

Are You “Being Used?”

INTRODUCTION:

1. One thing for sure is that our view of “being used” varies depending on the context.
 - A. There is a very bad connotation attached to these words in that no one wants to “get used.”
 - i. This usage refers to people attaching themselves to you under the pretense of friendship, etc., with the real intent of getting something from you for *their* benefit.
 - ii. This could happen on the job or in a relationship. In either of these cases we do not appreciate *being used* in this way!
 - B. Yet, there are another contexts in which these words have a much more positive connotation.
 - i. In our work situations we want to *be used* by the company in a productive way, seeing that no one wants to be overlooked and their talents wasted.
 - ii. And, for the spiritually minded, being used by God in His kingdom for His glory is a very important aspect of their lives in service to Christ.
2. It is this second connotation that I want to focus on.
 - A. And, two questions I want to ask you to ponder are “are you being used in a profitable way by the Lord?” and “are you *seeking* to be used in a profitable way by the Lord?”
 - B. For, your answer to these questions is a very important seeing that being used by God is His desired outcome of your salvation and a good indicator of your spiritual growth in Christ.
3. With that said let’s talk about *getting used* by the Lord in your lives.

BODY:

I. Being used by God for righteousness is His intended results of our salvation in Christ.

- A. Because we have been raised with Christ, who was first raised to live for God, we are to present ourselves to God as being alive from the dead (Romans 6:5-7, 10-13a).
 1. There is a very violent aspect of our conversion—the crucifixion of the old man/body of sin with Christ—that we cannot ignore or overlook its implications (6:5-7).
 - a. Crucifixion was one of the most horrific deaths one could have faced in history!
 - b. And, the implications of its use to describe our change of relationship with sin must be appreciated.
 - i. The old ways of sin that we, like the world, once catered to must be destroyed.
 - ii. And, the fact that it is described as a crucifixion implies the extremes that God expects us to go to in order to end that life and lifestyle for the Christian.
 2. For, as our death is achieved in connection with Christ’s, there must be a death to sin for us, no longer allowing our bodies’ members to be presented to Satan as instruments of sin (6:10-13a).
 - a. There must be a concentrated efforts to overcome the power of lust in our lives that will allow us to live for God in Jesus (6:10-12).
 - b. And, there must be a conscious choice to stop presenting our bodies’ members to Satan to be used for unrighteousness (6:13a).
 - c. And, I want to emphasize this matter of *conscious choice*, seeing that without it being a conscious effort, we are likely to fail in accomplishing this!
- B. And, upon ceasing to present our members to Satan for unrighteousness, we must consciously choose to present our bodies’ members as *instruments* of righteousness to God (6:13b).
 1. The idea of presenting our members to God means that we bring our bodies to God and *stand always ready to be used* by Him for righteousness.
 - a. We are, therefore, commanded to see our lives now as being “instruments,” or tools, to be used in God’s hand to accomplish His work and desires!
 - b. And, as “instruments” for God’s use, we should consciously strive to present ourselves to God ready, like a proper tool does, to do His bidding *at all times!*
 - c. A tool that only works, or is only available hit or miss, is not much of a tool!
 2. I also might add that the word *instrument* here can also refer to a *weapon!*
 - a. I bring this up because it opens to us another aspect of our lives in Christ.

- b. For, there is work as instruments of righteousness that would involve repairing and preparing the souls of the world for Christ and eternal life.
 - c. Yet, there may also be a hint of a militant purpose for which we present ourselves to God in taking the fight of the gospel to the world and standing for the truth of God.
 - d. For, the truth is that the souls of the world will never be repaired or prepared for eternity with God without His people being militant in their approach toward the gospel!
- C. So, I ask you, who is using you...Satan or God?
- 1. I ask this because these verses, as with other verses that address this same type of issue, present no middle ground (Rom. 6:16 – “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?”).
 - 2. Either you are presenting your life to Satan for sin or to God for active duty in righteousness.
 - a. I understand that there is weakness among Christians where they do not really want to serve Satan, but poorly serve Christ; but that is not a state to shoot for and abide in!
 - b. To properly serve God you are going to have to put sin from your past life out.
 - c. So, I want us all to ponder the fact that if you are not actively seeking out opportunities to be used for righteousness in God’s hand, you may very well be being used by Satan for unrighteous purposes!

II. The proper attitude toward being used by the Lord.

- A. We must appreciate our positions as stewards of the gospel (1 Cor. 4:1-2 – “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”).
- 1. As Christians, this is how we live—as stewards of Christ’s gospel—having been given possession of it to use *faithfully* in our lives for the glory of God!
 - 2. This stewardship necessitates that we incorporate the urgency expressed by Paul in taking the gospel to others (1 Cor. 9:16-17 – “For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷ For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.”).
 - 3. We need to compare our approach toward the far greater possession of gospel with that of Jeremiah’s view of the O.T. law of God (Jer. 20:9 – “Then I said, “I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name.” But *His word* was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding *it* back, and I could not.”).
 - 4. So, think brethren, where have we come to stand in this matter of being used by God?
 - a. For, no one is going to be brought to Christ by us unless we chose to present the gospel to them.
 - b. And, that is not likely to happen unless we ask them for a study!
- B. We must understand the importance of living out our lives as servants/slaves of all.
- 1. We must with *forethought* seek, as did Paul, to *become all things to all men* in order to be *used* by God save people’s souls (1 Cor. 9:19-23).
 - a. Paul consciously sought to work his way into the lives of the lost around him in order to save their souls!
 - b. These efforts spanned from paying the expenses for Jews to complete certain ceremonial vows to God, to living among the Gentiles as they lived, all the while being governed by the law of Christ!
 - 2. This requires, as Paul spoke of, the cultivation of a servant mentality.
 - a. Those who would be first in the kingdom understand their role to be that of a servant of all (Matt. 20:25-28 – “But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. ²⁶ “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. ²⁷ “And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be

- your slave—²⁸ “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”).
- b. This service is to have the purpose of bringing souls closer to God, to see His glory in your life that they might glorify God in heaven (Matt. 5:14-16).
 - i. This requires sacrifice on our part, including the giving up of our time, energy, and focus!
 - ii. The kind of efforts in which the Lord can truly use us is when we take our time to help a neighbor, such as mowing their grass when they are away, getting their mail for them, visiting them in the hospital, going to the funeral home during a loss, etc., all for the purpose of getting involved in their lives so as to bring them to Christ!
 - c. Of course, in the end, despite our efforts to serve them, until we are willing to ask them for a study, they are not going to be brought to Christ.

II. I plead with you to *use me!*

- A. As a preacher of the gospel, I like most struggle with self-worth sometimes based on the visible results of my work.
 1. I wonder how I will hold up under God’s fiery test that is to face us all in the end (1 Cor. 3:9-15).
 2. I wonder how I will be remembered in relationship to my work as a gospel preacher.
- B. So, I ask you to use me in your efforts to be used by God in profitable service!
 1. Begin by praying for open doors for the gospel in your life and mine.
 - a. As Jesus said (Matt. 6:9-10 – “In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven.”).
 - i. Although God’s kingdom has come, it has not reached its fruition as far as the number of souls God would have added to it.
 - ii. Therefore, pray that God would use you to do His will through you by using you to serve with the purpose of getting studies to save their soul.
 - iii. And, brethren, I ask that if you need to, use me in working together to teach them of Christ and salvation.
 - b. And, I would ask that you pray earnestly that I might be used by God in getting the gospel to the world and to speak it properly in my efforts (Col. 4:2-4 – “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; ³meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, ⁴that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”).
 - c. So, I plead with you that we might work together in accomplishing this goal for Christ!
 2. Therefore, I would ask you to use me to serve others, to be a part of your efforts if you desire my help, that we might make an impact for the glory of God and their salvation.
 - a. Is there something we can do for some, some service we can perform together, to further the kingdom of God?
 - b. Is there a visit to a family member, friend, or coworker that we can make to establish a study?
 3. If you want to have study together, I am available.
 - a. If you can have a study where a non-Christian is invited, please use me!
 - b. If you would like to study certain biblical topics, I would ask that you use me, not to do your studying for you, but for both of us to study on the subject and then come together for the spiritual benefit of both you and me (2 Tim. 2:15 – “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”).
 4. If you need prayers, I would ask that you use me, and your brethren, to reveal the details of what is needed and I will, and I will encourage others, to do our best to pray for your needs.

CONCLUSION:

1. The point is simple. God has provided His wonderful grace that has saved our souls for the purpose that we might be used by Him for His glory in the world through service resulting in saving souls!
2. So, I ask you again, are you being used?
 - A. In particular, are you being used *by God* and are you actively seeking to be used by Him?
 - B. For, if you are not, it may very well be that you are being used by someone else to the detriment of God's cause and the destruction of what He seeks to do.
 - C. Remember, there is no real middle ground!
3. How you answer these questions is going to say a great deal about your spiritual condition as well as where this congregation is going to be spiritually throughout this year and the years to come!
4. ARE YOU GETTING USED...BY GOD?
5. Effective and profitable use of your life on the earth begins with coming to Christ in faith that He is your Savior and Lord, confessing Him before men, repenting of your sin, and being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and the salvation of your soul.
6. And, of course, salvation is received in the end through faithful service to God as an instrument, an actual weapon, in God's hand for righteousness!