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Quarterly Quotes

I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.

C.S. Lewis

The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts.

C.S. Lewis

We may be certain that whatever God has made prominent in his word, he intended to be conspicuous in our lives.

Charles Spurgeon

Let all writers have their due esteem, but compare none of them with the Word of God. We will not refuse their service, but we must abhor them as rivals or competitors. It is the sign of a distempered heart that loseth the relish of Scripture excellency.

Richard Baxter

If we preach the whole counsel of God, we shall be accused of extremism, not only by the world but also by a professing church that cannot endure sound doctrine.

Vance Havner



The Prayer of Faith

By Jaque Shank

Last week I read a blog triggered by a Barna Group study from 2010 claiming; "The Christian Church is becoming less theologically literate."

The blogger's pet peeve was "Bible studies becoming "self help" studies and not about a focus on the original text." She went on to say, "I've been in studies about setting Boundaries, and being a Fixer-Upper. I've been in 12-week studies on Discerning God's Voice and learning how to Walk Across the Room. I've learned that I'm a Martha and not a Mary, and I'll probably never change. And these, for the most part, are good studies, a rare few have been so excellent that I'd recommend. But they all have one issue for me. There is very little Bible reading, and this frustrates me so." ("Spoiled Wings" Blogger)

I certainly hope Visionwriters is part of the answer and not the problem. We understand a good Bible study has to be theologically sound as well as pragmatic. That's

why we repeatedly state the need to read and study the Biblical text along with listening to the Holy Spirit deliver its personal meaning into our lives. We simply can't forgo the Biblical text while "writing the vision to make it plain." Practicing a personal relationship with Christ would just be lopsided without the discipline of reading and studying Scripture; we'd end up with journals fraught with questionable theology.

Our courses are meaningful for just this reason. I expect to hear God speak through Scripture. That's why, as I read, chew, swallow, consider, cross reference, and read some more, I am able to write down the personal application I receive from the Holy Spirit. Though Scripture is my foundation, I understand the text was made for the Holy Spirit, not the Holy Spirit for the text! So with the infilling of the Holy Spirit I rightly divide the word of truth, receiving it pragmatically into my life. Prayer is an important subject to balance with correct theology and pragmatism.

The Prayer of Faith, cont.

And Jesus, replying, said to them, Have faith in God [constantly]. Truly I tell you, whoever says to this mountain, Be lifted up and thrown into the sea! and does not doubt at all in his heart but believes that what he says will take place, it will be done for him. For this reason I am telling you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe (trust and be confident) that it is granted to you, and you will [get it].

Mark 11:22-24 (AMP)

With the mind of Christ everything is based on the union Jesus paid and prayed for in John chapter 17. When I “get it,” I know Christ is my life and that I have His mind; He is in me as me. It’s not about a separate me and a separate Him—it’s all about Him. That’s why I don’t wonder about whose will it is when I’m praying. If I did...if I didn’t know for certain that the Lord *initiates* the speaking of His will, why in the world would I pray? I could hardly hope for an answer. I would be uncertain, double minded and unstable in all my ways. There is much Biblical text to prove we are supposed to pray the will of God because *we know what His will is*. If we don’t understand His will theologically, how can we begin to believe we are *actually hearing God* when we write conversationally in our journals? God’s personal voice speaks *only* in agreement with the Biblical text!

So deliberating on the above text (along with others) I can discern His voice in the following: *Jaque, faith only begins where the will of God is known.*

I wrote in my journal:

Lord, if *you* don’t initiate my prayer, why would I pray? For *how* I pray reveals what I believe about *you*. If I know you by your word, as well as by your presence in me, but question whether you *are* or actually *reward* those who dili-

gently seek you, I’m acting religious at best—trying to manipulate a vending-machine-type-God. No, this is what I know for sure: *you* bring to pass what *you* lead me to say (pray). I say it because *you* initiated it. This is why I *know* that I *already have* what I’m asking for! So I thank you in continual watchfulness as I wait to see it come to pass in your time. I don’t feel the need to resort to faithless begging, as if I (alone) initiated the prayer. No, I *continue* to give thanks (praying without ceasing) with a happy anticipation of the outcome of that which you prayed through me. This is theologically correct—the substance of faith (Christ) filled prayer!”

Do you see how faith can’t begin until we know God’s will? Again: *Faith begins where the will of God is known.* Actually we have no other reason to pray or expect anything from God.

Bible study is for the purpose of expanding our awareness of God’s will. We pray without ceasing because we have no other hope but *Him*. We expect our prayers to receive answers that produce exceedingly, abundantly above and beyond what we ever understood was going to happen when *He* first incited our prayer. Yes, it’s true; the initial asking-desire grows as we pray and continue to pray. He takes little and makes it exponentially more than we can ask or think! We pray without ceasing because that’s how we love Him from the very love with which He first loved us. We say everything *God* says about everything. We speak to mountains when the word of the Lord breaks out of our mouths. Then, by the power of the Holy Spirit, *mountains move*. And we watch outcomes deliver *what they already were* the first time we prayed the prayer of faith.

Experiencing God

(The following parable appeared as part of an article featured in the Stoke Poges News. Jenny Wilkins was kind enough to share it with us as part of a recent forum post and we wanted to pass it along to you. We preserved the story and original inspiration...but made the closing paragraphs our own.)



The story is told of a Native American village set in the shadow of a high mountain. Only the very strong or determined could climb it so all the village boys were eager to try. One day the chief gave them permission. "You may try to climb the mountain," he said. "Each of you go as far as you can. When you are too tired to go on come back. But bring me a twig from the place where you turned back."

Soon one boy came puffing back. In his hand he held out to the chief a cactus leaf. The chief smiled, "My boy," he said, "you did not even reach the foot of the mountain."

Later a second boy returned. He carried a twig of sage. "Well," said the chief, "you reached the foot of the mountain."

The next boy to come back had in his hand a cotton twig. "Good," said the chief. "You climbed as far as the springs."

Another boy came back with some thorn. "You, my boy," he said, "were really climbing. You were up to the first rock-slide."

An hour afterward, a boy came back with a branch of pine. "Brilliant," said the chief, "you made three quarters of the climb."

The sun was low in the sky when the last boy returned. His hands were empty, but his face was shining. He said, "Father, there were no trees where I was. I saw no twigs, but I saw a shining sea."

Now the old chief's face glowed too. "I knew it; you have been to the top. You needed no twig to tell me, it is written in your eyes."

If you or I were assured a private audience with the Lord at the top of our local mountain range would we climb the mountain and return with a radiant face? We do not need to climb a mountain to experience His presence but the story is one that asks us how hungry we are for a more tangible encounter with God.

We cannot elevate ourselves to His level but in Christ He has come down to ours. God entered our story by becoming one of us so that we could enter His story. God's humble act of assuming flesh and blood is almost unthinkable but even more amazing is His desire to take creatures and turn them into children.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:10-14 (NIV)

Our Chief doesn't just send us up the mountain; He came down the mountain so that we could watch Him go ahead of us, conquer the wild beasts, clear a path and then come back down the mountain and join Himself to us so that we would know that He is an ever-present internal Guide Who will lead us up and down every mountain and in and out of any pasture. Our face radiates in the glory of His presence from the inside out.

Surely training our ear to distinguish His voice is worth all the discipline, accountability, relationship, and community that Visionwriters applies toward our goal of eliminating the ache of silent God.

Those who look to him are radiant. Psalm 34:5 (NIV)



The King's Speech

By: Sara McDaniel

I'm currently sitting on an airplane recovering from the emotion of watching the in-flight movie.

Sometimes God calls us to positions of authority or leadership in which we feel totally inadequate. *The King's Speech* brought this home to me with a powerful dose of patriotism and a new appreciation of the courage of a man who was called to be King under most difficult and unusual circumstances. At one point in the relentless momentum of events, he broke down privately, expressing his inadequacy to his wife, crying "I'm not a king!" but he *was* a king and a fine one. He was fully equipped but he needed help using the equipment. Courage, perseverance and commitment were required and the love of country. These qualities he had.

I wonder how many of the great men and women

of our past felt this way, and I suspect it was most of them. James chapter five tells us that Moses and Elijah were of like passion as we are; they had good days and bad days. And Moses had trouble speaking too. They were normal human people who understood what the will of God was and were called by Him. Have you received a calling from God? Has He put you in a position where you feel totally inadequate? Has he given you a job to do that you know you are incapable of? That's normal!

Oswald Chambers writes, 'If you are faced with the question of whether or not to surrender, make a determination to go on through the crisis, surrendering all that you have and all that you are to Him. And *God* will then equip you to do all that He requires of you.'

First we must recognize that human leadership is always second place to God's leadership. He is the One who will fully equip us and then help us to use the equipment. His Word, His Spirit

and His Presence are freely available to us daily. God's leadership is comprehensive and personal. He calls us, and he is our vindicator and our advocate as long as we are obeying him. He very personally talks us through it, guides, corrects, teaches, encourages, blesses, exhorts, and gives peace, confidence and security. It's always about Him. Paul says, *"I'm so thankful to Christ Jesus for making me adequate to do this work.....He grants the needed strength and makes me able for this."* (1 Tim 1:12)

We may wonder why God calls us to certain tasks but that's usually because the way He sees is different from the way we see. We look for qualifications and credentials. When Moses pointed out that he was not eloquent and that *"I've never been good with words, neither before nor after you spoke to me. I stutter and stammer."* God replied, *"And who do you think made the human mouth? And who makes some mute, some deaf, some sighted, some blind? Isn't it I, GOD? So, get going. I'll be right there with you—with your*

The King's Speech, cont.

mouth! I'll be right there to teach you what to say." (Exodus 4:10,11 Message)

God calls us knowing what is in our hearts, just as He called David to be king because He was a man after God's own heart. Character (and maybe personality) is more important to God than qualifications. Kathleen Norris writes in her book *The Cloister Walk*, "To answer a call as a prophet or poet (or whatever God is calling you to do), is to reject the authority of credentials, of human valuation of any kind, accepting only the authority of the call itself. Credentials measure and quantify but a call cannot be measured, it is pure process." ...and training is included! 1 Tim 1:4 Amplified version says there's divine training in faith, in that leaning of the entire human personality on God in absolute trust and confidence.

Once God has us where He wants us, He can go to work through us and through our surrender, doing

things we could never have figured out ourselves in ways we would never have thought would work. And we:

"Continue on in faith and love and holiness, gathering it all into maturity (1 Tim 2:15)

Pastor Bill Johnson says, "Its only when we turn away from the battle we're assigned to, that we face a battle we're not equipped for. David lost the battle with his eyes, which opened the door for him to lose the battle over his heart...and it was all because he wasn't in the battle he was born for."

Follow the calling, whatever it may be, whatever He asks you to do, that's all that's required. It is essential that we live and "walk in the light" of God's vision for us ([1 John 1:7](#)). Oswald Chambers says if you select your own spot to be planted, you will prove yourself to be an unproductive, empty pod. However, if you allow God to plant you, you will "bear much fruit" ([John 15:8](#)).

And what do we get from it all? We experience *God fathering us!* How amazing that is! No longer orphans, trying to figure things out and raise ourselves, we rest in our Father's hands and simply obey. He has given us the right to be called children of God, and he has the right to parent us. One of my favorite songs says it best:

*I offer all that I've come to be... I give myself unreservedly **to know your love fathering me.** Father you're all I need; my soul's sufficiency, my strength when I am weak, the love that carries me. Your arms enfold me till I am only a child of God.*

[\(Child of God, Kathryn Scott\)](#)

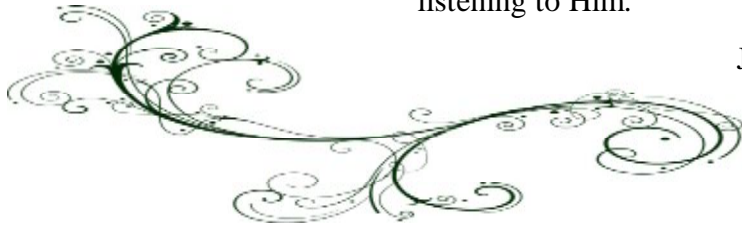
Nothing compares to being in the hands of God and in the will of God no matter how inadequate and empty handed we feel, that's when God can use us and all the resources of the universe are at His command. Amen!



“” Recent Quotes

“I am a woman of prayer and I am used to sitting and listening to the Lord in prayer, but never have I had such deep, rewarding conversations with the Lord as I have experienced through journalizing. I am utterly amazed at this new tool. I am totally in awe of the things that I have heard God speak to me. I am a new woman; I will never be the same! I want the whole church to learn about Visionwriters.”

A. Watties



“Journalizing digs a deeper hole in me that God fills with Himself. I am listening to God more in prayer. He told me in a journal that I rush off and ‘force pray’ over things that He hasn’t even talked with me about. I needed to stop panicking over every prayer need and stop to listen to Him about every situation or concern. He is near. To pray “in everything” is to listen to God about everything. To persist in prayer is to persist in listening to Him.”

J. Plank

“Be prepared to think outside the box, especially if you grew up in the church. Be prepared for new ideas all based on the Word of God. Be ready to be challenged and grow in the Lord like you never have before!”

J. Christner

“Journalizing has helped me to take what I have read in the Word, meditate on it, then converse with God about it. It helps me to see what He has to say to me and for me to tell Him what is in my heart. It was the ‘next step’ in my devotions that I was not yet taking.”

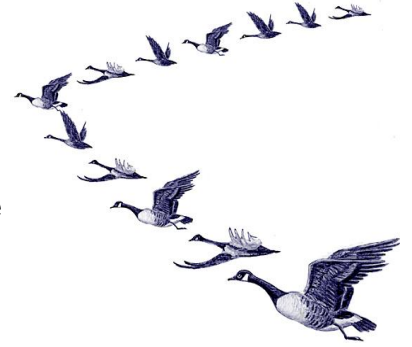
C. Sheern

A Prayer of St. Patrick

Christ, as a light
illumine and guide me.
Christ, as a shield
overshadow me.
Christ under me;
Christ over me;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;
in the mouth of each who speaks unto me.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Christ as a light;
Christ as a shield;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.

Story of the Geese

Author Unknown



Next fall when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in V formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way:

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in V formation the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front. If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are.

When the head goose gets tired it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point. It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs...with people or with geese flying south.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. What do we say when we honk from behind?

Finally...and this is important...when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshots, and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies, and only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their group.

If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that.



The titles given to the Church in Scripture bespeak heavenly unity, such as the body, the vine, the temple of God, a holy nation, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood. Such words set forth the Church of God as a witness for Him in the world; but the names which have been invented by men are names of sects, and declare our shame.

Robert C. Chapman

Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to which each one must individually bow. So one hundred worshippers meeting together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be were they to become "unity" conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship. Social religion is perfected when private religion is purified.

A.W. Tozer

We are all in the same boat in a stormy sea, and we owe each other a terrible loyalty.

G.K. Chesterton

In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity.

Augustine

About Us

Visionwriters is a mentoring program with a long-term vision or worldview; one that is committed to a long-term Gospel. Vision either determines victory, or its absence produces despair. God's word imparts vision. Writing the vision helps us sort things out, for thoughts are untangled at the point of a pen. But writing isn't enough if it falls short of application. We help people apply the truth, because truth without application is just information. When truth is applied it is powerful.

We facilitate people who ache to hear the voice of Truth and experience a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ ~ people who want to hear God's voice and open their communication with God ~ those who want answers to their most perplexing questions ~ people ready to admit there is a hole inside and who want to overcome this inner loneliness.

Journalizing, or Visionwriting, is taking dictation from the Holy Spirit. Because we want to understand God's personal instructions, we write to capture, assimilate and obey them. You will learn how to hear God's voice, have communication with God through a spiritual relation with Him. Through that spiritual relationship you will overcome loneliness.

Philosophy of the D.A.R.C.

D = Discipline

God's discipline, sated with love, is our wake up call to righteousness. A renewed mind can't grasp the revelation of righteousness alone; this revelation requires the heart to be awakened by the voice of His love. "Today if you will hear My voice..." (Hebrews 3:7-8). To hear with disciplined intent is to not only agree that God initiated a covenant with us, but to finally agree to fully and personally receive it. A long persistence in the right direction is required if we are going to 'see' the place to which God calls us to abide. We write the vision out of our deep longing to "understand" and then "do" what we see our Father doing.

A = Accountability

Each one of us is accountable for our own personal relationship with God as we bear it in front of others. Because we genuinely want to read so we can run with the vision, we surrender to the Holy Spirit and He leads us to what helps us sort out our thoughts and let go of what isn't true; then we can integrate what is true into our hearts and lives. Here we begin to learn the freedom of open and honest relationships.

R = Relationship

Our relationship with God is central to everything and everyone. It is intimate, up close, and personal. Therefore we are ready to explore ourselves the way God knows us and to drop human judgment in order to receive others and encourage them toward the recognition of all God knows them to be. We are "response-able" as we proclaim the truth—here as "selves for others."

C = Community

We need one another; God made us that way. So community is the place all things finally make sense—where God's promises are realized—where the corporate ache is filled. As we operate in union with Him we lose ourselves and get nothing less than our true selves back. This is when we begin to deeply experience our self-giving nature and where "the whole is defined by the sum of its parts."