

THE PROS AND CONS OF . . . PEOPLE

Being fiercely introverted like my mom, I often have wondered if this world would not be a better place without . . . *people* (other than me, of course). I have heard pastors joke how their jobs would not be so bad if it weren't for people (which, of course, is the main priority and calling of their ministry). As an introvert, people drain me, so I am recharged when I am not around them. Even if I were not introverted, I am often driven crazy by ignorant (as in "not knowing") customer and tech support people.

So I decided to informally poll myself (and I think we all know how painful that can be!) to determine if it would be better with or without people on the planet along with me. The first "plus" for people is that I am not a hunter/fisher type of person. I would not do very well trying to catch, let alone skin and prepare, any type of food other than fruits and vegetables, most of which I currently do not like. So, in other words, I would starve to death. This ended up being such a huge plus for people that I had to call off the rest of the debate. Not only did people bring me into the world, but I would not be able to survive without them . . . so I just concluded people are good to have around!

I also do not take for granted the fact that this ministry (LBM) could not exist without the support of . . . *people*. Most people have jobs that pay a regular salary each month. I do not. I am totally dependent on God to move others to either donate money when I preach or perform somewhere, or to donate money to this non-profit ministry toward His ongoing work through me. Since I have never felt like God wanted me to ask for a specific amount or minimum when I am ministering somewhere (or to ask others to donate) I have been totally humbled when God has raised up people to support me and this ministry.

That is another reason I have been so heartbroken when I have experienced the passing of so many people who have supported me through prayer as well as financially. Six people died in a little over a year who faithfully supported LBM. In most jobs there is an employer who pays your paycheck. It is often an entity or company and rarely just an individual. If it is an individual, more than likely you are doing something to earn that paycheck. You are working and getting paid for your work. My job/ministry is unique in that there are specific people who have felt led by God to support me, to allow me to have food on the table and pay expenses for this traveling (and increasingly online internet) ministry.

I no longer mow yards, clean your windows, or give dance lessons. I humbly realize that I do NO works that are directly beneficial to the people who are financially supporting me and this ministry, so I am totally at the mercy of God's grace and . . . *people*. We also cannot do any works to earn salvation so we are totally at the mercy of His grace. It is a free gift we must humbly receive (Eph. 2:8-9).

When *people* have supported this ministry and believed in me and what God has called me to, it makes it even more heartbreaking to see them leave this planet and

go to Heaven. It really is not primarily the loss of any financial income, but rather the loss of someone who invested their life into mine and now is no longer around to be that encouragement.

I wrote this as a main article over a year ago before Covid hit . . . and then all the other crazy things over the year kept pleading with me to write about them instead of this article on people. As I just finished writing most of this, I was watching a secular music awards show on TV and heard this song called . . . PEOPLE, which debuted at *#1 on the Billboard Awards Gospel* charts. The author is a Christian (Jonathan McReynolds) and a 3 time Grammy Award nominee. Here are some of the lyrics:

*Deliver me from . . . People, People
When you said you could heal me from many things
Did you mean . . . People, People
She was the reason I smiled in the morning
He took the last bit of joy I was storing
That's too much power for anything human
Deliver me from . . . People, People
Crazy . . . People, People
Trolling, Self-righteous, Entitled . . . People, People
Hating, Lying, Disrespectful, Forgive me when I'm one of those . . . People, People.
Deliver me.*

About the song he states:

"Everybody is both a victim and also complicit in this great crime of humanity. Again, we go back to grace. We thank God for having it for ourselves, but then we don't like that it was given to the people that we don't like. We ought to listen to the Spirit, who is supposed to be living within us, as much as we listen to our Instagram followers."

So if you happen to be reading this and you are a "people," then thank you for taking the time to read these articles, and praying for me from time to time. I pray, as people, we all continue faithfully on our journey towards the Son, loving other people as ourselves and God with all our hearts!

"Don't tell God how big the storm is . . . tell the storm how big God is!"