Life in Three Words

Two Jewish guys, one about 30 years old and the other was about 17 when he started. They formed a friendship and carried on while the older one was working. He invited the younger one, who was dealing with some nets at his dad's boat at the time, to leave all that behind and to follow him. And young John did just that. At 17! But then Jesus at 30 knew what he was doing and whom he was calling.

Years later when John was writing his memoirs into a narrative, much like I'm doing in this tome, he chose a phrase to describe himself in relation to Jesus. He said of himself four times, that he was "the disciple whom Jesus loved." (John 13.23, 20.2, 21. 7, 20). What a great appellation. What a powerful reminder that our religion is not based on our own performance, but on the grace and mercy and love of God towards us.

When this question asked me the "three words" that would describe my life, I immediately thought of this, "Loved by God." Without that love, I would have been more smug, more self-centered than I still am. Without that love, my purpose would be self-consumed and I would still want people to admire and praise me throughout my days. What a waste.

I suppose this realisation that I'm an approval addict was late in

coming. It took the woeful activities of my life in 2015/2016 and the reality of a 12-step program that welcomed me and brought me a lot of self-investigation and personal inventory. At the end of such inventory, no matter what I found inside myself of weaknesses and the aforementioned addiction, I found outside myself the substantial reality that I'm loved by God.

When the Swiss theologian Karl Barth was asked during a 1962 lecture at Princeton Theological Seminary, to summarise the millions of words of his massive life's work in theology, he famously responded: "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

Remember the classic Sunday school kid's talk where the teacher gathers the kids up front and asks the little ones, "What's gray, has a bushy tail, and gathers nuts in Fall?" None of the kids dares answer. They all know, but don't want to be caught out. Finally, the assistant pastor's son raises his hand. "I know the answer is Jesus, but it sure sounds like a squirrel to me."

Yes, the best three words to self-describe should include God or Jesus.- That's the 'right' answer.

And honestly, it's the best answer.

That's my answer, and I'm sticking to it.