

Testing Our Maturity 4-10-16AM

Song 481 - *All of Self and None of Thee* – is a song about spiritual maturity. We begin our spiritual lives completely selfish - **All of Self and None of Thee**. Many, like small children, cannot conceive that God is an individual outside of themselves. They believe that if they like it, God likes it. “Worship how you like, watch what you want, love who you want, because if you are happy, God is happy” is the mantra of the person who has created God in their image.

Some of Self, Some of Thee - Yet we in various fashions realize that there is more to faith than our heart’s desire. We realize that God is real, and sets rules and standards of His desire. We realize it is better to follow Him, and learn what it is to be obedient to the Gospel. We are born again, and as such as newborn babes in Christ. The church is the family of God, a family designed for the nurturing of the newborn. I Corinthians 12:22 and Ephesians 4:11-13 both point to this truth. The church is not a showcase of saints or a place where the most mature come to be praised, it is a place where the least mature are cared for by the most mature.

Less of Self and More of Thee - As we mature in Christ, we do so by taking steps in growth that are patterned from the Bible. In II Peter 1:5-8 Peter describes growing in faith. It is a pattern and progression that ultimately culminates in the ability to love. This is not the love of the world, emotional feeling good about another, this is divine love – AGAPE. It seeks the best for others. It also means that every day we must die to the world and the lusts of the world. We offer ourselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2) every single day.

None of Self and All of Thee – Maturity in Christ is an attainable position. Elders are called in their work as those who are mature in their faith. Jesus said in Matthew 5:48 (James 3:2) that we are perfect when we can love like the Father (i.e. love our enemies).

Where are you in your walk of faith? Scripture says that we need to “*test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves*” (2 Corinthians 13:5). We need to apply characteristics of mature conduct to ourselves and determine if we are indeed mature or maturing. We must ask ourselves “what is my interest in my Christian brethren”? In Philippians 2:4-8 Paul describes the mind of Christ (the mind of maturity) as one that puts others above ourselves. In 1 John 3 John states that “*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death*” (1 John 3:14). When we don’t care about the brethren, we have failed the test of maturity.

At the same time we need to have a mind towards the lost. When Jesus looked at the lost, He did not despise their error nor did he react to their wickedness with maliciousness of his own. He had compassion (Mark 6:34). How does the mature person look on the lost or erring? With a heart towards their restoration or salvation. As Stephen was dying in Acts 7 at the hands of the Jews, he called on God to forgive them. This was the mind of maturity.

Our songs are not inspired (except for the few taken from the Scripture). But most of them teach us inspired truths. If you look at “*All of Self, None of Thee*”, which verse is your life in at this moment?