

Heaven Scent

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Scripture: John 15: 1-8 ESV

A few months ago, I visited my college friends in Chicago. I mean friends who answered the phones in the hallway of our dorm room where it was connected to an actual wall.

Don't ask how old I am.

Our time together included a visit to their parents in a local assisted living facility. It was one of the highlights of my trip. Their parents served as officers in The Salvation Army for 40 years mostly in the ARC program. ARC stands for Adult Rehabilitation. Back when they served, most of the residents were alcoholics and all were men. The idea was to give them a safe place to stay, work to do in the SA store, classes that helped them re-enter the sober world, and a spiritual basis for their foundation.

The husband was 96-years-old, while his wife passed the centurion age and counted her years on earth as 101. We entered their simple apartment and talked. Right away I knew this visit was special. Mr—or Major Valezquez cared for his wife with an intimacy and tenderness that went way past any romance magazine articles you could read. Not only did he care for her, but his goal was to minister to the people at the facility. While we visited, a widow came to ask for his assistance with a small problem she had. She knew she could count on him.

“I don't tell them that I am a minister in The Salvation Army. I just give them a welcome to the building card and then remember them on their birthdays. I let them know I am available to help if they have a problem. I want them to just know me as a friend.”



That's when I smelled it. The Heaven Scent. Because of his smell, I asked this man of God to pray for me and my family. When someone smells like heaven, you can't pass up an opportunity to have them speak to the Almighty on your behalf. He prayed for my family, my friends, and me.

You can't buy this scent at Macy's. Or earn it. It has to be learned. Cultivated—in time spent with The Master—time spent washing others' feet. I want to smell like that.

Mostly, I have a putrid smell that says, *Look at me!* I come away from gatherings thinking that I didn't represent Christ, I represented me.

But how do you and I get that priceless scent? How do you smell like Jesus? Here is a scripture that I believe sums it up.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, Neither can you, unless you abide in me.” John 15:4

I don't know about you, but abiding is hard. There are probably several reasons for that. Distraction, laziness, the inability to sit still are a few. At least those are my reasons. But when I do abide—when I meet with Jesus, it brings me great joy and fulfillment.

I remember my son asking me a few years ago what my favorite time of the day was. “My prayer time this morning,” I answered without hesitation.

That was then, this is now. I want more of abiding. My plan this year is to be part of a Bible Study and take a day or two to spend alone with Jesus.

Because I really want that Heaven Scent.

Reflect:

- How about you? Can you make a plan to abide?
- I will schedule time alone within this month with the Lord. I'll put it on my calendar and ask a friend to hold me accountable

Dig a little deeper:

- Our obedience to God's call is a fragrant aroma to the Lord.
 - Ephesians 5:2
 - 2 Corinthians 2:14-15
 - Psalm 141:2
- Prayer:
Lord, you know I'm stinky. I want to smell like you. Help me to abide in You so your scent permeates my being and when others see and hear me, they think about You.

REFERENCES

English Standard Version Bible (2008) Crossway Bibles