

Psalm 50 (14-15) – Break the Pattern

Psalm 50:14-15 – *Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.*

Hebrews 13:15 – *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*

Our main aim in life should be to know God. In John 17:3, Jesus said that eternal life was about knowing God – *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.* And what pleases God most is for you to know him. So, the greatest thing that can happen to you in this life, the greatest thing you can strive for in this life, is to know God. And to know him better, more fully, more personally. There is no higher call for your life, no higher call from God, than to know him.

Nothing is worth more than knowing God. And nothing is worth holding onto if it means not knowing God. Listen to the Apostle Paul in Philippians 3:7-8 – *But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.* And in vs.10 he restates his aim – *that I may know him.*

Now, we've heard from Jesus and the Apostle Paul about knowing God. It is obviously important, more important than anything and everything else. But how do you do that? Paul said he did it by being willing to lose everything. He was talking about losing his reputation, and position, and former life. But what does this look for me? How can I know God?

One way that you can know God is to start winning the battle against the Big Lie in your life. What's the Big Lie? The Big Lie is that you will find true happiness and lasting fulfillment by violating God's will. Practically speaking, believing the Big Lie means that you look to find satisfaction in sin. By deliberately sinning. By relishing sin. And you need to find a practical

answer to it. An “in the moment of temptation” answer. Something to help you “break the pattern” of persistent, willful sin.

Now it’s true that you may find momentary happiness and partial fulfillment in violating God’s will. Sin might seem to “work for you” in the short run. Sin can be enjoyable, and feel like a relief. But its pleasures are fleeting, they don’t last for too long before sin comes calling again, and you’ll just keep chasing the wind. You’ll never be done with sin by continuing to do it. You’ll always need to come back to the altar of the Big Lie to make a sacrifice of sin. So, if you’re going to stop that certain type of sin, you’re going to have to answer the Big Lie in your moments of temptation.

What you need to learn is to sacrifice those fleeting moments of pleasure on the altar of praise and thanksgiving. And this is where the battle is most real. People can be willing to praise God, when they want to. But they don’t want to praise, when what they want is sin. And therein lies the battle. However, the more you yield to God with praise and thanksgiving, in those moments when it seems like a sacrifice, the more you will progressively find true happiness and fulfillment in God. The sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; that’s how you’ll discover that God is greater than the pleasures of sin.

Now you might say, “Yeah, ok, I can agree with that, but how exactly do I *do* that?” “What does that really mean, practically speaking?” “What exactly do I do in those very moments when it feels like sinful pleasure is what I need to relieve my stressful pressure?”

Well, I am going to be perfectly practical with you. I will be very specific as to what to do in order to battle the Big Lie when it rears its ugly head. And it’s a very simple thing. But it is not simplistic. It is holistic. In other words, it is a lifestyle. You can easily remember it. But you’ll have to keep reminding yourself to do it until you get used to doing it as a holy habit.

When you start doing it, it may seem like hard work, because you’re just not used to doing it. And it may seem entirely unnatural to do it. Your mind will

fight against it. The enemy of your soul will tell you it won't work. It might feel useless or even hypocritical. It will seem like a sacrifice. You won't want to do it. But that is why you need to do it, to do something good, godly, and different in your battle with "in the moment" sin. You break the pattern.

And if you can experientially know God, right down in the battle zone, and you can see and feel and know how God has led you to win some battles, and overcome some temptations, and see some change, then you can know him in a way that you cannot know him otherwise. As God's soldier in your war against your sin. And that knowledge of God will spill out into and fill up the rest of your life. Because as you grow in your knowledge of God, you gain a greater love for the word of God, the worship of God, and the people of God. The more you know God, the more you delight in godliness.

So, what do you do in those moments of temptation, when the Big Lie makes you think sin is satisfaction, like it's what you need? Here is what you need to do... *sing praise and thanksgiving to God*. I am talking about singing out loud with your lips and your heart to God.

Here it is, again: when you feel like sinning, start singing. Right then.

You break the pattern by starting a new one. That's how you change. And it works. Now, when you first do this, it is going to hurt. It may seem like you're dying. And in a sense, you are, you're dying to self. Galatians 6:8 says – *For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life*. In other words – You will either suffer the death of your flesh, or suffer death from your flesh.

You need to do something different for a change. If you want to change. And in those moments of temptation, when you sing instead of sin, you're worshiping God by saying no to sin. And a life of worship is worth the self-denying sacrifice. Psalm 50:14-15 bears witness to this. In our day, in your life, it looks like this: Offer up the sacrifice of thankful obedience, call on God with your praise, and he will deliver you, and it will glorify him.

Hebrews 13:15 says, *through him...let us...offer up...praise to God*. Your sacrifice is not the blood and exacting details of the old covenant, but the sacrifice of praise, through Jesus Christ, on the ground of his righteousness.

The text says, *let us continually offer up...praise to God*. Your praise to God is to be offered continually, it should be a consistent and constant practice.

The text says, *let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God*. Your praise to God may be costly or inconvenient. But you worship God, and know God, by giving the sacrifice of praise instead of indulging the satisfaction of sin.

The text says that our praise is *the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name*. Yes, that means you say that you are a Christian. If people ask you what you think about Jesus, you don't deny him, you say that he saved you and is your Lord. But it also means you act like he is Lord when something else demands your obedience. It means you sing to Jesus instead of giving in to sin. Your praise to God is more than just thoughts, it is spoken or sung. You're winning against sin when you sing to him.

Music and singing have an incredible, indelible impact on you. After the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they sang a song that we still sing today. I will sing unto the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously, the horse and rider thrown into the sea. How many times do you have a song in your head? And how many of us sing in our cars, or in the shower, or when we are all alone? What you need to do to answer the Big Lie is take that truth and apply it to the altar of God. To give the sacrifice of praise instead of indulging the satisfaction of sin. When you feel like sinning, start singing.

Fight sinning with singing. Break the pattern, and start a new one. In those moments of temptation, you worship God by saying no to your sin, to yourself, and what the world and the devil want you to do. And you add to that by praising and thanking God. You break the pattern by doing the opposite of what you usually do. And it becomes what you used to do. Break the pattern; you can stop enjoying that sin, and start enjoying God. Amen.