

QTC564. Spirituality as a 'Madness'. 27 March 2025

"Spirituality as a 'Madness'" | Malcolm Cox | Quiet Time Coaching Episode 564

Opening:

Today, we explore a thought-provoking idea from Ronald Rolheiser: *Spirituality is not an option; it is essential. The only question is whether it gives life or destroys it.* What we do with our inner fire, our restless energy, defines our spirituality. How does this connect with Jesus, our relationship with God, and the way we approach personal devotion? Let's explore.

The Full Quote:

Ronald Rolheiser writes:

"Spirituality is not something on the fringes, an option for those with a particular bent. None of us has a choice. Everyone has to have a spirituality and everyone does have one, either a life-giving one, or a destructive one. No one has the luxury of choosing here because all of us are precisely fired into life with a certain madness that comes from the gods and we have to do something with that. We do not wake up in this world calm and serene, having the luxury of choosing to act or not act. We wake up crying, on fire with desire, with madness. What we do with that madness is our spirituality."

The Fire Within

Inner restlessness never leaves us. It is hard-wired into our spirits. God put it there. Sometimes, it appears as ambition, longing, hunger for purpose. At other times, it manifests as anxiety, frustration, or even destructive impulses. Rolheiser reminds us that this inner drive is not something we can switch off. We must do something with it.

The question is, where does that fire lead us? Does it push us toward God or away from Him? Do we use it to fuel love and service, or does it consume us in self-destructive ways?

Jesus and the Proper Channeling of Desire:

Jesus experienced this same fire. We see His passion manifested in overturning tables in the temple, weeping over Jerusalem, and groaning in prayer in Gethsemane. But Jesus didn't allow

His inner fire to consume Him or burn others in a destructive way. Instead, He surrendered His desires to the Father.

Consider His words in John 4:34: *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work."* His desire found direction in obedience to the Father's will. His passion was channelled through love, mission, and trust in God's provision. This is our model.

The Role of Devotion and Prayer:

How does this affect our personal times of devotion? When we come to prayer, we are not just engaging in a ritual. We are bringing our *restless* hearts before God. Our prayers are not meant to be lifeless recitations but raw, honest encounters with the Father who welcomes our desires, fears, and longings.

When we pray, we are making a choice: *Will we let our inner fire be shaped by the world, or will we offer it to God?* Consider David's psalms—how often he pours out his heart, expressing everything from anguish to ecstasy. His prayers are evidence that true spirituality does not deny desire but directs it toward God.

Practical Steps

- 1. Bring Your Whole Self to God.** Don't filter your emotions in prayer. If you feel restless, say so. If you feel on fire with passion or purpose, surrender that energy to God.
 - 2. Anchor Your Desire in Scripture.** Read passages that speak to your longing, your frustrations, your hopes. Let God's word shape your inner fire.
 - 3. Use Your Spiritual Fire for Good.** Let devotion to God ignite acts of service, kindness, and deeper love for others.
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Conclusion

We all wake up each day with a fire inside us. The question is not *whether* we will have a spirituality, but *what kind* of spirituality we will have. Will our inner fire push us toward self-destruction or toward God? Jesus shows us the way: to bring our passion, our longings, our restlessness to the Father in trust and surrender.

As you spend time with God today, don't suppress your desires—bring them to Him. Let Him shape your fire into something life-giving.

Until next time, keep seeking, keep praying, and let your quiet time set your soul ablaze for God.

Share your thoughts, insights, or questions with me and the other listeners. And if you haven't yet, grab a free copy of my eBook on spiritual disciplines, "*How God Grows His People*," at www.malcolmcox.org by signing up for my newsletter.

Take care, and God bless, Malcolm

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