



Spirit of Grace

Herald

THE MINISTRY OF DENNIS
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Obsessed

I admit it. I get kind of obsessed at times with certain subjects which attract my attention. Sometimes I get so focused on a particular thing that everything else must take a back seat. Bills may be ignored, routines are thrown out of order, and people wanting my attention may have to work a little harder than usual to get it, as my energy, time, and passion are all drawn toward my latest fascination.

As a writer this often happens when I am researching a particular individual while doing a biographical devotional. When I wrote an article on Mickey Mantle quite a few years ago, I devoured several lengthy books, some on Mickey and some on baseball at that particular time. Although I am not an especially big baseball fan, at that time it seemed as though I was transformed into one who couldn't get enough information about baseball, especially as it related to Mantle. When I finally sat down to write the article it came to only a little over 2,000 words in length, miniscule in comparison to the intensive research I had done on Mickey Mantle. For a while baseball, Mantle, and the Yankees seemed the most fascinating subject in the world to me. I couldn't get enough.



Then the article was finished. That passion to immerse myself in all things related to Mantle quickly dropped away, and within a week or two I was back to normal. I have had this happen again and again, as I have written about various individuals, some good and some bad. (I don't admire the bad guys, for sure, but I do become fascinated by them for a season, as I attempt to learn as much as I can about them.) I always end up learning far more about these individuals than I can possibly put on paper, and then I must go through the painful process of trying to cull the useful information from the non-useful, and then the highly useful stuff from the somewhat useful.

I was thinking about this lately while I was doing research for an article about Bonnie and Clyde. For a couple of weeks I lost myself in the great depression era, and the lives of these not-so-admirable outlaws. I read three major books, watched videos, viewed a movie, and read numerous Internet articles. When I discovered that a major author and expert on Bonnie and Clyde was going to be giving a lecture at the Dallas Historical Society, I had to drag Benedicta down to Dallas to see what further information I could gain. (She wasn't nearly as excited as I was, but dutifully accompanied me anyway.)

After the article was written and the fascination began to lift, I thought of another fascination and obsession that I experienced many years ago.

It happened when I was a sophomore in college. At that time I was attending the University of Missouri at Cape Girardeau and was a psychology major. In religious terms I was an agnostic. I hadn't been much of a believer in God or Christ since my boyhood. At the Christmas break in the winter of 1973 I saw an old Bible at home that my dad had bought for me when I was around ten years old. I had read several chapters in it immediately, and then laid it down and hadn't read a verse in it since. Now, for some reason, it seemed to attract me, and I took that Bible back with me to my dorm room in Cape Girardeau.

And then it happened. That fascination which borders upon ob-

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session came over me as I read through its pages. Starting in the New Testament I quickly became totally captivated by Jesus. Until then I had considered myself decidedly non-religious, but suddenly I could not get enough of the Bible and the Jesus of whom it spoke. I soon set a schedule of reading five chapters a day, but I could rarely keep to that schedule because after my five chapters I would be so eager to see what more it had to say I would read five more, and then sometimes five more still.

So what is the difference between my Mickey Mantle and Bonnie and Clyde obsessions, and my "obsession" with Jesus? Many answers could be given, but one of them is this: with all the other "research obsessions," the interest quickly faded once I learned what I needed to know and wrote what I wanted to write. But with Jesus there has been no fading. I find Him as fascinating now as I did forty-one years ago. I still read about Him and constantly immerse myself in His life, death, and resurrection, His words, His miracles, and His promises. I read of Him not merely for research; not simply so that I can write another article about Him. I read of Him because He is my life, my reason for living, and the Hope I have for a wonderful future that has no end. **Jesus is more than simply another fascinating historical character. He is the Word made flesh, the only begotten Son of God, who was with God in the beginning and who is God.** After forty-one years since that first introduction to Jesus, after countless joys and numerous disappointments, gratifying successes and heart-wrenching failures, seasons of abundance and seasons of scarcity, He is still faithful, He still upholds and sustains me by His grace, and the passion I have for Him shows no sign of waning.

Praise God for the grace of Jesus that preserves us until that Day!

In October—Mission India



Dennis and Benedicta are scheduled to minister in India in October. **This will be our last overseas mission of 2014.** As is normally the case this mission is a step of faith. The total budget for this mission will run around \$11,000, and we are presently in need of \$10,000 to come in before we leave in mid - October. We appreciate your prayers and generous donations toward this



mission. The regular gifts given by our friends keep this ministry going, but it is the extra gifts you send that enable us to reach out to the nations in these special missions.

Our Gift to You



When you become a **Friend of Grace**, you will begin receiving a monthly CD from our Audio Devo series (except for video report months). Each CD contains five different concise teachings of approximately 12-13 minutes each, covering nearly every Bible topic imaginable—predestination, the filling with the Holy Spirit, the Rapture of the church, marriage... You name it, you'll probably hear it sooner or later. Playing these CDs in your car is a great way to redeem the time.

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