



THE INCOMPLETE JOYS OF THIS WORLD WILL NEVER SATISFY THE  
HUMAN HEART

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE

I WAS AT EASE IN EVERYTHING TO BE SURE, BUT AT THE SAME TIME  
SATISFIED WITH NOTHING. EACH JOY MADE ME DESIRE ANOTHER. AT  
TIMES, THE SLIGHT INTOXICATION, MY WILD ENTHUSIASM,  
EVERYONE'S VIOLENT UNRESTRAINT WOULD FILL ME WITH A TIRED  
AND OVERWHELMED RAPTURE, IT WOULD SEEM TO ME - THAT AT  
LAST I UNDERSTOOD THE SECRET OF CREATURES OF THE WORLD.  
BUT MY FATIGUE WOULD DISAPPEAR THE NEXT DAY, AND WITH IT THE  
SECRET. BECAUSE I LONGED FOR ETERNAL LIFE, I WENT TO BED WITH  
HARLOTS AND DRANK FOR NIGHTS ON END.

ALBERT CAMUS, *THE FALL*

WE LOVE HIM, BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US.

ST JOHN

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

AGAIN, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A MERCHANT LOOKING FOR  
FINE PEARLS. WHEN HE FOUND ONE OF GREAT VALUE, HE WENT AWAY  
AND SOLD EVERYTHING HE HAD AND BOUGHT IT

MATTHEW 13 VS. 45-46

WHAT DOES OUR  
SPIRITUALITY  
LOOK LIKE?

IT IS NO EASY TASK TO WALK THIS EARTH AND FIND PEACE. INSIDE OF US, IT WOULD SEEM, SOMETHING IS AT ODDS WITH THE VERY RHYTHM OF THINGS AND WE ARE FOREVER RESTLESS, DISSATISFIED, FRUSTRATED, AND ACHING. WE ARE OVERCHARGED WITH DESIRE AND IT IS HARD TO COME TO SIMPLE REST. DESIRE IS ALWAYS STRONGER THAN SATISFACTION. PUT MORE SIMPLY, THERE IS WITHIN US A FUNDAMENTAL DIS-EASE, AN UNQUENCHABLE FIRE THAT RENDERS US INCAPABLE, IN THIS LIFE, OF EVER COMING TO FULL PEACE. THIS DESIRE LIES AT THE CENTER OF OUR LIVES, IN THE MARROW OF OUR BONES, AND IN THE DEEP RECESSES OF THE SOUL. WE ARE NOT EASEFUL HUMAN BEINGS, WHO OCCASIONALLY GET RESTLESS, SERENE PERSONS WHO ONCE IN A WHILE ARE OBSESSED BY DESIRE.

THE REVERSE IS TRUE. WE ARE DRIVEN PERSONS, FOREVER OBSESSED,  
CONGENITALLY DIS-EASED, LIVING LIVES, AS THOREAU ONCE  
SUGGESTED, OF QUIET DESPERATION, ONLY OCCASIONALLY  
EXPERIENCING PEACE. DESIRE IS THE STRAW THAT STIRS THE DRINK. AT  
THE HEART OF ALL GREAT LITERATURE, POETRY, ART, PHILOSOPHY,  
PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION LIES THE NAMING AND ANALYZING OF THIS  
DESIRE. WE LOVE STORIES ABOUT DESIRE - TALES OF LOVE, SEX,  
WANDERLUST, HAUNTING NOSTALGIA, BOUNDLESS AMBITION, AND  
TRAGIC LOSS. MANY OF THE GREAT SECULAR THINKERS OF OUR TIME  
HAVE MADE THIS FIRE, THIS FORCE THAT SO HAUNTS US, THE  
CENTERPIECE OF THEIR THINKING.

WHATEVER THE EXPRESSION, EVERYONE IS ULTIMATELY TALKING ABOUT THE SAME THING - AN UNQUENCHABLE FIRE, A RESTLESSNESS, A LONGING, A DISQUIET, A HUNGER, A LONELINESS, A GNAWING NOSTALGIA, A WILDNESS THAT CANNOT BE TAMED, A CONGENITAL ALL-EMBRACING ACHE THAT LIES AT THE CENTER OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND IS THE ULTIMATE FORCE THAT DRIVES EVERYTHING ELSE. THIS DIS-EASE IS UNIVERSAL. DESIRE GIVES NO EXEMPTIONS.

IT DOES HOWEVER ADMIT OF DIFFERENT MOODS AND FACES. SOMETIMES IT HITS US AS PAIN-DISSATISFACTION, FRUSTRATION, AND ACHING. AT OTHER TIMES ITS GRIP IS NOT FELT AS PAINFUL AT ALL, BUT AS A DEEP ENERGY, AS SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL, AS AN INEXORABLE PULL, MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING ELSE INSIDE US, TOWARD, LOVE, BEAUTY, CREATIVITY, AND A FUTURE BEYOND OUR LIMITED PRESENT. DESIRE CAN SHOW ITSELF AS ACHING PAIN OR DELICIOUS HOPE.

SPIRITUALITY IS ULTIMATELY, ABOUT WHAT WE DO WITH THAT DESIRE. WHAT WE DO WITH OUR LONGINGS, BOTH IN TERMS OF HANDLING THE PAIN AND THE HOPE THEY BRING US, THAT IS OUR SPIRITUALITY.

RONALD ROLHEISER

SPIRITUALITY IS NOT SOMETHING ON THE FRINGES, AN OPTION FOR THOSE WITH A PARTICULAR BENT. NONE OF US HAS A CHOICE. EVERYONE HAS TO HAVE A SPIRITUALITY EVERYONE DOES HAVE ONE, EITHER A LIFE-GIVING ONE OR A DESTRUCTIVE ONE. NO ONE HAS THE LUXURY OF CHOOSING HERE BECAUSE ALL OF US ARE PRECISELY FIRED INTO LIFE WITH A CERTAIN MADNESS THAT COMES FROM THE GODS AND WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING WITH THAT. WE DO NOT WAKE UP IN THIS WORLD CALM AND SERENE, HAVING THE LUXURY OF CHOOSING TO ACT OR NOT ACT. WE WAKE UP CRYING, ON FIRE WITH DESIRE, WITH MADNESS. WHAT WE DO WITH THAT MADNESS IS OUR SPIRITUALITY.

RONALD ROLHEISER

MERCHANTS  
OF OUR OWN  
SOULS

THE THING WORTH  
LEVERAGING  
EVERYTHING  
ELSE FOR

RELATIONSHIPS?

SEX CANNOT DELIVER THE GOODS; IT ALLEVIATES OUR LONELINESS TOO LITTLE, ESPECIALLY OUR MORAL LONELINESS. SEX THAT ISN'T SUBLIME DOESN'T BRING US A SOUL MATE. WHAT IT BRINGS IS A FIX, A HIT, A DRUG, THAT HELPS US THROUGH A LONELY NIGHT OR LONELY SEASON, BUT THAT, DEEP DOWN, WE KNOW CANNOT GIVE US WHAT WE NEED, AND SEX CANNOT BE SUBLIME WITHOUT FIRST LIVING A REAL CHASTITY. THE PERSON WHO SLEEPS WITH SOMEBODY HE OR SHE HARDLY KNOWS, HAS NO REAL COMMITMENT TO, AND HAS NEVER LIVED A CHASTE TENSION WITH, WILL NOT HAVE A SUBLIME OR PROFOUND EXPERIENCE. SHORT-CIRCUITING CHASTITY IS LIKE TRYING TO WRITE A MASTERPIECE OVER NIGHT. GOOD LUCK, BUT IT ISN'T GOING TO HAPPEN! GREAT LOVE, LIKE GREAT ART, TAKES GREAT EFFORT, SUSTAINED COMMITMENT, AND LOTS OF TIME.

RONALD ROLHEISER

MORE DEEPLY THAN WE LONG FOR A SEXUAL PARTNER, WE LONG FOR  
MORAL AFFINITY, FOR SOMEONE TO VISIT US IN THAT DEEPEST PART  
OF US WHERE ALL THAT IS MOST PRECIOUS TO US IS CHERISHED AND  
GUARDED. OUR DEEPEST LONGING IS FOR A PARTNER TO SLEEP WITH  
MORALLY, A KINDRED SPIRIT, A SOUL MATE IN THE TRUEST  
SENSE OF THE WORD.  
AGAINST AN INFINITE HORIZON

MONEY?

THEN HE SAID TO THEM, 'WATCH OUT! BE ON YOUR GUARD AGAINST ALL  
KINDS OF GREED; LIFE DOES NOT CONSIST IN AN ABUNDANCE OF  
POSSESSIONS.  
LUKE 12 VS. 15

IDENTITY?

THE PEARL  
OF GREAT PRICE

AS FOR YOU, YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND SINS, IN WHICH YOU USED TO LIVE WHEN YOU FOLLOWED THE WAYS OF THIS WORLD AND OF THE RULER OF THE KINGDOM OF THE AIR, THE SPIRIT WHO IS NOW AT WORK IN THOSE WHO ARE DISOBEDIENT. ALL OF US ALSO LIVED AMONG THEM AT ONE TIME, GRATIFYING THE CRAVINGS OF OUR FLESH AND FOLLOWING ITS DESIRES AND THOUGHTS. LIKE THE REST, WE WERE BY NATURE DESERVING OF WRATH. BUT BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE FOR US, GOD, WHO IS RICH IN MERCY, MADE US ALIVE WITH CHRIST EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN TRANSGRESSIONS—IT IS BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED.

AND GOD RAISED US UP WITH CHRIST AND SEATED US WITH HIM IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS IN CHRIST JESUS, IN ORDER THAT IN THE COMING AGES HE MIGHT SHOW THE INCOMPARABLE RICHES OF HIS GRACE, EXPRESSED IN HIS KINDNESS TO US IN CHRIST JESUS. FOR IT IS BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED, THROUGH FAITH—AND THIS IS NOT FROM YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD— NOT BY WORKS, SO THAT NO ONE CAN BOAST. FOR WE ARE GOD'S HANDIWORK, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS TO DO GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD PREPARED IN ADVANCE FOR US TO DO.

EPHESIANS 2 VS. 1-10

FOR YOU KNOW THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THAT  
THOUGH HE WAS RICH, YET FOR YOUR SAKE HE BECAME POOR, SO  
THAT YOU THROUGH HIS POVERTY MIGHT BECOME RICH.

2 CORINTHIANS 8 VS. 9

THEREFORE, SINCE WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SUCH A GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES, LET US THROW OFF EVERYTHING THAT HINDERS AND THE SIN THAT SO EASILY ENTANGLES. AND LET US RUN WITH PERSEVERANCE THE RACE MARKED OUT FOR US, FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS, THE PIONEER AND PERFECTER OF FAITH. FOR THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM HE ENDURED THE CROSS, SCORNING ITS SHAME, AND SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF GOD.

HEBREWS 12 VS. 1-3

FOR YOU KNOW THAT IT WAS NOT WITH PERISHABLE THINGS SUCH AS SILVER OR GOLD THAT YOU WERE REDEEMED FROM THE EMPTY WAY OF LIFE HANDED DOWN TO YOU FROM YOUR ANCESTORS, BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH OR DEFECT.

1 PETER 1 VS. 18

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE