

Stance and the Primary Focus

A human being must derive their true identity and worth not from the shifting judgements of the external world, but from an internal and divine source. For a person's primary focus directly determines their stance. Wherever the focus is, the direction flows there; wherever the direction flows, character is shaped in that direction over time.

In Syriac wisdom, "**knowing who you are in Christ**" means recognising oneself through the gaze of God. This comprehension allows the individual to realise that their worth is not dependent on the appreciation, criticism, or approval of people. For human beings are changeable: if their thoughts are not nourished by truth and righteousness, they may praise today and curse tomorrow, according to their internal state.

Therefore, a person who gives their focus to the negative thoughts of people surrenders their soul to a constantly turbulent sea. For this reason, the proverb has been said: "He who looks to man is bewildered, he who looks to God lives."

When a human being's primary focus shifts to the external world, their human stance also begins to weaken. The individual bends and twists to gain acceptance; compromises themselves to avoid criticism; and diverges from their truth to receive praise. In such a focus, the stance cannot remain fixed; it changes shape according to circumstances.

Yet, the person who directs their focus towards the divine—that is, towards God—attains an internal centre. This centre renders them independent of external influences. Such a stance neither grows with praise nor shrinks with criticism. Because the place from which it is nourished is not variable, but constant.

If a person constructs their identity according to others, that identity becomes fragile. It cracks at the slightest criticism, and changes direction at the smallest praise. But the person who grounds their identity upon God and His justice achieves an unshakable internal balance. For this reason, Christ says: "***But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you.***" (Matthew 6:33)

This word was spoken to bring order to internal chaos. It aims to direct the human being towards a righteous state of existence. It expresses an internal state rather than an external location.

When our priority is spiritual order, material order finds its place naturally. When our priority is truth, the gateway to freedom is opened. Then, possessions and needs cease to be instruments of slavery. Anxiety and ambition are replaced by understanding and empathy. This expresses a profound liberation. A human being no longer lives with the anxiety of "what will people say". Criticism does not tear them down, and praise does not inflate them. Because their self-evaluation is strong; they know well who they are.

The reality that "not everyone will understand" is not a deficiency, but the very nature of life. Every human being's level of comprehension, perspective, and depth is different. Expecting everyone to understand places an unnecessary burden upon a person's shoulders. Accepting this reality, however, gives rise to a freedom that lightens the soul.

True self-worth and self-confidence are born precisely here: not from the outside, but from within; not from people, but from the bond established with God... Therefore, it is lasting; therefore, it is unshakable. Because it takes its root not from the transient order of the external world, but from the truth within the human being. Indeed, Saint Augustine (354–430) says: *"Why do you focus on the distorted deeds of another, whilst neglecting the commandments of God?"*

This word turns a person's attention away from external turmoil and towards internal responsibility. For true transformation begins not with correcting others, but with purifying one's own essence.

Ultimately, when a human being directs their focus to the right place—that is, to God—their human stance is fortified. However, when they lose their focus, their stance scatters. Therefore, the issue is not merely who we are; the essential issue is where we place our focus. And indeed, when a human being defines themselves from the right place, the voice of the external world can no longer govern them. Thus, they achieve a true internal peace and a steadfast stance of existence.

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