



## Devotion

### **1 Chronicles 28:9 NIV**

**“And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.”**

Every devotion has an object. What is the object of your devotion?

The other day I came home and tried to help upgrade the meal we were having by adding to it toasted bread and butter. I had the bread, I just lacked the butter. By now I was excited about having hot toast and jam to serve and so I was determined to find the butter in the refrigerator. Normally there is a stick of butter at the front on one of the door shelves so I searched there but didn't find any. Then I scanned the front of the refrigerator on each shelf and there was no butter there. Now you must realize that with a family of six and two of them being male teenagers, our refrigerator is packed to the edges with no room to squeeze in even a candy bar. At this point, I would normally quit looking and just give up on the matter because diving any further into our refrigerator is like disturbing the ecosystem of a tiger. Mary Jo is not keen on finding things moved around. But because I now was beginning to salivate at the thought of hot buttered bread and jam, I was willing to take my life into my own hands and see if there was a stick of butter somewhere in our refrigerator. First I pulled out everything on the top shelf...the salsas, the salad dressings, the jams and the hundreds of weird exotic sauces we keep but no butter. Next I went to the lower shelf with the milk cartons, the

1

### **Awakening**

**Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory...**

**Luke 9:32NIV**

yogurts, the eggs, the bacon, the lettuce, the chicken and all the other odd sauces we have but still not a single partial stick of butter. I moved down into the cheese and deli meats drawer knowing full there would not be any butter there but by now I was desperate and did not want to risk missing it. I then checked the vegetable drawer with the shallots and lettuce and carrots and broccoli. Not one stick of butter! At this point I would have milked a cow and churned the cream myself to have butter but unfortunately we didn't have a cow either.

Is there anything each day you persistently try to find? Is there something you would like to find at work...encouragement, meaning, a pay raise, the respect of your co-workers, a challenge? What do you search for at work? What do you hope to find at home...love, affection, peace, encouragement, stimulating conversations, a backrub, good food, a funny TV show, hope? What do you hope to find at home? What is it you would like to discover at school...success, good friends, a girlfriend or boyfriend, interesting lectures, connections, a direction for your life, challenging ideas? What do you want to discover at school? What is it you are wanting when you go out for the evening or the weekend...entertainment, a moment of relief from the pressures you face, a reason to keep going, something new and interesting, some excitement, a new friend, beauty, a fresh perspective? What is it you are wanting when you "go out"?

Whenever we start out on a fresh adventure or even a new day or leave one spot and go to another, we have a certain number of expectations for it, even if we don't think much about them. They are always there, perhaps below the surface percolating but they are there. The Bible has a number of examples of this that are intriguing. When David in his old age found himself at the point of turning over his kingdom to his son, he wanted Solomon to face fully the great opportunity before him. All of us at some level or another are daily confronted by the same moment of actualization. Something bigger than our plans and expectations is right before us. The way David presented this to his son is intriguing. **"And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever."** (1 Chronicles 28:9 NIV)

None of us I am fairly certain have ever faced a day when an entire kingdom is about to be turned over to us so it is easy to scoff at this admonition as irrelevant to you right now but it isn't. It is just as pertinent to your situation as it was for Solomon's. You too are on the verge of something, on the edge of something that may or may not be exciting, may or may not be too big for you, too overwhelming for you. You don't know what you soon will face, what opportunity or crisis may stand just around the corner. It is there though; you may not be aware of it coming your way but it is there and so you too like Solomon must respond to David's admonition. Your one decision as you await your moment is what you will do about devotion. Will you have enough of you left to be devoted to the God who saves you?

Let us look at a couple of examples before we answer that question. In Matthew 20 is the mostly straightforward account of the two blind men who sat by the roadside begging from those who passed them. When they heard Jesus was approaching, the two started

2

## **Awakening**

**Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory...**

**Luke 9:32NIV**

crying out at the top of their lungs for Jesus to come their way. Even when the crowd waiting at the same spot for Jesus tried to silence them, the blind men kept shouting for Jesus. Now that is devotion; an unbending determination to be with someone...an enthusiasm for someone that you refuse to be wrenched from you. These two blind men were devoted at that moment to Jesus. Now we can say, and maybe justifiably so, that their devotion was fueled by a determination to be freed of their blindness. At that moment we don't know if that actually was the case but they certainly were more outrageously devoted at least outwardly to Jesus than anyone else there because they crazily screamed for Jesus to notice them. The cynic in us however cannot lift the motive from the action. Nearly every devoted Christian has been misunderstood in the same way by those outside the inner circle. It is thought that devotion to Jesus can only be due to some sort of handicapped thinking; a want to get something out of the devotion, a childish hope for a prize the devotion generates. And yet we find things don't quite go that way here. After, and immediately after the two blind men were released from their blindness by Jesus, they followed Jesus devotedly once the prize came to them.

Let's not move too quickly from this scene. What seems so simple, the two blind men showered their affection on Jesus just to be done with their blindness is not quite so. Once they were free to move on with their lives...get jobs, perhaps get married, have kids, make something of themselves, they didn't. The next step as soon as they could see was to become devoted to Jesus. In Matthew 11: 7, Christ asked the crowd who surrounded John the Baptist what they hoped to see by coming all the way out into the desert. Jesus did not ask them this because He wanted to know. Like David told his son Solomon, God already knew. He asked that question of them because He wanted each person in the crowd to know or at least try to discover why they stood gaping at John the Baptist. What was it they were doing there? How come they sacrificed time, money and comfort to go see for themselves the curiosity John? We are each of us presented the same question. Why do we do what we do? What do we hope to gain by it? What is the real motivation behind our actions? Are we who and what we say we are?

Devotion is for most a fickle thing. It rises and falls with the comfort it finds. If God gives you a thing you are devoted. If you hope God will give you a thing, you are devoted. But if it no longer matters what you get, are you like the blind men devoted? Do you chase after Jesus when there is nothing to gain by it, no reward hidden out in the fields somewhere? Are you devoted to Him when the treasure chest is empty and the things He says no longer intoxicate your imagination but rather demand more of you than you want to give? What did you hope to find when you came to Jesus? Was He going to make you happy and take away your hardship or were you going to be led down a hard path that would bruise and batter you and leave you tired and wounded? What did you hope you would find when you put your life in His hands?

When life was exciting and there was so much new to discover and attempt, Solomon was devoted to God. When He needed the gifts and longed for a paved road that would make him a great king, Solomon was devoted to God. But as the riches and honor and success rolled in on him, Solomon became less devoted and then even less devoted until there was nothing about him that had the look of devotion to God. He became so

3

## **Awakening**

**Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory...**

**Luke 9:32NIV**

careless about it that long after the heart lacked devotion, even the shallowest of observers could tell Solomon was not devoted to God.

Devotion of the heart and mind disappears far before devotion of the lifestyle. You can still be doing all the things that make people think you are devoted to Christ but in reality you have become devoted to someone or something else. It is never very complicated. You begin to like your wine too much, your girlfriend too much, your upgrades too much, your leisure too much, your career too much, your temper too much, your bitterness too much, your plans too much and your smart ideas too much and devotion to Christ becomes a relic of your past. But the cold, hard truth is that nothing whatsoever compares to finding Christ. Nothing you do or accomplish or achieve will compare to finding Christ. You become an empty bag if anything but devotion to Christ takes up your thoughts. It is Christ alone who can fill you, who can smash the emptiness of your life. Solomon, the farther he moved away from devotion to God, saw everything as empty, as vain. David got it right when he spoke to his son. The most important thing you can do each day is find God because He lets you find Him.

Take the moment you have now to pause and offer yourself to Christ. Devotion is not a concept, it is a decided act. Tomorrow when you get up, immediately offer yourself to Christ. In the morning as you start to find your day building in intensity, offer yourself to Christ. Give yourself to Christ as the afternoon comes upon you. In the evening offer yourself to Christ. Before you fall asleep, offer yourself to Christ. You will find Jesus at some point during the day because God has promised you will. The moment is His to reveal Himself to you. The decision to find Christ is yours. How badly do you want Jesus right now? He already knows. The problem is, you might not. When you do though, the treasure of treasures will be yours.

## **Awakening**

**Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory...**

**Luke 9:32NIV**