

SELF-IMPOSED FAMINE

Joe Slater

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God, ‘that I will send a famine on the land. Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord’” (Amos 8:11).

God’s people weren’t listening! In fact, one high-ranking official had told Amos in no uncertain terms to hush up and leave the country (Amos 7:12-13). God’s man refused to be intimidated.

The time would come, however, when the Lord would simply say, “Enough!” He certainly was under no obligation to continue sending His prophets only to have them ignored. Sometimes people don’t appreciate their blessings until they lose them. When God quit speaking through His prophets, the Israelites would sit up and take notice. “They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but shall not find it” (8:12).

We would never do this, would we? God isn’t sending us inspired prophets to teach and warn us in this age. But we have His inspired word in written form, and it is complete (2 Timothy 3:16-17). You can purchase a copy online or from any of dozens of merchants right in this county. You can read it online for free; or this church will give you a Bible at no cost to you.

I fear, though, that there is, indeed, a famine of the word of the Lord; **and it is a self-imposed famine!** When God’s people will not discipline themselves to study His word, hear it taught and proclaimed, and conform their lives to it, is that not a famine?

One can starve to death because there is no food; or he can starve himself by refusing to be nourished with food that is readily available. So it is with God’s word. The first is a disaster; the second is foolishness.

High Adventure

A number of years ago, I delivered the eulogy for an individual who lost his life while scuba diving on the wreck of the *Andrea Doria*. For those unaware, the *Andrea Doria* lies in deep water near Nantucket and is considered the "Mount Everest" of scuba diving. Only the most experienced divers even attempt it, with some paying the ultimate price for the adventure.

In today's world, people often seek the ultimate thrill – the so-called “Mount Everest experience.” There's no shortage of people who live for the next exploit. Great amounts of time and money are often spent to make preparation for high adventure. For example, the gentleman who lost his life while diving had trained almost two years for the one-day event.

Sadly, many ignore life's ultimate "Mount Everest" experience. David asks, “Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart...” (Psalm 24:3 - 4). Spiritual preparation for this journey is required, yet few choose to pursue this undertaking.

Those who decline the challenge of living for a home in heaven are walking away from the ultimate adventure.

--Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)

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“I will praise thee more and more” (Psalm 71:14). What a marvelous answer is this to the inevitable encroachments upon life of age and infirmity. It is not a time for slowing down in the pursuit of holiness; it is not a time for leaving everything to the next generation; it is not a time for slackening zeal in our faithfulness to Christ and his Church. Indeed no! It is time for trusting God, “more and more.” It is time for greater fidelity, more loving devotion, and “more and more” constancy in our adherence to the “Faith once for all delivered to the saints.” —Burton Coffman (deceased) via randal.us

YOU'RE NUMBER TWO

I heard about a couple celebrating their second anniversary. The husband arranged to have flowers sent to his wife at her office. He told the florist to write "Happy Anniversary, Year Number 2" on the card.

His wife was thrilled with the flowers, but not so pleased with the card. It mistakenly read, "Happy Anniversary. You're Number 2."

While I chuckle at that story, the truth of the matter is that if the same thing had happened to my wife, she would have reacted in a totally different way -- she would have been thrilled! Perhaps a word of explanation is in order as I share something very private with you.

While we were dating, I came up with a pet name for Sueanne. She was my "little number two" (usually written as "lil no. 2"). That was how I would address her when I wrote her notes or sent her cards -- "Lil no. 2." That was my way of saying to her, "God comes first in my life, but you are second."

It never bothered my wife that she was number two in my life. She never saw that as an insult. In fact, I think she understood that as long as God stood in the number one place in my life, she would always be treated with dignity, love and compassion. We are approaching 29 years of married life, and she remains my "lil no. 2". She always has been, she always will be. She will never be number one. But that's OK with her.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:30) Seek to make God number one in your life and I promise it will improve your relationship with "number two."

--Alan Smith (Spring Lake, N C) via Bulletin Gold