

Monday Memo 306: Christian-itis

I finished up the cruise to Alaska last Saturday and now I have a group of friends and associates over here in the States from Zimbabwe. I will be with them for the next two weeks. The cruise was great. Michael W. Smith is the "real deal" -- a nice man with a great family.

I have noticed a strange malady circulating in the body of Christ. It is not fatal, but it afflicts many people. It's something that I jokingly refer to as Christian-itis. It is a virus and it spreads from one believer to another. No one is immune, but there is a cure. For someone to be cured, however, they must admit that they have the disease. Furthermore, they must see that the disease can against them clarifying their purpose. What is Christian-itis? What are the symptoms? I'm glad you asked. To learn what it is, however, you will have to read on.

THREE SYMPTOMS

1. The first symptom is what I call "God-speak." Most people don't know their purpose because they have never asked and kept seeking until they got an answer. When they do ask, they use "God-speak" lingo and style. "God-speak" causes you to say God's name every third word when you pray. It makes you use a lot of words that sound spiritual but aren't. "God-speak" can even cause you to change your voice so that, when you pray, you don't use your everyday voice when you talk to God. It can even cause you to use King James English, using "Thee" and "art" when you pray.

I found my purpose after a painful business failure. I wasn't looking for purpose; I was angry with God. Yet my honest question, "If You didn't create me to start this business, what did you create me to do?" elicited a response from God that my purpose was to "create order out of chaos." Believe, there was no "God-speak" the morning I said what I did. I was honest with God and He, in turn, was honest with me!

2. The second symptom is false humility. That is when you are so concerned with what people may think of you that you deny who you are and what you can do. For example, someone says, "That was great!" You say, "It was nothing. The Lord did it. I had nothing to do with it." When employing false humility, you may go out of your way to find fault with who you are or what you did so that no one will think too highly of you or your work.

If you deny that you can do something well, when in reality you can, they you have false humility. Humility isn't denying the reality of who you are

what you can do, it is acknowledging that, while God made you with the gifts and talents you have, you still have a role to play in their effective expression. While false humility seems like it honors God, it does not. It only seeks to confuse you as to who you really are and cause people not to pay you a compliment.

3. The third symptom is inactivity. When you have this aspect of Christian-itis, you say, "I am waiting on the Lord." You don't wait on the Lord like you wait on a train or bus to arrive. Faith without action is dead and when you are doing nothing, you may think you are renewing your strength as stated in Isaiah 40:31. I like the translation that says "those that hope in the Lord will renew their strength."

I am believing God for a best-selling book. What am I doing while I am hoping, waiting and believing? I am writing! No one can buy a book I haven't written. While it sounds spiritual to say, "I'm praying about that right now," it's also spiritual to act on your faith projects. To not do so is symptomatic of Christian-itis.

THE CURE

Each symptom of Christian-itis has a simple cure. For "Godspeak," you must be honest with God. For false humility, you must have an accurate assessment of who you are and who you're not. And for inactivity, there is action. While all three remedies are simple and straightforward, they are difficult to employ. Why? Because Christian culture feeds and perpetuates the symptoms! They are actually held in high esteem by many.

So what say you? Are you ready to be cured or are you satisfied to stay in your present condition? Are you ready to go against the norm and act differently than you have in the past? If not, then purpose will always be a fantasy for you, a destination you would like to reach if it doesn't require too much. If you are ready to apply the remedies, then you are ready for your PurposeQuest -- and you will not be disappointed. I urge you to choose the latter option and get on with the work that God has for you to do. If I can help you in any way, please let me know. Have a great week!

Feel free to add your comments to this entry on the [site](#) where it is posted.

Monday Memo 307: Be A Deviant!

I am in Chicago right now, but I want to write about something I learned this week in Seattle at The Pacific Institute. Lou Tice, the founder and president, talked to us about being a deviant. No, he wasn't urging us to

get involved in some deviant or unacceptable behavior or lifestyle. In Lou's opinion, most people tend to stay in their comfort zone, doing pretty much what they know to do or have always done. When he talked to us about being a deviant, he was exhorting us to be high achievers and went on to outline the five aspects of this kind of deviant behavior that he felt were critical. Would you like to learn what those five aspects are? If so, read on. If not, read on anyway -- you may learn something!

FIVE POINTS

Here are the five characteristics common to all high-end achievers:

1. Purposeful – Now there's a novel idea! Purpose! Being a deviant starts with some overarching reason for doing what you do. Of course, I am interested in seeing the will of God be the purpose that drives you beyond what is considered normal. I have devoted the last 16 years of my life to helping you and others like you clarify their purpose. I was delighted to hear Lou say that purpose is where it starts. I am signing my latest book, *Beyond Purpose*, however, with this motto: "It starts but it doesn't end with purpose."

2. Others-focused – If you are or want to be a high-end achiever, you are motivated by purpose, but your purpose always helps other people. In my *Seven Steps of a PurposeQuest* seminar, I teach that when you know your purpose, you often become a servant-leader because you know who you are and you have something that others need. Thus you can't help but devote your life to making the world a better place for other people by serving their highest priority needs.

3. Self-determined – If you are a deviant, you find the energy and motivation to do what you do from within. No one can force you to do what you do, not even the Lord. You are self-driven and that generates the creativity and energy to succeed. No one forces me to write this Memo every week, or my books for that matter. I write because I choose to write. I hope the results bear out that reality.

4. Self-efficacious – Efficacy is a word you may not use every day, but it simply means to make things happen. Efficacious people pull things off, usually things that others consider impossible. If you are efficacious, you try and don't worry about failure. You think, "I can do that" or "I am good at this or that." You don't look for reasons why things won't happen; you look for ways to make things happen.

5. Courageous – If you are a deviant, you go where angels fear to tread! Someone once said that courage isn't the absence of fear, it's learning to

function in the midst of fear. If you wait for your fears to subside or lessen, you may never try anything out of the ordinary. People who make a difference often have to face criticism as they become positive change agents. I hope that you are exhibiting courage as you make your best effort to clarify and fulfill your purpose.

DEVIANT BEHAVIOR

I guess the bottom line is that deviants don't follow the norm; they do things that others can't or won't do. Again, I trust you understand that I am not urging you to engage in bizarre behavior. I am, however, recommending that you follow your heart and see where it leads you. If you do, it may just cause you to do something that those around you never considered or imagined. You will then move beyond the norm to deviate from everyone else.

As you start this week, you may want to give yourself a score in the five areas above. Go back and give yourself a number from one to five for each of the five characteristics of a deviant, five being the most and one the least. What is your total score? The goal, if you want to be a person of purpose, is to have a score as close to twenty-five as possible. Are you satisfied with your score? If so, good for you! You are a deviant! If not, what can you do this week to help earn you that label? I truly hope that you understand what I am urging you to be and that you will join with other deviants as together we move forward to change our world. Have a great week!

Monday Memo 308: Pay Attention

Do you know what I admire most about Jesus? He was aware of what was going on around Him! I know that sounds strange, but it's something I keep noticing in the gospel accounts. A woman touched him while the crowd pressed all around Him, and He knew what she had done. He watched the people giving and yet noticed and pointed out a woman who gave two coins. While He was agonizing in the Garden, He knew that the mob had come to seize Him, while His faithful disciples slept just a stone's throw away.

Because Jesus was aware, I want to be aware as well. Unfortunately, I have too often been like the snoozing disciples mentioned above. I just finished a three-week trip that took me to Seattle, Alaska, back to Seattle, Indiana, Chicago and Florida. Here is what I learned about myself during those three weeks.

WHAT I LEARNED

1. I am a good tour guide. I know how to travel and don't mind taking people with me. I can explain where we are and the significance of the places I visit. I have a great sense of direction and seldom get lost or disoriented.
2. I enjoy seeing people enjoy themselves. I even like watching game shows to see the people win prizes and get excited. I was with hundreds of people on my Alaska cruise and I was with eight Zimbabwean friends for the last two weeks, some of whom enjoyed their first visit to the States. I had as much fun as they did.
3. Life on the road is crazy, and I love it! You are constantly improvising when you are on the road. Flights are delayed, people run out of soap, people need to do laundry, and they have trouble using their international calling cards. I love solving problems and thinking up quick solutions to problems as they arise. If I could figure a way to have my wife on the road with me, I don't think I would ever come home.
4. I love learning new things. On this trip, I attended two training sessions and grew from both of them. I have a goal to attend one new learning experience every year. I have exceeded that goal this year already.
5. Don't take anything on the road that you won't mind losing. On this trip, I lost my Bluetooth headset, then lost the replacement's power cord, mangled my cell phone car charger, left a CD in a rental car, lost my pocket pen, and now can't find a piece of paper with important information on it. What's more, my new computer malfunctioned and I had to get it fixed in Chicago. I have learned that all of it can be replaced or repaired and not to fret too much over it all.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

In Memo 293, I talked about taking a joy inventory that would help you identify what gives you joy. I urged you to pay attention to their heart, for out of it flow the springs of life. The five points I listed above are an inventory or review of my last few weeks and I wrote those things in my journal as I reflected on my trip.

So now it's your turn. You may not have paid attention over the last three weeks, but you certainly can this coming week. Why not keep a journal of the activities in which you engage in the next seven days. Keep track of your feelings. What did you enjoy and why? When were you happiest? Most sad? Depressed? Discouraged? When did you procrastinate? Why?

At the end of the week, read back over your joy inventory and see what your impressions are. As you can see from my five points, I was reminded of one thing: I love to travel and it shows. The question then remains as

to how to use this love to serve God and fulfill my purpose. Furthermore, I have found that when I pay attention to how I feel, it helps me empathize with how others are feeling. That is my ultimate goal in this entire exercise, for I want to be a better purpose coach for others. That starts with being in touch with my heart so I can help them be in touch with theirs.

So have a good time this week paying attention to you and the things around you. As you do, I know that you will have a great week and that your joy inventory will help you have even better weeks as you learn to pay attention.

Monday Memo 309: A Fat Duck

I was in New York yesterday to celebrate my son's 30th birthday and was nowhere near a computer, so this Monday Memo is the Tuesday version. I trust it will be just as relevant though a day late.

I read this quote recently from Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be." That is what I have tried to do with the Monday Memo and purpose teaching: Inspire you to be who God created you to be, who you know you can be. I have found, however, that some resemble the duck described by the Christian philosopher Kierkegaard. I hope you aren't like this duck, but just to make sure you aren't, you had better read on.

GROUNDING

The story has it that there was a duck flying with some other wild ducks when they flew over some tame ducks in a barnyard. The wild duck decided to stay with these tame ducks for a while. He stayed for an hour, a day and then several months. Finally, his wild duck cohorts flew overhead one day and beckoned the wild duck to rejoin them, which he gladly did.

He found, however, that his barnyard living had made him so soft and heavy that he could not fly high enough to join his former mates. So he dropped back into the barnyard, promising that he would get in shape to join them the next time. The next time he heard them, he flapped his wings but could not even get off the ground. Finally, after many attempts, wishful thinking and a lot of broken promises, the wild duck became a domesticated bird that looked good but never went anywhere.

FLYING HIGH OR NOT AT ALL?

Did you dream of flying high at one time? Better yet, did you actually taste the heights you had determined to reach? Then where are you now? Are you still flying high or content with the safety and provision of the barnyard full of chickens and goats?

I am 57 years of age and last week I began a Doctor of Ministry program here in Pittsburgh. Last month, I released my seventh book and I am working on two more. I continue to produce regular Bible studies that are sent to 5,000 people. Next week I will be back in Africa, then to Israel, Jordan, possibly Mauritius and South Africa. I want to fly high and refuse to forsake the heights of productivity for the safety of the barnyard, with its regular rations.

Flying high can be dangerous, but the view is fantastic! This week, why not ask yourself where you are most comfortable. Do you talk about flying, or do you really do it? Are you content with barnyard chatter and routine, or are you ready to flap your wings to see how high and far you can go? I hope you are ready to fly, and if I can be someone to inspire you to be who you know you can be, drop me a line and let me know. Have a great week!

Monday Memo 310: The Jonah Complex

The famous psychologist, Dr. Abraham Maslov, described a life condition and identified it by using a name from the Bible. What name do you think he used? Moses? Joseph? Jesus? Paul? If you answered any of those, you are wrong. He used the name Jonah and the entire term is called "The Jonah Complex." What did Maslov mean when he referred to "The Jonah Complex?" I'm glad you asked. You will have to read on to find out.

RUNNING AWAY

We know that Jonah was an Old Testament prophet and has a short book that relates part of his life story. Jonah was given an assignment by God to go and deliver a harsh message to a city and people he didn't like. He didn't want to do it, so he ran. He got on a ship and went in the opposite direction from where he was told to go.

A storm arose during the trip and it soon became clear to the sailors that Jonah was the cause of the storm. When they threw him overboard, the storm ceased and a whale swallowed Jonah. Jonah then spent three days and nights in the whale's stomach. After Jonah relented and agreed to go on God's mission, the whale spit him out and Jonah went on his way.

Maslov used "The Jonah Complex" to describe anyone who was running from his or her true life calling. He went on to say, "If you deliberately set out to be less than you are capable of, you will never truly be happy." This complex accurately describes the condition of many people with whom I have come in contact. If someone you know suffers from the Jonah Complex, they are avoiding or running from the greatness and creativity that is in them. They are afraid not of failure, but of success.

So what is it like to be caught in "The Jonah Complex?" According to my experience, these people spend a lot of time trying to weather the storm. They try to stay on the ship where they are instead of jumping into the waves of life. They tell me they are "praying about it," whatever the "it" is for them. Yet day after day and sometimes year after year goes by and they do nothing.

Their prayer can actually be a delay tactic as they wait for God to do something that only they can do. They may not know what to do, but they don't seek advice from or listen to someone who could help them get started. They just hold on and hope that somehow things will change even if they don't do anything to help the change along. Or they are waiting for the "it" to happen all at once, instead of taking faith steps today that will lead them to their destiny.

JUMP SHIP

So what about you? Are you suffering from "the Jonah Complex?" Are you running from your purpose or from some significant thing that God has for you to do? Is your ship being tossed by the waves of financial lack, unhappiness, and lack of productivity, yet you stubbornly cling to the ship's mast hoping that things will get better? I've found that many know their purpose but are afraid for whatever reason to speak it out. Perhaps it's time for you to face who you are and what God wants you to do. And perhaps it's time for you to take steps to get off your sinking ship and into the purpose of God.

It may look more dangerous "out there," but the only danger lies in you avoiding the great things that God has for you to do. The Chinese say that the longest journey begins with the first step. Maybe it's time for you to take the first steps this week on an exciting journey—your PurposeQuest. I hope you have a great week.

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