

Gleanings from the Missionary

THE KOKENZIE FAMILY

February 2012

THE BEST BIBLE INSTITUTE IN THE WORLD

“The greatest Bible institute in the world is a father reading the open Bible to his family” (*How to Have a Family Altar*, “The Family Altar and the Blessing of Persuasion,” Norman Williams, 1957, TheWord Bible Software).

COMPLETELY UNINTERRUPTED TIME

The longer I am in ministry, the more I have noted the tremendously priceless value of *completely uninterrupted time*. Let me explain. I currently pastor a church. I also am a husband and father of four young and needy children. I also work on several ministry projects intended to reach beyond this single church here. Add to this, the daily dilemma of the mundane tasks that come my way. The brakes need replaced, the dog needs a bath, the hedges need trimmed, the boys need a haircut, the bills need to be paid and so forth. I remember those days, from times gone by, when moments of solitude, for prayer, reading and reflection, were common and easy to come by. They were *extremely* beneficial in every way. I spiritually thrived off of them. That was then. This is now. *To have completely uninterrupted time available these days demands I make it, or something will take it away from me*. That’s the difference between now and then. I remember, as a boy, throwing bread crumbs in the sea and watching the hundreds of fish swarm and devour it. That’s how my time is these days. If I do not carefully guard it, it is picked away in a fury. *I must demand for my own spiritual survival completely uninterrupted time for prayer, reading and reflection*. How about you? Maybe you keep saying to yourself, “I need to read the Bible more,” or, “I need to pray more.” Yet, the common excuse is, “I just can’t seem to find the time.” Anymore, I find that time does not call out to me to let me know it is available. *If I am ever all God wants me to be, I must never excuse my soul’s shallowness, because I lack the time to deepen it with God*. This means that I must intrude upon my regular way of living, and determine exactly when, where and how I am going to have completely uninterrupted time for prayer, reading and reflection. It demands character out of me to do this, but it is essential. I must. I will.

A MARRIAGE OF THREE IS STRONGEST

“Then the pastor said, ‘Go home and make at least one more try to make your marriage beautiful as GOD meant it to be. This time however never allow a day to close without gathering around GOD’s Word, reading a portion and then kneeling down to pray. That is my counsel. Do it and you will save your marriage. You see, you have forgotten a very important thing - a successful marriage is not a matter of two persons but of three persons. A successful marriage is not so much a matter of two people adjusting to each other, but of two people adjusting to a third person - CHRIST. For when two are right with Him, they will be right with each other’” (*How to Have a Family Altar*, “The Family Altar and the Blessing of His Presence,” Norman Williams, 1957, TheWord Bible Software).

THE INVENTION OF THE BOOK

2000 years ago, the apostles did not write New Testament *books* as we know them today. Instead, they used *papyrus*. This “fibrous pith of a water plant” was matted together, written on and then rolled up into a scroll. If the writer ran out of room, he may even write on the back. Considering the style of writing back then, Luke’s record of the Gospel was a roll of about 32 feet in length! Back in those days, therefore, one did not carry a Bible about as we do today. It would have been entirely unmanageable, for one thing. For another thing, each scroll had to be hand written. (The printing press would come some 1500 years later). Thankfully, “Christians were particularly concerned to improve on this situation. As early as the 2nd century AD ‘codex’ experiments were tried. A papyrus codex is made up of sheets of papyrus folded once into a ‘quire’ or gathering, like a gigantic scrapbook; this is in fact the basis of the book as we have it today. For this we have the church to thank: it was the desire of the churches for ‘user friendly’ and portable Scriptures that helped establish this now universal system of book construction. Truly, in the providence of our mighty God, the full record of His Words deserves, even in this small but significant point, to be called ‘the Book’” (*The Authorized Version: A Wonderful and Unfinished History*, C. P. Hallihan, 2010, pp. 10-12).