

WAITING FOR INSPIRATION?

By D. Barry Weir

(Editor's note: The following is adapted and expanded by D. Barry Weir from a "Monday Memo" column by Steve May, founder of an evangelistic outreach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, applying his observations to today's workplace.)

The artist Chuck Close once said, "Inspiration is for amateurs – the rest of us just show up and get to work." Along the same lines, Tchaikovsky, made the observation, "a self-respecting artist must not fold his hands on the pretext that he is not in the mood." Poet E.B. White expressed the same idea this way: "A writer who waits for ideal conditions under which to work will die without putting a word on paper."

The consensus among successful creative types is that over the long haul, perspiration is more important than inspiration. Screenwriter Neil Gaiman offered a useful insight about writing on the Nerdist podcast. Talking about a novelist's need to be consistent, Gaiman said (in summary), "You have to make your word count each day; those words won't wait for you. You have to write whether you're 'inspired' or not. And the weird thing is six months from now, you'll look back and won't be able to remember which scenes you wrote when you were inspired and which scenes you wrote because they had to be written."

What does this have to do with workplace or the everyday challenges of living a life devoted to Jesus Christ? Quite a bit, actually. In our work, we must learn to resist the temptation of waiting for inspiration to make an important sales call, develop an effective strategy to expand the business, or complete that project we have been postponing for too long. And we need to remind those we lead (and remind ourselves, too) the Christian life isn't lived by inspiration. We don't wait for the moment to arrive when we feel like doing something right. We just need to do right, today and every day, whether we feel inspired or not.

Is there something you've been putting off unnecessarily while you wait for the right inspiration? Try perspiration, rather than waiting on inspiration to arrive. Forget about how little you feel like doing the task at hand. In the words of the Nike marketing slogan, "Just do it." In six months – or for the remainder of eternity – It will not matter how inspired you felt at the time. It will matter only that you did what needed to be done. Here are some insights I have found helpful from the Bible:

Inertia can be the result of disobedience. In physics, *inertia* is defined as "lack of movement or activity especially when movement or activity is wanted or needed." We might sugarcoat this lack of action by calling it procrastination, but the Bible uses a different term: "*If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is **sin** for them*" (James 4:17). Waiting for inspiration, rather than moving into action when necessary, is considered sin.

When you find something to do, do it. When you have the opportunity comes to accomplish something, pursue it eagerly. You might not get another chance at a later time.

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Move into action with the right motives. It helps to remind ourselves not only what we should do, but also why we are doing it – and for whom. *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Colossians 3:23).*

D. Barry Weir is owner of D. Barry Weir & Associates, an information technology and services company. He is a CBMC leader and a member of the area leadership team for Orange County, California, U.S.A.

CBMC INTERNATIONAL: Jim Firnstahl, President
2850 N. Swan Road, Suite 160 ▪ Tucson, Arizona 85712 ▪ U.S.A.
TEL.: 520-334-1114 ▪ E-MAIL: mmanna@cbmcint.org
Web site: www.cbmcint.org Please direct any requests or change of address to:
jmarple@cbmcint.org

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Do you often find yourself delaying specific action at work, or in your personal life, because – as this "Monday Manna" is titled, you are waiting for inspiration?
2. In your view, is a decision to wait until the moment of inspiration arrives always a bad thing to do? Explain your answer.
3. Most of us – if not all – have experienced times when moving into action without taking sufficient time for planning and preparation proved equally bad. How do you think a person can discern when waiting for inspiration is warranted – and when it is not?
4. What is your reaction to the biblical declaration that if we know the good we should do and fail to do it, our inactivity equates to sin? Do you think this assessment is too harsh? Explain your answer.

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 10:4, 12:11,24, 14:23, 16:26, 24:30-34; Matthew 5:16, 6:33-34; Colossians 3:17