

Wanting to vs. Obligation – Daily Exercises

Thoughts and questions for reflection, writing, and prayer to enhance personal growth.

Day 1

Think back to a time in your life when you were doing the right thing, but out of a feeling of obligation, because you felt you were supposed to. We can easily get sucked into a mindset of doing the things of God because it is a duty instead of doing it out of love. Write about a time like that in your life. Why did you feel you had to do it? Were you consistent in it for a long time, or did you eventually quit doing it? How was your attitude while doing it? Would you want to go back to being that way?

Day 2

It is amazing how God is much less impressed by what we do, and much more impressed by why we do it. Read this passage and answer the questions on it:

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-3 (NIV)

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

What things, when done without love, are meaningless to God, according to this passage? Based on what this verse says, how important are our motives, or why we do what we do? Are there other things we can do in a loving manner, other than what is listed here? What is the difference you have noticed, from your own life, between doing something out of a feeling of obligation and doing something because you love someone?

Day 3

Memorize

PSALM 37:4 (NIV)

Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Day 4

Often the devil will try to get us to lose sight of why we want to do the things that will help us grow in Christ. Spend some time thinking about why you want to do your devotions and go to church. What are some reasons, other than you have to? Write down a list of reasons why you want to spend time with God, and what you enjoy about it. How does spending time with God bring good into your life? What are some things you are grateful for about your church? Why do you want to go?

Day 5

It is interesting to note that we don't really believe everything God says. If we did, we would never sin. God teaches us that sin is bad for us, but every time we sin, we do so because we think that in that instance, sin would not be all that bad for us. Think back to the last few sins you committed, or some you have committed recently. Write down why you think God doesn't want you to do them. Write down some reasons why you want to obey God in things He asks you to do. Examine your motivations for why you are living for God and doing what you know you should be doing as a Christian to see if you are serving God because you love Him and want to serve Him, or because you feel you have to. Spend some time asking God to help you to live for Him because you love Him, not for any other reason.