satisfaction, need or individual purpose.

There was a time when the United States was known for having the very best of everything. Remember when products and automobiles were the very best, the U.S. economy was the strongest, and the American work ethic was a benchmark standard? It seems like a long time ago, but really it's not. It's sad to say a lot of that has changed.

When one past U.S. president was elected, a national newspaper said the American people were willing to settle for competence as opposed to character. Which raises the question: Why can't we have both? It seems we have become satisfied with the status quo.

The prophet Ezra writes: "And now for a little while grace has been shown from the Lord our God to leave us a remnant to escape and to give us a peg in His holy place that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage" (Ezra 9:8, NKJV).

Once again God's people were in trouble because of their sins, and we see the indescribable grace of God at work. (Thank God for His mercy and grace, right?)

But even in the midst of their self-inflicted difficulty God blessed them with something totally undeserved: "a measure of revival" in their bondage.

Sound strange? If we read all of Ezra 9 and 10 as well as the whole Bible we clearly see how great and good our God is when He often gives His people less than they deserve.

But I can't help but think, Why not get out of bondage and receive more, maybe even all the Lord has for us? Why settle for second best?

Paul uses phrases such as, "attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" and "blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Eph. 4:13, 1:3; NIV; emphasis added).

The words "whole," "fullness" and "every" sound much better than the needy "a little dab'll do ya." Thankfully God does give us a little revival and relief while we're in bondage, but let's pursue more than that.

Jesus made an interesting statement listed in three of the Gospels: "With the measure you use it will be measured back to you" (Matt. 7:2; Mark 4:24; Luke 6:38).

This principle is illustrated in 2 Kings 13:14-20. The prophet Elisha advised a corrupt king leading a nation in bondage. The king followed through with the prophet's instructions by taking the arrows, shooting them in the air and then striking the ground.

He did all he was told to do yet still incurred the prophet's anger. Why? He did them less than wholeheartedly. The mediocrity of his heart was exposed because if he had simply struck the arrows on the ground a few more times he would have had an even greater measure of victory over his enemies on behalf of his nation.

He was willing to settle for second best.

Can we get too close to Jesus? Can we reach out too much? Why not pursue God for more than just our own personal satisfaction, need or individual purpose?

Consider when you get a raise at work but you still have a poverty-driven mind-set. That is like receiving a little

revival while still in bondage. (The problem isn't handled with simply more income but by properly managing what we have.)

When we stop using drugs but still smoke and drink, some consider it progress, but we need to press all the way through to full victory and freedom.

When a married couple is separated and comes back under one roof but still lives in a world of hurt and bitterness—be thankful for improvement. But know that greater victory can come if you pray and work together for a healthy home.

Remember, with the measure you use it will be measured back to you. As a man thinks in his heart so is he. And our measures are often formed by attitude, background, family, friends, culture and past.

Let's ask God to help us change and redefine the measures we use in life. Let's pursue God to ignite in us and impart to us something we can use to reach the world and our neighbors right now.

God's Word renews our minds and transforms our measure.

Let's change our measure so that we may change our world.