

A Devout Man

Introduction

Living in- interesting if not unusual time in history.
Who could- foreseen nations shut down by-virus?
Times like this- many voices beckoning for our
attention- God's judgment/conspiracy theories.
The question we need to wrestle with is-
what is God saying, what is God doing?
God will use this to further- work of His Kingdom.
That work must begin in our own hearts and lives.
There is no doubt- as a nation- have turned from
God- there- place for national repentance.
That repentance must begin in our own hearts.
More than ever-want-experience God's presence.
But do we realize that His presence places
certain demands on our lives.

Romans 14:7-8

**7 For not one of us lives for himself, and
not one dies for himself;**

**8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if
we die, we die for the Lord; therefore
whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.**

Cultural Commentary

Ideas expressed- these verses -not popular- ie-
not our own masters, answer to someone else.
Objective truth- less important than how we feel.
Sometimes we fall for this same subtle deception.
When we interpret scripture we place what we
feel/think is right above what the Word says.
Learn- live under- objective reality of God's Word.

A Story About A Military Commander

**A man in the military who was a
company commander. He had seen**

much combat and was a hardened military officer. He was stationed in a foreign nation that was being occupying to maintain order. However as he spent time among the people his heart softened toward them and he began to take note of how they worshipped God. As a result he began to seek out the reality of their God. During this time God gave as vision that stirred his heart even more. Shortly after this a man showed up at his door and talked to him about God. This dramatically impacted this man and he and his family received Christ. God gave the man a dream and sent a man to his door. My question is, “What was it about this man’s life that got God’s attention?” We cannot buy or earn our way into God’s presence, but I do believe we can do things that get the attention of God.

I want to look at this man’s story which is found in Acts 10 and his name is Cornelius.

Cornelius

Acts 10:1–4 (NASB95)

**¹Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort,
²a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually.**

3About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, “Cornelius!”

4And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, “What is it, Lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

I do not believe angelic visitations are happen chance-they happen in response to something. God is sovereign- can send angel for any reason. But I cannot help but wonder, what was it about Cornelius that **invited God**- send an angel? Does our life style invite God to respond to us? Look at what- can learn about Cornelius ...

Act 10.2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually.

Examine these four traits to better understand what might have **caught** God’s attention. We cannot earn God’s love- but I believe we can **catch** His attention- Moses/burning bush.

1st Trait: He was a Devout man

Devout- speaks of an awakening in our hearts to the reality of God’s presence.

Devout-speaks of- inner energy/passion for God- that expresses itself- outward acts of devotion.

Devout- is not just an inward feeling about God, but something that overflows in active worship.

To be devout is to recognize- God has a claim on every area of our life- we live under a Master.

In Christ- truth sets us free- not free to do what we want to do- called to restrain our behavior- bring- into alignment w/God's Word.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NASB95)

¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

²⁰For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Being devout results in ...

>inward reverence for God that

>shows up in outward actions and

>is seen in our worship and how we live

Many have embraced- impatience of our culture.

We want the wow of God w/o investing the time and energy in true devotion to God.

Devotion is always a mixture of our ...

>love for God

>fear of God ... two sides- same coin.

... the Old Testament placed its

emphasis on the fear, the New

(Testament) places it on the love, though

there was love in the fear of God's saints then, as there must be fear in (the) love

(of God's saints) now. Trench

What does it mean to love God?

Our love for God is not a feeling, it comes out of a revelation of God's love for us.

This invokes in us a love for God and for others.

1 Jn 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom

he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

We love God/others out of- God's love for us ...
>we find a deep love for God in our hearts
>we can love/forgive those who- hurt us
>we become a conduit of God's love
God's love lives in us/through us.

Jude 20–21

**20But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,
21keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.**

How do we keep ourselves in the love of God?
>labor to build up our faith
>pray in the Holy Spirit
>actively look forward to- Lord's return

James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you ...

Our love for God will drive us to ...
>obey Him and
>to learn what pleases Him

2nd Trait: He feared God

This is also the other side of the love God coin.

What does it mean to fear God?

Sometimes I think we- make God a benevolent teddy bear- tolerant of our behavior- godly/not.
It is easy for us- look over our own faults/sins while seeing the short comings of others.

2 Cor 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh

and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

As believers we should have a healthy fear of God that motivates us to live a holy life.

Matthew 10:28 “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

It is the recognition that ...

Romans 14:12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

Charles Spurgeon said ...

The fear of God is the death of every other fear. Charles Spurgeon

If we fear God we have nothing else to fear- we are set free from all other fears.

3rd Trait: He gave generously

Paul says this ...

1 Tim 6:18 Instruct them ... to be generous and ready to share,

Why? Consider these verses in Proverbs ...

Proverbs 11:24–25 (NASB95)

²⁴There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want.

²⁵The generous man will be prosperous, And he who waters will himself be watered.

Generous living is not just in respect to money- but with the entirety of our lives, with ...

- >tangible/intangible resources,
- >time,

- >our praise of God-(be generous- praise)
- >blessing of others

**Isa 50:4 (MSG) The Master, GOD,
has given me a well-taught tongue,
So I know how to encourage tired
people ...**

Is my tongue well taught-praise God/bless others.

**Giving is an expression of our trust in
God's provision/declaration that our
treasure is in heaven, not here on earth
but in heaven.**

4th Trait: He prayed continually

What does it mean to pray continually?

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NASB95)

16Rejoice always;

17pray without ceasing;

**18in everything give thanks; for this is
God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**

What is God's will for your life?

Luke 18- parable- teaches people how to pray ...

**Luke 18:7 (tell parable) now, will not God
bring about justice for His elect who cry
to Him day and night, and will He delay
long over them?**

It is through prayer that we develop/deepen ...

>our relationship with God

>our understanding of what God is doing

>how we respond- circumstances/people

**One of the reasons our prayer
malfunctions is that we try to treat it like
a domestic intercom for calling the
butler for another pillow in the den
rather than treating it like a wartime**

**walkie-talkie for calling down the power of the Holy Spirit in the battle for souls.
John Piper**

Lance Wallnau made a similar statement ...

Most of our corporate prayers are driven by a sense of crisis, not by a sense of anticipation of God doing something or unfolding something or creating something ... When do we get to create the chaos the devil has to pray about?

Lance Wallnau

God's response to Cornelius

The angel speaks to Cornelius ...

Act 10.4 And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, "What is it, Lord?"

We need to ask God the same question- God ...

>what are you doing in my life now

>what are you expecting of me

The angel responds to Cornelius ...

And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God."

What reached- halls of heaven- his prayers/alms!

How should we respond- God's call- prayer/giving

Cornelius' response to God

How did Cornelius respond to God?

Acts 10:5 "Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter;

He obeyed the angel/took action/sent for Peter ...

>he risked his reputation calling for a Jew

>as a Centurion he was humbling

>open to receive whatever God said/asked
Should not our heart be in the same place?

The Result of Cornelius's obedience

When Peter began to share about Jesus ...

Acts 10:44–46 (NASB95)

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

⁴⁵All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

⁴⁶For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God ...

Cornelius' prayers/generosity opened the door for him to receive the Baptism of HS.

I am not implying that Cornelius earned this blessing- it was/is a free gift from God.

However, Cornelius positioned his heart before God such that it invited God to bless him.

We can and should do the same.

Conclusion

If- want to experience- power/presence of God-

>pursue God w/all- heart/mind/soul/strength
(the essence of devotion)

>develop a healthy fear of God
(God is- loving Father but also-Judge)

>give generously
(every area of life- tangible/intangible)

>pray continually
(weave prayer through- fabric of life)

Position yourself, as Cornelius did, to receive all that God has for you.