

BOOK TWO: Show Him The Money



Upon arriving at the church, he found Frank sitting at a table in the church fellowship hall with several people he did not know; everyone was wearing name tags. Frank introduced them and led him over to the table with laden with cookies, fruit and vegetables. There was coffee, iced tea, juice, ice water and hot water for tea or cocoa. Frank laughed in response to his unspoken question: "The coffee is decaf; if you want caffeine you'll need to drink tea. Caffeine's one of the problems with burnout." He grabbed a regular tea bag, made tea and came back to the table.

"What's going on here tonight?" he asked Frank. The room was set up with 20 or so tables; some were crowded, some were empty, at others individuals were reading through notebooks or other materials. Each table had a small basket; he could see the one on their table held a dozen clothes pins in a variety of bright colors.

"We call this *Solomon's Porch*," Frank explained. "It's modeled on two concepts: the verse in Acts 5:12 where the Apostles gathered daily in the New Testament version of a public park called Solomon's Portico, and also on the traditional Friday beer blasts at Silicon Valley startups - minus the beer, of course."

"What is the purpose?"

"Organizations are living systems built out of people. The Bible identifies the church as such: we are the body of Christ. Every part of a system is linked to every

other part, and every part has a need from time to time to communicate with other parts. Solomon's Porch is that communication time. Any leader in our church can drop by on Wednesday night and find out what he or she needs to know. They can stay for the full three hours or just a few minutes."

"What's going on tonight?"

"That group over there is studying the book of Proverbs. The group in that corner is a class led by one of our associate pastors on how to lead a meeting." Frank pointed to a man sitting at a table alone. A little stand on the table held a card where all could see it; printed on the card was the word Missions. "That's our missions committee chair. The fact that he's claimed a table indicates that there will be some sort of committee meeting tonight." Across the room was a card printed "Youth Camping Trip" on a stand and a boisterous crowd of teenagers. One of the teens put a bright red clothespin on the card and Frank rose from the table.

"That red clothespin is a request for input from the Finance Committee, and I'm representing them tonight. See you in a bit." It was disorganized, but there was a lot of energy in the room, quite a difference from the mall. People were having fun.



He looked at the two left with him at the table. "What table are we?" he asked jokingly. The woman, identified as "Angel" by her name tag, said, "We are a pet project of Frank and the senior minister. Bill and I call this the burnout table but Frank and the

senior pastor call it the OMM. table."

"Burnout table?"

"We are both survivors of professional burnout. Pretty severe cases. Frank told us you would be here tonight, so we came to meet you. Our main group normally meets here on the fourth Wednesday of the month, but we are clergy."

"Why do you call him Bill and his name tag says 'Oscar'?"

"It's short for Oscar the Grouch," Bill answered. "From Sesame Street. My burnout manifested itself as anger and complaining. So the group labeled me as 'Oscar'. Whenever I get out of line somebody calls me Oscar and that wakes me up from being a grouch. My goal is to be more 'Bill' and less 'Oscar' to the people I work with."

"I compensated by pretending to be perfect and flawless so my nickname became 'Angel' - which we all know none of us are."

"What's Frank's nickname?"

They snickered. "Frank!"

"What does OMM stand for?"

"That's what the senior pastor calls his cure for burnout. He now prefers to call himself the *One Minute Minister*. He even has that as the title on his business card."

"Why the One Minute Minister?"

"Because it only takes a minute to change direction," Bill said.

"Because it only takes a minute to ask God for guidance," Angel said.

"Because it only takes a minute to show people you care," Bill said.

"Because it only takes a minute to get started on your paperwork!" Frank said,

laughing, as he returned to the table. Bill crumpled up a piece of paper and threw it at him.

"Because it only takes a minute to be honest about your imperfections."

"Because it only takes a minute to recognize that you're acting like a grouch."

"Because we clean up our messes one minute at a time," Frank said, throwing the paper back at Bill.

"Because we relate to God one minute at a time," Angel said.

"Because we relate to our people one minute at a time," Bill said.

"Because we tie up our loose ends one minute at a time," Frank said, clipping a green clothespin to the placard.

"How long did you rehearse that?" the minister asked. "And who's the comedy routine for?"

They just looked at him and smiled.

Frank nodded toward the table of teenagers where an older man excused himself and walked toward them. Dressed casually in khaki's and a polo shirt, he radiated calmness, competence and confidence. "Hello," he greeted him. "I'm the One Minute Minister."



As the One Minute Minister sat down at their table, Bill took an index card out of a shirt pocket filled with them. "Would you mind sharing with us how we can be in contact with you . . . name, address, phone, email, etc.?"

As he wrote his information down on the card he listened while they chatted with one another. An interesting thing happened when he slid the card across the table. Angel got a bound record book out of her purse and made a note of his information, while the One Minute Minister dictated his information into a digital recorder smaller than a cell phone. Frank already had the information in his day planner.

"I've known of you for many years," the One Minute Minister said to him, "but I'm glad to finally meet you." Upon seeing the look in his face, the One Minute Minister explained, "Oh, we've shook hands and passed the time at denominational meetings, but that's a far cry from sitting at this table tonight. That's pseudocommunity, the imitation of the real thing; hopefully, here we strive for the real thing. No one sits at this table, including me, if they don't at one time or another need real help. I needed it once, and I received it, and now I'm a One Minute Minister and I'm trying to return the favor."

"What is the 'one minute' thing?"

"Things go wrong one minute at a time. And it only takes a minute to start to turn them right again. Consider a jet airliner flying from New York to Los Angeles. It will constantly drift off course in its journey. It takes less than a minute, however, to get it back on course. Every minute between course corrections puts it farther and farther away from the quickest path to the true destination. I'm a One Minute Minister because I frequently take a minute to get back on course in my life."

"I don't think I have a problem staying on course; my problem feels like I've forgotten where I'm going. I'm no longer sure what is off course and on course."

"That's a common problem," said the One Minute Minister. "But it's a deceptive one. The wandering you've just described to me is the situation of a pilot who is either

lost or who is confused as to which destination is best. The minute you choose a destination, you are not lost; you are only on course or off course."

"I think I understand what you are saying."



"Let's talk about our careers as pastors," the One Minute Minister said. "When we woke up and realized that we had a call to the ministry, we were excited to be doing God's work and working for God. Our calling was a beacon that led us in a direction. Our goal was to please God and fulfill our calling. And then what happened?"

"They told us to go to a seminary."

"Exactly; what a subtle shift in the goal, but it took us off course. Now we had a new course: finish seminary. And how do we do that?"

When he looked blank, Angel supplied the answer: "Please the professors."

"And this change of course led to another after graduation. We were sent to a small church, eager to prove ourselves by doing what?"

"Please the people!" Bill interjected.

"Exactly. And how do you please the people?"

"You do it their way."

"Or?"

"You lose your job."

"So here is the new course: please everybody. And how many people is it possible for one minister to please?"

"In seminary they said that you needed more staff to serve a church of more than 100 in average worship attendance."

"And how many people do you have now?"

"Close to 200."

"You must be good at this job of pleasing people. So how does it feel, racing from one person to another, trying to please all of them?"

"Exhausting."

"So the meaning of on course has been changing all these years, to where now to be on course means to please all your people. How long has it been, honestly, since your only goal was to please God?"

"Years."

"What would happen if you stopped trying to please everybody and set a course to please God?"

"I would lose everything I've worked for all these years."

"Ah! Not necessarily so, but it feels like that, doesn't it? But at the same time, isn't there a part of you that dreams of exactly that? Doing some other work? Aren't you already fantasizing of letting go of it all anyway? Isn't it becoming too great a burden to carry?"

"Yes."

"So, what does this mean, when Jesus says to us: *Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke on you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.*"

"It's not that easy."

"Oh, but it is. You were called to pull the yoke of Christ, and you have all you need to pull that yoke, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Over the years you have taken upon yourself many other yokes; they are the problem. Remove them one by one - and with as little fuss as possible - and you will find that you have returned to your original calling: to please God."

"It sounds too good to be true."

"It's what being a One Minute Minister means to me: one minute at a time, I yield myself to God, then seek to learn and do what pleases Jesus Christ. That's my primary course correction."

The One Minute Minister took his hand and looked him in the eyes. "Are you ready for something different?" He nodded. "We can help, act as guides, but are you willing to do the work necessary to change?"

"Yes." The minister was certain that he wanted a change.

"OK. Remember your calling." The One Minute Minister rose to go to another table. "He's ready. Show him the money."



"Show me the money?"

Frank picked up an envelope out of the basket and opened it. "Basically, the problem of accumulating too many yokes and burning out is a problem of time management. We use time management in the wrong way: to help us to have the time

to do 'things right.' Whenever we gain some efficiency, we add to the number of things we have to do right until we are maxed out again. The best purpose of time management is to move from 'doing things right' to 'doing the right things'.¹

"You've lost me."

"That's why we're going to show you the money. Ever heard of the Pareto principle or the 80/20 rule?"

"Yes."

"Define the Pareto principle for me."

"The 80/20 rule is that in human communities correlations frequently break down into groups of eighty percent and twenty percent."

"Such as?"

"Eighty percent of the sales are made by twenty percent of the sales people. The other twenty percent of sales are made by the other eighty percent ."

"Exactly. Eighty percent of the complaints are made by twenty percent of the church members."

"It's not always negative," Bill said. "Eighty percent of the compliments are made by twenty percent of the church members."

"And, more to the point, eighty percent of the profit comes from twenty percent of the products," Angel finished.

"Now," Frank said, "we will apply the Pareto principle to what you do each day." He opened the envelope and counted out five \$20 dollar bills onto the table. It was play

¹Source: Peter Drucker, *The Effective Executive* (?)

money.

"Each of these bills represents twenty percent of your time each day. All together they add up to 100% then, right?"

"Right."

"Because of the 80/20 rule you know that eighty percent of the benefit or profit or whatever you want to call it, will come from one and only one of these tasks." Frank laid down four more \$20 bills next to one of the original \$20 bills. "You agree?"

"Yes."

"Twenty dollars input, eighty dollars output?"

"Yes."

"Twenty percent input, eighty percent output?"

"Yes."

"This is good, right?"

"Yes."

"Now, how much of the total amount is left to distribute among the other tasks?"

"\$20."

"Then how much to each one?"

Light dawns. "\$5"

"OK. Twenty dollars input, five dollars output. And what do we call that?"

"Uhhh..."

"A loss," Bill said.

"A bad investment of our time," Angel said.

"A waste of our time," Frank said.



"So what you are trying to say is..."

"That eighty percent of what you are doing is a waste of time."

"But everything I am doing is important!!!"

"No, the fact is that eighty percent of what you are doing is a waste of time."

"But everything I am doing is so urgent and demanding!!!"

"No, the fact is that eighty percent of what you are doing is a waste of time."

"But every day I go from crisis to crisis!!!"

"No, the crisis is that eighty percent of what you are doing is a waste of time."

"But I am so busy!!!"

"Yes, you are busy. No doubt about it. But the fact is that eighty percent of what you are busy with is a waste of time."

"And if you are so busy wasting your time, all you have to do is to cut out the bad investments and you won't be so busy," Bill said.

"To put it in the positive," Angel said, "you won't be so busy if you focus primarily on the vital twenty percent ."

"But ... but ... but ..."

"Sorry, Frank said. "It's a reality. In real life, the percentages may not be exactly 80/20. For some people, the ratio might be 90/10, for others 60/40. But it is a fact of life that some tasks are more valuable than others. The real problem you have, however, is not so obvious. Can you guess what it is?"

"Everything I do seems equally important!"

"But it demonstrably is not equally important. So what's the problem?"

"I can't tell the difference?"

"That's your problem. And mine."

"And mine," Angel said.

"And mine," Bill said.

"And if you don't learn to tell the difference, what happens? You get too busy?"

"Until you crash," Frank said.

"Until you hit bottom," Bill said.

"Until you come face to face with reality," Angel said.

"But how can you tell the difference?"

They only smiled at him. "It only takes a minute!" they chorused together.

"OK," he smiled. "I have a minute."

"No, it's not that easy," Frank said. "Teaching the first concept takes more than a minute. It's only a minute to put it into practice."

"The first concept?"

"There are three basic concepts in the One Minute system for personal, spiritual renewal. When we change what we do with our time, we change the results we get."

Angel smiled. "I'm usually the one that gets to teach the first concept. Can you meet me for breakfast tomorrow?"

"I'm usually in my office in the mornings..."

She pointed to the dollar bills. "Which one is the vital twenty percent here? Learning a life changing concept or sticking with your old routine?"

"OK, OK, breakfast it is."

"And you'll be staying with Carol and me tonight," Frank said. I've already called your wife."

"OK," he yielded. No late night channel zapping tonight, he thought glumly. I wonder who thought of that - Frank or my wife?