

The Simplicity and Purity of Devotion to Christ

by Cliff Canipe

At the beginning of 2006 I felt strongly that the Lord challenged me in the form of a question with these three words - "Is Jesus Enough?" Some of you who are reading this may have actually heard me speaking about this throughout the year, while many others of you will not understand the significance those three words have come to have on my life over the past twelve months. So as we end off the year and look forward to 2007, I want to take some time to reflect on what the Lord spoke to me and how it has shaped my thinking over this year.

In 2Corinthians 11:1-3 Paul says, *"I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."* I believe it was in the context of these verses that the Lord directed this simple question to me at the beginning of this year. There are a few thoughts I want to share along these lines. The first is from a personal perspective. I knew for sure this question was first and foremost directed to me personally. I felt as though the Lord was asking me, in light of all my challenges, distractions, and needs, was Jesus enough. I must say without any hesitation, yes, He is enough. I have seen over and over throughout this past year how Jesus has been all I needed and more. For this personal revelation, I am grateful.

On another level, I felt the Lord was encouraging me to share this same question with others in the context of my own ministry and sphere of influence within the body of Christ. This is where these verses in 2Corinthians 11 really came to life for me. As I began to share with others throughout the year this simple question, it became very evident to me that these verses hold for us an essential truth that we must all grasp if we are to really grow in our relationship with the Lord. I began to see so clearly that our enemy, the devil, has one purpose in the life of a believer and it is to **move us away from a simple and pure devotion to Jesus in our lives**. At first glance, many of us would say that surely the devil's tactics are much more advanced. But if you will look closely at these verses you will see that Paul draws back on the single most significant event in the history of the human race to make his point. He says that the devil actually deceived Eve (and Adam) by his craftiness into thinking that she could live independently from God. As a result, the entire human race fell into this same deception. It is only by the redeeming work of Jesus and the new birth one experiences in Him that we can return to our created place of total dependence upon God our Father for everything in life. This place of total dependence is found only through a simple and pure devotion to Jesus. And the devil knows that, like Eve, he can lead our minds astray and keep us from our life source -- Jesus.

The most alarming aspect of all this is the level of deception in which the devil is able operate in our lives. He knows that even the best intentions in the hearts of men and women to serve the Lord and do things for Him can easily keep us from a simple and pure devotion to Jesus. It does not take a horrible sin as some would think. It only takes any small thing that would successfully distract us from our intimate and simple devotion to Jesus. I am also amazed at the amount of focus Christians give to so many peripheral things that ultimately do not matter to the Lord. While we can become very passionate about many things, we must always ask ourselves if what we are consumed with is helping us to develop a more simple and pure devotion to Jesus. If not, we may have fallen into the devil's oldest trap of leading our minds astray.

I believe that this is something that all of us can afford to consider before the Lord as we finish 2006. How are we doing in our simple devotion to Jesus? It seems that for many people I encounter along the way, the Christian life has become highly technical and very complicated. But this is not how it should be. It may be that some of us need to renew our hearts and minds in this simple truth and commit

ourselves a new to this type of relationship with Jesus for the upcoming year. I can promise you there will be many things that will come into our lives to draw us away from our pure and simple devotion to Jesus.

We must be on the alert and ready to protect our relationship with Him at all costs. Remember, apart from Him we can do nothing. So let's cast ourselves upon the Lord in total dependence and cling to nothing other than our simple and pure devotion to Him in the coming year.

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*******End of Lesson*******