

[451: Adam's Children](#)

Do you consider yourself a creative person? What creative outlets do you have, or rather how many do you give yourself permission to have? For most of my adult life, I did not give myself permission to pursue creativity and I wasn't open to the fact that I may be creative. My self-image was that of an administrator and creativity and administration were at odds with one another -- or so I thought.

Are you creative? If your answer is no, then perhaps you need to expand the way you view creativity and, consequently, view yourself. If you are open to that possibility, then urge you to read on.

ADAM'S ZOO

Adam was made by God to be creative and we are Adam's children. After God created Adam, He invited Adam to enter into the creative process by naming the animals:

“Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field” (Genesis 2:19-20).

Adam decided what the animals were to be called; it was an expression of his creative dominion in the Garden.

Too often, we have identified only musicians, songwriters, poets and writers as creative—and they are indeed creative. Those expressions, however, are only a few of the creative expressions that are available to Adam's children. Let's take a look at the essence of creativity that is part and parcel with who you are and then see if you can't get even more specific about your area(s) of creativity:

1. I don't want to be offensive in any way, but you were made to create other human beings. When you reach maturity and marry, in most cases you must take precautions to *limit* your creativity, your offspring.
2. Scientists tell us that every seven years you have a totally new set of cells in your body. Your cells are constantly dividing and creating new cells.
3. One of the first things I did when I returned home recently was to get a haircut. In most cases, your body is creating new hair, nails and whiskers on a daily basis.
4. Your body is constantly creating what it needs to carry on life. Your stomach creates gastric juices, sweat glands produce sweat and your ears create wax!
5. What happens when you go to sleep? You create dreams; you are a “dream machine.” For every eight hours you sleep, you dream almost two hours. Your mind is constantly creating symbolic sleep scenarios that help you maintain your psychological equilibrium.

6. Every day you create thoughts and ideas; you also daydream, creating potential scenarios with you in them.
7. You talk every day, stringing words and ideas together creatively.

YOU ARE OH SO CREATIVE!

I hope you get the picture. Like Adam, you are creative and God wants and needs you to express your creativity in every day life. Stop saying you aren't creative—you are! I have assembled a list of creative expressions from past Memos on creativity, which is posted on my [website](#). Take a look at that list and see how many expressions are present in your life and then, settle once and for all your perspective on your own creativity.

Perhaps then you will see yourself as creative, which is just how the Lord wants you to see yourself. Once you see yourself as creative, you will then give yourself permission to pursue and release creativity in ways not possible up to this point in your life. As you do, I know you will have a great week!

[452: It Is Finished!](#)

This past week I reached a goal I set in 2001. I have worked at that goal almost every day for more than eight years, and last Thursday I finished it. The feeling I had last Thursday was exhilarating, and I want you to experience something like it in your life over and over again. What was my goal? What took me almost every day for nine years to complete?

Last Thursday I finished my last online Bible study, which means I have now completed a verse-by-verse commentary on the entire New Testament! (In case you were wondering, there are more than 7,000 verses in the New Testament and I wrote something for every one of them.)

Let's take a look at how it all came about.

EIGHT YEARS IN THE MAKING

After I completed a study of faith in 2001 (which later became my book *The Faith Files: Volume One*), I had an idea. I had always said that "one day" I wanted to write commentaries on the Bible. I decided to start such a study, determining that I would look at four verses every day and write some devotional material for those verses. At the end of every week, I would send out those notes to those who were already getting *The Faith Files*. The list continued to grow and today about 5,000 people still receive my weekly studies.

So by studying and writing on four verses every day since 2002, I completed studies for all 27 New Testament books! Commenting on four verses a day every day enabled me to accomplish a huge task a little at a time. I exercised faith every day I sat down to write and I "saw" something in every verse along with ways to help the reader apply those

verses to their daily walk. Needless to say, I have learned a lot since I began writing those studies and I hope my readers have, too.

IT IS FINISHED!

How did I know I was supposed to embark on this project? Was I certain that it was God's will? I can't say for sure, but I refer you to what Luke wrote in the opening of his gospel:

Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, **it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you**, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught (Luke 1:3-4).

All I can say is that it seemed good to me to write and keep on writing. As people would say they found the studies helpful, I just kept on going. The goal helped me reach the end. My creativity with God's help took care of the rest. I am glad to say that as far as my Bible studies are concerned, "It is finished!"

So what about you? Do you have any "good ideas" like I had? What can you accomplish if you do just a little every day? I have found that most people won't be **anything** because they can't see how to do **everything**. They won't give a **little** because they can't give a **lot**. Won't devote a little time because they don't have huge chunks of time. I decided to do what I could do every day -- four verses -- and now I have completed my goal. There's no telling what you can do if you apply the same principle.

Stop procrastinating and take one step at a time. If you keep putting one foot in front of the other, who knows how far you can go. The Chinese say that the journey of a 1,000 miles starts with the first step. Why not take your first steps this week? Have a great week. I know I will as I bask in the glow of a huge goal that I can check off my to-do list.

If you would like to see my studies in their entirety, you can visit my [website](#) or my [blog](#). In July, I will begin sending out recycled studies, starting with Ephesians. If you want to sign up to receive them every other week, then go [here](#) and enter your email address.

[453: It Is Finished, Too!](#)

Not only did I recently finish my verse-by-verse Bible studies, I also wrapped up my next book and sent it *Fresh Look at the Last Book* and is a verse-by-verse devotional from the book of Revelation. The cover is pictured to the right (click on it to enlarge), and you can access my [website](#) for more info on how to order an advanced copy and get free shipping until June 28.

In the meantime, I have one more post on creativity this week and then we will move on to a new subject next week (I think). Read on for one of my all-time favorite lessons presented in any of my Monday Memos.

A PHILOSOPHY FOR WINNING AT SOFTBALL . . . AND AT LIFE!

For eleven years, I lived in Alabama, a state in the deep South. Since I was home then, I played in a church softball league for nine of those years. Softball is a game similar to American baseball, but the ball is bigger and the pitcher throws it more slowly using an underhand motion. I was a better fielder than batter, and my teams won a few more than they lost.

There was one team from another church, however, that was very good, and they beat us most of the time year after year. They didn't look as sharp as we did because we got new uniforms almost every year and they played in whatever they had. We practiced weekly yet we never, ever saw them on the practice field. They just knew how to win.

One night we met with some of their players to see if we could understand the secret of their success. We asked many questions, but then our coach asked their best batsman, "When you're at bat, do you have an offensive philosophy? Do you try to hit it over the fence or do you try to advance the runners one base at a time?" The man stared at our coach with a surprised look for a short minute and then answered, "We don't have any philosophy. We just hit it hard and wish it well."

That simple statement changed my life, and from that point forward became my philosophy not only for softball but also for life itself!

As I have sought to express my creativity, I have found this a great strategy to employ. This week perhaps you too just need to stop thinking about what you want to do and just go "hit it hard and wish it well." In softball, sometimes you can do everything just right and not get to first base. Other times your technique can be all wrong, yet the ball off your bat lands in the right spot and you win the game for your team. Maybe you're waiting for perfection before you try something, or perhaps you're frustrated that you have done everything correctly, but things haven't worked out so far. This week you need to overcome your hesitancy or discouragement and go to bat one more time.

"HIT IT HARD" IS IN THE BIBLE!

"Hit is hard and wish it well" is a principle found in the Bible. The writer of Ecclesiastes wrote thousands of years ago:

"If clouds are full of water, they pour rain upon the earth. Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there will it lie. Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap. As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God,

the Maker of all things. Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well" (Ecclesiastes 11:3-6).

Do you have any creative ideas on which you need to act? The time to analyze is over; the time to act has come. This week step to the plate and take your turn. Paint your picture, apply for the degree, start your business, or plan the vacation. Don't fret about uncertain results over which you have no control. Do what you can do this week and trust that it will work out for the good. If you do, I know you will have a great week! Who knows, you may even hit a home run and win the game!

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

[454: Creativity is a War!](#)

A while back I read Julia Cameron's book [The Right to Write](#). Cameron always stirs my creative juices, especially where writing is concerned. While I'm sure I wouldn't agree with her theology, I do agree with her that writing and creativity are spiritual experiences. Let's look at a few things she has to say.

WHO SAID WHAT ABOUT CREATIVITY

In one of her chapters, Cameron quoted the following artists concerning their creativity:

- *"The music of this opera (**Madame Butterfly**) was dictated to me by God. I was merely instrumental in getting it on paper and communicating it to the public."* - Giacomo Puccini
- *"Straightaway the ideas flow in upon me, directly from God."* - Johannes Brahms
- *"The position of the artist is humble. He is essentially a channel."* - Piet Mondrian.
- *"I myself do nothing. The Holy Spirit Himself accomplishes all through me."* - William Blake

So if creativity is a spiritual expression and you are a spiritual person, why don't you create more? May I suggest three enemies that do battle with your God-given ability to create.

THREE ENEMIES OF CREATIVITY

1. **Fear**. I've written about fear in past [Memos](#). How many fears can you think of that could prevent you from being creative? I can think of fear of failure, poverty, ridicule, family, culture, authority, inadequacy, and success. Can you think of any others?

If you are going to express your creativity, you must face and overcome the oppression of fear. It will paralyze your efforts and cause you to procrastinate, hoping for a more opportune time. Remember what Paul wrote his disciple Timothy: "**For God has not**

given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV). If you are afraid, what are you prepared to do about it this week?

2. **Comparison.** When you look at what you do and compare it to what others have done, it can cause you to stop being creative. In your opinion, you aren't "as good" as the other person. Stop and think about that. What is **good** where creativity is concerned? Is creativity a process and can your simple efforts today lead to stellar creativity tomorrow? Is it wise to compare your initial or even mature efforts to what someone else may have spent a lot of time developing?

Paul described an important principle that he used when he looked at his work: **"We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12-13).** Why not do something creative this week and discipline yourself not to compare it what anyone else has done? Is it the best it can be right now? If it is, then I would say you have done a good job.

3. **Perfectionism.** We discussed this in [Monday Memo 154](#) when I described the little old man that lives inside you, waiting to criticize and disqualify what you create because it isn't good enough. I know of only One who is perfect, and He is God. While you should strive for excellence and your best performance, you can never expect it to be perfect.

The pursuit of perfection is unrealistic and will hinder you from doing something great just because it isn't perfect. I can't find a verse that talks about perfectionism, but I can find one that speaks to excellence: **"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Colossians 3:23).** Perhaps the distinction between perfection and excellence will help you do something this week that you haven't done just because it isn't the best that anyone can do.

IT'S A WAR!

I close by again asking the question I raised earlier: If you are a spiritual person and creativity is spiritual, why don't you create more often? Perhaps it is because creativity is more of a battle than you anticipated? I hope I have helped you identify some of the enemies of your creativity and I further hope you will determine to enter into a season of creativity that begins just as soon as you finish reading this **Monday Memo**. Fight the good fight to be able to express your innate creativity that is latent within your heart and mind.

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

[455: Live to Live Again](#)

I have come to the conclusion that you can actually live life at least twice, probably more. That's right, you can live two lives. I'm not talking about reincarnation or leading a

double life, but rather experiencing your life events on at least two separate and distinct occasions. How is that possible? I'm glad you asked. To get the answer, you will have to read on.

LIVING LIFE *BEFORE* IT HAPPENS

I read something in a book by Matthew Fox's entitled, [Creativity](#), and it got me thinking about living twice. Fox wrote:

Anais Nin once said: "We write to taste life twice." I agree. I think we write to taste life twice, and we paint and dance and sing and compose and do all art to "taste life twice." This opportunity to taste life twice is an invitation to go deeper, to miss nothing, to tell others, to experience the joy a second time in the telling and in handing on the depth and mystery of life. When we behold, we become so struck by what it is we want to share. We call that sharing "art."

That quote got me thinking about what Stephen Covey wrote in [The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#). Covey said everything that is created is created twice: first in the mind or heart and then in reality. So when you create a business for example, you are living that business twice—once in the theoretical and then the practical. Finally, someone said that our lives are being recorded and will be played back to us in eternity, where we will either weep with joy at the opportunities we took advantage of, or with grief when we see the opportunities we missed.

Since you will live your life twice, either in regret or joy, it is essential that you first focus your mind on what gives you joy and then make every effort to **do** it. I write *The Monday Memo* in my mind all week and then I sit down on Sunday to actually write it. I dreamed about starting my business and ministry and now I get to conduct business all over the world. In both cases, I enjoy my work **before** I ever do it. There's another way, however, that I can live twice, and you can join me and do the same.

RELIVING LIFE *AFTER* IT HAPPENS

When I write, I get to enjoy life again **after** it happens. I have re-lived safaris, trips, successes, recoveries, book signings, and insight by recording what I felt, thought and did in written form. I have often told people that I write not only for others but also for myself. I often get more from my work than others ever could.

At times I have even relived my most painful memories by counseling and teaching people about what I learned from those experiences. They were hard to live through once, but I have used those failures to make them (and me) into something that could help others. In some ways, I have relived those mistakes, made them right and gave them new meaning by distilling the most important lessons to be learned and creatively sharing them with my audiences.

Since you have many creative ideas, you want to act on those that will provide the greatest benefit for you and others as they are experienced over and over again. I have chosen writing and teaching as my main creative expressions. My books will outlive me and my teaching can help shape lives and destinies. What can you do? Can you write poetry, write screenplays, paint pictures or develop a cure for a problem that plagues mankind?

You can go through life experiencing things only once, reacting and allowing things to happen, or you can release your creativity and help make them happen or give them new meaning, thus living them at least twice. I hope you will choose the creative path that, even though more difficult, produces greater rewards and benefits for you and others. Have a great week!

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