

Ambassadors Fellowship, Inc (AFI) African American Missionary Devotional

Dr. Michael & Kay Johnson

What Does it Cost to do Missions? *

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 5:16



Be careful what you pray for. Dr. Michael Johnson once prayed for a large surgical practice. The Lord answered by sending him, along with his wife Kay and their four children, as a missionary surgeon with World Gospel Mission in 1990, and they remained on the field for 20 years. It has been said that “Dr. Johnson can write with a scalpel, as well as operate with one, excising and bringing healing.” After 20 years serving in the Tenwek hospital, the Johnsons returned to the US to serve the underserved community of Philadelphia. They continue ministering in medical missions at Miriam Medical Clinic, providing care for people living in homelessness. It may sound like Dr. Johnson is too good to be true, but he testifies that goodness wasn’t always his ambition. The following is a testimony from one of his books on missions:

I Never Really Wanted to be that Good. “The author and radio personality Garrison Keilor related the story of holding his newborn baby daughter for the first time. He told of the joy of holding new life. It was such a joy to behold a soft and innocent baby in his arms. He knew his daughter would forever change his life. She would require constant attention. She would require sacrifice. She would require him to change. She would require him to be a better person. He would have to be good. Then he went on to admit, ‘I didn’t want to be that good!’

I guess when it comes down to it, I really don’t want to get too close to Jesus. I don’t want to be that good. We all wrestle with this somewhat. The more the Holy Spirit becomes real to me, the more I’m inclined to have second thoughts about this burden for missions.

You see, I became a Christian reluctantly. I was really enjoying all of the things in which I found myself involved. I enjoyed smoking dope. I enjoyed having any woman who would be willing to spend a little time with me. I enjoyed the attention of being among the elite intellectuals within my small congregation of a black Baptist church. I enjoyed buying new expensive suits and shoes on a whim.

I enjoyed a life without real sacrifice. I enjoyed giving what was left over out of the abundance God had given me. I enjoyed going out to dinner for any occasion, spending whatever

it would take to keep my wife happy, and impress my friends. I enjoyed buying those four new cars in five years.

I enjoyed having a beeper, a phone in my car and the ability to hire two staff members in the office to manage my growing patient load. I enjoyed the new computers we had purchased for the office and being able to dictate letters to the referring physicians detailing how I removed the skin tag from one man and the gallbladder from his wife.

Why did I need to do overseas missions? I really don't want to be that good!"

Our problem with reaching the world for Jesus Christ is that we are too comfortable and too well adjusted to the world...

"That's the problem with Christianity. The more I read the Bible, I find that there has to be something to the admonition Christ lays out about 'seeking the kingdom first' and having the needs of life met in the process (Mt 6:33). I don't want to be that good, however, because it will cause me to live out this goodness. It will cause me to 'sell all that I have and give to the poor and follow Him.'

I don't want to be that good because changing will not allow me to store up treasures in this life, but it will cause me to think more about the life to come. Who needs that? I really want to enjoy life here, Lord. I told Jesus this on several occasions. This idea of bringing every thought captive to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5) means that I can't even think bad thoughts, watch bad movies, tell dirty jokes or keep bad company, at least not for pleasure." (Excerpt from *What Jesus Wouldn't Do*, pp. 34-36)

Dr. Johnson struggled with the reality of the Holy life until God fully came into His life and began to change him and his desires from the inside out. He learned that he didn't have to make himself good. "God could do it, if I would yield to His word." He learned the secret was depending on God.

Have you wrestled with really desiring holiness or goodness? Are you striving to be good or better, or have you yielded to God to let Him do it as you follow His word? What commandments of Jesus seem too hard for you now? Will you surrender today?

For Further Information:

*Dr. Michael Johnson. *What Jesus Wouldn't Do: Making the Blind Man Lame*. 2017.

Dr. Michael Johnson. *Broken Pottery: A Collection of Poetry and Spiritual Reflections*. Philadelphia: GGIS Publishing.

Dr. Michael Johnson. *Be Ashamed to Die*.

<https://thosepeculiarjohnsons.org/> & <https://www.miriammedical.org/about-us>