

Total Abandonment to God

Total abandonment is a concept that exists in both Christian and non-Christian religions even though it is implemented differently between the two. It is also implemented in different ways within the two groups. I was probably attracted to the idea of abandonment because I was strongly preoccupied with my thoughts and desires when I was growing up, and they interfered with everything in my life.

Eastern philosophy was my first introduction to the idea of total abandonment. It told me that all thought-related activity was not Reality, and that, in order to find truth, I should rely only on my observation or awareness without interference from my thoughts and desires. The result would be inner peace and love. I found it very helpful because it explained why I was getting more and more frustrated in my attempt to find contentment in life through the pursuit of my favorite desire. It told me to abandon that whole idea of desiring things for fulfillment because desire is never satisfied, and we continuously seek for more without arriving at satisfaction. The Bible tells us that desires or lusts are deceitful for the same reason.^[1] I immediately concurred because of my own experiences with ongoing frustration. I tried the practice of awareness as I understood it, and the frustration that I was experiencing immediately dissipated. I was shocked, and I interpreted it as good psychology at that time; but, I eventually noticed that it was difficult to sustain and to keep thoughts and desires at a distance that was sufficient for an on-going awareness.

A few years later, I found the explanation for this in the Bible. It told me that we are all born with the inability to lessen the power of our thoughts and desires for sustained inner peace and love. It is called the Law of Sin.^[2] Our own willpower is inadequate for overcoming it. This is why we find

it difficult to avoid doing the things that we don't want to do. Our thoughts and desires still reign supreme and keep us in bondage. This is the fatal flaw in non-Christian spiritualities because they do not recognize that only Jesus Christ can strengthen us and set us free from this condition.^[3] He tells us to deny ourselves, which is the same as disowning ourselves;^[4] and then He shares His own peace and strength with us when His Spirit is within us. This is how He gives us His rest.^[5]

Pursuing things for contentment always ends in frustration. The pursuit of any desire for contentment in life doesn't produce what we expect. Even pursuing God for contentment may end up in frustration because we receive God by unconditional trust in Him, and not by human desire.^[6] They are opposites because we rest our minds on God from our thoughts and desires in order to have His peace. When we reject the whole concept of desiring things for contentment, and unconditionally trust in God, He enables us to not lean on our desires. Our usual spiritual practices need to be examined in this light; especially when they do not bring about what we hope for. We may not be doing it God's way.

I eventually experimented with total abandonment in Christianity, and found the instructions for this in the Bible. They differ from those in other spiritualities. The Bible told me to be anxious for nothing by casting all of my care on God in order to be exalted or lifted by Him at the opportune time of His choosing.^[7] When I tried it, I was even more shocked at the result than what I had previously experienced with Eastern Philosophy. All of a sudden I had the peace and strength from God to disregard thoughts and desires at a much faster rate and in a more efficient way; and, a greater ability to avoid doing the things that kept me in bondage. There was no turning back after this.

I believe that the degree of passivity or receptivity that is possible when we abandon ourselves toward God cannot be achieved in any other way. It literally draws the Spirit of God into us that contains His peace and strength; and He sustains it in a way that isn't doable for us because of the law of sin.^[8] He also enhances our ability to practice restraint. All that I needed to do to maintain this was to yield to God.^[9]

My abandonment was directed toward the Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: however configured. Apparently, it didn't matter whether I had a complete understanding of the Godhead as long as the abandonment was total and not selective.

Christ made all of this possible when His Spirit became available for us at Pentecost. He gives us access to the Father and His grace when His Spirit is within us. The fruit of the Spirit contains our Christian enlightenment when we walk in the Spirit.^[10]

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^[1] Cf. Ephesians 4:22; Proverbs 3:5-6; Isaiah 55:7-9

^[2] Cf. Matthew 26:41; Romans 7:14 thru 8:4

^[3] Cf. Romans 5:6; 2Peter 1:4

^[4] Cf. Matthew 16:24-26

[5] Cf. Matthew 11:28-30

[6] Cf. Philippians 4:11; James 4:3

[7] Cf. 1Peter 5:5-7; Philippians 4:6-7; James 4:5-10; Proverbs 3:5-6; Matthew 6:25-34; 11:28-30; Psalms 37:7; 55:22; Isaiah 26:3-4; 30:15; 55:7-9; John 6:63; Romans 13:14; 6:13; 8:28; Galatians 5:16-25

[8] Cf. Psalms 55:22; 1Corinthians 1:8; 2Timothy 1:12

[9] Cf. Romans 6:13-23

[10] Cf. Galatians 5:16-25