

CLASSIC STATE OF MIND

Hi. I'm Ken Jones, and this is *A Classic State of Mind*, with *A Word About ... Paying Attention*

When I was younger, I had a terrible time 'paying attention.' In fact, I had an awful time even understanding what that term meant. I mean, who are you 'paying' when you're paying attention? When I was I a little boy, I knew I didn't have any money, but even if I did — even if I could 'pay' attention, where would I go to pay it?

When I was a little boy in grade school, and it was time to line up so we could get a drink at the water fountain? My teacher would bark, "You can't all drink at once. Wait your turn, 'Line up; stand at attention.'" Seemed to me like I was *always* so thirsty after recess, and yet I did my best to stand in line and not pinch the kid in front of me, but I never did know where 'attention' was, so I could stand in front of him.

So confusing, to me when I was a little boy, going to school. I remember that right after lunch recess — right after we'd all been outside playing tag and running around the playground — when the bell rang, we all had to line up, walk back into class without talking (or pinching one another, or shoving one another.) And we'd have to silently walk into our classroom, go to our seats, and put out heads down on our desks for fifteen agonizing minutes, quiet as a library, while the sweat from recess ran down the backs of our necks. Agonizing, it was. My seat was right next to my teacher's desk. If I looked up — if I raised my head to see what my buddy behind me was doing? My teacher would peck me on the shoulder with her ruler, and tell me to mind my own business and not pay so much attention to my 'neighbor.' I didn't *know* I was paying attention to my neighbor. I thought I was trying to see what my buddy was doing.

Well, now I'm a grown man. And as Paul said in I Corinthians 13, when I became a man, I should have put away childish things. In particular and for certain, I should have learned by now what it means to 'pay attention.' Except ... well, I'm not sure I've got that concept down very good. I mean, what should I be paying attention to? There's so much 'everyday-ness' in every day. Common stuff like standing in line, waiting for my turn at check-out line.

I love what Frederick Buechner wrote in, *The Sacred Journey*, when he said, "The question is not whether the things that happen to you are chance things or God's things, because, of course, they are both at once. There is no chance thing through which God cannot speak — even the walk from the house to the garage that you have walked ten thousand times before, ..." I would add, 'even the walk from the playground into the classroom.'

I have a much better teacher, now, looking deeply into the recesses of my hurried life, gently tapping my inner man and speaking in that Still, Small Voice of his, imploring me, urging me to listen up, no talking, just 'being quiet,' even for fifteen minutes. Ever notice what you 'notice' when you're quiet?

I'm convinced that because my life belongs to God and has been surrendered to Jesus... all my moments are Divine moments, even when I'm not paying attention, maybe even *especially* when I'm not paying attention, or standing at attention, or giving The God of All There Is my *undivided attention*.

In Prov. chapter 1, The Book says, and I quote, "A wise man will *hear* and increase learning" May I learn, today, O Lord, what it means to 'pay attention.'

I'm Ken Jones, and that's Classic State of Mind. You can reach me at our website: ClassicStateofMind.com, and if you'd like to download a printed copy of today's "Word About Paying Attention," it's available on our website. It's free. We'd love to hear from you, and thanks for listening.