



October 2009—*Why God Continues to Meddle in Our Lives*

Many of us come to faith in Jesus Christ because of problems in our lives that we cannot handle ourselves. Normally, the problems are sin or the consequences of sin (whether direct or indirect). Quite naturally, we want help to overcome these things, and God does provide it. But he has a larger plan for our lives than we are aware of. C.S. Lewis explains:

I find a good many people have been bothered by...our Lord's words, "Be ye perfect." Some people seem to think this means "Unless you are perfect, I will not help you;" and as we cannot be perfect, then, if He meant that, our position is hopeless. But I do not think He did mean that. I think He meant "The only help I will give is help to become perfect. You may want something less: but I will give you nothing less."

Let me explain. When I was a child I often had toothache, and I knew that if I went to my mother she would give me something which would deaden the pain for that night and let me get to sleep. But I did not go to my mother—at least, not till the pain became very bad. And the reason I did not go was this. I did not doubt she would give me the aspirin; but I knew she would also do something else. I knew she would take me to the dentist next morning. I could not get what I wanted out of her without getting something more, which I did not want. I wanted immediate relief from pain: but I could not get it without having my teeth set permanently right. And I knew those dentists: I knew they started fiddling about with all sorts of other teeth which had not yet begun to ache. They would not let sleeping dogs lie, if you gave them an inch they took an ell.

Now, if I may put it that way, Our Lord is like the dentists. If you give Him an inch, He will take an ell. Dozens of people go to Him to be cured of some one particular sin which they are ashamed of (like masturbation or physical cowardice) or which is obviously spoiling daily life (like bad temper or drunkenness). Well, He will cure it all right: but He will not stop there. That may be all you asked; but if once you call Him in, He will give you the full treatment.¹

God wants to cure us of *all* our sins, the ones we know about and the ones we don't. He wants to make us like Jesus, and nothing less will satisfy him. That's why throughout our life he continues to show us more of our sin and to empower us through his Spirit to change. Our part is to respond with repentance and new obedience to conviction of sin, as difficult as it may be, and to allow his grace to transform our lives.

*Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-24 (ESV)

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), pp. 173-174.