

FRIDAY, September 11, 2009:

“Now when Jesus had come into Peter’s house, He saw his wife’s mother lying sick with a fever. So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.” (Matthew 8:14-15)

I have always looked at the response of Peter’s mother-in-law in this passage. I considered it a good thing that upon being healed she got up and served Jesus and those with him. That is indeed a good thing.

However, upon reading this passage recently I noticed that Jesus touched her hand when He healed her. You would have thought that someone suffering with a fever that He would have touched her fevered brow.

I wonder – looking at the account from Jesus’ point of view – if a part of the motivation for Jesus healing her was so that she could serve. In other words, someone was needed to fulfill that role and she was the only one available.

My point is this: I suspect that God doesn’t just bless us so that we can feel better and have fun or simply because of his mercy and grace; but I suspect that He also blesses us so that we can in return be a blessing.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 12:1-3

SATURDAY, September 12, 2009:

A Quotation that matters:

- *“Knowledge in application is effective only when it is specialized. Indeed, it is more effective, the more highly specialized it is.”*
_Peter F. Drucker, The Essential Drucker, p. 308

The old adage – “Do something even if it’s wrong!” sounds good, but is probably not the best policy. Doing the specifically right thing is what is best.

I am reminded of the engineer who sent a bill for 10,005.00 for repairing a machine. When the owner sent a letter requesting an explanation for the unusual and very expensive bill the engineer sent back the following explanation: The five dollars was for the labor of turning one screw, the 10,000.00 was for knowing which screw to turn.

As Mark Twain said, the difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightening and the lightening bug.

If what you have been doing lately has not been working, maybe more than action is required. Maybe it’s time to do some soul-searching, studying and praying until you learn what the right action should be.

SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 3:1-2



Pastor Kemp’s Weekly Devotional

For the week of September 6, 2009

Daily Reflection Questions:

- Reflection: Of what eternal benefit was my day?
- Reflection: What eternal truth(s) did I observe today?
- Reflection: Did my behavior match my values?
- Reflection: What am I thankful for today?

Personal Notes:



MONDAY, September 7, 2009:

AFFIRMATION: *To surpass the deeds of others is not important; to surpass my own deeds is all. Therefore, I will strive for daily improvement.*

This affirmation teaches some very important principles of life. First, it is a reminder that we are not in competition with the world. Many people see all of life as a win/lost world. The way they see it is that there is only so much to go around and if they are to win, then someone else has to lose. They may have millions but they don't realize that they are living with a poverty mindset. They are always living in fear that their "stuff" (possession, position, prestige) is going to be taken by someone else. In other words, their security comes from outside sources, and on the inside, there is very little to sustain them.

However, someone with a "prosperity mindset" understands that the issue is not "is there enough to go around," but they understand that winning is about being on a journey. Each of us has a God-given destiny. The true winner refuses to become burdened down with a bunch of "stuff" that keeps them from growing and becoming what they were born to be. Instead, they understand that the trophies of success come naturally, as they continue to improve.

In closing, let me add one more thought. The day that I am writing this, I am on vacation. That fact has caused me to consider that, while striving for improvement is important, striving "daily" may not be. The Sabbath principle teaches us that sometimes the best thing to do is rest. The relentless pressure of having to strive daily for improvement can suck the joy right out of life.

I truly believe life was designed by God to be fun and fulfilling. Whatever you do, don't allow the pressure to succeed rob you of the joy of just simply living.

TUESDAY, September 8, 2009:

As I mentioned in yesterday's devotional, I am writing these devotionals during my vacation. Sonja and I are taking a cruise and are really enjoying ourselves. However, living the Christian life doesn't stop with vacation and God is always desiring to teach us something, and today was no exception.

The lesson I learned came from watching the ocean. We are enjoying a day at sea and as a result, I have beautiful ocean around me as far as the eye can see. However, the one thing that I find my eyes continually going to is the one spot of agitation on the seas – the wake left by the ships propellers.

It was almost as if I could hear God chuckle as he spoke to my heart saying, "Here I have given you a beautiful open sky and vast oceans to enjoy and the one thing you want to focus on is a manmade disturbance."

And isn't that so typical? There are so many things to be thankful for and yet the temptation is to allow some disturbance and agitation to draw us away from all of the good.

Oh Father God, please help us to live a thankful life today and see the good instead of the bad.

SCRIPTURE: Phil. 4:8

WEDNESDAY, September 9, 2009:

Quotations that matter:

- *"Unless one has considered alternatives, one has a closed mind."* _Peter F. Drucker, The Essential Drucker, p. 254

Monday's devotional was a reminder to make it our goal to live life with a mindset of continually trying to improve ourselves. I was reminded of that when I read today's quotation.

It is so easy to "go with what you know" and to go with what is comfortable. And in many cases that may be the best thing to do. However, unless we first at least take into consideration that there are alternatives to how we are currently doing things we are setting ourself up for becoming irrelevant and ineffective.

Life is not about us being comfortable; it is about us making a contribution and more likely than not that will require us changing.

Oh God! Please help us to keep growing by being teachable.

SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 15:12

THURSDAY: September 10, 2009:

"You will know them by their fruits."
(Matthew 7:16)

Jesus and many of the other New Testament writers warned us repeatedly to beware of false prophets who will come to us in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

As I read today's scripture lesson it occurred to me just how important this warning is in the days we live. There is technology available to us that could not have been imagined by the followers of Jesus when he first spoke this warning. With books, radio, television and now the internet we can hear/read the words of the most influential and popular Christian speakers and authors of our day and of past days.

Yet with this privilege comes a great responsibility. We must beware that we do not expose ourselves to "ravenous wolves" as Jesus put it. From the far away distance of edited books and edited digital programming, one can make "fruit" look really nice. But anyone who has ever shopped in the produce department at the grocery stores knows, to really know if you're getting good fruit you have to get close to it so that you can inspect it. The produce manager has to earn your trust. He may be able to fool you for a while, but with a long-term relationship, you began to learn if you're getting good fruit or just a poor substitute. The same is true with the ministers, teachers, and mentors that we allow to speak into our lives.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 7:15-20