

What Are You Chasing? (2)

Joe Slater

“Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22).

Last week’s article dealt with the pursuit of that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:15), including the pursuit of righteousness. What other good things should we be chasing?

Let’s start with love. Several years before he told Timothy to pursue love, Paul wrote to the brethren at Corinth: *“Pursue love”* (1 Corinthians 14:1). At that time they had an unhealthy fascination with miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Paul spent the entire thirteenth chapter showing them the *“more excellent way”* of love. Without love, the spiritual gifts were nothing (vv. 1-3). Even faith and hope, precious as they are, take a back seat to love (v. 13).

One manifestation of love is hospitality. Paul exhorted the Romans to be *“given to hospitality”* (literally, pursuing hospitality, Romans 12:13). Though the word is a compound of “love” and “stranger,” we can and should be hospitable to people we know as well (see 1 Peter 4:9).

Paul also told Timothy to pursue peace. The Hebrews writer likewise exhorted, *“Pursue peace with all people”* (12:13). And Peter instructed, *“seek peace and pursue it”* (1 Peter 3:11). More than just the absence of conflict, biblical peace includes the presence of harmony, friendliness, and serenity. In a world filled with hostility and tension, peace certainly is worth pursuing!

Nearly everyone is chasing something. Make certain you are chasing things that are good according to God’s word!

Opportunity or Attitude?

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might...” (Eccl 9:10)

Many years ago I read of a young man who grew up in a poor neighborhood where there was very little to do. He wanted to stay in shape, but had no money for a gym membership. For exercise the young man used to push a car up and down the street.

Eventually he went from pushing the car to tackling running backs. He was pretty good at it. My brother once had the opportunity to speak with NFL running back Ron Johnson. He asked him, “What is it like to be tackled by Dick Butkus?” If I remember right the answer was, “A lot like being run over by a train.”

Dick Butkus could have become bitter about his lack of opportunities. Most American kids have more than a junk car to entertain them. But then, most American kids do not sign a contract for \$200,000 as soon as they leave college. Most do not end up with a net worth of 8 million.

What is the lesson here? Perhaps the lesson is that sometimes our lack of opportunities, if responded to properly, become our opportunity.

So, if you do not have the opportunities that you wanted and prayed for, if God does not seem interested in giving you the gifts and ministries that you sought, maybe you should find an old car and push it. I am not suggesting that it will lead you to a net worth of millions, but I am sure that it will lead to something better than you will find by crying over the lack of opportunities.

If you cannot do the big jobs, do the small ones. If you cannot find the jobs that will gain you notoriety, do the ones no one will notice. But whatever you do, do it with your might – the best of your ability. Even if no one else notices, the Lord will know. Deep down you will know also, and you may in the end find more satisfaction in the simple and homely tasks than you really would have in the things you dreamed of doing.

--Thayer Salisbury (Toledo, OH)

You Animal!

Some church members are as **stubborn as a mule** about doing church work, but as **sly as a fox** in their own business deals

They’re as **busy as a bee** in spreading the latest gossip, but as **quiet as a mouse** in spreading the gospel of Christ.

Many are as **blind as a bat** to see the needs of others, but have **eyes of a hawk** to see the faults of a few.

Some are as **eager as a beaver** about a barbecue, but as **lazy as a dog** about the prayer meetings.

Some will **roar like a lion** when things do not go just to suit them, but they are as **gentle as a lamb** when they need the preacher of the church.

Some are as **noisy as a blue jay** when letting the church know their opinion, but as **timid as a kitten** in mentioning Jesus to others.

Some are **quick as a bunny** in pushing their agenda, but as **slow as a snail** about contacting absentees and shut-ins.

Some are **happy as a clam** to be a church member, but as **mad as a hornet** when someone encourages them to get more involved.

Many are **night owls** on Saturday nights, but **bed bugs** Sunday mornings and as **scarce as hen’s teeth** on Sunday and Wednesday nights.

--Adapted by Edd Sterchi (Campbellsville, KY)

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ABORTION IS THE ONLY MEDICAL PROCEDURE THAT IS CONSIDERED A FAILURE IF THE SUBJECT SURVIVES.