

Cribb<s> Note – June 8, 2008

Have you given your life completely to God? That may seem like an odd question, but it is an honest one. Have you ever thought seriously about what it means to turn your whole life over to God? Of course, we realize we live only because of God's love. But, what do we do with the life God has given to us?

Ten years ago my life made a major shift. It was like I turned a corner and discovered a world I had never known. It was not the first time I found myself in a strange place. Yet, it was unlike any previous experience. While stopped at a red light in Cleveland, a phrase started forming in my mind. Before the signal changed, I heard the words flowing from my mouth, "No matter what happens today, I am going to practice gratitude and joy because God is the Source of my life."

There was no 'burning bush' or 'thunder from the sky'. I did not see any bright light or hear voices. In the time it took to roll to a stop, wait, and drive on, a new mantra became my 'daily word'. I realized I did not own my life. God is in complete charge of everything. My only responsibility was to submit myself wholly and completely to God. Life is an 'act of faith'.

The best part of the story continues to unfold. Since that moment at the intersection, God has revealed a range of events, ideas, and experiences that define who I am.

All of us are God's children. We are cradled in God's loving hands and guided through the uncertainties of life. Our unanswerable questions are taken seriously and handed back to us to ponder with a deep faith of assurance that their meaning will be made known.

While pursuing a career in broadcast news, I took great pride in planning my moves and creating strategies for promotions. I actually believed I could control my destiny. I thought if I worked hard, stayed positive, and did not give up, doors of opportunity would swing wide open. As a person of faith and religious conviction, I prayed and trusted God; but, my priorities were out of sync. God was there to answer my call. I was not available to answer God's call. I was too busy building a very successful career in media.

It is quite strange how we can turn things around. Sometimes we think the most important thing in the world is what we are currently doing. We believe there is nothing else for us to do. We order our lives in a way that blocks out new possibilities. We compartmentalize and structure every aspect of life to the extent that God is squeezed to the corner. We can become so busy doing 'our thing' that we leave very little room for us to notice God.

What a relief it was when I got out of the way and invited God to take over. Actually, I became aware that God is always available to guide us in the right direction. The bonus gift was learning there is no sacrifice or loss associated with giving my life fully to God.

There have been many changes: new cities, new homes, new friends, new jobs, new family members, and new life. There have been disappointments, rejections, depression, and discouragement. But, at no time has there been despair. The gift of "practicing gratitude and joy" has allowed me to face numerous and diverse situations with the confidence that God is still in charge, "the Source of my life."

God's 'amazing grace' is given freely to everyone. We all benefit from it when we dedicate ourselves completely to God. Then, we realize the joy and breadth of God's love, the fountain that renews, revives, and restores life.

-Pastor Art Cribbs