

MONDAY MANNA

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THE EVER-CHANGING TOOLS OF THE TRADE

By Rick Boxx

The “tools” I was given for my first job in public accounting included an adding machine, pencils, and a pad of green columnar paper. The only computer I recall was a \$1 million albatross located at a client’s office that no one could figure out how to use. How the times have changed since then!

Today, my laptop computer is about the size of my former adding machine, capable of putting that \$1 million dinosaur of a computer to shame. My laptop has eliminated the need for an adding machine, I rarely use a pencil for anything, and the green accounting paper has been replaced by software with a capacity for doing work we could not have imagined during the first years of my career.

What is most interesting about this is how, along with not being able to anticipate today’s advancements in decades past, we know that technology continues to present us with new tools and resources that we cannot envision right now. Just when we start thinking we have “arrived” in terms of technological breakthroughs, we learn about some new innovation.

This is true not only for the workplace, but also for every aspect of our personal lives. If it has been a few years since purchasing a new car, we find ourselves amazed at new additions that make driving safer and more comfortable. Advances in communications move so quickly, it is almost impossible to keep pace with them.

All of this newness continues to amaze us, but the Scriptures tell us we can eagerly look forward to discovering new things in the spiritual realm as well. In Isaiah 42:9, God said, *“See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being, I announce them to you.”*

If we look at the “book of beginnings,” the Old Testament book of Genesis, we read about God’s work of creation, how He started with nothing and created an entire universe and proceeded to create the world we know, along with everything in it – foremost of all, humankind. Finally, Genesis 2:1-2 tells us, *“Then the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing, so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.”*

However, this did not mean God forever ceased from His plan to create and oversee the wonders that we experience every day. As Jesus Christ told His followers, *“My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working”* (John 5:17). Best of all, this work is not limited to a broad, general sense. God’s work of “newness” takes place in the lives of each of His people every day. He can and desires to perform an act of recreation in us as well.

As the apostle Paul wrote, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* As the seasons change, we see a continual march of new replacing the old. And as the Spirit of God works in our hearts, we can experience new life – new desires, new motives, new values and new strength – moving in to replace our old lives that brought us so much failure and frustration.

The future tools of our trades, the resources we utilise for performing our daily jobs, are usually announced in a very rudimentary form. However, if we pay attention and are receptive, we can be prepared for the new things God has declared that He will do in us and through us, for His glory, whether it is where we work or where we live.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

How have the tools you use at work changed since you began your career? What have been the greatest changes and innovations for enabling you to do what you do?

Do you have any anxieties about forthcoming changes in your vocation or industry? How easily are you able to adapt to changes, especially those involving technological innovations?

What are your thoughts about "newness" as it applies to spirituality – the spiritual dimension of our lives that includes our beliefs, values and motivations?

Has God performed a new work in your life? Do you believe He is continuing to do so? Explain your answer. If so, how would you describe the new work that He has been doing in you?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:

John 3:3-8

Romans 6:1-11, 12:1-2

Galatians 2:20

Ephesians 4:22-24