

RANSOMED HEART

LOVE GOD. LIVE FREE.

March 2018

Dear Friends,

First off, no—you did not miss my February letter. We didn't drop you, nor did the postal service lose it. I did not write a February letter, for reasons of sanity.

February turned out to be an especially busy month for us; among other things God is really increasing our reach internationally. I was way deep into the month when I realized, *Hey—I haven't written a February letter.* But I am trying to practice a more sane life, a soul-friendly life. Those two things usually mix like oil and water—busyness and living a sane life. So, what I am learning to do is to let go what I *can* let go of during busy times, and in February the newsletter turned out to be one of those things.

Which actually leads me to what I'd like to share this month—living a sane life, a soul-friendly life. A few small choices that will make a big difference in our life with God.

We all need more of God. Every one of us. No matter what our circumstance may be, whether the current pressures are emotional, financial, career, health, relationships—if we had a greater measure of God in our life right now, I guarantee you things would turn out better. He is the source of all provision, healing, and life; all love and guidance and every other good thing we can think of or need. “More of God!” is the cry of every human soul.

Now, if that's true—if more of God is what we most deeply need—you would think that we would be arranging our lives to do those things that allows our soul to find more of God. If you live in a desert, you plan your day around finding water.

So my question for you is simply this: What is it that you are doing on a regular basis to receive more of God?

An awkward question; the room often goes silent when you ask this question. Because most of us are waiting for God to invade our busy lives, rather than making room for him. If God is our deepest, most pressing need, you'd think we'd all be arranging our lives to do those things that bring us more of God on a daily basis. As our highest priority.

So—what I'd like to offer this month are a few things you can do to create some soul space, and find more of God. Things which are simple, accessible, and sustainable. (Because if they are not simple, accessible and sustainable, we won't do them.) By way of example, let me offer The One Minute Pause...

I noticed that during my day I simply go from thing to thing to thing, without pause, from morning till night. (I am eating lunch at my desk as I write this letter.) I finish a phone call, and turn back to email. I finish this letter, and go find someone I need a meeting with. There is no pause in my day. No sacred space at all. So what I have begun to do is look for the One Minute Pause. After I finish a phone call, and before I start something else, I simply pause. When I pull into work in the morning and when I pull into my driveway in the evening, I pause. I literally lay my head down on my steering wheel and just pause, for one minute. It sounds rather simple to be a practice that brings me more of God, but it's very effective. Because what it does is open up soul space, breathing room. And God is right there.

This pause has become so important to our life at Ransomed Heart that twice a day monastery “bells” ring out at 10:00 and 2:00 on our office sound system, reminding every team member to stop what they are doing for one minute and just make room for God. It’s simple; it’s accessible.

Here’s another—do not look at your phone, or any technology, first thing in the morning. Don’t check texts, or Facebook, or email. Push back all technology for a few waking moments, to just allow your soul some room. Pray a little. Play a worship song. Let God have the opening moments of your day, rather than letting the clamor of the world in.

Touch Nature. I’m serious—every day, your soul needs to engage Creation. Nature is the world your soul was made to live in, and for most of us, Nature is the first thing to go. We live in artificial environments, going from apartment or home to vehicle to workplace, and never even noticing what Nature is doing. But everyone can get outside, in some way; take a 5-minute walk around your building. Notice the weather; let the sun or rain or breeze touch your skin. Dear friends, technology drains us. Research is revealing a direct correspondence between rising levels of anxiety and depression, and time spent on social media. More and more data is emerging to say that “screen time” is not good for the brain, let alone the soul. Technology—where most people live their lives—is draining. Nature is healing. So reduce one and increase the other. You’ll find God there.

Now for a simple act that will transform your life (every one of these things is available in even the busiest life). We learn the practice of Release. Every night before I go to bed, one of the things I pray is, “Jesus—I give everyone and everything to you.” Everyone and everything. Your soul was never meant to carry it all, dear ones. If you want to make room in your soul for God, you have to let go of all the things that are currently filling your soul. You might be surprised by how much is filling your soul. So we give it all back to Him—we give everyone, and everything back to Jesus. The fruit of this practice has become so life giving, I do it now several times a day.

Now, yes—there are more substantive spiritual practices. Lingering prayer. Scripture. Times of private worship. Spending a day with God. But if you will begin with simple, accessible, and sustainable things, they will lead you on to other practices that create sacred space in your life, which allows you to find more of God. (If you’d like to hear more about this, and other practices that are readily available, listen to our February 26 and March 5 podcasts. You will love them!)

Friends, we cannot ignore our souls, let alone God, and then go on to try and make a life. God is the source of all life: “For with you is the fountain of life” (Ps 36:9). We need to turn there, often, for a good, deep drink. Therefore, what we need to do is to arrange our lives to make room for those things that bring us more of God.

Honestly—it’s that simple. And utterly life-changing.

Love

John

PS. Now through Easter, we are offering *All Things New* and *Beautiful Outlaw* book and video combo packs for \$20 each! Let hope rise!