

## **A Letter from Brother Andrew Yu to a Brother (2)**

Dear Brother X,

In the last letter, I mentioned that a God-man living is the living that God has ordained for every one of us believers. The God-man living is not just for fulltime co-workers, but is for every believer, especially for working ones like you who are so busy all day long. Furthermore, this living is not confined in our meeting life or prayer life, but should be manifested in our family life, work life, and personal life. Christians should not have two kinds of living, one in the meetings and the other in their daily life. Instead, they should have only one kind of living, while their daily life should be the extension of their meeting life and prayer life. The life of Christ should be manifested both in their meeting life and in their daily life. A believer cannot have two kinds of living, as much as the Lord said that a man cannot serve two masters. Those who want to serve two masters would sooner or later discover that one master has been replaced by the other. In the same way, those who want to have two kinds of living would sooner or later discover that one living has taken over the other.

However, the question is: since we all know that we should live a God-man living, and that our living at present is not up to God's standard, how come still only a few live this way? For example, we all know that we should not waste time on things other than the Lord, and the Bible also teaches us clearly to "redeem the time" (Eph. 5:16), so how come many of us still do not live out such reality? For certain things, we may say that the flesh is weak so we cannot do it, or the temptation is so great that we can't overcome. But wasting time is neither something for which the flesh is too weak to resist, nor a habit so impossible to overcome. So how come many people still can't change it? Why can't these kinds of defects which should be

overcome without much effort be cast off from us? We know some difficulties do entangle us and bind us, which for now may be called our private sins or our unbeatable rivals. These are things for which we feel powerless, for which Paul said, “For I do not do the good which I will; but the evil which I do not will, this I practice.” Regarding how to overcome these bondages, there is clear instruction in the Lord’s word. But we are not even talking about that kind of great difficulties here. I just hope that we can first look at defects which can be overcome as long as we will or remember. So why can’t we even overcome these things? The answer is in the question itself. We can’t overcome things which can be overcome as long as we will or remember, because we have never willed or thought about them. We have never treated them as problems and considered them this way, let alone setting our will to overcome them. To some people, they are small problems, and since they are small problems, they are not problems.

I find out that today many believers are lacking in their daily living, mostly not in big things but in small things. Because they are careless in many details of their living, they live a life of failure. However, the God-man living that we should live is not only in big things but even more so in small details. Now the question is: why are the details of daily living so difficult to overcome? It is because we lack the heart, a heart that desires to live out Christ in all things. Imagine a person who has a strong desire to live out Christ; this desire is well-pleasing and acceptable to God. Never become so spiritual to the point of saying that God doesn’t want our willingness and we cannot even make ourselves willing. This is a wrong concept. For a man to be saved, he must be willing; if a man is not even willing to be saved, he can’t be saved. Similarly, for a man to overcome, he must be willing; if he is not even willing to overcome, he will never overcome. Overcoming is not a spontaneous matter; it first requires the willingness. It has been a theological debate for two thousand years concerning how important human will is in fulfilling God’s will. Some believe that human will is everything, and with the heart and will alone one can live out

holiness and righteousness. Such people do not know themselves; they do not know that the human will is a naïve idea of the fallen man. Man is not saved by his own will; he is saved by grace. However, there are others who fall into another extreme, thinking that human will is fully corrupted after the fall, so it is utterly useless and forsaken by God. They think that since salvation is wholly done by God, man does not need to do anything. This is too passive. While it is correct to say that salvation is freely given by grace, not by the works of law, man nevertheless needs to actively turn himself to God, repent, and change his mind. This is what man must do. Salvation is God's gift, but man must receive it in order to possess it. This is just like air, which is God's gift, but man must open his mouth in order to enjoy this gift of God. The sunlight is also God's gift, but man must open his eyes to see it. Although a car can go for a thousand miles a day, man still needs to sit in the car and turn on the engine to enjoy its goodness. We do not agree with salvation by works, and we would never say that man can fulfill God's purpose by his will. Everything is by grace and out of God. But grace is not to make man passive; grace operates to make man active. Grace not only initiates all things; it also causes man to cooperate with God. Grace not only makes God willing; grace also operates to make man willing. This willing heart is the cooperation that man renders to God. God has His work, but man needs to cooperate with it. The most basic principle in the Bible is the principle of God and man working together. God sends rain to water the earth, but man also needs to labor on it to bring forth produce. If there is only man's labor without the rain, the earth would yield no harvest. In the same way, if there is only God's rain without man's labor, there would be no crops either. Man plants and waters, and God causes the growth. This is God's law. To say that everything depends on God, so we need to do nothing, is too spiritual. God has done His work, but He needs our willingness to cooperate with Him.

Philippians 2:12 says, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." The subject of this book is exhorting us to have a living which is "for me to live is Christ", that is, to live

Christ, the God-man living. This kind of living causes us to have all boldness and always magnify Christ in our bodies whether through life or through death. For this reason, the “salvation” in 2:12 is to save us and deliver us from living a life that does not live Christ and express Christ. This salvation is daily and hourly. We need to be saved and delivered day by day and hour by hour from the condition of not living Christ and expressing Christ. In other words, we are saved into the God-man living, and this kind of salvation which brings us into the God-man living needs our working out, even with fear and trembling. Apostle Paul did not say that this kind of living can be spontaneously produced and done in a completely passive state. In this verse, he reminded the Philippians, “even as you have always obeyed”, meaning that the Philippians’ obedience is related to their having a God-man living. In order to experience salvation and live out such a life, they need to cooperate with God’s salvation by their obedience, just as Christ learned obedience through sufferings (Heb. 5:8). He did not let God simply work out this obedience, but “offered up both petitions and supplications with strong crying to Him who is able to save Him” (v. 7), through which He learned obedience. Thus Christ cooperated very actively with God, and He learned obedience bit by bit through exercising His will. Suppose Christ had said, “the matter of obeying God cannot be worked out by man. If the Father wants me to obey, He would surely work out the obedience in me spontaneously.” If He had spoken in this way, do you think God’s purpose could have been fulfilled in Him? Paul said to the Philippians, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” If the Philippians had said, “Living Christ is not our responsibility. If God wants us to live Christ, then we will live Christ. If God does not want us to live Christ, we cannot live Christ even if we want to”, do you think that this kind of attitude is “with fear and trembling”?

The footnote of the New Testament Recovery Version on Phil 2:12 says that salvation here is different from the salvation in chapter one, which comes through the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. It is to save a believer not from a specific encounter in a particular situation, but from ordinary things in

common situations in his daily living. We do not need to be thrown into prison and have our feet shackled in order to experience this salvation. It is in the small things of our daily living like wasting time, losing temper to our children, and shopping at the mall that we need to experience this kind of salvation. And this salvation requires us to cooperate with the Lord actively. Don't say that "God does not want us to exercise our will and that our will is useless." The Devil would either make a person's will stubborn toward God, or cause him to give up his will altogether and become a person completely passive with no will. Just as a person with a stubborn will cannot fulfill God's purpose, a person with no will cannot fulfill God's purpose either. Verse 13 follows verse 12 by saying, "For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure." Here it states clearly that we need to be willing. Of course, this willingness is the result of God's operation in us. The Bible does not deny human will; rather, it says that in fulfilling God's good pleasure, God operates in cooperation with human will. On the one hand, to will independently of God cannot fulfill God's purpose; on the other hand, to rely on God alone without the cooperation of human will cannot fulfill God's purpose either. God's operation needs our cooperation, and our cooperation completes God's operation. Peter on the day of Pentecost exhorted the saved disciples to "be saved" from this crooked generation" (Acts 2:40). "Be saved" in the original language has both an active sense and a passive sense; it is in the active-passive voice (note 2). On the one hand, we cannot save ourselves, and we need the Lord to save us and be saved by Him; on the other hand, we need to "want" to be saved, to act actively. In the matters of pursuing the Lord and living the God-man living, we need to be both passive and active. "Passive" because everything is of God's grace, and "active" because everything depends on our cooperation. And these two do not contradict each other.

Coming back to what we just talked about: If we want to live the God-man living, we cannot wait for God's working entirely. At least we need to have a desire, and at least we

should pray to God, saying, “O Lord, I am willing to live the God-man living. I desire to live the God-man living.” This prayer, this desire, gives God the position, the ground, and the opportunity to work out in us the living He desires. No one who lives the God-man living has not first desired to live such a living, and no one who lives Christ has never first prayed to live Christ. The Bible is full of examples like this. In the Old Testament, Samuel’s mother, Hannah, prayed desperately, so God listened to her prayer and fulfilled her desire. In the New Testament, as the Lord taught His disciples about prayer, He even compared Himself to an unrighteous judge to indicate the need for prayer and expectation. Yes, God is willing to send down the Holy Spirit, and our heavenly Father will not give a stone when He was asked for a loaf, a serpent when asked for a fish, and a scorpion when asked for an egg. But we need to recognize that our living is not well-pleasing to God, and that the God-ordained living through His Word is not a pitiful, Godless living, but one that is full of God, full of the Holy Spirit, and fully one with the Lord. We need to envy this kind of living and ask the Father for it. We should desire to be joined to Christ as the Head in everything, so that we may grow up into Christ as the Head in all things to magnify the Lord and live out the example of the God-man living. Shall not a strong desire as this affect a person’s living? Would it not make him long to live out Christ in everything? This desire, this longing, this hunger is the beginning of spiritual progress. All spiritual progress starts from a longing. M. E. Barber had a wonderful prayer, in which she asked the Lord to give her an everlasting hunger and thirst. Matthew 5:6 says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” The first requirement for all spiritual progress is to hunger and thirst for righteousness. The requirement for revival is to be unsatisfied with the current condition, and the requirement to be filled in spirit is to hunger and thirst for the Holy Spirit. Our heart needs to pant for God, “as the hart pants after the streams of water” (Psa. 42:1), so we can be satisfied “with Your lovingkindness” (Psa. 90:14). Some have never been satisfied because they have never hungered and

thirsted. Only those who have hungered and thirsted can experience true satisfaction. Satisfaction is different from complacency. Some are complacent about their living, but they are not satisfied. They are content with their career, friends, families, children, neighbors, and colleagues, but they cannot experience satisfaction in life. Satisfaction is the result of being filled with Christ, and one requirement for being filled with Christ is to have a spirit of hunger and thirst. If we are to live a God-man living, a living that is the reproduction of the Lord's earthly living, we first need to have a longing for it. Only if we long to be like the Lord could we be like Him, and only if we long to be a God-man could we be a God-man. Everyone who is longing for something definitely believes that he may obtain what he longs for, because if he has determined that he would not obtain something, he would not long for it. This is like when a man longs for a lady, it means that he has the hope to win that lady. So for a man to long for an overcoming living means that this living is attainable and practical. Thus, he has the hope, and he cries out and longs for this living. This is the first requirement.

According to my observation, however, many working brothers and sisters do not even long to have this kind of living. One reason for this is that they from the beginning have believed that this living is unattainable and too idealistic, or it exceeds human ability. They have made up their mind and reached their conclusion, so they feel that since this living is impossible, there is no need for prayer and pursuit. This kind of people needs to listen to the Lord's word, which promised that "he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me" (John 6:57). This means that this living is possible and is for the believers; it is doable and is not an unattainable goal. 2 Peter 1:3-4 says, "Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue, through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust." All these "precious

and exceedingly great promises” have been granted to us. The Lord said in John 7:38, “He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.” This flowing life is the Lord’s word of promise to everyone who believes as something they may experience in this life, something that may happen to them. The Lord said again in John 14:19, “Because I live, you also shall live.” This is a fact according to His promise. He wants us to live just like how He had lived. This is not an unreachable standard. We must believe and say amen to His word, rather than doubting its feasibility. Second Corinthians 8:12 says, “For if the eagerness is there, it is acceptable according to whatever one has, not according to what he does not have.” If we cry out to the Lord, saying, “O Lord! I am not satisfied with my living. I long to experience a living in which the living water just flow out of my innermost being. I long to have a different living”—if you cry out this way from your heart, it will be the beginning of your salvation, the beginning of entering into a richer life.

The life of a Christian is a life of consecration, a life of vows. A man who never vows to God should not hope to live a holy life and have a sanctified living. The whole twenty-seven chapters of Leviticus end with the regulations for devotion. This devotion is stronger than ordinary consecration. It is not to have an ordinary wish before God, nor to have a so-called free-will offering, a non-binding commitment. It is a firm decision made with a will that has been strengthened; it is a binding commitment and promise. All the matters covered in the whole book of Leviticus—including all the offerings and ordinances concerning the enjoyment and living of a priest—are all inseparable from this kind of devotion. Without such devotion, there would not be the living and service as recorded in Leviticus. Dear brother, it is not impossible to live the God-man living, and it is not theoretical to be a priest enjoying Christ, eating and drinking Christ, and wearing Christ in daily life. But in order to practice this kind of living, we need to have a definite vow, an irreplaceable and unchangeable vow, a vow according to the shekel of the sanctuary, not according to our standard. Who



says human will is useless in this matter? Whoever says this is in fact just trying to find a back door, an excuse, for his failure. However, being a Nazarite to live a sanctified living is a matter of devotion. Nazarites are people who consecrate themselves to God willingly. They are people who exercise their will to cooperate with God. They exercise their God-given will by the operation of the Lord's grace and power to turn away from a worldly life, refuse all the earthly enjoyment from wine and strong drink, and stay away from all human death. They deliberately grow their hair and willingly cover their heads to obey the Lord's will. They learn from the real Nazarite—the pattern of Christ—to be a burnt offering sanctified to God. We must take God's desire as our desire, His will as our will, and His goal as our goal in every detail of our living—in thoughts and attitudes, in words and conducts, in spending time and money—so that we may live out the God-man living on earth to please God and take Him as our joy.

Faithful is the Lord who can do it. Let all the excuses pass away! Let all passivity be gone! Dear brother, let us rise up to cooperate with the Lord and work out our own salvation. May these words not become some mere wishes and fantasies to us, but become a guide for our practice.

Brother Andrew Yu