

Are You 'Clingy'?

A canine member of our family is a beautiful black lab we affectionately call “Abby”, short for her official registered name – Countess Abigail of the Hunt! She is neither royalty nor a hunter, but she is ‘clingy’! She constantly wants to be close and petted – often to the point of ridiculous. ‘Clingy’ is not always an annoying or alienating thing. The Bible gives us a perspective on being ‘clingy’ that is vital to our spiritual health in today’s Templates of Truth.

The Hebrew language of the Bible has a word for ‘clingy’ with several shades of meaning - to be deeply attracted to; to pursue intensely and remain close; to fasten a grip upon; to adhere to and be permanently fastened. The word is used in Genesis 2:24 to describe marriage as one man to one woman for life – (to *cleave* to each other). It was also a word applied to the condition of leprosy. Since there was no cure for leprosy in ancient days, once a person contacted the disease, it was permanently attached to his body.

The deathbed words of Joshua to the people of Israel included this admonition – *cling to the Lord your God* (Joshua 23:8). That is exactly the testimony attributed to the life of King Hezekiah of Judah – *he clung to the Lord* (II Kings 18:6). What does it mean to cling to the Lord? In essence, it describes our pursuit of God. As we examine the life of this faithful king, we see the things of his character and lifestyle that bear evidence of this pursuit.

A Personal Pursuit – The Biblical writer states that Hezekiah *trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel* (II Kings 18:5). Trusting God is an expression in Scripture that frequently describes a person’s faith and belief in God. When we accept Christ as our personal Savior, we are proclaiming our trust & acceptance of all that He is, all He has done and all that He promises to us. We are committing our life to Him in a very personal, intimate relationship.

A Passionate Pursuit – Hezekiah’s personal testimony before the Lord was – *I have walked before Thee in truth and with a whole heart* (II Kings 20:3). Here we see the depth of his personal commitment. It was a passionate priority in his life. Not just part of him, but Hezekiah desired God with his whole heart. Every fiber of his being pursued God and His truth with passion, zeal, and fervency.

A Persistent Pursuit – When confronted with challenging circumstances, Hezekiah was faithful to give God his first and foremost appeal. He sought divine counsel from God’s prophet, Isaiah (II Kings 18:2). Before making any decisions he took matters before the Lord and sought the will and plan of God (II Kings 19:1, 14-15). He was careful to follow that which God had revealed with all diligence, faithfulness and obedience – *and he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments* (II Kings 18:6).

A Productive Pursuit – Clinging to God is not just a heart commitment, it is also a hand commitment. When we come to understand that which God desires & expects of us, we roll up

our sleeves and perform the work He has called us to. Hezekiah *removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah... (and) broke in pieces the bronze serpent* (II Kings 18:4). Hezekiah didn't just have a divine fervor, he also had divine feet. He put into action and made so that which God had made known.

A Powerful Pursuit – God honored Hezekiah's faithfulness with results and a demonstration of His divine power. When he took the matter of the Assyrian assault before the Lord, God defeated the enemy – *the zeal of the Lord performed this* (II Kings 19:31). When Hezekiah took the issue of his terminal health situation before God in prayer, God told the king – *I have heard your prayer... behold, I will heal you... and I will add fifteen years to your life* (II Kings 20:5-6). To give Hezekiah a sign that His promise would come true, God caused the shadow of the sun to reverse ten steps (II Kings 20:8-11). Simply put, *the Lord was with (Hezekiah) and wherever he went he prospered* (II Kings 18:7).

Wouldn't that be a great description for your life and mine? – the Lord is *with* us! James reminds us that when we cling to God, He clings to us (James 4:8). I wonder, though, how much we miss of the power of God being made manifest in our life because we don't abide in such a close, personal, intimate relationship with the living God. We don't know the depth of Hezekiah's walk with God, because we don't pursue God with the same passion, persistence and productivity. My dog may irritate me sometimes with her 'clingy' tendency, but God is never resistant to any effort I make in being close to Him; to touch Him, feel Him and lie confidently & affectionately in His warm, loving embrace. May God help us to know how we can better cling to Him and experience the depths of knowing Him in all His goodness.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide in Christ. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in the Lord Jesus.