

The “Ahhh” Factor

I’ve become old enough, cranky enough, and arthritic enough that purchases having anything to do with my person now must have the “ahhh” factor. If I am going to sit in it, lie on it, wear it, use it, or it’s going to otherwise be in direct contact with me, it must have the “ahhh” factor. For example, many years ago when we lived/worked in Jacksonville TX, I decided that I needed a new office chair. I didn’t necessarily dislike the chair I’d had for several years. I bought it when I was having a lot of lower back problems, and it was very supportive. But it didn’t have the “ahhh” factor that had since become important to me. So, I took off to Tyler one morning on a quest to find a new chair.

I went straight to a big office supply store, and they had a cornucopia of chair choices. They had chairs that looked old, they had chairs that looked new, they had chairs that they apparently stocked to supply the local mad scientists’ needs for torture devices in their labs (which I didn’t even know Tyler had!), and they had chairs that looked like that if you accidentally pulled the wrong lever or pushed the right button, they might sprout rocket propulsion jets and blast off into space. I tried them all, but some of them for no longer than it took my posterior to hit bottom and spring right back up again accompanied by, “Oh no- that’ll never do.” Then it happened, I plopped down in one leather-clad big and tall “executive” chair, and was immediately and absolutely compelled to utter a long and audible “Ahhh.” It was an unstoppable involuntary bodily function, no more controllable than a sneeze during a bishop’s prayer. That’s the way the “Ahhh” factor is though; when it is finally achieved or found, vocalization is mandatory.

The “Ahhh” factor is somewhat hard to define. You may not be able to completely understand or describe it, until you experience it. I didn’t really know exactly what I needed or wanted until I sat in the chair that forced the “Ahhh” out of me. It was adjustable to reach the perfect height, its back curved at just the right place to match my back, the armrests were at the perfect height (which eliminated most of the previous candidates), and the memory foam padding was, as Goldilocks would say, “just right.” I didn’t begin my quest with this particular criterion in mind, I just knew my current chair wasn’t all it could or should be. But, when I found one that was, it became obvious.

What has all of this to do with spiritual matters? Anthropology tells us that cultures all over the world and throughout man’s history have worshipped some form of “god.” Why? **God created man with an innate knowledge of a “higher power,” and a need to worship “it.”** Without knowledge of inspired revelation (cf. John 1:18; Hebrews 1:3), the form of these “gods” and expression of worship varied, and still varies, greatly. But the knowledge and need is there, unless it is suppressed.

Thus, men have searched *“that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us,”* Acts 17:27. This search, **when divine revelation is ignored**, is vain and unsatisfying. Oh, we can know that God exists from simply observing the world around us, or even contemplating the presence and wonders of our own bodies, Romans 1:19-20; **but the “Ahhh” factor of really understanding God and having a real relationship with Him requires the knowledge and application of His revealed word.** Hear Romans 10:2-3 regarding Israel on this point, *“For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in*

accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God."

Simply put: **Unless we are willing to read God's revealed word, and do what it requires of us, our lives and the conduct of them will never have the *spiritual* "Ahhh" factor.** There will always be something missing, though we may not even be sure exactly what it is. Jesus said, "*Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven,*" John 3:5. The Spirit reveals that water baptism is a necessary part of being "born again." But notice also v.3, "*Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.*" **Unless we read God's revealed word, and do what it says, "the kingdom of heaven" specifically, and spiritual matters generally, will elude our comprehension, and we will never have the "Ahhh" factor of truly knowing God.** (Philip C. Strong; Viking Drive Church of Christ; 3791 Viking Drive, Bossier City, LA; online at vikingdrivechurchofchrist.com; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)