

Thought for Wednesday

February 18, 2009

If you were with us at the Saturday night Celebration, you might recall me talking about my experience in Albany on Friday with a Tom-tom... For those of you who weren't there, allow me to fill you in on our Karen and Mark's excellent adventure! See, for Christmas Karen and I got ourselves a Tom-tom (GPS Navigation) because with moving to a new community we thought we'd need the extra help finding our way around – It has come in handy!

Last weekend, we made arrangements to pick up a few items in the Albany area that we'd found on Craig's List (maybe we'll talk about that in the future). Anyway, as we follow our Tom-tom to one of our destinations, we wanted to go South on 787 – **No problem, right?** As we came to a “Y” where North went right and South went left. Tom-tom was saying, “*Stay in the right lane... Turn right...*” which I did the first time and the second time, even the third time! After our little merry-go-round experience that wasn't very merry, I took matters into my own hands and said out loud, “*If we're suppose to be going South, I'm not listening to “Dum-dum” anymore!*” and promptly turned left!

Ever feel like your devotional life is just around in circles, basically going nowhere? I've had that same feeling many times – **What do you do?** Well quite frankly, like I did with “*Dum-dum*” (I mean Tom-tom) you've got to take matters into your hands, make a course correction to get yourself going in the right direction. With a little help, let me offer some practical ways you can get your devotional life back on track if you find yourself either going in circles, or in the proverbial “*rut...*”

- .. *Expectancy* – Come before God with a sense of anticipation, expecting to connect, fellowship and receive a blessing from your time together. The Sons of Korah wrote, “*As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God.*” (Psalm 42:1)
- .. *Reverence* – Don't rush into God's presence, but prepare your heart by being still before him. Let the quiet clear away the thoughts of the world. The psalmist says, “*In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.*” (Psalm 89:7)
- .. *Alertness* – Remember that you are meeting with the Creator, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Redeemer of all mankind. Now is not the time to

fall asleep, so be properly rested and alert. The best way to be prepared for morning devotions is to get to bed the night before at a reasonable hour!

- .. *Willingness to Obey* – This is absolutely critical! Having a devotional life is not about choosing what you will or won't do, but it's having a mindset that you will do his will no matter what! Jesus said, *"If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own."* (John 7:17)
- .. *Make an Appointment* – Decide in advance when and for how long your quiet time will be. The general rule is, "When am I at my best?" Now for me, that's mornings – I'm a morning person and produce 85-90% of all I achieve in a day by Noon. Some people are afternoon people, some are evening people – Which are you? How much time can you afford?
- .. *Choose a Special Place* – When I was in Atlanta, I had a small closet that was big enough for rug (my knees) and a chair (to sit and kneel at) – It was perfect for me. Jesus practiced this regularly, *"Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him."* (Luke 22:39) Wherever you choose, make it a sacred place – a place that you will set aside every day to meet with God.
- .. *Wait on God* – Be still and quiet for a minute or two to put yourself in a reverent mood. It's actually following God's own advice, *"Be still and know that I am God."* (Psalm 46:10)
- .. *Request* – Ask God to cleanse your heart and guide you into the time together using a prayer such as David's, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offense way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."* (Psalm 139:23-24)
- .. *Read your Bible* – Read a section of the Bible (there's many helps online). This is where your conversation with God begins – He speaks through His Word, and you speak through prayer.
- .. *Reflect and Remember* – Meditate and memorize verses that especially speak to you.
- .. *Record* – Write down on paper (journal is best) what God has spoken to you, shown you, revealed to you.

- .. *Request* – Spend some quantity time actually praying. After God has spoken to you through His Word, speak to Him in prayer; which is your part of the communication – Remember, it’s a two-way street!

A few other tips...

- .. *Vary your plan* – From time to time change your methods. How easy it is to fall into the trap of performing a method instead of getting to know God!
- .. *Just worship* – Sometimes when prayer seems hard and heavy, spend that time just thanking God for who He is and what He’s done in your life. Listen to a worship CD and just worship God!
- .. Devote the whole time to Scripture memory. Let God speak to you in this special and challenging way!
- .. *Remember your main goal* – To know Christ more and more! Don’t let your devotional life become a legalistic exercise in “*doing your Christian duty...*” You’re there to meet with Jesus Christ and know Him more!

Be Strong, Be Courageous, Be Fearless – and remember...

Christ **IS** All!
Pastor Mark