



# Pause on Purpose

*"Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while."* Mark 6:31

Ernie Johnson Jr. knows baseball. His father announced three decades' worth of major-league games, following the Braves from Milwaukee to Atlanta. In the quarter century since Ernie inherited the microphone, he has covered six sports on three continents, voicing blowouts and nail-biters, interviewing losers and buzzer beaters.

But one game stands out above all the rest. Not because of who played, but because of who stopped playing. Ernie was a nine-year-old Little Leaguer, dutifully playing shortstop. An opposing batter hit a ground rule double that bounced

over the fence. Two outfielders scampered over the fence to retrieve the ball so the game could continue. (Apparently the league operated on a tight budget.)

Both teams waited for them to return. They waited ... and waited ... but no one appeared. Concerned coaches finally jogged into the outfield and scaled the fence. Curious players, including Ernie, followed them. They found the missing duo just a few feet beyond the fence, gloves dropped on the ground, found ball at their feet, blackberries and smiles on their faces.

The two players had stepped away from the game.

How long since you did the same? We need regular

recalibrations. Besides, who couldn't use a few blackberries? But who has time to gather them? You have carpools to run; businesses to run; sales efforts to run; machines, organizations, and budgets to run. You gotta run.

Jesus understands. He knew the frenzy of life. People back-to-backed his calendar with demands. But he also knew how to step away from the game.

Having withstood the devil's wilderness temptation and his hometown's harsh rejection, Jesus journeyed to Capernaum, where the citizens give him a ticker-tape reception.

They were astonished at His teaching. (Luke 4:32)

The story of what he had done spread like wildfire throughout the whole re-

gion. (v. 37 NLT)

People throughout the village brought sick family members to Jesus. No matter what their diseases were, the touch of his hand healed every one. (v. 40 NLT)

Could Christ want more? Enthralled masses, just-healed believers, and thousands who will go where he leads. So Jesus...Rallied a movement? Organized a leadership team? Mobilized a political-action society?

No. He baffled the public-relations experts by placing the mob in the rearview mirror and ducking into a wildlife preserve, a hidden cove, a vacant building, a deserted place.

Verse 42 identifies the reason: "the crowd ... tried to keep Him from leaving them."

More than once he exercised crowd control. "When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he told his followers to go to the other side of the lake" (Matt. 8:18 NCV).

When the crowd ridiculed his power to raise a girl from the dead, he evicted them from the premises. "After the crowd had been thrown out of the house, Jesus went into the girl's room and took hold of her hand, and she stood up" (Matt. 9:25 NCV).

After a day of teaching, "Jesus left the crowd and went into the house" (Matt. 13:36 NCV).

Though surrounded by possibly twenty thousand fans, he turned away from them: "After Jesus had sent the crowds away" (Matt. 15:39 CEV).

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Christ repeatedly escaped the noise of the crowd in order to hear the voice of God.

He resisted the undertow of the people by anchoring to the rock of his purpose: employing his uniqueness (to "preach ... to the other cities also") to make a big deal out of God ("the kingdom of God") everywhere he could.

And aren't you glad he did? Suppose he had heeded the crowd and set up camp in Capernaum, reasoning, "I thought the whole world was my target and the cross my destiny. But the entire town tells me to stay in Capernaum. Could all these people be wrong?"

Yes, they could! In defiance of the crowd, Jesus turned his back on the Capernaum pastorate and followed the will of God. Doing so meant leaving some sick people unhealed and some confused people untaught. He said no to good things so he could say yes to the right thing: his unique call.

Not an easy choice for anyone.

God may want you to leave your Capernaum, but you're staying. Or he may want you to stay, and you're leaving. How can you know unless you mute the crowd and meet with Jesus in a deserted place?

"Deserted" need not mean desolate, just quiet. Simply

a place to which you, like Jesus, depart. "Now when it was day, He departed" (Luke 4:42). "Depart" presupposes a decision on the part of Jesus. "I need to get away. To think. To ponder. To rechart my course." He determined the time, selected a place. With resolve, he pressed the pause button on his life.

The devil implants taximeters in our brains. We hear the relentless tick tick, tick telling us to hurry, hurry, hurry, time is money ... resulting in this roaring blur called the human race.

But Jesus stands against the tide, countering the crescendo with these words: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Follow the example of Jesus, who "often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed" (Luke 5:16).

God rested after six days of work, and the world didn't collapse. What makes us think it will if we do? (Or do we fear it won't?)

Follow Jesus into the desert. A thousand and one voices will scream like banana-tree monkeys telling you not to. Ignore them. Heed him. Quit your work. Contemplate his. Accept your Maker's invitation: "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31).

And while you are there, enjoy some blackberries.

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*UpWords, with Max Lucado is a popular daily Bible devotion. This Max Lucado devotional offers wisdom and insight for applying Biblical truths to the ups and downs of everyday life.*

*Reading daily devotion provides strength and encouragement in your daily walk with Jesus Christ.*

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## 6th November

### ACROSS

- 1 \_\_\_ alai
- 4 "Lark's Tongue in \_\_\_" (King Crimson)
- 9 Mrs. who chewed the fat
- 14 Stunning defeat
- 19 Bruins great
- 20 R&R
- 21 Make ecstatic
- 22 Soap plant
- 23 Holmes, in retirement
- 25 Scruffs
- 26 Emulates an esne
- 27 Less loopy
- 28 Holmes's debut
- 31 \_\_\_ Indies
- 33 Odin's Sleipnir
- 34 "Huzzah!" in Chihuahua
- 35 Vandyke, e.g.
- 37 Itinerary abbr.
- 38 Champ
- 40 Football zebra
- 43 Caddie's kin
- 44 Pouches
- 48 Comet component
- 49 Sown, in heraldry
- 50 In toto
- 51 \_\_\_ jacket
- 53 Holmes's WWI case
- 55 Vegas cube
- 56 Verdi work
- 57 Pay for a hand
- 58 Brown in butter
- 59 Sun. talk
- 60 Schoolmarm's hair arrangement
- 61 Expected
- 63 Irish \_\_\_
- 64 221B \_\_\_ (Holmes's address)
- 68 Hart work
- 73 Just like ewe?
- 74 The, in Berlin
- 76 Play with some cats
- 79 Riyadh resident
- 80 Markdown tag
- 81 Removes a brooch
- 84 Maritime agcy.
- 85 Home of Holmes's creator
- 87 Boxing units
- 88 Hebrew measure
- 89 Miller et al.
- 90 Property claim
- 91 Just lose it

### DOWN

- 1 Tasks
- 2 Space
- 3 She intrigued Holmes
- 4 Sandarac wood
- 5 "The Handyman" author Carolyn
- 6 \_\_\_ Doc (Haitian kleptocrat)
- 7 Burlly Burl
- 8 Brand of breath mints
- 9 UPS user
- 10 Golfer Gary
- 11 \_\_\_ transit
- 12 \_\_\_ asteroid
- 13 Actress Harper
- 14 Boris Badenov's partner Natasha
- 15 Love: Ital.
- 16 Snake shape
- 17 Parisian pronoun
- 18 Take a load off
- 24 "The Snowy Day" author
- 29 Actress Hagen
- 30 Terra \_\_\_
- 32 Lab vessel
- 35 Spurs
- 36 Friend of Stan

- or Fran
- 38 Victorian dress support
- 39 \_\_\_ Royale
- 40 Contradict
- 41 Be theatrical
- 42 Not as plentiful
- 45 Domain
- 46 Oxnard's st.
- 47 \_\_\_ vous plaît
- 48 Iranian coin
- 49 ER call
- 51 Boo-hoo sound
- 52 Big business in Barbuda
- 53 Arrogance
- 54 Compass reading
- 62 Taxpayer's ID
- 63 Be resolute
- 65 Legit
- 66 Eau from France
- 67 Patsy's pal ("Ab Fab")
- 68 Lake Nasser's dam
- 69 "Sleuth" star
- 70 Food fish
- 71 They're laid at the track
- 72 Zero, to an English football announcer

- 75 Draft gp.
- 76 Holmes's friend and chronicler
- 77 Santa \_\_\_ Park
- 78 Belarus capital
- 80 SEATO's sphere
- 82 Integers: abbr.
- 83 Witticism
- 86 Daughter of King Juan Carlos
- 92 Like a sea lion
- 94 Shadowed
- 95 \_\_\_ bourgeoisie
- 96 Part of a rack
- 97 Family \_\_\_ room
- 99 Summer bummers
- 100 Banter
- 101 Astringent powder
- 102 Florida cigar city
- 104 Increase
- 105 2002 retiree
- 106 Oeil-de-boeuf shape
- 107 Ship timber
- 108 Philippine port
- 109 Sp. wives
- 110 Guesses: abbr.
- 112 Dynamite
- 113 Small pest
- 117 Laugh start

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