

RANSOMED HEART

LOVE GOD. LIVE FREE.

January/February 2020

Dear Friends,

January was such a whirlwind, and so much information is always rushing at us, I thought it would be kinder to send a “January/February” newsletter. (The world has grown absurdly complicated, most people’s lives are jammed already, so I want these letters to be oases, not more noise.)

Really—this world we live in is constantly assaulting our souls. The pace of life, the complexity, the lack of any real margin, the tsunami of information and technology bombarding our attention, the heartbreak of the world. (And all the little chirps, beeps and vibrations that announce something new has come in.) The soul was never meant to process, navigate, or carry this much.

I’ve said it before but it needs repeating: This mad world requires a soul that is strong, resilient, rooted in God. And yet, this mad world *is perfectly designed to prevent your soul from being strong, resilient, rooted in God.*

That’s called a double-bind. It’s what we’re all struggling with.

We need more of God. We want a soulful life. But we can’t find it, because of the chaos swirling around us, and *in* us.

About a year and a half ago I suddenly woke to the facts: I was asking my soul to live at the speed of a smartphone. And that’s really unkind, because the soul is not a smartphone, and was never meant to live like one. I began to seek Jesus for some practical changes to my life—simple changes I could sustain—which would help me recover my soul, my humanity, recover my life in God.

And I’m very glad to report that it’s working; it’s helping. As I began to share some of the things I was learning, I noticed how quickly it helped my friends, too.

I had a beautiful conversation with a man just last week, whose role is to provide care for a number of missionaries in the South Pacific and Asia. He wanted to report that he and his wife had been learning what I call “Benevolent Detachment,” the grace of truly giving everything over to God. “This has been a rescue for us,” he explained. “We’ve been carrying everyone, and it has been crushing us. Your teaching has changed our lives and rescued our mission. Really.”

Not two days later I received an email from another beautiful soul who is deeply involved in missions in a dangerous country I can’t name here. There was an accident; people were killed. He was writing to say that the practices I had been sharing were pulling him out of the trauma and back to God.

I wept for joy and gratitude.

And so it is with enormous happiness and excitement I can announce to you that I put everything I learned in a book, and that book comes out in about a week! It's called ***Get Your Life Back – everyday practices for a world gone mad***. A step-by-step report on the graces God taught me to recover my own soul in this crazy hour, and how to embrace these helps for yourself.

Benevolent Detachment is chapter two; it's also the centerpiece of the One Minute Pause app we created to help folks with the practice. Learning to take simple pauses in your day to catch your breath, give it all back to Jesus and restore your union with him. (You can download it for free in the app store!) And there is so much more!

God saturated our world with oxygen because we need it, every moment of our lives. He's done the same with water—no one can live without it, so our planet is filled with water. Then I realized God did the same thing with Beauty—our world is absolutely saturated with Beauty, intimate and epic. From morning sunlight to drops of water on a windowpane, the song of birds, the laughter of a child, the intricate lace pattern of leaves. Beauty heals the soul; beauty especially addresses trauma. But so few people take it in. We might see it if we're not rushing; but we merely observe, and think to ourselves, *That's lovely*, and get on with our day. I want to teach you how to receive it into your soul for healing.

I also want to share the grace of Transitions—learning to allow your soul some room between things. We cram our soul through a number of gear changes every day (every hour). We go from a tender conversation with our child scared about school, to a business meeting, to a call about our parent's memory care unit, to the news about a friend's passing, to a phone call haggling with our insurance agency. No wonder we don't know what to say when someone asks us, "How are you?" We don't know. We're blowing through life so fast our soul was lost long ago.

There is a better way.

I think *Get Your Life Back* could have the impact of *Wild at Heart*, one of those game-changing books so healing and refreshing people talk about for a long time. That's my hope anyways!

There's an audiobook, which I recorded because I know many people don't have the time to read but love to use audiobooks as they exercise or commute. There's a small group curriculum and guide too so that you can gather with friends and explore the recovery of your souls together.

This is a brutal hour to live in, friends. We simply must take care of our souls. I hope you'll pick up a copy or two of the book—one for you, and one for someone you love.

Offered in love,


John

PS. Our current podcast series is focussing on the some of the practices from the book. I think you'll love listening in!