

“...THAT THEIR HEARTS MAY BE ENCOURAGED,  
HAVING BEEN KNIT TOGETHER IN LOVE...”

Colossians 2:2



# From my Heart

Volume 22, No. 2  
November 2007

Who ministers to you? Who disciplined you? Those are two questions I have often been asked through the years. One of the primary ways I have been disciplined and ministered to has always been through books. Proverbs 13:20 states: “He who walks with the wise grows wise.” And one of the ways we walk with wise men and women is through their writings. I love to read and always have a stack of books by my bed and by my favorite chairs—and even in my car.

As we approach Thanksgiving—and the end of the year—one of the things I am most grateful for this year, as in the past, is the ministry of books in my life. They have encouraged, inspired, taught, and guided me. So, I thought you might enjoy a smorgasbord of my underlining from one of the books I’ve read in 2007.

Here are a few of the sentences I’ve marked from the book *The Rest of God: Restoring your soul by Restoring Sabbath* by Mark Buchanan, Thomas Nelson Publishers, ©2006

The Greeks had two words for TIME. The first word is *Chronos*. It is the time of clock and calendar, time as a gauntlet, time as a forced march. *Chronos* is the presiding diety of the driven.

The second Greek word for time is *Kairos*. This is time as a gift, an opportunity, a season. It is time pregnant with purpose. In *Kairos* time you ask NOT *What time is it?* but *What is this time for?* *Kairos* is the servant of holy purpose. “There is a time for everything,” Ecclesiastes says, “and a season for every activity under heaven.” (p. 36)

The devil distracts, God interrupts. And for some reason, we fall prey to the one and grow oblivious to the other. Brother Lawrence found the most simple device for reversing this. In his small, wise book, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, he speaks about a companionship with Jesus that is without boundary—not in time, or place or circumstance. Anywhere, everywhere, in anything, you can be with God. God wishes it and invites it and is present and available right now for it.

The only thing missing is us. The one thing lacking is attentiveness. So Brother Lawrence commends a discipline—simple as saying hello—of becoming present with God in season and out, in church and away, in crisis and routine, in ecstasy and heartache, in thrill and tedium. In all these

things, as Paul says, we are more than conquerors—not because of some swaggering valor in us, but because we have a God to whom we can cry, “Abba” (See Romans 8:15). We have a God who is there. (p.130, 131)

“My whole life I have been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted,” Henry Nouwen said near the end of his life, “until I discovered the interruptions were my work.”

No, Jesus didn't seem to keep time. But he noticed. So many people along the way—blind men, lame men, wild men, fishermen, tax men, weeping whores, pleading fathers, grieving mothers, dying children, singing children, anyone—captured his attention. He stopped to tell a lot of stories, many of which arose out of, well, interruptions. (p. 79)

The best way I know to embody this Godward orientation is *thankfulness*. *Thankfulness* is a secret passageway into a room you can't find any other way. It is the wardrobe into Narnia. It allows us to discover the *rest of God*—those dimensions of God's world, God's presence, God's character that are hidden, always from the thankless. *Ingratitude* is an eye disease every bit as much as a heart disease. It sees only flaws, scars, scarcity. Likewise, the god of the thankless is wary, stingy, grudging, bumbling, nitpicky. He's by turns meddlesome and apathetic, suspicious then indifferent, grubbing about in our domestic trifles one moment, oblivious to our personal catastrophes the next.

But to give thanks, to render it as Scripture tells us we ought—in all circumstances, for all things, to the glory of God—such thanksgiving becomes a declaration of God's sovereign goodness. Even more it trains us in a growing awareness of that sovereign goodness. You cannot practice thankfulness on a biblical scale without it altering the way you see. And the more you do it, the more you find cause for doing it. Inherent in a life of thanksgiving is an ongoing discovery of God's sufficiency, his generosity, his fatherly affection and warrior protection. (p.67, 68)



As we enter the Thanksgiving and Christmas season, I am particularly thankful for you and for your faithful prayers and investments in my ministry. I pray, in the midst of the busy-ness of the coming days, you will sense His presence with you. I hope He will surprise you with carved out spaces to rest...and be...with Him...and maybe even read a good book.

With dearest love and a deeply grateful heart for you,

P.S. *Faith Is Not A Feeling* is being re-printed by Waterbrook Press with a new cover (my favorite cover so far)—the 17<sup>th</sup> printing since 1979. It will be available before Thanksgiving in Christian bookstores or on the Internet.