

“Our Food”

Allan Pole on Sunday morning, March 12th, 2023



Theme: Jesus wants to give us His desires.

Text: John 4:27-42

Here's a thought: We become like Jesus as we walk and work with Him.

How long have you been working in the same company? One year? Five years? Ten? Walter Orthmann started as a shipping assistant on January 17th, 1938, when he was 15 years old at a textile company in Santa Catarina, Brazil. He has continued to work there for more than 84 years, as verified on January 6th, 2022. His passion, discipline and commitment motivated him to keep doing what he loves and, eventually, become an official Guinness World Records title holder for the longest career in the same company (<https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2022/4/100-year-old-brazilian-breaks-record-after-84-years-at-same-company-701664>).



Walter Orthmann turned 100 years old on April 19th, 2022. He celebrated his centenary in the company of his coworkers, friends and family with an unforgettable party. Walter reflects on his longevity, "When we do what we like, we don't see the time go by." He is in good health, with excellent mental clarity and memory. He enjoys a calm life and exercises every day. As a result, Walter has maintained enough vitality and energy to drive to his favourite place every day: the office. He comments that the best professional advice he can give is to try to work for a good company in an area where you feel motivated.

I admire Walter Orthmann. His commitment and longevity show that he caught the values and vision of his company. Walter gets me wondering. Who and what will we become if we commit ourselves to Jesus and His work?

Jesus and His disciples were on a road trip. While His disciples had gone into the town of Sychar to buy food, Jesus struck up a conversation with a Samaritan woman at a well in John 4:27-42:

27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” 28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him. 31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.” 32 But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” 33 Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?” 34 “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35 Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. 36 Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. 37 Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.” 39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. 41 And because of his words many more became believers. 42 They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.” NIV

Jesus wants to give us His desires while we:

Work



“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.” We are called to work but not to *our* work. We can do a lot of good work, but if this work does not flow from an ongoing relationship with the Lord, it is fruitless. We can even prophesy, drive out demons and perform many miracles without this relationship (Matthew 7:21-23). We are called to do the will of Him who sent us and to finish His work.

We get to know the *will* of God by getting to know *God*. I sound like Captain Obvious here, but we need to know and be reminded that there are no

shortcuts to knowing the will of God. Many sermons have been preached, and many books have been written on knowing God's will. We look for signs or try to follow formulas, but they are eternally effective only if they stem from abiding in the Lord and letting Him abide in us. There is no substitute for intimacy with the Lord. We need to know the Lord and His will to do His work.

Jesus spoke to people who thought they knew God and His will in Matthew 11:28-30:

28 Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. NIV

I suspect there are very few true-blue atheists. Most people believe in God somehow, and with these beliefs come rules or works they think they need to do. Whether praying five times daily or attending church weekly, people believe God must be appeased. If we are worn out, we are doing *our* work. God's work brings joy and purpose. God's work begins and ends with knowing God and doing His will.

Are you getting to know God by reading His Word, talking to Him, listening to Him and watching Him? Are you speaking His words and doing His works?

What on earth are you doing, for heaven's sake?

Jesus wants to give us His desires while we:

Work

Look



The agendas of Jesus and His disciples clash here in John chapter 4. The men focused on food and drink that would provide the energy they needed to move through Samaria as quickly as possible. They wanted to get out of Dodge, or in this case, Sychar. Samaria was not a place where Jews wanted to be, and Samaritans were not people Jews wanted to be around – and the feeling was mutual. Jesus, however, saw an opportunity to bring salvation to a woman and her town. Jesus was energized by sharing the Gospel and seeing the kingdom of God expand. This was His food; this is what put wind in His sails.

Jesus knew His disciples were focused on earthly thoughts, so He jolts them

with a question and a statement, “Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”

Jesus might be quoting a proverb about four more months and then the harvest. While the disciples think about the lunch they brought back from Sychar, Jesus looks up at the harvest before them – not of wheat or barley - but of people. Jesus calls His disciples to see the opportunity to harvest souls with Him.

A guy has a 15-acre farm where he breeds dogs to work on the farm. He grows cantaloupe, and the dogs sniff out the ripe ones at harvest time and return them to the barn. He says they are Melon Collies.

Let’s not be too hard on the disciples. We tend to get caught up with everyday life and lose sight of the big picture. Jesus nails it in Matthew 6:25-34:

25 Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? 28 And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. NIV

What is life about? Is it about food, drink and clothes? These are necessary and enjoyable, but the Lord calls us to look up. While most of the world goes about daily life without much thought of the bigger picture, the Lord calls us to live with eternity’s values in view. He wants us to open our eyes to what matters – loving Him and loving people (Matthew 22:37-40). He calls us to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. The King of kings is looking for people who want to be a part of His kingdom, and He calls us to search with Him.

Who and what do you see when you look around you every day? Do you see the next task that needs to be completed, or do you see divine opportunities?

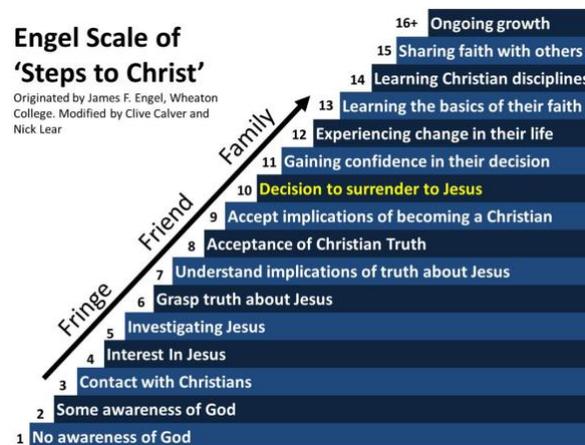
Jesus wants to give us His desires while we:

Work
Look
Sow



We need to watch and listen, to discern whether we need to sow or reap. Has someone gone before us to sow into this person or this group? If the answer is no, it could be spring, a time to plant.

James F. Engel and Wilbert Norton wrote a book published in 1975 called "What's Gone Wrong With the Harvest?" The Engel Scale illustrates how all people go on a journey or process to know God and follow Jesus.



They start with no awareness of God, but through contact with followers of Jesus and learning more about Him, they also decide to follow Jesus and invite others to do the same.

When I was a child and teen, most Canadians had a basic understanding of the Bible and Jesus, but this has changed. We can no longer assume people are aware of God and His love. Many have not heard the Gospel or Good News of Jesus. Many have not even known a faithful follower of Jesus who cares about them and prays for them. Sadly, Jesus has been misrepresented to many, so they have decided to ignore or reject Him without knowing who He is, what He says or what He does.

Consider the people around you – your family, friends, coworkers, fellow students and neighbours. Where do you think they are on the Engel Scale?

How might you help them take the next step up the scale toward Jesus?

Jesus wants to give us His desires while we:

Work

Look

Sow

Reap



We need to watch and listen, to discern whether we need to sow or reap. Has someone gone before us to sow into this person or this group? If the answer is yes, it could be fall, a time to harvest. It takes the sun, water, good soil and time working together for a plant or crop to grow, mature and ripen. We cannot rush this process.

Jesus explained in John 6:44, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.” NIV

Salvation requires a partnership between the sovereign God and a person’s free will. We cannot pressure or force someone to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, but we can provide the space for others to know Him and His ways so they can make a well-informed decision about His invitation.

How does one start a relationship with Jesus? It’s straightforward yet so challenging that we need the Holy Spirit to help us. We acknowledge who He is – our Saviour and our Lord. We recognize who we are – sinners who need His forgiveness.

Are there people around you who are close to deciding to follow Jesus? Will you pop the question and invite them to follow Jesus with you?

We don’t need to strive to be like Jesus. We become like Jesus as we walk and work with Him. Transformation comes as we catch His heart.

Jesus wants to give us His desires while we:

Work

Look

Sow

Reap

Jesus wants to give us His desires.

