

“RECLAIM THE HIGHER WAY”

INTRODUCTION:

Listen to this true phone call from the WordPerfect Help Line:

“Ridge Hall computer assistance; may I help you?”
“Yes, well, I’m having trouble with WordPerfect.”
“What sort of trouble?”
“Well, I was just typing along, and all of a sudden the words went away.”
“Went away?”
“They disappeared.”
“Hmm. So what does your screen look like now?”
“Nothing.”
“Nothing?”
“It’s blank, it won’t accept anything when I type.”
“Are you still in WordPerfect, or did you get out?”
“How do I tell?”
“Can you see the C: prompt on the screen?”
“What’s a sea-prompt?”
“Never mind, can you move your cursor around the screen?”
“There isn’t any cursor; I told you, it won’t accept anything I type.”
“Does your monitor have a power indicator?”
“What’s a monitor?”
“It’s the thing with the screen on it that looks like a TV. Does it have a little light that tells you when it’s on?”
“I don’t know.”
“Well, then look on the back of the monitor and find where the power cord goes into it. Can you see that?”
“Yes, I think so.”
“Great. Follow the cord to the plug, and tell me if it’s plugged into the wall.”
“Yes, it is.”
“When you were behind the monitor, did you notice that there were two cables plugged into the back of it, not just one?”
“No.”
“Well, there are. I need you to look back there again and find the other cable.”
“Okay, here it is.”
“Follow it for me, and tell me if it’s plugged securely into the back of your computer.”
“I can’t reach.”
“Uh huh. Well, can you see if it is?”
“No.”
“Even if you maybe put your knee on something and lean way over?”
“Oh, it’s not because I don’t have the right angle - - it’s because it’s dark.”
“Dark?”
“Yes, the office light is off, and the only light I have is coming in from the window.”
“Well, turn on the office light then.”
“I can’t.”
“No? Why not?”
“Because there’s a power failure.”

"A power. . . A power failure? Aha, okay, we've got it licked now. Do you still have the boxes and manuals and packing stuff your computer came in?"
"Well, yes, I keep them in the closet."
"Good. Go get them, and unplug your system and pack it up just like it was when you got it. Then take it back to the store you bought it from."
"Really? Is it that bad?"
"Yes, I'm afraid it is."
"Well, all right then, I suppose. What do I tell them?"
"Tell them you're too stupid to own a computer."

Or maybe the caller is smarter than many today who are so caught up in **videophilia** and **computerphilia**.

Computers ... wow! ...

Around the world people have become so hooked on computer screen time. Here's a true illustration of just how hooked some folks have become:

A recent CNN program showed pictures of a boot camp in China for young people who are obsessed with on-screen computer time. One young man told his story of desperation. He had even attempted suicide because he was unable to control his need for the love of the computer. Parents of these youth send them to government operated camps to de-program them.

Wow! But how much time do you and I spend before video generated images? Not just computer screens,

but TV, DVDs, ipods, movies, Blackberries?

Lots.

There's even a term for this: **videophilia** – the love of video. The root word "*philia*" means *love* and we can get caught up in so many forms of love.

Look at these forms listed on the screen:

Shopping-philia,

War-philia,

Control-philia,

Food-philia,

Past-philia,

Approva-lphilia,

Guilt-philia,

Busy-philia.

But what about ...

Theophilia

What? What is that?

Theo = "God" and philia = "Love of" - **What of our love of God?**

Our many philiias tend to keep us from the most important philia of all - our **Love of God**. How do we unhook the hooks of those philiias that tend to get our lives out of balance?

The Isaiah 55 passage tells us how to keep our love of God foremost while we enjoy, within good balance, the other philiias of life.

How do we keep spiritually strong and healthy?

The passage begins with the words "Ho – Hey – Come!!!"

This is calling for your attention and offering you an invitation.

The word "Ho" was a strong word in its day. Do you remember the song the Seven Dwarf's sang?

*"Hi ho, Hi ho, its off to work we go (la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la).
Hi ho, HiHo, Hi Ho."*

"Ho"- it means give me your attention, come on – let's go. So in modern words:
"Hey there! You! - all you who are thirsty, come to the water."

What water? Where? Who?

The water God has supplied.

Are you penniless? Don't have any money?

Come buy and eat. Buy without money, every thing is free. Listen, get this, this text is speaking to **you** about God's invitation to you and offers three key guaranteed gifts:

- 1 – Support Supply
- 2 – Restoration
- 3 – Higher Ways and Higher Thinking

1 - Support Supply

God says, "I have plenty of living water for you to drink and plenty of life-giving, life-nourishing words for you to feed on." Quit feeding on junk (i.e. cotton candy). Cotton candy is nothing more than sugar blown out into a sticky goo. No real nourishment there. Feed on that and you won't have much strength. "Listen to me, listen well," says God –

"EAT ONLY THE BEST, FILL YOURSELF WITH ONLY THE FINEST."

Our problem is that we have become so accustomed to eating junk food, so full of things that don't satisfy – substitutes for the quality life that God wants us to have. We're stuffed with stuff that's not the best – not the finest that the Living God envisions for us. God says, "Ho – Hey – Come. Pay attention. Listen carefully. I've supplied just what you need to have the best – the finest life."

God makes a **covenant** (i.e. a promise) with you, an everlasting covenant, a commitment. This commitment is absolutely sure, solid, and based on enduring love.

Oh! **THEOPHILIA – Don't you just Love God?**

Such a commitment ... such an enduring love.

This is so because God says so. **Absolutely!**

And listen . . . hear the second guaranteed God offers – **RESTORATION.**

2 – Restoration

What's that?

God guarantees to bring you back when you turn away from ways of abandoning a wicked- wrong path; from a wrong path, a dumb direction, an evil way. God doesn't say, "You dummy – pack up your spiritual computer and send it back to me. You're too stupid to live the spiritual best and finest life!!!"

No, God says, "Turn back and come back to me." God says, "I am merciful and lavish with forgiveness." God says, "Got a problem? Bring it on, let go of it, come and learn some more."

Oh! **THEOPHILIA – Don't you just Love God?**

And don't miss this – the third guarantee from God for your abundantly better and finer life.

3 - Higher Ways – Higher Thinking

We can all benefit from discovering and following a higher way of living, a higher plain than what we've already found. Why, even the Jefferson's in the old sitcom about a dry cleaning business, started and ended their show with the song; "Moving On Up".

Well, God says, "My ways, my thinking are Higher – Come On Up!"

God's thinking is not limited to ours, not limited by our understanding, our insights. Oh, but we want to hold on to our ways, our thoughts. . . we're just oh so comfortable with these.

God says, "I don't think that way. I've got some new thoughts for you and the way you work, ok, but it's not my way – I've got some better ways for you."

Just in case we don't get a clear picture here, the writer says to look up at the sky. Do you see how high the sky is above you? Well, God's ways and thinking are that much higher than yours. Keep in mind that this is not a put down. It's an invitation to Higher Thinking and Higher Ways.

Come – Drink – Eat – Come – Seek.

Seek the Lord while he may be found (Isaiah 55:6).

How do we do that?

If God's ways, God's thoughts are way up there and we're way down here, can we connect?

Yes.

How?

Drink, feed on God's living water and feed on God's higher thoughts.

How?

Good, you want an action plan. Here it is:

Find A Balance: *Balance your work and your play time.* To live in Theophilia – love with God – we need to balance our work and work with God's rest and play restoration. We dry out, our lives become parched, without meaning, when we live out of balance. When we are over-committed to our jobs, to work, and to other things, they keep us from God love.

Take A Sabbath: *One day a week that is totally different from every other day of work.* Give your love of God, a place of honor among your other passions and pursuits. But, don't you say you have such a full schedule; that you must work, work, work, so that you can do the work of God.

Oh, are we that important, that we can think higher than God? Do we have to work this hard, rather than trust God's higher way of ceasing, stopping, interrupting the rat race for one day a week to have a very different kind of a day to praise God and pray ... to rest in God's provision . . . to eat and drink without money?

Is it that we've become so obsessive and compulsive in our thoughts and ways that we have become so earthbound in them and are missing the **HIGHER**?

Take the Sabbath – it's an act of faith, and an act of higher thinking, of trusting God's ways.

Enjoy The Benefits: *Come – Drink – Eat of what God has supplied.* Be nourished in prayerful thoughts to God. Gain new insights, new perspectives.

Feed on the Word of God. Eat the good words, not the junk words. Here are the benefits you'll find:

- ▶ Nourishment
- ▶ New Insights
- ▶ New Ways
- ▶ Assurance
- ▶ Forgiveness
- ▶ Direction
- ▶ Love

In God's word you find **assurance** of your forgiveness and **direction** for the next steps in your life. Get the view from above – it's far, far, far more valuable than our human view alone.

Here's Your Action Plan:

- 1. Gather Your Thoughts**
- 2. Quiet Your Heart**
- 3. Renew Your Love Affair with God**

for Higher Thoughts and Higher Ways.

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