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# Gleanings

*by Gerald R. Chester, Ph.D.*

## Divine Problem Solving

Ron was a typical risk-taking entrepreneur. Seeing an opportunity, he borrowed heavily to invest in gold stock. The stock appreciated rapidly, but before Ron could sell his position, the stock market was closed. The government declared an economic emergency, in part because of the rapid appreciation of the value of gold. As a result, Ron, unable to repay his loans, was forced into bankruptcy. He lost everything.

A friend gave Ron a car and gas money so Ron could begin a new job as a sales representative for a pharmaceutical company that involved traveling over a wide area. Somewhat disillusioned but grateful, Ron embarked on his new career.

During his first trimester while on a sales trip, Ron was traveling through the desert region of southwest Africa (now Namibia). In prayer he had heard the Lord say, "I will teach you with wisdom, but not hard."

The road he was traveling on was rarely used, the temperature was unbearable, and he was miles from civilization when the radiator in his car lost its coolant. He had no means of communication, no expectation of being found, and no hope of finding help. What was he to do?

Ron employed the divine problem-solving methodology found in Matthew 7:7-8: ask, seek, knock. Ask means to pray. Seek implies doing research to determine available options. And knock is the process of pursuing the best options.

He prayed asking the Lord for guidance and direction. Then he examined his options. The idea of waiting for someone to come by didn't seem like a good option. As Ron prayed, he felt that he was supposed to drive over the next hill and look for a sign. Given that the car had no coolant, he had to be very careful to manage this process in the desert heat. Gingerly moving the car, he climbed the hill.

Just over the hill, he saw a small sign, a sign that he probably would not normally have seen, directing him off the main road onto a secondary road. Taking this road would probably put him even more at risk. He had little hope of anyone finding him on the main road, much less on a secondary road. Nevertheless, he decided to "knock on the door," so he turned and drove down the secondary road.

A few miles down the road, he came over the top of a hill and was shocked by what he saw—a town. How could this be? He hadn't even known that this town existed.

Finding a garage, he left his car to be repaired. The garage attendant suggested that Ron go across the street to get something to eat in the hospital cafeteria.

As Ron sat down with his tray of food, someone called him by name. He looked up and a gregarious man in doctor's attire greeted him. As it turned out, the doctor had played rugby against Ron during their younger years.

The doctor joined Ron at his table. A delightful conversation ensued as the men reminisced about days gone by. The doctor then inquired about Ron's vocation. Ron explained that he was a pharmaceutical sales representative. The doctor responded that he was in charge of all purchasing for the hospital, as well as all the hospitals within the mining company. Ron left the hospital a short time later with a large product order. He continued doing business with the company for years to come.

The lessons from this story are numerous. There is the issue of learning to walk by faith and not by sight. We all struggle with allowing bad circumstances to lead us to despair, discouragement, and fear. Learning to rise above circumstances trusting in the goodness of God is a difficult skill for all of us.

But perhaps an even more profound lesson from this story is the use and power of the divine problem-solving methodology—ask, seek, knock. Asking is prayer, seeking is research, and knocking is action. For many of us problems become insurmountable because of despair, discouragement, and fear, which means that we are not walking by faith. It is an amazing reality that this simple methodology can be a powerful tool to help us practice the principle of walking by faith.

The key to the divine problem-solving methodology is walking humbly and prayerfully by faith, not by sight. Ron experienced the power of this reality. His approach to his problem illustrates the efficacy of the divine problem-solving methodology. Give it a try; let this methodology be a tool in your life to better enable you to walk by faith, not by sight.

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