



Your NAWE Companion

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Swallowed Up with Envy

Tony Elder, *Conyers, GA*

Talk about a rude awakening! Maybe you heard about the poor guy in Florida a few years ago who was asleep in bed when a sinkhole opened up, swallowing him, his bed, and practically the whole room. The nightmarish facts make it sound like a scene from some Hollywood disaster movie. I understand that the man was screaming for help as he was plunged twenty or thirty feet and as the ground closed back in over him.

It's hard to imagine such a horrible fate. If I lived in one of those areas of Florida where such sinkholes are prevalent, after hearing this story I might be tempted to sleep with a rope tied around my leg with the other end anchored to the ceiling fan.

This incident reminds me of a time when God used similar means to bring judgment on a group of Israelites. Let me make it clear, I have no reason to believe this tragic event in Florida had anything to do with God's wrath being poured out on this particular man who died in such an awful manner. Some such events are simply natural disasters that adversely affect the godly and the ungodly alike.

The biblical incident to which I referred took place during the time of Moses. A group of men from the tribe of Levi rose up in rebellion against Moses and Aaron. They had become envious of the two top leaders of the Israelites and dissatisfied with the position and sacred responsibilities God had entrusted to them – the care of the tabernacle. They wanted to be priests too, even though God had not chosen them for that high office.

This account ends up with God's judgment falling on that group in a unique way. The earth opened and swallowed them up, along with their families and possessions. The Bible says, "They and all those with them went alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly" (Numbers 16:33).

This incident should serve as a reminder to all of us not to take lightly the position God has put us in and the responsibilities for which He has equipped us. It's tempting to enviously look at others who are gifted differently from us and wish we could be like them. We may even go so far as to turn away from what God has called us to be in order to seek to be like someone else.

Don't get me wrong. We need to be open to new avenues God may open up for us as we go through life. And some of those will stretch us and get us out of our comfort zones. But let's not seek greener pastures simply because we're discontented with who we are, how God has made us, and with the gifts He's given us. Let's not try to become something we're not and that God doesn't intend for us to be.

For example, I enjoy music and admire those who inspire others with their singing. But anyone who has ever heard me sing will agree that it would be ridiculous for me to try to become a soloist.

Moses reminded those men that what God had called them to do in serving in the tabernacle was not a small thing. And wherever God puts us and whatever role He wants us to play in life, it's not a small thing either.

Be grateful for how God has created you and for the position He has put you in to serve Him. Rest assured that it is no small thing. However if you insist on thinking otherwise, you might want to consider sleeping with a rope tied to your leg.

June—July 2017



Praise & Prayer

Praise the Lord for the wonderful fellowship at our Ministers' & Wives' Retreat.

Give thanks that Laurens Hudson's recent surgery went well and was effective.

Pray for others with physical needs, including Walter Moody, Dewey Fleming, and Lance Snipes.

Be praying for our upcoming Annual Meeting:

- for our speaker
- for inspiring services
- for good fellowship
- for safe travels
- for guidance in the business matters

Annual Meeting

Greetings from Our Speaker

Steve Blakemore, *Jackson, MS*

I am very excited to be a part of this year's NAWE conference. As a seminary professor and someone who has traveled the country speaking to churches and university groups, I am convinced that the theological and spiritual heritage of the Wesleyan tradition can be a great gift to evangelical Christianity in America today. Sadly, many of the larger denominations that trace their roots back to John and Charles Wesley have for the most part abandoned or forgotten the doctrinal and theological foundations that birthed the "Methodist" movement. There is, therefore, a great need for groups of people who have been shaped by the Wesleyan tradition's spiritual heritage to band together and rediscover their voices in witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

While we can be grateful for and rejoice in the traditions of other evangelical Christians--and even though our goal is not to make "Wesleyans" out of everyone--we have been entrusted with a very rich vision of the Gospel. Ours is a theological tradition that preaches that God does not only forgive us for our sins, but God's Holy Spirit can and will, through faith in Jesus Christ and his atoning work, transform our lives into the holy image of God's Only Begotten Son. Victory over the power of sin as well as freedom from condemnation is our message to the church and the world. Also, following the Wesley's and the witness they left us, we understand that personal salvation and social ministries of compassion always go hand in hand. We don't need to choose between one or the other, because the Kingdom of God has power both for the individual and the culture at large.

During the time we will be together in worship and fellowship God will be faithful to meet with us; and I look forward to experiencing His presence with you. Praising Him, hearing His Word, and encouraging one another, we will all be glad that we took the time to meet with each other in His presence. Know that I will be praying for the days in July; and I trust you will hold me up in prayer, as well.

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Calendar

July 11-13: Annual Meeting at Wesley Community Fellowship in Conyers, GA