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# Visiting Hours

Moment of Manna

Leo Pete

I've never been able to go to the hospital to visit people. Whether they're sick or injured, family or close friends, I always seemed to have a phobia about it. At times I've actually gone as far as the front door of the hospital, only to turn around and go back home. I don't know why, but I just can't seem to get through the door. I just DON'T...want...to go.

Years ago my father was in the hospital for major surgery. He had to have a leg amputated. Fortunately he came from a big family, and he had a big family, so he always had someone there to visit. He probably didn't notice that I only showed up a couple of times. He was there for about three weeks, and finally went home. I had very flexible work hours in my job at that time, so I thought I'd go visit him one day. I figured since it wasn't a hospital setting, I might be ok. So I went. I actually made it through the door, but only stayed about fifteen minutes. As I was driving home, I began to think, "That wasn't too bad. Since he's home alone most of the day, maybe I'll go back again tomorrow." So I did, and that time I stayed for almost two hours. I actually enjoyed it and continued almost every day for the next three months. We talked about just about everything and got closer than we had ever been before. Finally, he healed well enough to get his artificial leg and was able to get out of the house and even go back to driving. Our little visits ended at that point, and I kind of missed it. But as I look back on it I realize that I was blessed tremendously by that whole experience, and I think he was too. And I think I was blessed because I forgot about how I felt and just went ahead and did it, because it was the right thing to do. To this day, I still have trouble going to the hospital to visit, but I'm getting better.

Ananias and Jonah were two men in the Bible, one from the New Testament and one from the Old, that faced very similar situations. Ananias was told by God to go and visit Saul of Tarsus. But Ananias questioned it and in Acts 9:13-14 he says, "But Lord, I've heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem! And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon your name." God tells him in verses 15-16, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument

to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake."

God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and warn the people of what was to happen if they didn't change their ways. Jonah didn't want to go. He said, "Lord, I know what you are going to do. You will forgive them and bless them and they are evil and don't deserve it." Jonah wanted the destruction of Nineveh, and he didn't want to go and let them off the hook.

There will be times when God will put a burden on your heart to approach a certain person, say a specific thing, or go to a particular place. You have a choice in the matter. You can either go or not go. When God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, he got up and went in the opposite direction, and God showed him a whole new way to travel, and it wasn't first class. Ananias didn't want to go either, however, he did what God told him to do, to go to Saul of Tarsus and he received the blessing of seeing a man healed and a life changed forever.

You can be a Jonah or you can be an Ananias. You can go where God tells you to go or you can refuse. You can go and receive the blessing or you can refuse to go and become just so much whale vomit. God may ask you to do something that you really DON'T... want... to do. If He tells you to go, then you should go, because if you choose not to, God will get the job done anyway; but you will miss out on that blessing of obeying Him. God says "to obey is better than sacrifice"; and when that obedience IS a sacrifice, then you get a double blessing. Jonah disobeyed and had a whale of a time getting his life back in order. Ananias obeyed and was blessed beyond his wildest dreams. If God is telling you to go, to speak; check the visiting hours—and don't turn back at the door. Go!