

Enjoying My Inheritance, Part IV

Normal

I think of myself as being a fairly normal person, not very different from most everyone else I know and have worked with over the years. Over the years I have enjoyed my work and the variety of jobs and vocations I have had the opportunity to pursue. The only exception, I must say, were some of the years in roof construction where the pains of the effort under the hot sun or in the cold winds of the Rocky Mountain winters did not match the pay rate.

One fact I did prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Do not wear yourself out to get rich; be wise enough to restrain yourself. When you glance at wealth, it disappears, for it makes wings for itself and flies like an eagle to the sky. Proverbs 23:4-5 (BSB)

I spent a number of years proving this fact is absolutely correct and should be believed. An expected profit in a trade deal can dissipate overnight. The person you are negotiating with can die overnight. Greedy men can steal your business or customers with schemes you are not yet privy to. Extortion is a way of life for certain people. The outcomes of these events are devastating, depressing and maddening all at the same time.

Solomon, one of history's wealthiest persons, who had it all, passed on the piece of wisdom above and the promise below. We can rely upon these, each which are reality checks for you and me.

The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life. Proverbs 22:4

The apostle Paul added this forewarning...

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin and destruction. I Timothy 6:9

When the men and women are interviewed, who have lived much of their lives, many will describe the aspects of their lives that made them rich, but which does not involve cash or property assets. The older one gets, and the wiser one becomes, the more they realize that true wealth a person can have includes such things as...

- family bonds
- friends that are transparent and supportive
- a healthy interactive church community
- peace of mind and heart
- confidence in dealing with sources of fear
- gaining freedom from the guilt of sin and failure
- health, strength for the new day
- a certain hope in the final outcome of history

Throughout my life, I finally began to see that God was directly involved in my daily interactions with work and profit or the loss thereof. Once you realize God is directly involved, your considerations for each new day are altered. Or should be!

I finally began to understand God's objectives for me in the practical matters of practicing my faithfulness in very small things. It included using my management of any money in amounts large or small as practice for the managing the weightier issues of life. It involved being careful and responsible for the assets that belonged to others.

Consider these four basic lessons:

“He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.” Luke 16:10-15

For a starting exercise, make a list of everything you consider “highly esteemed/valued” in your own life. What would that be on your list? Would you like a four car garage with one bay a modern car wash? Do you dream of owning a fast ski boat or a fishing boat? How about a brand new \$90,000 electric car which would give you the rights to park at the special charging stations closest to the front door of your church?



Unsplash – Ernest Ojeh

When you figure out this mystery, as to why what you see as so very valuable is so very detestable to God, you will have embarked on an entirely different path. Guaranteed.

Jesus said it this way. “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” Luke 12:15

God wrote the Operating Manual for our lives. Father does know best. God is patient and persistent to aid us in learning how life is optimized for each of us, by understanding His values, by cooperating with His purposes in every detail of our lives by the prognosis and prescriptions from God’s Word, the Bible.

This next Bible text is a bit long for this piece but is so very critical for gaining an understanding of how God Himself thinks about you and me. It reveals what He is thinking about the course of life we are involved in.

The main lesson in this text, for me is this: “Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’ “But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth...”

“All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore *to give* to your forefathers. “You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, *that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. “He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.* “Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. “Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. “Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. “For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. “When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.

“Otherwise, you may say in your heart,
‘My power and the strength of my hand
made me this wealth.’

“Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived *in them*, and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, *and all that you have multiplies, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.* “He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, *with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint.* “In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. *“Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’* “*But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth,* that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is this day.* “It shall come about if you ever forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish. “Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so you shall perish; because you would not listen to the voice of the LORD your God. Deuteronomy 8:1-20

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power to make wealth...”

Clear as a bell, the person who is humble before his Maker and entrusts his work and outcomes to God’s hand, that person will live a life that is rich in benefits which God provides.

This all reminds me of the country song made famous by Mac Davis...

Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble
When you're perfect in every way
I can't wait to look in the mirror
Cause I get better lookin' each day
To know me is to love me
I must be a hell of a man
Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble
But I'm doin' the best that I can

The right choice, with some genuine humility, is to gladly submit to the will of God the Father and His specific purposes for our individual lives.

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, *you ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do

this or that.” But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows *the* right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. James 4:13-17

Well, that is it for starters. Much more to come...