

Heart

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6.8).

God's people had forgotten what it meant to be God's people. They had been away so long that being in the presence of the Almighty made most of them uncomfortable.

As a child, our family would take a trek to northern North Carolina for our Hundley reunion. I always enjoyed the ride and the scenery. One particular trip, when I was about ten years old, brings back memories.

My father would point out places and items of interest along the way - things like the small Presbyterian church where Dad grew up and where my uncle Miller Hundley had served as an elder. As we turned down the dirt road leading to my uncle's home, Dad pointed to a shack in the middle of a field and said that was the place he was born. That especially caught my attention because it appeared to be a seedy excuse for a tobacco barn - not fit for human occupancy.

The location of Dad's birthplace made it possible for him to spend much time with his uncle - working on the farm, wading in the creek, or just being there. Dad assured me that I would really like Uncle Miller because he was Dad's favorite uncle - they had spent so much time together.

As we parked the car, Aunt Percy and Uncle Miller came out with warm greetings - expressing how glad they were to see us and have us visit for a spell. Of course, my brother and I got the tweak on the cheek from Aunt Percy who gushed over how we had grown.

After giving us some simple boundaries (to keep us from falling off the mountain), we all settled in for a family get-together - only, something felt wrong. No matter how kind and gracious our hosts tried to be, they were strangers. Yes, they were family - same blood - same roots, yet, strangers. The food was wonderfully tasty and plenteous - but we were eating in the home of strangers. In a crowded house filled with people, I felt alone - desperately alone.

How could my father think these foreign people were special? Why was it that he felt so comfortable in their home while I felt so miserable? After many years, I believe I have

the answer. The answer comes from spending time together - great quantities of time - time that allows hearts to knit together.

In the latter days of my mother's life on earth, one of our greatest pastimes was burning brush. We would get a pile of limbs and other yard debris, wait until dark, pull up a couple of lawn chairs and burn the stuff. After Dad went to be with the Lord, Mom did not require vacations and trips, entertainment and excitement - she wanted fellowship. More sacred to her than anything purchased was time spent with her son - sometimes we would talk and sometimes we would not - we would simply be together.

Over the past several years, I have come to appreciate the times my wife and I have when we are alone together. I must admit that we have both snored through the greater part of some movies at home while holding hands (usually one of us wakes up only to ask the other if our snoring was causing too great a commotion).

The time we spend together cannot be replaced with things or activities. Time is your most valuable commodity - it can be used only once. When it is gone, it is gone forever.

So, what was it that God wanted from His children? He never asked anyone to give up chocolate for Lent; however, He did say, **"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." (Proverbs 23.26)**

"Give me thine heart." This is the way to fellowship and pleasing God. So often, parents leave their children to babysitters and daycares only to find that as teenagers their children are strangers. Many believers go their own way only to attempt family reunions with a God they have never spent time with - offering Him gifts He does not want - attempting vain rituals that have lost their meaning because they come from a stranger.

Remember, God is not as interested in what you offer Him in the collection plate, as He is in having you walk with Him daily. How comfortable are you when you are in God's presence?

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