

SEEK ME AND LIVE!

Joe Slater

The Lord told the house of Israel, “*Seek Me and live*” (Amos 5:4). Sounds simple enough, right? But sinful people have a way of complicating even the simplest matters.

“Seek” doesn’t imply God was hiding. The word means “resort to.” That is, look to Me; trust Me; obey Me. What could be simpler than that?

But no! The simple word of God didn’t suit the majority of Israelites. They wanted to “seek” God in their own way. So, through Amos, the Lord warned them: “*But do not seek Bethel, nor enter Gilgal, nor pass over to Beersheba*” (5:5a). What was He talking about?

Upon arriving in Canaan, Abraham had worshiped near Bethel (Genesis 12:8). Jacob worshiped at Bethel after seeing the vision of the staircase (Genesis 28:19). But King Jeroboam corrupted the place with one of his golden calves (1 Kings 12:29). Israel followed, but seeking God via calf-worship was an exercise in futility.

Gilgal, likewise, had a rich history. Joshua set up memorial stones there (Joshua 4:20). Samuel judged there and anointed King Saul. But now it, too, was a center of idolatry (Amos 4:4; Hosea 12:11).

Both Abraham and Jacob had worshiped at Beer-Sheba (Genesis 21:31-33; 26:4; 46:1). Tragically, idol-worship was occurring as Amos wrote (Amos 8:14).

God’s simple word still doesn’t suit the majority of people today. We may not see altars and idols on the street corners, but non-Biblical beliefs and practices are the order of the day. Instead of immersing believers, some are sprinkling babies. Rather than making melody with the heart, most adopt the organ or band.

Far too often, “I like” and “I want” trump what God said. We must decide: Will we surrender to the ways of the world, or will we seek God and live?

Buried Talent

You are a unique person. No one else is like you. God made you an individual with characteristics, personality, and tastes that distinguish you from every other human being who lives or has ever lived.

“Identical” twins aren’t. People who know such twins can usually tell them apart from their manner of being.

As a child of God, you have unique experiences, talents, gifts, and opportunities. No one else has lived through the exact same sequence of events. No one else has processed them like you. No one else has the same set of capabilities that you possess. No one else witnesses the same opening doors, rubs shoulders with the same set of people, sees the same potential for good.

So when you, living in God’s kingdom and enjoying all spiritual blessings in Christ, fail to use the gifts the Lord has given you and miss taking advantage of the opportunities he has set before you, the world is poorer because of it. The kingdom of God is weaker because of those unused gifts. And you are diminished in your faith and service since they lie dormant.

Use your gifts. Ask God to open doors for their use. When the opportunity comes, no matter how small it appears, take it. Large trees grow from small seed. Great deeds begin in small ways.

Be willing. Do not close yourself off to service in areas you think are now shut.

Someone wrote that from time to time we ought to reinvent ourselves. For the Christian, God often brings us to a point where he wants us to take new turns, learn new skills, exercise underused muscles. And he may well prod us to brush off some old gifts that were left aside.

We have our reasons. God has a greater purpose and a greater good. We think flight from service has its justification. We cite circumstances, relationships, or

limitations. The Lord understands, and he still prods, calls, sends, and equips.

Fears, hurts, and failures of the past may have caused you to shrink back. Worries about the future may hang heavy over your heart. Let God heal the past. Let him take care of the future. Raise yourself up, look around at a perishing world, see the family of faith in need.

Use your gifts. To bury them is to bury yourself. You know this to be true. As you unearth your gifts, let God give you life, power, wisdom, and the motivation of his love and grace.

--Randal Matheny (via forthright.net)

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Bad Company Did It!

A farmer loaded his shotgun and slipped out along the fence to make it warm for the crows that were pulling up his corn. The farmer’s sociable parrot, discovering the crows, had joined them.

Not knowing that his parrot was among them, the farmer fired his shotgun at the flock of crows and then climbed over the fence to see how successful he had been. There lay three dead crows and to his great surprise, his pet parrot with ruffled feathers and a broken leg.

When the bird was carried home, the children asked, “Who did it, Papa? Who hurt our pretty Polly?” “Bad company! Bad company!” commented the parrot in solemn voice. “Aye, that it was,” said the father. “Polly was with those crows when I fired, and received a shot intended for them. Remember the parrot’s fate, children. Beware of bad company.”

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