

March 1, 2014

Dearest Ministry Prayer Partners,

It is a joy to think of you there, blooming and bearing fruit right there where the Lord has planted you! We pray daily that the Lord may supply all your needs abundantly above what you can ask or think.

What a year we have awakened to! We are seeing wonderful tens of thousands of salvations in the different fields.

Ukraine is still in turmoil as I write. Our Kiev coordinator, Ruslan, is asking for prayer for his country. During the worst of the upheaval, he reported horrors on the ground, even people being burned alive in the streets.

There have been many reports in the news, but the gist of the ordeal is the question of whether the country will follow Russia toward a Soviet-like union or continue to pursue a European Union dream. The erosion of trust in the government brought about an adversarial relationship between the people and the leaders.

It is easy to understand how the people feel, as they are beginning to see the fruit of freedom after decades in the USSR. Ukrainians are “their own people.” They no longer have to feel like the peasant “grunts” working the fields to feed mother Russia. They don’t have to be subservient anymore. The very idea of a return to that role made them fight fiercely to prevent any more advances of the agenda that was being developed by top leadership.

Curiously enough, the entire nation seems spellbound by the idea of becoming like Western Europe! But I was just in Spain and France, and I can tell you that the people of Western Europe have problems of their own!

1. In Spain they know they have reached “the bottom” economically and socially, but they also are worried that instead of preparing for a “rebound,” they are “wandering in circles at the bottom’s floor.”
2. France is trying to keep a lid on potentially similar problems, as well as more complicated results.
3. While I was there, Europe was appalled that in the first four weeks of the year more than 120 people drowned at sea crossing illegally from Africa towards the perceived haven of Italy, trying to make it to the island of Lampedusa. Some 300 drowned late last year trying to do the same. Italy has been condemned by the U.N. for developing what amounts to concentration camps once the people do reach the “haven” of Europe.

The problems of Europe could fill pages—but let me simply point to this truth:

**To fulfill His purposes,  
God has brought us into  
a very needy world.**

It might be easy to miss God in all this. It's easy to develop a nonproductive attitude, attitudes not in tune with the heart of God regarding people's neediness...

We could look at these situations and dismiss them smugly—because, after all, “they’re getting what they bargained for.”

Or we might say, in essence, “You’ve got your troubles, I’ve got mine.”

Or, we might settle for minimal piety, paying lip service to the needs and the opportunity they present.

Our actual agenda might be one primarily concerned with our own personal peace and affluence.

*But God has other ideas for us.*

Look at 1 Samuel 13:13. God commends David, the king, as being a man tuned in to His own heart: “a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do” (Acts 13:22).

In this remarkable story, God makes two seismic moves: removing Saul from the throne, and handing the kingdom to David. Of course Saul claims that he was doing God's bidding: “I felt compelled to offer the burnt offerings” (1 Samuel 13:12). But Samuel replies, “You acted foolishly.”

By way of contrast, Saul's son, Jonathan, is about to embark on a major battle, and he is fueled by a faith not seen anywhere else in Israel! Jonathan with one sword attacks the garrison of the Philistines, banking on God's power: “Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving,” he declares, “whether by many or by few” (1 Samuel 14:6). It's one of the most inspiring passages in the entire Bible. (When the odds are stacked against you, this is the story to reread!)

The highest-impact lesson for me in this account is how three people can have the same Scriptures, can have a relationship with the same God—and yet live so differently! All three are claiming faith in God and service to the Lord—yet one is so far from God's heart!

Saul had one sword and 600 men and a form of religion. Jonathan had one sword, one armor bearer, and a big God. David had a sling and a BIG God!

The BIG God people have it!

Our beloved Professor Howard Hendricks used to look for the BIG God people in a seminary filled with future ministers so he could pour his time and energy into them. There were many who wanted time with Professor Hendricks, but he made time for those who were focused on a relationship with a BIG God.

But now the concept of having a BIG God has produced subsets of people all claiming to have a BIG God. How can the distinction be made now? Shall we invent a new concept of the REALLY BIG God?

*Or shall we just do what He wants us to do?*

This is the entire curriculum! “I have found David son of Jesse,” God told Samuel, “a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.”

The Pharisees were and are forever inventing ways to “worship and serve” the Lord without getting hurt, without harming their self-interests. David and Jonathan were living a larger-than-life adventure in the fellowship of those tuned to the heart of God. Doing everything He wanted them to do!

Erwin McManus has written an entire book—I’ve been through it as a study series and I highly recommend it—on the various attitudes between two extremes: a stale Christianity that sees only the familiar and the commonplace—and the larger-than-life adventure lived by someone committed, come what may, to doing what God calls them to: “Everything I want him or her to do!”

McManus warns us: “We must ensure that while we celebrate the goodness of God, we do not neglect the purposes of God.” Our routine can make us feel that all is in place, so that we quietly drift ... and eventually find ourselves far away from where God would have us be.

On the other hand, he describes Jonathan’s attitude as “**chasing daylight**—seizing the power of every moment for the expansion of God’s domain.”

Today, you and I have unprecedented opportunity to “chase daylight”—to make powerful gains for the Lord’s church—as dramatic events churn the kingdoms of the world.

1. In Western Europe, we are seeing more conversions and church plants than ever before. They used to imagine their wealth as “an unscalable wall.” Now it’s so low, you can hop, skip, and jump over it. Hearts are opening to the word of God.
2. Prices have come down on many fronts—including the price of the building where our seminary meets in Spain. We also have more students and church planters and evangelists, so more scholarship funds are needed. We are happy to report that there are “BIG God people” in our student body. In Spain, a secular country, you have to be a minority, you have to go against the crowd to be an evangelist. They’re eager for this challenge!

3. Ukraine is seeing an attendance spike in our 500-plus churches there. We have a backlog of church planters waiting to be part of the evangelizing and church-planting force working in the country. A two-year “scholarship” of \$125 per month is producing two local churches on average—two years!

Imagine the multiplication beyond the original investment. The church planter actually plants one church and then that church turns around and plants one or two others!

So the question is: If you were at the crossroads,  
faced with an opportunity for the kingdom, what  
would you do?

Would you stick to the familiar and the  
commonplace?

Or would you *run and chase*  
*daylight?*

God said, “I have found David son of Jesse.” David was found because God was looking. God is still looking today: “For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him” (2 Chronicles 16:9).

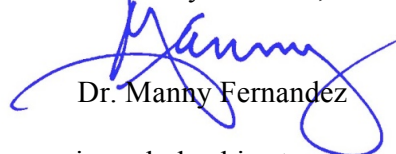
In this passage, God is looking for those whose hearts are truly committed to Him, but His purpose is not only that they may serve Him. His purpose is also to give them victories in battle.

Today, once again, the battle is on. Will you tune in to the heart of God for the world? Will you seize the opportunity to be fully committed to Him and do all that He wants us to do?

Join Him and engage with all your heart. Help us seize the moment and win the victories. Let us hear from you today with your most generous possible gift ... doing *all that He wants you to do!*

God bless you and strengthen you.

Gratefully in Christ,



Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. Let us chase daylight together. Help us give scholarships to a new generation of church planters and evangelists in Spain, in Ukraine, around the world. Help us seize the moment and take possession of our building in Madrid for \$1.2 million—to serve as a catalyst for evangelizing Europe. Be a part of this amazing larger-than-life adventure! Thank you!