

Cicero Christian Church Men's Breakfast
The PAPA Prayer: Part Three

"Purging the Obstacles"

Doubt sees the obstacles. Faith sees the way!
 Doubt sees the darkest night, Faith sees the day!
 Doubt dreads to take a step. Faith soars on high!
 Doubt questions, "Who believes?" Faith answers, "I!"
 —*Gospel Banner*

Longing, hungering, desiring the "Living Water" as if you were in the midst of the driest days and hours of the Sahara Desert. Your soul yearning for the connection to the Heavenly Father you have read about and dreamt about for years. You call out to Him, you cry out to Him, you plead with Him but to no avail. The connection that you desire seems to be severed yet there is still something deep in your gut that continues to hold out for the hope that He will answer.

Psalm 42:1-2 – *As the deer panteth for streams of water, so my soul panteth for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?*

- *What does it mean for a man's soul to thirst for God?*
- *What does this look like in our modern day world?*

There are many Christian men in our churches today that long to feel and embrace the presence of God but for years they have only experienced a glimmer of that presence. Maybe just enough to wet their appetite but the God they desire still seems to remain elusive and they just cannot figure out why. Many men long to fully experience the presence of God instead of merely talking about the idea of God.

- *What does it mean to experience the transformational power of God?*
- *Is this a one time deal or is it an ongoing process? Explain.*
- *Describe what it means to be in the presence of God?*
- *How do we come into the presence of God?*

LIVING FROM THE CENTER

At the core of this lesson lies a simple Biblical fact that is often understated: *The presence of God is found in the exact center of your life where His radiant glory resides.* Desiring the presence of the Lord means that you desire to **LIVE FROM THE CENTER** or live from the heart of God.

Few Christians choose to live from the center of their lives. Many Christians say that they desire to live in the presence of God but few attempt to make this claim a reality.

- *Why do many Christian men find themselves stagnant in living for or longing for the presence of God in their own lives?*

Many Christian men choose not to live from the center because they do not realize what they are missing out on. Christian's do not take the time to reflect upon and examine the benefits of "Living from the Center."

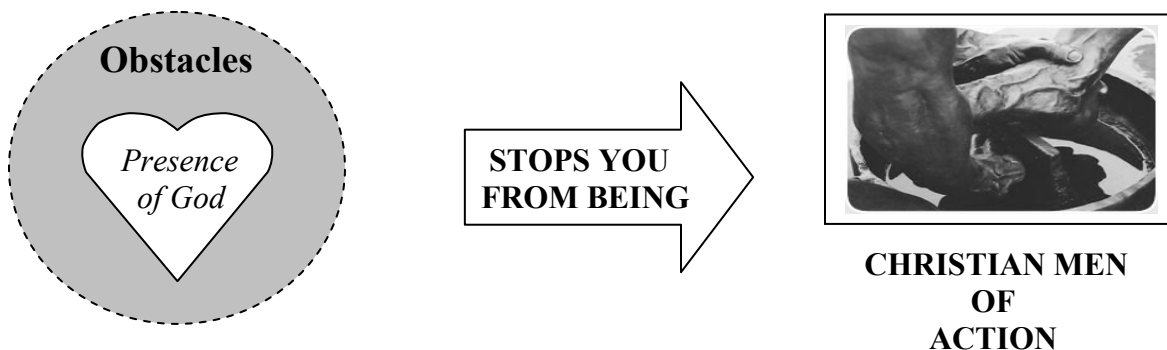
- *What do we find when we examine the "Center of the Godly Life?"*
 - Communion with God
 - Sanctuary of God
 - Eternal JOY
 - Fear of God
 - Holy Spirit
 - Word of God

The Obstacles Before Us

Every Christian man faces obstacles when choosing to live from the center of his life, where God dwells. Many men will recognize these obstacles throughout their lifetime but few men will make the choice to strive to overcome these obstacles.

- *How do obstacles stop us from Living for God?*
- *What are some obstacles that Christian men face today?*

Examine this simple Diagram...



You cannot be a Christian man of action if you are not living from and in the presence of God. The question that comes to mind is: How do I overcome these seemingly insurmountable obstacles?

Mt. 19:26 – Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Three Basic Steps in Overcoming the Insurmountable Obstacles

STEP #1 – RECOGNIZE GOD'S STRENGTH

- The first step comes to us as we realize that overcoming the obstacles in our lives is not an isolated process in which we rely on our own strength.
- It has never been about your strength but your obedience. It is always about His strength!

John 14:1 – “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.”

STEP #2 – PURGE YOURSELF

- The second step comes to us as we realize that the only way to overcome the obstacles before us is to purge ourselves of sin. Unconfessed sin creates the obstacle between you and God therefore we must confess our sins in order to remove that obstacle and restore our relationship with the Father. Sometimes we recognize the unconfessed sin and at other times we may be oblivious to it.
- Pray this Psalm when desiring for God to show you any unconfessed sin present in your life and choose to seek His forgiveness.

Psalm 139:23-24 – Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

STEP #3 – ABANDON YOURSELF TO HOLINESS

- The third step comes to us as we reflect on “*Letting Go and Letting God.*” This can basically be summed up as abandoning ourselves to holiness.
- We must learn dependence upon God over our own wisdom or the wisdom of our fellow man. We are called to seek God and his will over all others.

1 Peter 1:15-16 – But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

- *What does it mean to be holy in all we do?*
- *Explain this phrase: “Be holy, because I am holy.”*

Ponder these Questions this Week

How Am I Obsessed With Myself Right Now...

- As I'm struggling with discouragement?
- As I'm handling tension with my spouse or friend?
- As I'm anxious over what might happen?
- As I'm feeling disillusioned or bored with my church?

** Lesson in Conjunction with Core Practice #9 = Equip the Head of the Household*



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