
The Writer's Inkhorn

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Continuing Reflections on the Word for Your Personal Growth in Christ

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Relentless Pursuit!



This issue of the Inkhorn is so late coming because I honestly did not know what to write. After coming off of a long project for our jurisdiction's centennial celebration, I was spent. It is in times like this that I recall the words of Mother Betty Price: "I don't get tired of what I do; I get tired *from* what I do. This is a critical and necessary distinction to make.

When we are involved in work that is the joy of our hearts, our spirits can be operating on ten but our bodies on two. The work *wears* you. I **loved** gathering and reading the histories of the churches and people, many of whom I knew from my childhood. But the work itself took hundreds of hours to bring to a completion worthy of publication.

So, here we are past mid-August and the Lord gives me the above title in a dream just this morning. In the dream I was on a mission trip and speaking with Mother Lee Etta Van Zandt about this title having been given to me. At the moment that I spoke it to her, I felt the presence of God and I told her that was confirmation for me that it was the message He intended for me to deliver.

Note here that the message was not given; *just the title*. God always leaves some work for *us* to do, although He could do it all, Himself. Somehow this tends to amuse me when He gives a thought or lesson and even an outline, but leaves it to me to flesh out the details. So, here is my offering, totally depending upon Him as I write, as is my usual practice. And I pray, also as per my usual, that you are blessed by what is presented in the pages that follow.

Relentless

Has anyone ever described you as relentless? Would you describe yourself in the same way? Here is the positive side of that word, as defined by the dictionary, with some synonyms (there were as many more that I did not include).

re·lent·less /rə'len(t)ləs/ (adj) constant; incessant.

synonyms:

persistent, continuing, constant, continual, continuous, nonstop, lasting, never-ending, steady, uninterrupted, unabated, unbroken, interminable, incessant, unstoppable, unceasing, endless, unending, perpetual, unremitting, unrelenting, unrelieved, sustained;

Examples and/or Stories from Scripture

Perhaps some of the stories which follow, you readily remember and others not as much, but I share them here to highlight the relentless pursuit of some person or people involved, and trust that you can take courage from reading about or reviewing them again.

Noah in building the ark and the people in building the Tower of Babel in Shinar.

Although both of these show examples of relentless pursuit, the first was in obedience to God's instructions and the second was to God's displeasure. These two, then, are striking reminders that *whatever* we pursue relentlessly must be to *God's* glory and honor and not just for our own name's sake. Since all things were created by God and for His pleasure (Revelation 4:11b), then it stands to reason that all I do should be for **His** glory.

Caleb and Joshua, in relentlessly pursuing God's promised inheritance for His people. Caleb's name is most easily remembered in association with Joshua as they were two of the twelve spies which Moses sent out to view the land of Canaan which God had promised the Israelites. What is most significant about these two is that they were the **only** spies of the twelve who had the faith to pursue the promise that God had given them (Numbers 13:20, 14:6-9). When the report from the other spies was filled with fear and faithlessness, these two tried to talk some sense into the people, but to no avail. God was indeed ready to kill the whole lot of them, right then and there, but Moses and Aaron interceded on their behalf.

Nevertheless, the people's unbelief cost them dearly. All of that "evil congregation" (God's words) died in the wilderness of Kadesh-barnea as they wandered those forty years in that wilderness, one year for every day they were sent to spy out the land. With the exception of the young ones **under 20 years of age**, along with Joshua and Caleb, who had faith in what God had promised, that "evil congregation" never got to see the Promised Land.

A lack of faith can have devastating effects in the life of the believer. That must surely be why, a millennium and a half later, the writer of Hebrews tells us that "*without faith it is impossible to please God.*" We would do well to heed these words when we are in pursuit of God's will for our lives, in faith, as God has directed us. While we are here, is there something God has called you to do that you have not done simply because you have not the faith to step out and act upon accordingly? Now would be a good time to self-assess.

David in relentless pursuit of the heart of a worshipper. David had many exploits as a warrior-king but the one that most impresses me is his relentless pursuit as a worshipper. Elsewhere I wrote: "David found time to write

at least 73 psalms while he subdued and ruled kingdoms!" (*Devotional Nuggets for Powerful Living*, p. 50, Webster Moore, 2017). These psalms are evidence that he chose to continue to relentlessly pursue his life as a musician and psalmist and was not only a *warrior-king* but also a **worshipper-king**. Even at the end of his life, this beautiful description is given of David by the writer of 2 Samuel in 23:1: "*David the son of Jesse...and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel...*"

Can you imagine how difficult it must have been for David to keep up his relentless pursuit of worshipper? Even when his wife despised his worship as he danced before the Lord with all of his might as he was bringing home the Ark of the Covenant, he did not relent. He allowed nothing to stop his worship. As dancer, as writer, as psalmist, as musician, he embraced it all. I often wonder where David kept his scrolls, pens and ink while he was on the battlefield. Have you ever thought about that?

For those of you who would be writers, with hundreds of pens and pads within easy access daily, how difficult is it for you to just pick up the pen and write? What excuses are you offering instead of offering up worship through what you could or should write? Are you not even aware that every gift that we have been given by God is an avenue for worship? Walk through the psalms and note all of those that say "A Psalm of David" and use your study Bible to see the various and difficult circumstances under which David wrote some of those psalms. Then determine to make no more excuses, but instead to just pick up the pen, already.

God in relentless pursuit of relationship with us. From the time that God created us, He has been in pursuit of our hearts that He might have a relationship with us. I imagine if what happened in Eden had happened today, the scene could have gone something like this:

God comes down to periodically check on how things are going on any given day:

God to them: How are things going?

Adam: Oh, hey, God! We're good. I finished naming all of the creatures today. I'm just relaxing with the wife. Eve, God's here!

Eve: Hey, God! These flowers and trees are *so* beautiful, and...

God: I know, Eve. Adam, remind her of what I told you.

Adam: I did. I told her not to even *think* about going near that tree in the midst of the garden, or else...

God: Okay, Adam; I'll check back with you later.

Adam: Okay, God, later.

Things are going well until that one fateful day when God comes to check on things, calls Adam's name and gets no immediate reply as in times past. What has happened? Finish it.

And just like that, fellowship is broken. But don't think God was caught off guard. He knew that when left to our own devices, we are too easily snared by Satan's traps, his smooth tongue and twisting of God's eternal word. Yet He chose to give us free will. He wants us to willingly pursue Him as He does us. Love is not love if it is forced. He *so loved* us that He *gave* us His only begotten Son, and He wants to be the desire of our hearts such that we willingly *give* Him *our hearts*.

Just as Eve willingly chose to listen to Satan's voice (disguised as a serpent) above that of the God who created her and then gave her all of those good things, we, too, are often guilty of doing the same. Why *is* that? It happens when we pursue pleasure above divine purpose. See Genesis 3:6 and compare it with I John 2:16. I help you with that here:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and

gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

It is not God's will that any should perish but that all should come to repentance, but it is *our* choice. We must *desire* relationship with Him as much as He desires relationship with us. Scripture is replete with evidence that God is relentlessly pursuing our hearts. Romans 5:6 says, *When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.* Then Paul reiterates in Romans 5:8, *God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Our salvation was no afterthought. The Apostle Paul teaches us plainly in Ephesians 1:4-5, that God has *chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.* And He continues to relentlessly pursue our hearts in big and small ways. Just think, the God of the whole universe desires relationship with us! How dare we not respond favorably to His loving gestures?!? What evidence can you offer that you are relentlessly pursuing God?

In Pursuit of a Life of Holiness

Recently, I have been reading and meditating on some of the New Testament letters, specifically back and forth between I and II Thessalonians to Jude, and have been allowing them to feed my spirit and speak into me wisdom for righteous living. As I was reading in I Peter, the third chapter, these verses (8-15) settled in my spirit to share here.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren,

be pitiful, be courteous: ⁹Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

¹⁰For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: ¹¹Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

¹²For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

¹³And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? ¹⁴But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; ¹⁵But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: ¹⁶Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. ¹⁷For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

Of course, the whole of the Bible, as we have been taught, is essentially written for *the believers*, except for the parts telling non-believers of their need for salvation and what the consequences are for not choosing to believe in Christ as Savior. My point here is that there are other Scriptures I could have chosen (e.g., Matthew 5-7; Romans 12-13, my usual go-tos), but these words from Peter seem to speak to me from where I am today.

Holiness is *not* a garment to be put on at will, when no temptations are around to lead

us astray. Rather, holiness is a lifestyle that is to be pursued with all sincerity and diligence. Meditating on God's word and then applying its concepts to our daily lives is the only thing that can keep us rooted and grounded in a life of holiness.

Without dedicated attention to the word of God, our focus can be easily shifted by the multitude of voices that are out there in the world spouting their own truths, trying to dissuade us from the truths that are in God's word. And the thing of it is, some of that stuff may sound appealing, but do not be fooled by Satan's deceptive tactics. We cannot allow ourselves to become numbed, desensitized by what gets into our ears and enters into our spirits. Keep God's word as the guide for your faith and practice in godly living, daily.

In Relentless Pursuit of Divine Purpose

What else? What else is there to which you must give your attention? Your purposeful and well-intentioned existence, of course. Are you clear about your divine purpose, that for which you have been created? If so, are you pursuing it relentlessly? Have I written about this previously? Likely so. Why, then, do I return to it? I do so because there are many people out there who say that they do not know their divine purpose, and for me, that is a sad state of affairs in which to find oneself. In fact, you may be one of those people. If you are not, you are one of the fortunate ones. If you are one of those still searching, I say begin with really seeking God and follow it up by listening to your inner-compass. Do some self-reflection. When are you happiest? Go deep into that space to find your divine purpose and relentlessly pursue! Find joy in the journey.

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