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Investing in Futures: A Normative Profile for Generations

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INVESTING IN FUTURES

A NORMATIVE PROFILE
FOR GENERATIONS

by

D.P. Diffine, Ph.D.

MAKING MEMORIES -- LEAVING A LEGACY

Wouldn't it be sad if we dedicated our lives and careers to making a name of ourselves, and our own children didn't know who we were? Life is what happens while we are planning for it. Here are the ages of life: "You are... You will be.. You could be... You can be... You could have been... You were..."

Believe it or not, the average elephant lives longer than the average human being, which proves that there may be something to working for peanuts. But some people think that it proves the secret of long life is a thick skin. It's a start; read on.

Dear reader, you are now in the process of opening a time capsule, a chronological book of virtues, if you will. The eminent humorist Will Rogers is reported to have observed, "People don't need to be told a lot, but the do need to be reminded once in a while." If we could just get our young people to read this valuable time capsule, we'd be helping them to stay right side up and on track for their life's journey.

It's not that we were placed here to flounder. The Designer of the Universe put spaceship earth here with a guidebook of instructions. We were also given the common sense to seek knowledge and to learn judiciously from others. As I've chided some graduation audiences in the Mid-South, "Seniors, if you don't want to be a loser in the game of life, watch what losers do -- don't do that!"

"Avoid dumbth, that is, willful ignorance... Don't make the same mistake twice more than once!" Alas, we must learn from those who have been around the block a few more times than we have. We won't live long enough to make all their collective mistakes -- as resourceful as we are behind their backs.

INVESTING IN FUTURES

A Normative Profile for Generations

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INTRODUCTION -- MAKING MEMORIES

"Writing a book is an adventure," said Sir Winston Churchill. "To begin with, it is a toy and an amusement. Then it becomes a mistress, then it becomes a master, then it becomes a tyrant. The last phase is that just as you are about to be reconciled to your servitude, you kill the monster and fling him about to the public."

At this juncture, I am in transition from the old age of my youth to the youth of my old age -- an apprentice senior citizen. God is still God, and I am His child. And yet, surveying my own life, and gauging the direction it is headed on this planet, I have devised the following timetable by decade (all cleverly start with "D" as does my name):

0 - 10	Discovery
11 - 20	Drift
21 - 30	Dilemmas
31 - 40	Development
41 - 50	Debt
51 - 60	Determination
61 - 70	Decisions
71 - 80	Disabilities
81 - 90	Decomposition

So here I am: stuck between the "Young and the Restless" and the "Old and the Stressless." Life is what happens while we are planning for it. Here are the ages of life: "You are... You will be... You could be... You can be... You could have been... You were..." Believe it or not, the average elephant lives longer than the average human being, which proves that there may be something to working for peanuts. But some people

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Relationships between parents and children are constantly evolving. This item titled "Father -- In Any Language" is translated from a Dutch magazine and shows that families are much the same the world over:

- ◆ 4 years: My Daddy can do anything.
- ◆ 7 years: My Dad knows a lot, a whole lot.
- ◆ 8 years: My father doesn't know quite everything.
- ◆ 12 years: Oh, well, naturally Father doesn't know that either.
- ◆ 14 years: Father? Hopelessly old-fashioned.
- ◆ 21 years: Oh, that man is out of date; what did you expect?
- ◆ 25 years: He knows a little bit about it, but not much.
- ◆ 30 years: Must find out what Dad thinks about it.
- ◆ 35 years: A little patience; let's get Dad's meaning first.

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- ◆ 50 years: What would Dad have thought about that?
- ◆ 60 years: I wish I could talk it over with Dad once more.

Now, here's a little background to INVESTING IN FUTURES. In the Spring of 1990, and after making a keynote speech at a building contractors' convention, I received the following correspondence which would set the stage over the next several years for this book project:

Dear Dr. Diffine:

This letter will probably seem strange to you, but I've been mulling over writing it for nearly a week now, and since my urge to write it hasn't subsided I decided to let 'er rip. I was present for the speech you gave at our Association's Leadership Conference last Wednesday. I want to sincerely thank you not only for the message you presented, but also for the hope that you gave me.

I have thought about what you shared with us about workaholism, adversity, growth, family, and humor. These are areas in my life I certainly could use some improvement on as I am a struggling entrepreneur who works and worry too much while at the same time am trying to raise three small children.

Dr. Diffine, I would be interested in knowing how you keep the positive outlook you so obviously

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possess, and would welcome any suggestions you might have on successful living. Have you written any books or papers that I might purchase? I know you are a very busy man, and I would appreciate any time or suggestions you might allow me. Thanks again for the heart-warming talk you gave and the hope you have instilled in me.

Best personal regards,

(Signed, but confidential)

Well! What a challenge. I believe that we should approach each day of life as if it were the first day of our honeymoon and the last day of our vacation. And as an author and public speaker, I attempt to combine the following:

- the simplicity of Adam Smith;
- the wisdom of Solomon;
- the depth of Lincoln;
- the patience of Job;
- the tenacity of a bulldog;
- the determination of a cab driver;
- the deductive powers of Sherlock Holmes;
- the persuasiveness of a job-hunting politician;
- the enthusiasm of a radio announcer;
- the alertness of a bird dog;
- the self-assurance of a mother-in-law;
- the tireless persistence of a bill collector;

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- the tactical genius of Patton;
- and the showmanship of P.T. Barnum.

Nobody gets a second chance to go through life again. This isn't a dress rehearsal -- it's the real thing! What about the person who truly is "having a bad life"? Somehow, this individual never learned the rules of the game. There he was, on the sidelines as a spectator, vicariously observing the exciting game of life through others.

Ever so often for our observer, the play would sweep around to his side of the field, go out of bounds, and "roll up" our spectator-victim into a heap. Perhaps it was at one of these moments that the expression was coined, "There are three kinds of people in the world: (1) those who make things happen; (2) those who watch things happen; and (3) those who asked 'What happened?'"

It's not that we were placed here to flounder. The Designer of the Universe put spaceship earth here with a guidebook of instructions. We were also given the common sense to seek knowledge and to learn judiciously from others. As I've chided some graduation audiences in the Mid-South, "Seniors, if you don't want to be a loser in the game of life, watch what losers do -- and don't do that!"

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long enough to make all their collective mistakes -- as resourceful as we are behind their backs.

Yes, dear reader, this book is about investing in futures. This is my 29th year with Harding University; guess I'll stay. I marvel at where the time has gone. I was the age of my students once (then twice and now three times). In our Economics classes, I'm now instructing the children of my former students. On a good day I vow to try to teach three generations. Most days I say, "No!" As the earth rotates, Father Time stands still for none of us. Education lasts all our lives: womb to tomb.

I'm 57 now. I should be 58, but I was sick a year. My peers and I have watched our kids grow up together. And should it cause us to reflect on many things -- both personal and professional? Yes, especially the need for that good, sound, two-way, intergenerational communication.

As I travel, people often ask me this question, "How are today's students different?" They really are different. Well, they "nuke" their food in microwave ovens and "channel surf" with remote controlled televisions (We were so poor -- we had to walk across the room to change channels). Less patient with anything considered boring, their attention spans value, not "how important" something is, but "how entertaining" it is.

Such is the legacy of the Nintendo Generation. When we instructors hand back the term papers they

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write, our students look at the disappointing grade and exclaim, "Hey, I ran 'Spell Check' over it." I don't publish anything until I rewrite it 10-12 times (and mistakes still creep in).

And yes, there does seem to be an attitude today -- our kids probably don't have a monopoly on it -- but it's that attitude which says, "Nothing is really wrong, if I don't get caught." It is a scary attitude wherever it's found. When did they learn that? (From us, perish the thought?) Maybe it has always been so. It would make a good term paper topic -- (or a book report), referencing accounts in the Scriptures. How far back could we go? -- Cain and Abel? -- last week's headlines?

Two ladies were talking about a handicapped orphan child -- One lady had paid for expensive surgery, so he could walk. "Guess where he is today?" she asked. "Well," said the other lady, "Is he some great person?" "No, he's in Federal prison -- we taught him how to walk, but we forgot to show him where to walk."

It was rare, but some of our kids' peers and playmates of yesteryear in soccer, football, baseball, and softball did grow up and get in trouble with the law. Whenever we'd see that in the newspaper, I'd remind our grown kids: "As a parent, never underestimate the power of that broken record you heard from us while growing up: Where are you going? When will you be back? What will you be doing? and Who will you be with?"

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If we all do our jobs well, you and I, then perhaps a fitting conclusion to this book will also track with my closing comments to our kids as they emerged intact from adolescence. It is therefore appropriate that this newest book, INVESTING IN FUTURES -- A Profile for Generations, circa 2000, is a sequel to WHAT I KNOW NOW THAT I WISH THEY'D TOLD ME BACK THEN -- A Time Capsule of Advice from Baby Boomers to the Baby Busters of Generation X, 1995; CHILDREN -- America's Greatest Natural Resource, 1996; and HOW TO AVOID BEING TOO SOON OLD, TOO LATE SMART -- More Sage Wisdom from Pre-Boomers & Baby Boomers to the Yuppie Puppies of Generation X, 1997.

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale observes this about human history:

It is a magnificent pageant of success and failures. And we have always learned from the past the things necessary for going forward into the future. The first step on the moon was a dramatic achievement. But so was the discovery that man could grow plants to feed himself, or weave cloth to clothe himself. So it doesn't hurt to look back on the long history of mankind and the wonders that have been achieved. Look back on courage, on self-reliance, on endurance, on fortitude, all the heritage that the past has given us. This is the way to find a true evaluation toward a glorious future.

I tell parents, teachers, advisors, and counselors, administrators this: "Regarding your role, if your candle

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should ever flicker, and you should ever question your role, remember that there is no greater gift than to have God's children entrusted to YOU! God must love them very much, because somehow He gave them YOU. If He rewards YOU, far beyond your worth, by letting YOU be their teacher-mentor-benefactor, then who are YOU to question His wisdom?"

Novelist James Michener also had a good handle on things: "I was born to a woman I never knew, and raised by another who took in orphans. I do not know my background, my lineage, my biological or cultural heritage. But when I meet someone new, I treat them with respect. For after all, they could be my people."

Such is the Kingdom of Heaven, I'm thinking. Two thousand years ago, Jesus of Nazareth provided our mandate: "Take heed that ye despise not one of those little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10).

1. THEY CAN COUNT ON US

When I was in my mid-20's, I was an administrative officer stationed at a Strategic Air Command (SAC) wing at an air force base located in the Mid-South. There, I worked for a career officer who proudly announced at work one day that he had just kicked his son out of the house. "Why?" I asked.

I will never forget his reply (although I have repeatedly tried). He said, "Because my son just turned 17 yesterday... My dad kicked me out on my 17th birthday... My dad didn't do nothing for me, and I'm not doing nothing for my son." Haven't we learned anything? Children raising children.

Wouldn't it be sad if we dedicated our lives and careers to making a name of ourselves, and our own children didn't know who we were? I wish we knew the author of this item. I think we'd like to thank him or her. Nevertheless, we can do something better -- we can live up to the challenge all our lives:

WE'LL BE THERE

We'll be there... when you sleep
through the night.

We'll be there... when you need us
to hold you tight.

For the first step you take,
And the first time you make it
Clear to the top of the stairs.

When you learn who you are
Wish on a star... we'll be there.

They Can Count on Us

We'll be there... when your words
turn to rhymes.

Little one, we'll be there... read you
stories at bedtime.

When you play at the park,
when you're scared of the dark,

When you learn how to pray
your first prayer.

Thunder and storm, when it's cold
or its warm...

We'll be there.

We'll be there... when you skin
up your knee.

We'll be there... when you climb
to the top of the tree.

I will teach you to hike,

ride a two-wheel bike,

Build a kite that will soar through
the air.

When you wade through the streams,
when you dream your first dreams ...

We'll be there.

And we'll be there... when you
try out your wings.

Yes, we'll be there... when you're
questioning everything.

When you learn how to choose,
when you try and you lose,

When you find that the world isn't fair,
when you stand or you fall,

You know through it all,

Mom and Dad are going to be there.

They Can Count On Us

Thanking God every day that He
sent you our way and He
trusted you once to our care.
And wherever you roam,
you can always come home...
We'll be there.

-- Author Unknown

We need to be there for our children in those formative years. For a decade, Mom and I spent many a boring evening in hot, steamy gymnasiums around our state because our son's or daughter's ball team was there. Sometimes their evening was spent keeping the other end of the bench from flying up when the coach sat down. And yet, at some point during the evening our child would give a faint wave to us from across the gym. And that meant, "Thanks, because if you weren't here, my parents missed it." Mission accomplished.

We parents shouldn't cling to our young people unnecessarily. Children who are desperate to get away from their parents are sometimes the ones whom the parents are frantically holding on to. If we give young people the freedom they long for, they may want to keep coming back.

It's ideal when we have the best of both worlds -- an active, exciting life on our own and the option of sharing our parent's life as well. In everything, we try to guide our young people to be responsible individuals. We are compelled to teach them that, as a child, no one really "gets by" with anything here or in the hereafter.

2. WINNING THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE HUMAN RACE

Cited here is a section from my letter to our own children at high school graduation (and yes, the personal remembrances really were omitted). No trust is violated in printing the text; before they read it in their senior letter, it was presented by me as part of a topical series on Sunday mornings in teaching a 10th grade Bible class over many years.

Yes, our job as parents has been to protect you, to provide for you and to give you every opportunity both now and in the Hereafter. You started out with a very small world -- your crib and then your playpen. We shall never forget the first time we heard that thud in the hallway, as you had climbed out of your playpen.

We, as all parents, must gradually broaden your horizons room by room, to the yard, to the neighborhood, to the county, etc. In that regard, We'll never forget the time we let you ride your bicycle around the block by yourself for the first time. It seemed an eternity before you came back in view, wobbling down the road.

We know that there will be times when it will be very hard for us to gracefully sever the apron strings and send you out on your way -- to truly and boldly go where no one has gone before. When you turned eighteen, we gave you a factual article that told you about your legal rights as an adult. We marvel at your progress and maturity. We appreciate so much your

The First Quarter of the Human Race

wonderful honesty, tender heart and good hygiene. We are at a crossroads right now. You have a wonderful adventure ahead of you. We all look forward to being a participant in it with you.

In the May/June 1988 of the *Christian Homes Newsletter*, President Nancy Miller had a fine little article about this particular milestone in their lives:

Graduation Day! What an exciting time in the life of a young person! Receiving graduation announcements is one of those marker times to the staff at Christian Homes -- marking another stage in the lives of some young people placed in adoption seventeen or eighteen years ago. This year's spring graduation announcements received at Christian Homes are the most meaningful.

Many of them came from students placed for adoption my first year at Christian Homes in 1970. And now, these young people are making that next big step into the future. Many of them are going to college; some will begin their working careers; perhaps some are getting married.

Each year as graduation announcements are received in our office, we feel a special degree of satisfaction and accomplishment -- knowing that those children have had their families to love, protect, and guide them to

The First Quarter of the Human Race

this mark in their lives. We are thankful to have had a part in their beginning, and we will look forward to each year's graduates as we continue to place babies who will be at that special marker time of graduation in their lives in a few years.

Young people, here is a motto that keeps parents going: "Avenge yourselves -- live long enough to be a problem to your children!" Well, in our case, the only concerns we have about the younger generation is that they will probably do a better job with the world's problems than our generation has done.

Sure, there are questions yet to be answered in the future. As our kids sang in their last school program, perhaps they noticed that even our National Anthem ends with a question mark, doesn't it? "Oh, say, does that Star Spangled Banner yet wave -- O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"

Come what may, our kids are the trustees of the future, because that is where they will spend the rest of their days. All in all, we are so thankful for their exuberance and confidence that comes from being a young adult.

3. CEMENTING LINEAGE AND HERITAGE TOGETHER

Isn't it amazing how life goes full circle? In the mid-1970's, and about the time our son (who is now a husband, dad, and a family practice physician) was starting elementary school, a letter arrived in the mail. It reads in part as follows (the original version was one full page, typed):

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Diffine:

...Your son seems to enjoy games, but he has a tendency toward undue roughness. There have been many complaints lately concerning your son's use of his hands. This often brings group and individual disapproval. For no apparent reason, he strikes out with his fists. Temporary separation from the group seems to help him most. He is a capable boy; he excels in academic pursuits. His paramount need at the present time is control of his hands in his relationships with his classmates...

Sincerely yours, Edna Johnson

Now get this. The letter came in an envelope from my Mom 25 years after Mrs. Johnson, my First Grade teacher, wrote it on April 11, 1949! And Mom's note to me in the mid-1970's said, "Son, I just found this in some old papers. Thought you'd like to have it at this time, as your children start school. It's called "retribution" -- your kids will soon be paying you back for the way you treated us."

Cementing Lineage and Heritage Together

I remember the incident (though not the letter). I remember Mom accusing me, "You say you've been good. Mrs. Johnson says she had to put you on the bench (Hey, I was good while I was on the bench)."

In the brief time that we will have with our children, as they are growing up, what will we decide to leave them in the way of a legacy? Will we leave them a good name? Will we leave them good memories? Will we leave them a good personal example? Will we leave them a strong faith? If so, we are giving them a wonderful legacy -- a heritage which, frankly, I never fully received from my parents.

Set aside time for your family. Children measure their parents' interest in them in direct proportion to the time they spend with them. Take time to find out what kind of a day every family member had. Make your home a happy home and a center of joy.

Be a good listener. Share your children's and your mate's experiences by listening. Set an example for your children and spouse. Practice what you preach. Accept them not only because of, but in spite of, the way they act. Keep those family ties strong. Be available. Do things with your family.

Develop each child's responsibility. Treat each child as an individual to guide and encourage. Teach them to take on responsibility. Understand the true meaning of discipline. Let your authority be motivated by love. There will be times when your children will call you "stupid." You just gather the little darlings in your arms

Cementing Lineage and Heritage Together

and you say, "Someday you will be a parent, and then you will be stupid, too."

Encourage your children to take their studies seriously. Insist on regular study hours, as much as possible. Teach them to work while they work and play while they play; that's the way to get the most out of every day. Give them a healthy attitude toward sex. Instruct them, and give them reverence for the body and the sanctity of marriage.

And make bedtime the closest time of the day, particularly for your young children. It's a time to talk to each child individually, rub backs, and hug. Never let your children go to bed hearing warnings, cross words, or threats. I wish I could say that I always lived up to that admonition. They somehow arrived at adulthood right side up and on track, if not because of our parenting, perhaps in spite of it. Time will tell.

4. TRYING TO RAISE THEM RIGHT

In the summer of 1993, and after we had all survived the teen years at our house, a longtime neighbor startled me with this question: "What did you do to raise such fine kids (apparently she had forgotten about the times she thought otherwise)?" Honestly, I was speechless, and finally managed a feeble, "They are?... Beats me... Let's wait 50 years until we decide that."

Were there ever times when their ingratitude and procrastination wore heavily on us? Yes. Did we struggle on occasions to achieve primitive, two-way communication? Yep. After a long driving trip, and after we got out of the car back in our own driveway, were we ever tempted to drop kick them through the hedge? For sure. Did we ever wish they wouldn't tell people their last names? Without a doubt. Were we ever on a first-name basis with several auto body repair shops when our kids were teenage drivers? Indeed.

Although we didn't have a formal approach or a code etched in stone, early and often we communicated the following to our kids (we are just now documenting it in writing for the purpose of this book):

- Children need parents, students need teachers, and employees need employers.
- Even smart people can do stupid things.
- This is homework-related -- Even the most fertile soil, if left uncultivated, can produce the rankest weeds.

Trying to Raise Them Right

- Life is really very simple. There are 26 basic letters, 10 basic numbers, 7 basic notes, and 3 basic colors.
- Be truthful; keep us informed, and we'll be your friend and supporter.
- Be dishonest; deceive us, and we'll be your judge and jury.
- We will not be manipulated by you, to wrongly defend you (even though we know that if we don't defend you, nobody will).
- The Teacher and Principal and Coach are always right -- we're on their side (even when they're wrong).
- There is an attitude which says, "It's not wrong unless you get caught." That attitude is unacceptable.
- "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." --III John 4
- Two parenting approaches can create a monster -- "All love and no rules," and conversely, "All rules and no love."
- You'll get "tough love" from us, no matter what; so ask us questions you know we can say "yes" to.

Trying to Raise Them Right

- You are not to drive alone without an adult in the car before age 16. It's the law.
- Speed, inexperience, and carelessness have no place behind the wheel of a car. Amen?
- We will all do our best to send you to school each day fully prepared and receptive to learn.
- We will continue to read and study about our roles as Moms and Dads, so that if there ever were a Minimum Performance Test for parents, we'd pass it handily.
- When arguing, consider taking a time out to cut your losses and to do some damage control.
- "Well, Duh!" is an unacceptable response.
- Avoid playmates who use foul language and have mean tempers -- bad news.
- Never wrestle in the mud with a pig; you'll get all dirty and the pig will enjoy it.
- "A good name is better to be chosen than great riches." --Proverbs 22:1.
- Plan your work -- work your plan.
- Work while you work, play while you play -- that's how you get the most out of every day.

Trying to Raise Them Right

- No one can really embarrass you for long, unless they have your assistance.
- There is something worse than losing a so-called boyfriend or girlfriend -- losing yourself.
- Nice guys don't finish last -- nice guys are winners before the game ever starts.
- Try to become the kind of adult that the child you once were would approve of.
- You cannot pay back our love; you can only pass it on.

Well, we could all keep adding to the list, perfecting it. Charles F. Banning states that "If All the gold in the world were melted down into a solid cube it would be about the size of an 8-room house. If a man got possession of all that gold -- trillions of dollars worth -- he could not buy a friend, character, peace of mind, clear conscience, or a sense of eternity." Let's keep investing in futures.

5. ROLE REVERSALS AND GENDER CLASHES

Yes, it has been said in jest that "the good Lord gives us 12 years to learn to love our children before they become teenagers." When there are difficult times, we all need to be reminded that teenagers don't cause difficulties by themselves. The problem is that both parents and children are changing.

Many parents don't realize that this is the source of conflict. There is a type of triple whammy that hits at this point of life. When our children are teenagers, we, ourselves, are hitting the mid-life crisis years, and our own parents are in their declining years.

The adolescent is asking, "Who am I?" The parents are asking "Is that all there is?" The experts say that parents are going through "middlescence," a time for looking back at what has been accomplished and ahead to what is left to be done.

A parent may have exaggerated reactions to the thing his teenager says or does, because the parent himself is having doubts about his own self-worth. So, my youthful friends, don't worry about an occasional outburst of temper from moms and dads. One bad day does not a bad parent make.

Further, although most parents wouldn't want to be teenagers again, they are upset about their own missed opportunities. They feel that with the wisdom they've gained, they would do a great job of being a teenager. They are probably right, but we must all learn from our own experiences, both the happy and the painful ones.

Role Reversals and Gender Clashes

Parents, too, are human and vulnerable. Young people have more freedom than we ever had at our age to pursue their own interests. Teens are starting to appreciate some of the things that older people enjoy. Teens are interested in the world, taking on a whole new perspective about it.

And we adults are often pleasantly surprised how responsible, sensitive, and perceptive our teens can be toward worldly and eternal values. We hope that teens will always keep a tender conscience, as they are bombarded by the media with so much sex, crime, and drugs.

The permissive generation of the 1960's -- which was a very anti-authority, anti-establishment time -- has resulted in the crime, drugs, divorce, and AIDS problems of the 1990's. We adults do so appreciate our teens' tender hearts in trying to view TV programs and movies that are as wholesome as possible. It is just not normal for people's relationships to move as fast in real life as they do on TV, hopping in and out of bed as fast as fleas on a dog.

In truth, every person -- dad, mom, brother, and sister -- is ultimately accountable to God who sees all actions. The child who feels an ultimate responsibility to God, in the context of a parent's responsible authority, is the least likely to rebel, or the most likely to recover from a period of rebellion.

And yes, it is frustrating to try to sort out good from bad. It's just that between the good and the bad are a

Role Reversals and Gender Clashes

lot of wise and respectively unwise actions. Wise actions usually lead to good results, and unwise actions often lead to bad results. That is what we've tried to teach our children -- it is part of our job description as parents.

I think it is a disservice to our young people to tell them that "this is the most carefree time of your life." It is not true; it's a wonder we don't send more of our young people over the edge with such thoughtless advice. They are going through a period of adolescence when their hormones won't stabilize, when their extremities won't coordinate, and they find little comfort in our telling them that "it is going to get worse."

The fact is, that although the stresses and pressures continue to mount as the years and decades pass, our ability to cope with these pressures -- socially, mentally, financially, spiritually, etc. -- grows so much faster.

Listen to the last paragraph of their Senior Letter (as they graduated from high school):

This Senior Letter concludes the same way it began. Please know that you have always been so much fun to be around. We do so look up to you. We are so proud of your tender conscience. You are always teaching us something wonderful. You never cease to amaze us. You are the best -- truly World Class. You'll always be in our "Hall of Fame." You make us so happy and proud -- so much so, that we have one final request -- can we have your autograph?

Role Reversals and Gender Clashes

And here is a short paragraph adapted from our son's medical school application:

My life's mission is to pay back, through a life of medical service, that gift that was given to me those many years ago. I intend to make it my life's goal to help people gain greater mobility, battle against needless suffering, and avert premature death.

6. ON CRUISING

The following is a guest article to the local paper (never submitted) on the chronic, and pesky problem of our clogged main drags on weekend evenings:

Cruising. It appears to be a genuine throwback to pioneer days when our forefathers circled the prairie schooners at dusk for security and companionship. Never did it myself; it was my gas, and I could seldom buy more than a dollar's worth at a time (Hey, that was three gallons). Those were leaner times all around for my generation; we had to chop wood to keep the television running. When it comes down to it, the only thing I envy about our young people today is that they will probably do a better job than my generation in solving problems and generally coping with life on or off the open road. Nevertheless, our young people don't "have to" cruise. Most, in fact, don't.

Nothing to do? Read on. Our young people are our greatest natural resource. There are many options -- scenic routes along the road of life:

Make credible use of your time and talents... Pay your debt to the past by being responsible for the future... Humor your parents... Realize that the greatest power in the world is the power of knowledge... Stay informed... Discuss with family what

On Cruising

you have learned or questioned this day... Discuss the future with people you respect... Work on accumulating the knowledge that can guarantee that future... Work hard -- play hard - - sleep well... Count your blessings... Develop some honest-to-goodness 21st Century computer skills... Ponder the full meaning of life... View a great movie or TV show... Go for a long, brisk walk... Listen to beautiful music... Read a good novel... Exercise a lot... Buy a new video game... Look at old family albums... Label old photos not yet in albums... Trace your family tree... Get a haircut... Give a haircut... Go for a swim... Go for a hike... Pick up litter... Take a cold shower... Take a shop class... Plan your life... Do something pleasantly unexpected... Study successful people; emulate them... Study losers; don't be like them... Mentor younger brothers and sisters... re-connect with an older sibling... Play on a team... Mow a widow's yard... Mow your own yard without being asked... Catch your parents when they faint... Learn new skills... Buy a dog or cat to keep you company... Get some new CD's or tapes... Buy something you have always wanted... Fix up your parent's house... Go to a

On Cruising

museum... Meditate... Pray... Clean out your closets or bureau drawers... Pick up your room... Organize the others... List your assets and accomplishments... Call a special friend who always makes you feel happy... Eat a large piece of chocolate cake... Play the stereo and sing along in full voice... Spend some time at a religious retreat... Get a job... Get another job... Take another class... Write poetry... Write a letter to the editor... Buy your own gas... Study time management techniques... Polish your people skills... Practice saying "Please" and "Thank You"... Landscape your parent's yard... Polish your shoes... Be patient with others... Donate blood... Join the National Guard... Memorize the Gettysburg Address... Be accountable for your actions... Jump in and share the blame when something goes wrong... Yield the right of way to other motorists... Whistle while you work... Eat broccoli... Read our country's founding documents... Tell your parents how wise they have become... Exorcise profanity from your vocabulary... Put the toilet seat down... Forgive people who leave toilet seats up... Take a "Hunting and Safety" course... Sing "The Star

On Cruising

Spangled Banner" in the shower... Buckle up... Be a good son or daughter... Cultivate your talents... Reinvent yourself... Seize the day... Repair broken friendships... Put a time limit on worrying about the future or the past... Polish your manners... Associate with people whose qualities you admire... Get places on time... Shop locally... Realize that "Life isn't fair"... Take a nap... Don't argue with parents when they are tired, or rested... Lose battles to win wars... Don't speak when you should be listening... Pull your own weight... Compliment the achievements of others... Protect your good name... Take advantage of rare second chances to make a good first impression... Include the Designer of the universe in your deliberations... Save money... Realize that children need parents, students need teachers, and employees need employers... Remember that the most fertile soil, if left uncultivated, can produce the rankest weeds... Shun the attitude that nothing is wrong if you don't get caught... Drive within the speed limit... When arguing, consider taking a time out to cut your losses... Plan your work -- work your plan... Remember that nice guys don't

On Cruising

finish last -- nice guys are winners before the game ever starts... Try to become the kind of adult that the child you once were would approve of... Avoid wrestling in the mud with a pig -- you'll get all dirty and the pig will enjoy it... Celebrate special moments in the lives of your friends and relatives... Listen while others speak... Submit your judgment to others with modesty... Keep alive that little spark of celestial fire called conscience... Live honorably among all people... Be kind to those lives you touch... Do your fair share to help those in need... Have courage and conviction... Be tolerant of others' faults and opinions... Walk a mile in the other person's shoes... Develop a marketable skill... Help your country preserve its moral umbrella... Strive for maturity... Realize that it's better to be hassled than be ignored... Let wise actions lead to good results... Avoid unwise actions that lead to bad results... When it's a jungle out there, get a compass... Tell your parents you love them... Thank your parents for the start they have given you... Be somebody... Give more than you get... Commit some time to self-improvement... Reinvent yourself every day... Cultivate talents that

On Cruising

have been given to you and you alone... Ponder the very special fact that you exist... Bet on the future success of your country... Renew your commitment to family and friends... Have long courtships... Be ye grateful... Develop a set of convictions to guide you through any temptation... Remember that integrity is in short supply and very great demand... Develop a "can do" spirit that you can achieve anything... Remember that space ship earth came with a manual of instructions... Let adversity make you a better person... Treat others with respect and kindness... Let good family ties lengthen to accommodate time and distance, schedules and situations... Develop a healthy attitude toward sex... Understand the true meaning of discipline... Let your actions be motivated by love... Do things with your family... Practice what you preach... Do your part to make your home the center of joy... Avoid "dumbth," that is, willful ignorance... Don't make the same mistake twice more than once... Don't have a bad life... Realize that the best Department of Health and Human Services is the family... Remember that even smart people can do dumb

On Cruising

things... Be accountable for your actions... Realize that the best is yet to be... Don't take your parents for granted... Carry money without spending it... Do a job without being supervised... Make a promise and keep it... Bear an injustice without wanting to get even... Realize that the grass isn't greener on the other side of the fence, but rather where it has been watered... Accept the fact that variety is the spice of life... Remember that it is monotony that buys the groceries... Read on other subjects to broaden your awareness of what is happening in the world around you... Study the ideas and dreams of our history to see how they can help you today... Make plans or your next summer job will be for the rest of your life... Develop a marketable skill... Become independent and self-supporting... Don't feel that doing chores violates your civil rights... Do what needs to be done, and then some... Compete when you must, and cooperate when you should... Watch your body language... Make few promises, but keep them... Make merry with those who rejoice... Mourn with those who suffer... Keep an open mind... Discuss -- don't argue... Treat everybody with equal importance... Learn the

On Cruising

difference between infatuation and love... Ponder the qualities your future mate should have... Consider what that future mate would want to find in you... Marry the right person and double your blessings... Give your friends and relatives good memories... Affair proof your relationships... Start a national movement to promote good, clean, safe monogamy... Live one day at a time... Be creative and let your dreams come alive... Refresh yourself with quiet time and meditation... Read more meaningful scriptures, books, and poetry... Recognize the value of the "here" and "now"... Cultivate the treasure of genuine relationships... Find the renewal that humor brings to the inner self... Begin a journal just for you... Write your life story... Allow yourself to delve into seemingly unanswerable questions...

Well! I'm sure it's an incomplete list. Starting from scratch, I have run it up to 150. I challenge our young people, cruisers and non-cruisers alike, to see how many more good things could be added to the list -- and then do them. Let's create a list long enough to make the Guinness Book of World Records. The young people of Searcy, Arkansas could own that record. Yes, Generation X may very well stand for "excellence."

On Cruising

Alas, it has been said that youth is young life plus curiosity minus understanding. It is not just a time of life for cruising -- it is also a state of mind. It is, as the various sages have described it, "a temper of the will... a quality of the imagination... a vigor of the emotions... a predominance of courage over timidity... of the appetite for adventure over love of ease." All in all, we parents are so thankful for the exuberance and confidence that comes from being a young person today. Without it, our young people would probably droop and perish away at the frightful prospect of some day being as dumb as their mom and dad.

Young people, now that you've completed the first quarter of the human race -- don't stop now and while you are ahead. You don't have to settle for circling wagons. Reinvent the wheel and go for a greater destiny, even though you may not yet know its address or location. Happy trails to you, and we'll be on-call.

Conversely, we need to nudge our young people toward the direction of developing good, marketable skills. If we are going to get involved in other people's lives to do good, it is going to take time and money. And we will have neither time nor money, if we don't have a marketable skill. We will be working at two jobs

7. NOTHING TAKEN FOR GRANTED

Whenever and wherever I speak to audiences across the land, I encourage parents and grandparents to write a letter of remembrance and advice to their children at graduation. It is a tradition at Harding Academy. Leave them a legacy -- make them read it twice a year. Give them a quiz on it; if they don't get at least 70 percent correct, write them out of your will (only kidding)!

Seriously, I also apologize to young people on behalf of busy parents. We haven't always been there for our young people. It has frustrated them and us. We have had to work so hard to pave the way for a bright and promising future for the next generation. We owe them that. We would give our lives for our children. We are giving our lives for our children. And guess what they owe us? Just one thing -- their cheerful cooperation.

As they start their working years, I remind young people that the world doesn't owe them a living; it owes them nothing -- it was here first. And while we are on the subject, the grass isn't greener on the other side of the fence; the grass is greener where it has been watered. Our young people are certainly welcome to climb the fence. But let them take some water with them. Then, wherever they are, the grass will be green.

Conversely, we need to nudge our young people toward the direction of developing good, marketable skills. If we are going to get involved in other people's lives to do good, it is going to take time and money. And we will have neither time nor money, if we don't have a marketable skill. We will be working at two jobs

Nothing Taken for Granted

seven days a week, and we won't have the time and energy to do much good for anyone.

Here is advice from a real authority:

Dear Abby: My mother is always on my back about something. It's "sit up straight, talk slower, turn down the TV, quit picking your face, and go do your homework!" What's a poor defenseless teenager supposed to do anyway? Signed Hassled.

Wouldn't it be fun to be a ghost writer for Abby? What do you suppose Abby wrote back?

Dear Hassled: Sit up straight, talk slower, turn down the TV, quit picking your face, and go do your homework.

8. PAYING THE PIPER

Each year around Mother's Day I hear a touching song on the radio. I have not captured all of it. However, the lyrics play out as follows (paraphrased):

A teenager came to his mother, and said, "Mom, I feel I should be rewarded for all the things that I have done this semester." And he presented to his mother a list. And the list said:

For all my good grades -----	\$10.00
For being on time at school -----	7.00
For keeping my room clean -----	10.00
For taking extra care of my books -----	3.00
For not complaining about the lunches you fixed -----	5.00
For doing extra reading and getting home with the notes from school -----	<u>5.00</u>
TOTAL -----	\$40.00

His mom looked the list over, put her arm around him and said "For taking care of you since you were a noise at one end and a mess at the other, NO CHARGE. For sitting up at night when you were sick (and then going to work the next day), NO CHARGE. For helping you many times with your homework, NO CHARGE. For taking you to school and picking you up 2,000 times, nearly 200 times this year alone, plus ball games, fundraising events, band practice, outings, NO CHARGE. For the time and the tears you've caused throughout the years, NO

Paying the Piper

CHARGE. For advice, knowledge, and some money for college, NO CHARGE."

The teenager, having learned the cost of real love, took his bill and marked it "PAID-IN-FULL." And Mom said, "Son, all we owe each other is our love. See, we pay our debt to the past, by being responsible for the future."

Some years ago, United Technologies ran the following as a full page advertisement "PLEDGE" in the *Wall Street Journal*:

1. I now realize that the greatest power in the world is the power of knowledge.
2. I want to be smart. Dumb, misinformed people go through life missing so many rewards that could be theirs.
3. I will learn my basic skills and be an expert in them.
4. I will read books on the subjects that interest me most. But I will also read books and articles on other subjects to broaden my awareness of what is happening in the world around me.
5. I will discuss at dinner time what I have learned or questioned at school today.

Paying the Piper

6. I will study the ideas and dreams of our history to see how they can help me today.
7. I will set aside some time each day to think about my future, to discuss it with people I respect, and to work on accumulating the knowledge that can guarantee that future.
8. I pledge this to those who love me and are trying to help me succeed. More important, I pledge it to myself.

Student signature _____

Teacher (I'll help you) _____

Parent/ Guardian
(endorsed with great love) _____

All of this "paying dues" comes back to establishing priorities early in life. In the late 1950's, James Michener was invited to dinner by President Eisenhower. He declined in a letter saying he was going to a dinner to honor a former elementary school teacher:

Mr. President, I'm sorry that I will not be able to attend your dinner. The woman who taught me to read and write is celebrating her 80th birthday, and I have been asked to be the speaker at her party. I think that I would not be missed at your party, but I most definitely would be at hers.

Paying the Piper

The President wrote in reply saying that Michener had made the better choice:

Mr. Michener -- Thank you for your kind reply. You have chosen the best option. For in a man's life he may see 10 or more presidents, but the opportunity to sit with a good teacher is one he should not miss.

9. GOOD WORDS FOR SONS AND DAUGHTERS

It is fascinating watching our children go through a metamorphosis and arriving at adulthood. Somehow, through that "no-man's land" we call the teen years, that caterpillar, which crawled awkwardly and slowly into the cocoon, emerges as a beautiful monarch butterfly. We can facilitate that process.

PHRASES TO ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD

1. You're so much fun to be around!
2. You get better at that every time I see you.
Way to go?
3. Hang on a second while I call Sports Illustrated
-- they'll want a picture of this!
4. I'm going to brag about this. That's great!
5. I look up to you!
6. That's the best I've ever seen!
7. You are so thoughtful!
8. This is a tremendous improvement.
9. Good for you!
10. You're such a joy to us!
11. I never did that well when I was your age!
12. Can I put this on the bulletin board at the office
so I can see it every day?
13. You handled that beautifully!
14. That's incredible!
15. You're always teaching me something wonderful!
16. They just didn't make kids as good as you when
I was growing up!
17. You're really special to me -- and getting more
special every day!
18. Keep that up and you'll be the world champion
some day!

Good Words for Sons and Daughters

19. I really enjoy being with you!
20. What a super effort!
21. The person who marries you will be so lucky!
22. That's worth a trophy ten feet high!
23. Your mom and I are so grateful to be your parents.
24. I need to get word to the White House about this -- the President will want to know about it.
25. I really enjoy your smile.
26. That's fabulous!
27. There you go! That's it!
28. You're so helpful! Thank you!
29. You're going to make it!
30. God is truly a miracle worker -- to produce a kid as great as you from ordinary parents like us!
31. I wish I could have done it that well!
32. You'll always be in my hall of fame!
33. I'm impressed!
34. I know you worked very hard on that.
Wonderful job!
35. You're the best!
36. You sure know how to do it right! Outstanding!
37. I love to hear you laugh!
38. You're something else!
39. That's amazing! How did you do that?
40. You take my breath away.
41. You never cease to amaze me.
42. I really like that!
43. Sensational!
44. Absolutely superb!
45. I believe in you!
46. Excellent! That's the way to do it!
47. Can I have your autograph?

Good Words for Sons and Daughters

- 48. Fantastic!
- 49. You make me so happy!
- 50. I love you!

-- From "Orphans at Home" by Joe
White, Questar Publications

Parents should not be taken for granted. It is true that the Wright brothers invented the airplane, but it was Mr. and Mrs. Wright who invented Orville and Wilbur. I am always encouraging young people to take mom and dad in their arms and say, "Mom and dad I love you, and thank you for the start you have given me."

And if young people will promise to do that, I guarantee them that they will live long and prosper. If they refuse to do that, I tell them that they will be poor and miserable and all their babies will be born naked (of course, they don't want that).

MOTHER TO HER DAUGHTER

- I gave you life, but cannot live it for you.
- I can teach you things, but I cannot make you learn.
- I can give you directions, but I cannot always be there to lead you.
- I can allow you freedom, but cannot account for it.
- I can take you to church, but I cannot make you believe.

Good Words for Sons and Daughters

I can teach you right from wrong, but I can't always decide for you.

I can buy you beautiful clothes, but I cannot make you lovely inside.

I can offer you advice, but I cannot accept it for you.

I can give you love, but I cannot force it upon you.

I can teach you to be a friend, but I cannot make you one.

I can teach you to share, but I cannot make you unselfish.

I can teach you respect, but I can't force you to show honor.

I can grieve about your report card, but I cannot doubt your teachers.

I can advise you about friends, but I cannot choose them for you.

I can teach you about sex, but I cannot keep you pure.

I can tell you the facts of life, but I can't build your reputation.

I can tell you about drinking, but I can't say NO for you.

I can warn you about drugs, but I can't prevent you from using them.

I can tell you about lofty goals, but I can't achieve them for you.

I can let you babysit, but I can't be responsible for your actions.

I can teach you kindness, but I can't force you to be gracious.

Good Words for Sons and Daughters

I can warn you about sins, but I cannot make your morals.

I can love you as a daughter, but I cannot place you in God's Family.

I can pray for you, but I cannot make you walk with God.

I can teach you about Jesus, but I cannot make HIM your Savior.

I can teach you to obey, but I cannot make Jesus your Lord.

I can tell you how to live, but I cannot give you Eternal Life...

**Tips For Teens
Young World Radio**

I try to make it a point to remind our young people that if they don't plan, their next summer job could be for the rest of their lives. Indeed, their first order of business should be to develop a marketable skill. Then they can become independent and self-supporting.

Consequently, they will never have to ask mother, father, brother, sister, church, or government to take care of them (we'd all come to their rescue, if truly needed). You see, now is the time for all good people to come to the aid of themselves. This is practical economics.

According to Henry J. Taylor, "Imagination lit every lamp in this country, produced every article we use, built every church, made every discovery, performed every act of kindness and progress, created more and

10. REINVENTING OURSELVES EVERY DAY

It seems as if I am always giving advice to young people; they really are America's greatest natural resource. I like to catch them at the threshold of their careers. Often, that time comes as I have the chance to speak at high school or college commencement exercises.

Commencement is a wonderful ceremony marking the beginning of a new life of "freedom" to support themselves. The students are seated there at graduation thinking, "Here I am world; I know my ABCs." And yet the world says, "Come on out here son or daughter, and we will teach you the rest of the alphabet."

I try to make it a point to remind our young people that if they don't plan, their next summer job could be for the rest of their lives. Indeed, their first order of business should be to develop a marketable skill. Then they can become independent and self-supporting.

Consequently, they will never have to ask mother, father, brother, sister, church, or government to take care of them (we'd all come to their rescue, if truly needed). You see, now is the time for all good people to come to the aid of themselves. This is practical economics.

According to Henry J. Taylor, "Imagination lit every lamp in this country, produced every article we use, built every church, made every discovery, performed every act of kindness and progress, created more and

Reinventing Ourselves Every Day

better things for more people. It is the priceless ingredient for a better day."

No "onward and upward" from me; they know the direction. The world is not out there eagerly awaiting their talents; the world has gotten along just fine without them. All that our current graduates have is a one-year head start on next year's graduates. And this new crop must make the most of it, for a year from now there will be others after their job. It is so hard to convince young people of this old adage, "You don't get more until you do more than you get paid for."

There is a certain amount of fear of the unknown as our children grow up and graduate. There is always that concern and wonderment, "Is there life after graduation?" Very few people know the rules of life, and so they lay themselves open to pain. Time after time they spend most of life as spectators on the sideline just observing the game.

Louis Pasteur had this profound observation: "I hold the unconquerable belief that science and peace will triumph over ignorance and war, that nations will come together not to destroy but to construct, and that the future belongs to those who accomplish most for humanity."

Few people realize that after graduation the rules are different. We get out of school and go to work, and then it starts -- somebody else gets promoted. The questions start in our minds, "Why did he get promoted? I am a good worker, I have been here

Reinventing Ourselves Every Day

longer, etc." We then work harder in order to improve ourselves; then it occurs again.

Someone else gets promoted. And we react by exclaiming, "How come he got promoted -- he must be doing something immoral!" Probably not, most likely, he was doing things in addition to his work. And the danger is here that we can become workaholics, working harder and harder in order to prove ourselves to our boss.

And all the time we are wondering, "Why doesn't he notice me?" Well, he doesn't have X-ray vision, and he never will. The sad thing about the workaholic is that he becomes a person who has no balance in his life. A person who buries himself in his work every evening and at the same time comes to resent himself, his company, his community, and even his country.

What went wrong? It all goes back to elementary school. There, the teacher gave us an assignment; we turned it in and got a grade. We never showed undue interest in the teacher or the assignment. We didn't want to be branded an "apple-polisher," a "boot-licker," or a "teacher's pet." That was the drill: We did the work, turned it in, and got a grade.

Every year we moved up because the other class had moved up. And there were plenty of empty chairs for us in the next class. We never stopped to talk to the principal, nor to invite him to sit at our lunch table. No, we didn't talk to him unless we had to. Then, he usually had a long talk and we had a long listen. But

Reinventing Ourselves Every Day

we advanced, and we thought it was that way after graduation.

Who are these people who advance in their careers, and what are they doing in addition to their work? These achievers learn to network, volunteer, lead, interact, join, go places, get organized, give more than they get, package the human capital worth, find a mentor, and commit sometimes 20 percent of their time (that's some nights and weekends) to self-improvement.

Achievers know that 87 out of 100 people who fail in their careers do so, not because of a lack of technical skill, but because they rub other people the wrong way. So the achievers polish their people skills. If they can't learn names, they take that George Carnegie course. It helped me. Achievers tell others what they do well. Achievers honestly compliment others on what they are observed doing well.

Achievers go up to the boss, who is the same authority figure as the school administrator, and say, "Boss, what are your goals and how can I help you achieve them?" He faints. You revive him and say it again, "Boss, how can I help you?" He replies, "You know, I have this problem I have been worried about."

And the achiever responds with, "Boss, why don't you let me worry about that problem with you?" By now, the boss has his arm around our achiever, and he is saying proudly, "My main man -- my main woman."

11. Reinventing Ourselves Every Day

The achievers advance, and everybody else just keeps on working.

Achievers know that successful people are successful because they make a habit of doing things unsuccessful people won't do. And it's not immoral, it's just a matter of getting the work done, and then some -- no matter how tired we are, no matter how long the day. It's not a violation of our civil rights, and it's not a slur on our masculinity. If the work is there and we are there, we just get it done, and then some. Once again, we don't get more until we do more than we get paid for.

There is a big difference between being a workaholic and an optimal performer. It has been said that there will probably never be a documented case of the hard-driving workaholic who laid on his deathbed, "Man, I wish I'd spent more time at the office."

However, the story is related that one summer evening, when Thomas Edison returned home from his work, his wife said, "You have worked long enough without a rest. You must go on a vacation." "But where will I go?" he asked. "Decide where you would rather be than anywhere else on earth, and go there," was the answer. "Very well," promised Mr. Edison, "I will go tomorrow." The next morning he returned to his laboratory.

11. KEEPING THE WORK ETHIC IN PLACE

Work has been called the crabgrass in the lawn of life -- the fast food in the banquet of life. If jobs were really interesting, we would probably get picture postcards from people at work. I remember that as a teenager, my boss held a victory rally just to honor me for showing up at work that day.

In our working years, there are a number of ways to get to the top of a tall tree: (1) Climb the tree; (2) sit on an acorn; or (3) make friends with a big bird. We can do all of these simultaneously. And yet, let us not confuse activity with results. The world doesn't care how many storms we have been through, but did we bring in the ship? We shouldn't describe our labor pains in great detail; show people the baby.

There is a big difference between being a workaholic and an optimal performer. It has been said that there will probably never be a documented case of the hard-driving workaholic who said on his deathbed, "Man, I wish I'd spent more time at the office."

However, the story is related that one summer evening, when Thomas Edison returned home from his work, his wife said, "You have worked long enough without a rest. You must go on a vacation." "But where will I go?" he asked. "Decide where you would rather be than anywhere else on earth, and go there," was the answer. "Very well," promised Mr. Edison, "I will go tomorrow." The next morning he returned to his laboratory.

Keeping the Work Ethic in Place

I have always felt that the ideal vocation would be to pick something that we loved to do anyway as a hobby, if we were independently wealthy. Then, we can get really good at that and go out and find some organization that would be willing to pay us to do just that. Then, we would never really work another day in our life. That is, we wouldn't call it work at all.

Andrew Carnegie once put it this way: "If a man would eat, he must work. A life of elegant leisure is the life of an unworthy citizen. The republic does not owe him a living; it is he who owes the republic a life of usefulness. Such is the republican idea."

However, work is one of those four-letter words to many people. It has been said, "Success comes ahead of work, but only in the dictionary." He who would leave footprints in the sands of time must wear work shoes. It's not just that we should keep busy, we should also know why we are busy. The bee is praised; the mosquito is swatted. Abe Lincoln may have said, "All things come to he who waits," but what is probably more true is that "all things come to he who hustles while he waits."

It was in 1625 when Sir Francis Bacon said, "A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds." Solomon used the ant as an object to teach us the urgency of work. And through it, we see that all nature is at work. Proverbs 6:6-11 says so:

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways
and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer

Keeping the Work Ethic in Place

or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest -- and poverty will come on you like a bandit, and scarcity like an armed man.

There will be times in our school and work life that we can keep a disagreement from becoming an argument. We should welcome the disagreement; we should distrust our first instinctive impression. We should control our temper.

We should listen and look for areas of agreement. We should be honest and promise to think over and study carefully the other person's ideas. We should also thank the other person sincerely for his interest, and postpone action to give both of you time to think through the problem.

There will be times when we will have to handle conflict on the job. We can avoid conflict when the issue is a low priority or is just developing. We can accommodate the other person and the conflict when we want to build a relationship rather than win an organizational battle.

We can compete in an emergency-like situation when we must act with speed and decisiveness. We can collaborate when our investment in the issue is high and we value the other person's viewpoint. We can also compromise when time to make a decision is

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running out, and collaboration and competition have failed.

And when it comes to office politics, remember that there is no such thing as "the loyal opposition," as there would be in politics. I have known a number of talented people in various places who were swept away because they thought they were "the loyal opposition." They were guilty of rank insubordination.

Sadly, to them "who is right" became more important than "what is best." And I tried to tell them, "If you are gone, who will champion your cause?" Work within the system, work around the edges, build some influence, etc.

From Tough Times Never Last, But Tough People Do, by Robert Shuller, comes PEOPLE WILL BE:

People will be unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered. Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.

Be honest and frank anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.

The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest minds. Think big anyway.

Keeping the Work Ethic in Place

People favor underdogs, but follow only top dogs. Fight for some underdogs anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth.

Give the world the best you've got anyway.

There are so many things that one can do to get along with people, the management experts say. We shouldn't say everything we think. And we should watch our body language; it may say more than we intend or want to say. Make few promises, but keep the ones we make if we want to be trusted. Learn to praise good work, no matter who did it -- including our enemies. Have empathy.

Make merry with those who rejoice; mourn with those who suffer. Keep an open mind. If we are the only one coming up with the right answers, something is wrong. Discuss; don't argue. Let our merits speak for themselves, but be ready to discuss them when asked. Don't talk about another's weakness unless necessary. Treat everybody with equal importance.

12. MANY HAPPY RETURNS ALONG THE WAY

Probably the biggest decisions for the young person have to do with love, courtship, and marriage. It sometimes happens when we are in sort of a teenage, emotional "no man's land." The juices are flowing, the hormones are at high tide, the circuits are overloaded; there will be times when we won't really know if we are in love or just so excited we can't see straight.

We will need to know if it is love or just infatuation. One is truly wise who knows the difference. Infatuation, the experts tell us, is usually based on one or two traits (usually including sex appeal), whereas love is based on many traits. Infatuation produces feelings of insecurity and wishful thinking, whereas love produces a sense of security. With infatuation, the person is in love with love, whereas in real love, the person is in love with the other person.

With infatuation the other person is thought of as a separate entity and employed for self-gratification; in real love there is an identity with the other person. With infatuation we suffer a loss of ambition, appetite, etc., whereas in love, we work to please the other person. The physical element is much more important with infatuation than when we are in love. Infatuation may change quickly, but love lasts.

In general, we become sure it is really love if it is developed over a period of time, rather than if it comes all of a sudden. Until it really is love, tested by time and all of the good consideration and advice I'm giving

Many Happy Returns Along the Way

here, try for long courtships. Then you will have a good chance of knowing if it is really, truly an abiding, lasting commitment.

Here are some things that the would-be husband owes to his bride-to-be -- and please realize that I would head the list with strong mutual religious convictions toward New Testament Christianity: He should be morally clean.

He should prove his worth for his wife by the treatment of womenfolk in general. At home and in his dating, he should be a man of good character, and he should be capable of providing for a wife and a family. He should have a good temperament and a genuine love for that lady.

Of course, it is a two-way street. Here are some things that the bride-to-be owes her groom-to-be: Again, I would head the list with the fact that she should have a stronger commitment to her Creator than she has to her husband -- that will solve nearly anything.

She should be good to her mother. How does she treat her mother? That will indicate how she will treat others, too. She should not be quarrelsome or nagging. She should be his equal and have tastes in common with him. She should be a burden-sharer and have a genuine love for him.

We shouldn't base the entire love, courtship, and marriage decision on sex. Sex is both grossly overrated

Many Happy Returns Along the Way

and greatly underrated. Sex is overrated if we think it will solve everything and make all of life seem terrific. If we think it will do all of that, then we are going to be disappointed. For one thing, the way we view it and the way our spouse views it are entirely different because of the difference in chemistry between men and women. For example, men want love and women want romance.

It is also underrated, and therefore seldom provides the couple with the conjugal bliss that it was intended by their Creator for them. But when it is approached in a very careful, considerate, patient, exciting, fulfilling way, then you've really got something.

The greatest love story in the world may never be told in a movie or a play or a book. The greatest love story will remain a very private thing between a couple who is working together and praying together and toiling together. They are really and truly one in all things. They are committed to each other and committed to the guidance presented by their Creator for the life that men and women are to have while on this planet.

I really believe that the key element to one's love life is this: the quality of the courtship determines the quality of the marriage. Doesn't that have to be true? If the courtship is stormy and short and raunchy and filled with doubt and recrimination and lack of trust and is devoid of integrity and fidelity, isn't it logical that the marriage will result in the same thing?

Many Happy Returns Along the Way

But what if there is a great amount of courage and consideration and fidelity and trust and commitment in the courtship? Wouldn't that make a dandy and enduring marriage? Ben Franklin once said, "Marry the right person; you double your blessings, and you half your sorrows."

Of course, the opposite is true: Marry the wrong person, and you double your sorrows, and half your blessings. What a tremendous time saver it is to marry the right choice. Man, a 100 percent return on your investment!

13. FAMILY VALUES DO MATTER

Why, of all our myriad topics, should we now deal with the topic of "Family Values?" I suspect that it's programmed into this writer's subconscious. Forgive the personal example from an editorial by former Daily Citizen publisher David McClain; however, it proves the point:

Two years ago Don Diffine spoke to the Rotary Club, and his message was held together by a similar thought: When we look at our lives and all we attempt, it is really for family -- children, spouses and parents. The family motivates noble efforts. Don is right.

What better place is there in the whole wide world than the family, where people can learn to live together! It has been said that family trees themselves are likely to produce inferior fruit unless they are dutifully pruned of extra growth and watchfully fertilized with the essence of Christian graces.

The traditional family has been buffeted by many challenges and changes since World War II. What are those so-called "family values," and how important are they? Consider this finding by Margaret Mead:

In the family, children learn to be people. The boy learns from his father how to be a man and from his mother how to care for women. The girl learns from her mother how to be a woman and a mother, and from her father what men are. No known society has found a

Family Values Do Matter

permanent substitute for the family as a way of shaping whole human beings.

My Dad? He had no problem raising a large family (six kids). His secret? Every Sunday afternoon he insisted on an all-day family drive -- while he stayed home and watched the ballgame! Only kidding. However, if we can have family members laughing with each other and about each other, then we can thoughtfully communicate.

And just how can we help the "Baby Busters" make it? It will take more than relying on dad's money and mom's charm. In his chapter "What Price Excellence?" best-selling author Tom Peters (In Search of Excellence) puts it this way:

We are frequently asked if it is possible to "have it all" -- a full and satisfying personal life and a full and satisfying, hard-working, professional one. Our answer is: No. The price of excellence is time, energy, attention and focus; at the very same time that energy, attention and focus could have gone toward enjoying your daughter's soccer game. Excellence is a high-cost item. As David Ogilvy observed in Confessions of an Advertising Man: "If you prefer to spend all your spare time growing roses or playing with your children, I like you better but do not complain that you are not being promoted fast enough."

Family Values Do Matter

Dear reader, especially dads, please find fulfillment by living up to your duties as a parent. When men abandon the upbringing of their children to their wives, a great loss is suffered by everyone, but perhaps most by themselves. Your children will need you and you will need your children. Your children will need to grow up with a male role model to teach them how to work and dress and speak and fit into the work-a-day world successfully.

Yes, in this day and age, it's very important to raise a family, because if we don't raise a family, how will we ever know how many jobs we can hold at the same time? What is the redemptive value of our lifetime of work and thrift? How do you spell relief? I tell my audiences that the answer always has been and always will be this: "F-A-M-I-L-Y."

Family makes it all come alive. Family is the past, present, and future -- closest thing to immortality this side of the grave. We need to be the best dad, husband, brother, son, mom, wife, sister, or daughter we can be. We need to give those family members good memories.

If we can create a strong, loyal family, bound together and deeply rooted in faith and trust, we can work with purpose. Families take what we've accomplished and build on it. Real families can't be conquered. Families are for growing up in, for going away from, for coming home to. The best Department of Health and Human Services is the family.

14. RICH MAN, POOR MAN

WHAT CAN IT BE? What makes u\$ ri\$e at break of day, gulp down a meal and ru\$h away, and at a de\$ k till evening \$tay? What i\$ the gla\$\$ through which we \$can each deed, each project and each plan, each \$truggle of a fellowman?

For what do we \$et honor by; give up a love without a \$igh; endure the hi\$\$ing and the cry? And what, when life'\$ poor lamp i\$ burned and the \$hadow we have turned, become\$ the cheape\$t thing we've earned?

-- Author unknown, wisdom eternal

If there were ever a topic which should be approached with great care, caution, and consideration, this is it: "Our economics and our religion -- are they allies or enemies?" The Scriptures certainly contain many statements of interest to an economist like me.

However, there are no graphs, curves, or equations, as such, in God's Word. The reader will probably be pleased to know that the concept of "opportunity cost," and many other terms dear to the heart of an economist, are not found, as such, in the Scriptures. Or are they? God's Word does address every aspect of our lives, including the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth, the subject matter of economics, too.

"The problem of our age," said Andrew Carnegie, "is the proper administration of wealth, so that the ties of

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brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmonious relationship."

In truth, we get much more out of life if we give more than we get. This is the essence of the so-called "Christmas Spirit," as described by Charles Dickens in A Christmas Carol. Dickens contrasted the "Christmas Spirit" of giving, generosity, and cheer with the stinginess of greedy, grasping Ebenezer Scrooge.

In Dickens' mind, Scrooge was a typical capitalist. Scrooge was not a typical capitalist; Dickens was not a typical writer. Scrooge, Dickens tells us, was converted by the "Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future." Then, it was his private property which enabled him to be generous. Voluntary, unrewarded activities very often depend on having time, money, and property. Scrooge just needed to learn about the painfully lonely "opportunity costs" of not giving.

Some would say, "But the bad done by business would fill a book." Yes, but the good would fill a library. I'd like to believe that all business people could become like Scrooge after he "saw the light" (and felt the heat). The "Christmas Spirit" of giving and sharing persists today because capitalism and private property survive. And, by the way, to perpetuate this, the new Ebenezer Scrooge showed up at his business early the next morning, the day after Christmas.

And there was extra coal in the fire, to warm Bob Cratchett's cold bones -- no doubt making him a more productive employee, too. Dickens may not have fully realized that it is having private property, and the

freedom to use it, that permits Christmas giving to occur. To cite a similar and popular cinema version of this same basic time capsule theme, it's still "A Wonderful Life."

God has so created the world in which we live, that we must, of necessity, concern ourselves with the matter of providing food, clothing, and shelter for ourselves and our dependents. And the irony about making a living is that we often feel we have to get up tomorrow and do it all over again -- buying things we don't need, to impress people we don't like, with money we don't have.

Ever wonder about this: If we run after money, we're money mad; if we keep it; we're a miser; if we spend it, we're a playboy; if we don't get it, we're a ne'er-do-well; if we get it without working, we're a parasite; if we don't try to get it, we lack ambition; and if we accumulate it after a lifetime of hard work, we're someone who never got anything out of life.

There is an irony in all this. Here's how Jacob Coxey put it: "Rags make paper; paper makes money; money makes banks; banks make loans; loans make poverty; poverty makes rags."

If this economist has learned anything in two decades of teaching and research, it's that poor people (and nations) can't help poor people (and nations) very much. Prosperous people (and nations) can help poor people (and nations). We give goods and services out of our love and abundance, because they come to us so easily through our American incentive system.

Rich Man, Poor Man

The late George Horace Lorimer, for many years editor of *The Saturday Evening Post* once wrote these words: "It is a good thing to have money and the things that money can buy, but it is good, too, to check up once in a while and make sure you haven't lost the things that money can't buy."

It has been said that "when it comes to money, we are all of the same religion." Is it really that simple? If you were in my Economics class, I would candidly tell you that money should not be in first place in our lives. Instead it should be in fifth place -- behind God, integrity, family, and country. If money is in first place in our lives, then we should have pronounced upon us that old Middle East curse: "May you make a million dollars; may you spend it all on doctors."

15. STRESS CONTROL OR ELSE

How's this for tenacity? "KEEP ON KEEPING ON" is the word from James Corbett:

Fight one more round. When your feet are so tired that you have to shuffle back to the center of the ring, fight one more round. When your arms are so tired that you can hardly lift your hands to come on guard, fight one more round. When your nose is bleeding and your eyes are black and you are so tired that you wish your opponent would crack you one on the jaw and put you to sleep, fight one more round -- remembering that the man who always fights one more round is never whipped.

However, here is a summary of several studies about key symptoms manifested by stressed-out people:

An overwhelming sense of the passage of time; the inability to delegate authority; the tendency to ignore all facets of life except work; the habit of taking on too many projects with occasionally conflicting deadlines; an obsessive need for affirmation, coupled with a persistent drive to achieve and advance, competing all the while; the feeling that normal conversation proceeds at too slow a rate of speed; explosive, blustering speech patterns; lack of a sense of humor; and a sense of disappointment -- that life holds few real pleasures.

Then there are doctors' frequent personality descriptions of types of people particularly susceptible

Stress Control or Else

to stress diseases -- descriptions, they say, that curiously match types of people who are likely to succeed in business:

The one-man band who tried to do too many things simultaneously; the chronic hurrier who is always under a self-imposed deadline; the exasperated person who has to be the first driver to start from a red light and can't wait in line; the volcanic struggler who is always ready to explode; and the combative challenger who competes in everything he does and has to be number one.

According to *Boardroom Reports* here are the characteristics of the stress-prone executive:

Plans the day unrealistically; the first to arrive and last to leave; always in a hurry; makes no plans for relaxation; feels guilty about doing anything else but work; the stress-prone person is "polphasic" in thinking (Involved in one activity while thinking of several others); he talks fast and interrupts often; attention span of a hummingbird; the need to be recognized is overwhelming; winning is the end-all, but there's no prize in winning or enjoyment of it; as a result, recognition, money, and possessions are seldom enjoyed.

From the same *Boardroom* magazine is an article on "Workaholism: A Good Disease... Often." According to it, psychiatrists question the workaholic's mental health.

Stress Control or Else

Colleagues resent workaholics because they advance fast:

But employers covet workaholics. Most work harder. And most work better, too. Since they love their work and seemingly live for it, they're much happier than those who resent the intrusion of work into their lives. The bad news? There is no way to transform someone into a workaholic. The good news? The workaholic's condition is usually chronic. Caution: Living with a workaholic requires an understanding of what they won't do -- such as take vacations, nor will they separate social life from work. To the surprise and distress of many spouses, workaholics desire to do and control everything doesn't carry over to home responsibilities. Most readily duck them.

Donald W. Browne, a medical director for Prudential Insurance, asserts that physical fitness serves as a sort of inoculation against stress. So, exercise more. Exercise has a tranquilizing effect. Dr. Thaddeus Kostrubala, a San Diego psychiatrist, treats his patients with exercise. He states that he has had more success than with all other treatments.

But if excessive exertion isn't enjoyable, don't do it. Otherwise you only create new tensions. The whole point is this: Many people experiencing these stress-related traits we've talked about are doing nothing to relieve the pressure.

Stress Control or Else

To maintain good physical and mental health, we may find it helpful to pause and take stock of our lives, much as we would take time to periodically review a legal document or investment portfolio. Certainly, it's Scriptural to do this soul searching about being anxious.

The following essay, "Slow Me Down, Lord," was written by Wilferd A. Peterson in 1952. According to the author, the essay was written especially for modern business executives working under tension as a suggestion to slow down and relax:

Slow me down, Lord! Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind. Steady my hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time. Give me, amidst the confusion of my day, the calmness of the everlasting hills.

Break the tensions of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory. Help me to know the magic restoring power of sleep. Teach me the art of making Minute Vacations... of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to pat a dog, to read a few lines from a good book.

Remind me each day of the fable of the hare and the tortoise that I may know that the race is not always to the swift; that there is more to life than increasing its speed. Let me look upward into the branches of the towering oak

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and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well.

Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values that I may grow toward the stars of my greater destiny.

And all the people said, "Amen."

First Decade -- looks and appearance

Second Decade -- marriage and career

Third Decade -- success, family, cost of living

Fourth Decade -- job security

Fifth Decade -- health

Sixth Decade -- waning strength and ambition

Seventh Decade -- retirement

Eighth Decade -- death and the hereafter

If that isn't enough to worry about, Martin Gardner says that the False Memory Syndrome of childhood traumas, molestations, etc., would not be so bad if such therapists were frauds interested only in money, but the sad truth is that some are sincere. So were the doctors, he summarizes, who once tried to cure patients by bleeding, and the churchmen who "cured" witches by torture, hanging, and burning.

16. WORRIES AND CONCERNS IN THE REAR VIEW MIRROR

It has been said that a person can't change the past by all his worrying, but he sure can ruin a perfectly good present by stewing about the future. Listen to wise old Benjamin Franklin: "If I saw 10 problems coming down the road toward me, nine of them would probably fall in the ditch before they reached me."

So, do we believe our doubts or doubt our beliefs? Are we residing on the premises or standing on the promises? According to The Anglican Digest, in the 1980s some 104 psychologists, through a study of case histories, determined a womb-to-tomb timetable for anxieties:

- First Decade -- looks and appearance
- Second Decade -- marriage and career
- Third Decade -- success, family, cost of living
- Fourth Decade -- job security
- Fifth Decade -- health
- Sixth Decade -- waning strength and ambition
- Seventh Decade -- retirement
- Eighth Decade -- death and the hereafter

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Worries and Concerns -- Rear View Mirror

Better-trained, older psychiatrists do not believe that childhood memories of traumas can be repressed for any length of time, except in rare cases of actual brain damage. Nor is there any evidence that hypnosis improves memory. It may increase certitude, but not accuracy. And there is abundant evidence that totally false memories are easily aroused in the mind of a suggestible patient.

Horace Fletcher describes anger and worry as "the most unprofitable conditions known to man. While they are in possession, mental, physical and spiritual growth are suspended... Anger is a highway robber and worry is a sneak thief."

On this subject, John Henry Kellog hit the nail with his head:

Worry wears worse than work. Worry destroys; work produces. Worry wastes energy; work utilizes it. Worry subtracts; work multiplies. Worry dwarfs, depresses, confuses, kills; work kills worry. Don't worry -- cheer up and go to work!

"All worry is atheism," says Fulton Sheen, "because it is want of trust in God." "Worry is a sin," says Tommy Stringer in an excellent *Firm Foundation* article. Worry is a sin: (1) Worry transgresses God's commands; (2) Worry shows a lack of faith; (3) Worry is harmful to the physical body, which is the temple of God; (4) Worry destroys human relationships; and (5) Worry destroys one's Christian example.

Worries and Concerns -- Rear View Mirror

In the meantime, Dr. Marilyn Schroyer suggests the following as worrying self-defense: "Set aside 30 minutes each day to worry... and then stop. During worry time, make a worry list, then rewrite in order of importance. Next: Ask yourself what, if anything, you can do to change each situation... call upon all of your knowledge and experience for wisdom... and write out your solutions."

Napoleon Hill, in being interviewed about his book Do It Now, is asked, "You mentioned the varieties of procrastination. Isn't there just one variety -- namely, putting things off?" "No," says Hill. There is one result, but there are a number of causes. The causes of procrastination are summarized from his book and are grouped into four categories:

First are the "Attitudinal factors (unwillingness to tolerate discomfort or unpleasantness, fear of failure, fear of success, low self-esteem, depression, boredom, shyness and feelings of guilt)."

Second are the "Meditative blocks (inadequate information, unclear priorities, indecision, uncertainty about how to attack the problem and failure to appreciate the importance of timely action)."

Third are "Environmental conditions (clutter, disorganization, noise, unmanageable workloads, diversionary activities, lack of needed tools, and friends or relative who lure one from the chosen task)."

Worries and Concerns -- Rear View Mirror

And finally, there are the "Physiological barriers (fatigue, stress, and illness)."

"Each instance of procrastination," says Hill, "involves one or more of these. If you can pin down the cause of your procrastination, you will have taken a big step toward overcoming it and replacing it with the habit of prompt action."

And then it won't be necessary for anyone ever to say of us:

He slept beneath the moon,
He basked beneath the sun;
He lived a life of going-to-do
And died with nothing done.

All varieties of procrastination and worry, in fact, involve self-delusion of one kind or another, concludes Hill. They involve denial of reality, and refusal to weigh penalties and alternatives objectively. How stupid is procrastination? It's a form of foolish game-playing says Hill, because we ourselves are invariably the losers.

Consider the words of the poet Robert Abrahams:

Some men die by shrapnel
And some go down in flames,
But most men perish inch by inch
In play at little games.

17. IT'S ABOUT TIME

I have a passion for this subject: time management techniques. It has been said that "life is a ball. Some catch it, some throw it, some dribble it, some drop it, and some just take it home and forget where they put it." How did they become that way, when it is obvious that time is money and the clock is running?

What is this thing called "time?" Merrill Douglass of the Time Management Center, says this in the introduction of "Ideas About Time:"

Time is a different kind of resource. You can't buy it, sell it, rent it, steal it, borrow it, loan it, store it, save it, multiply it, manufacture it, fabricate it, modify it, or otherwise change it. All you can do is spend it. Time is free. It neither inflates nor deflates. It is not subject to recession, or prosperity. Everyone receives exactly the same amount each day. Time is the only aspect of our lives where we are truly equal.

Time is life. With enough time you can do almost anything. Without time, you're finished. To spend your time is to spend your life. The way you spend your time defines the kind of life you live. To waste your time is to waste your life.

Time is personal. It is all yours. It belongs to no one else. You spend it as you will. No one can force you to spend it effectively. No one can prevent you from wasting it. Only you can

It's About Time

manage your time and spend it wisely. The question is, are you spending your time the best way possible? If you are not, then there are some things you can do to increase productivity, earn greater profits, and expand your personal performance.

The goal of time management, says Lauren Januz, publisher of the former newsletter *Execu-Time*, is not to cram more work into 16-hour days -- rather, it is to free you from those over-long days so that you can explore new activities and enrich your life. He focuses on that in the conclusion of his "166 Effective Time-Saving Tips for Executives":

Add new activities to your life. As your new activities broaden your horizons, you'll find yourself a better-adjusted, more-effective executive -- but you'll have more fun, too! Read what you want to read -- literature, mysteries, magazines -- whatever you have been neglecting to keep up on business reading that you're handling more effectively now.

Walk and exercise -- take up a sport, or play the one you enjoy more frequently. Start a regular workout routine. Take a nightly walk around the neighborhood and get re-acquainted with the sights, sounds and smells not associated with an office. Get to know your neighbors. Spend time with your kids; perhaps their image of you at this point is as the person who comes home late and buries himself/herself in the briefcase every night. Explode that myth!

It's About Time

Think and dream -- you must have time to think and plan and set business and personal goals. Otherwise, you'll forever be doing what's urgent -- not what's constructive for you. Start a hobby, pursue an interest, join a group that shares your interest. You'll meet people with different ideas than those you know through business.

Work around the house -- gain a feeling of accomplishment by doing the chores you've been putting off for months! Cultivate serenity -- if something has to be, accept it. Put a limit on your worry -- decide how much anxiety your problem is worth. Do some "power worrying" until that time is up and get on to something productive.

Taste and enjoy the food you eat. Keep to a minimum your contacts with people whom you find annoying and overly competitive. Plan to take relaxed, rather than structured, vacations. Aim for frequent short trips, rather than lengthy journeys in which you try to see and do everything.

Recognize the aggravating aspects of your job. Stop fighting them. Practice listening. Listening is more relaxing than talking. Establish a system of self-reward when a task is completed satisfactorily. Give yourself a special lunch, an article of clothing you've been wanting, or take yourself to the theater.

It's About Time

Away from the office, seek out activities not connected with work, from which you can derive some satisfaction. Keep foremost in your mind that work is important, but play, sharing with others, and relaxation are part of what make you a more effective, more successful individual. Live from month-to-month, instead of minute-to-minute. Make a conscious effort to avoid the feeling that someone is holding a stop-watch to check your speed. On Friday afternoon put all paperwork and the wristwatch in the briefcase -- and throw them in the safe!

Well, we need to do all we can to deepen our understanding of ourselves and the world around us. We need to train ourselves to think of self-enrichment as a major goal in our life.

John Hoarse Rhodes put it this way: "Do more than exist -- live. Do more than touch -- feel. Do more than look -- observe. Do more than hear -- listen. Do more than listen -- understand. Do more than talk -- say something."

Experts in the fields of physical and mental health believe in the value of self-examination. It tends to place things in a proper perspective, to calm people, and to lessen the everyday pressures experienced by many executives.

Socrates affirmed that self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom. When his enemies accused him of thinking himself superior to his fellows, he replied that if this were so, he was superior only in the matter

It's About Time

of self-awareness. He knew how to listen to the inner voice of his conscience. He obeyed the command to "know thyself."

Let me urge husbands that, if it is at all possible, try to keep your prospective wife home until your children start school. That would be a great achievement these days, wouldn't it?

May I be so bold as to give some further advice? The divorce problem is so epidemic today because people often did not have the benefit of proper courtship to work out their problems. Consequently, they married in haste and had to recede at leisure. I am going to be very candid here: the time for divorce is before we get married.

Let me be more candid. Divorce is a fact of life in American society today. It doesn't seem that any family is spared by it anymore. There is so much deep emotional scarring that occurs with divorces. Today there are people who are divorced and love each other. There are also people who are married and hate each other.

By 1990 step-parent families outnumbered biological families. Oh, there are all sorts of scary statistics. Today, compared to 1970, four times as many people

18. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS RIGHT SIDE UP

When we do settle down and marry, we will want to make our little corner of the world a better place by being a good parent and by passing on good values to our children. A working parent, who never forgets that his first responsibility is to pass on those values to the next generation and nurture and train his children -- a working parent who keeps that perspective can make it happen.

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By 1990 step-parent families outnumbered biological families. Oh, there are all sorts of scary statistics. Today, compared to 1970, four times as many people

Building Relationships Right Side Up

are living together without benefit of clergy. Today, 50% of married men and 25% of married women are unfaithful, according to recent national polls.

So many social, emotional, and medical problems could be solved and eliminated if we were people who abstained from having any premarital sex partners and who were totally committed to one partner for life in marriage. What we need is a nationally sponsored movement for good, clean, safe monogamy.

Never marry until you are sure you love each other. If we can't look that person in the eye and genuinely say, "I will never leave you," then we shouldn't get married. Love isn't a feeling; it is a decision based on commitment. "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loves the church" (Ephesians 5:28). And when we are married, we should try to be as considerate of each other as we were before we got married.

To affair-proof our marriage, we must regularly choose to remain married. We must regularly reaffirm our personal values, to have a firm grasp on what is important in life. We will have to daily choose a mutually enriching environment for our spouse and our self. If we consider our family worth preserving and enjoying, we'll have the power to choose to say "yes" to them and "no" to an affair. Then, the person who marries us will be so lucky indeed.

Please don't underestimate the importance of your role in building relationships. As head of the family, the basic unit of our society, you and all other parents will

Building Relationships Right Side Up

vitality affect the destiny of the community, the nation, and the world. Give your new home top priority.

No matter how successful you may be on the job or in business ventures, your life will be a failure if you neglect to give your family the time and personal attention they both need. Do not leave them behind to languish in neglect while you go off to do good works for others. Believe me, I know about this, not only from having experienced it some directly, but also from observing some tragic cases among preachers, teachers, and elders.

Encourage your children to take their studies seriously. Insist on regular study hours, as much as possible. Teach them to work while they work and play while they play; that's the way to get the most out of every day. Give them a healthy attitude toward sex. Instruct them, and give them reverence for the body and the sanctity of marriage.

Good family ties may lengthen to accommodate time and distance, schedules and situations, but they don't break. It is very difficult to make it, even under the best of circumstances. But I do know this: When we are all in the same lifeboat, tossed about on the stormy sea, we owe each other a terrible loyalty.

So, what we've always heard is still true: the best thing that a dad can do for his children is to love their mom. Believe me, that will solve and cure most of the family relationship problems today.

19. LIFE'S DOUBLE WHAMMY

We have been losing our moral umbrella in this country. Freedom is not just the right to do as we please. "Freedom," as Peter Marshall, former Chaplain of the Senate, put it, "is the opportunity to please to do that which is right." Therefore, I try to remind young people to keep on striving for maturity (they hate that "M" word).

Young people will often counter with, "but you can't define maturity!" Well, can you do a job without being supervised? Can you carry money without spending it? When you make a promise, do you try to keep it? Can you consistently get to where you're supposed to be and on time? When you get something out, do you try to put it away? Can you bear an injustice without trying to get even? That's maturity.

Working with our children to achieve maturity is a process which plays out over years. Once in a while, a window is provided by these children to give us a glimpse of their progress. Such was the case when my daughter wrote the following poem at about age 16 (I shall cherish it always):

FATHER & FRIEND

It seems like you've always been there for me,
Not as authority but as my friend.
Something inside you only I can see,
Like a noise in a whispering wind.

My time spent with you has been worthwhile,
Especially the day of the baseball game.

Life's Double Whammy

You knew how to bring my face to a smile,
It makes me feel like a queen in her reign.

Overcoming the trials that we once had,
Inside of my heart I would always know,
A bond shared by a daughter and her dad,
So special that it would forever grow.

So to my father and my special friend,
All my blessing and love to you I send.

It was fascinating watching our children go through a metamorphosis and arriving at adulthood. Somehow, through that "no-man's land" we call the teen years, that caterpillar, which crawled awkwardly and slowly into the cocoon, emerges as a beautiful monarch butterfly.

As they start their working years, I remind young people that the world doesn't owe them a living; it owes them nothing, it was here first. And sure, variety is the spice of life, but it is monotony that buys the groceries. And while we are on the subject, the grass isn't greener on the other side of the fence; the grass is greener where it has been watered. Our young people are certainly welcome to climb the fence, but let them take some water with them. Then, wherever they are, the grass will be green.

20. CUTTING THE UMBILICAL CORD

Rudyard Kipling once said, "I had six honest serving men, they taught me all I knew, their names were where and what and when and why and how and who." Why do I tell young people this? We have always told them, "Be somebody, be somebody." Now they must get specific and ask some tough questions: who, what, where, when, why, how, etc. I tell young people, "you don't want to be a "loser," watch what losers do -- don't do that!"

For the sake of more intergenerational bonding, there may also come a time in our careers that we would have enough confidence in ourselves and our achievements that we could honestly say that true happiness in our lives may be one less promotion, one less title, one less advancement, one less transfer.

Conversely, we need to nudge our young people toward the direction of developing good, marketable skills. If we are going to get involved in other people's lives to do good, it is going to take time and money. And we will have neither time nor money if we don't have a marketable skill; we will be working at two jobs seven days a week, and we won't have the time and energy to do much good for anyone. We need to be there for our children in those formative years.

So, what are alleged to be the four hardest jobs in the world? (1) teenager; (2) parent of teenager; (3) teacher of teenager; and (4) employer of teenager. The challenges are extraordinary. The famous educator, Horace Mann, once allegedly described the ideal educational environment -- the student, and teacher

Cutting the Umbilical Cord

seated at opposite ends of a log, conversing. Well, in truth, I have known some times when I would rather sit-on-the-student and talk-to-the-log!

I only have one thing against our younger generation, and it's this: I'm not a part of it anymore. But the results are in -- the top nonscholastic problems that schools report facing today? Drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery, assault.

The biggest problems in the 1940's and 1950's? Talking, spitwads, chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls, cutting in line, not putting paper in wastebaskets, sticking pony tails in ink wells ("What's a pony tail? What's an ink well?" Well, let's just say that if the two are in proximity, there is a moral obligation for little boys to connect them.)

Have you heard this question before? "Did you do your homework?" Students whose parents closely monitor their activities tend to get higher grades (a firm grasp on the obvious), according to the National Center for Education Statistics, which studied 58,000 high school students.

Some 88 percent of the "A" students indicated the highest degree of parental supervision. Eighty-one percent of the "B" students reported their parents knew of their activities. Seventy-two percent of the "C" students, and only 61 percent of the "D" students, said their parents monitored what they did closely. Surprise. Surprise. That probably explains my undistinguished record in junior high and senior high school.

Cutting the Umbilical Cord

See, my folks just tried to raise me on *Parent's Magazine*. They didn't read it. They just rolled it up and whacked me on the rear. I never understood why teachers would go into the Work Room so grumpy and come out later so happy, until I sneaked in there one day and found a perforated picture of me on their dart board. Only kidding.

Only kidding.

We're all familiar with the famous doctor slogan, "Don't cuss a farmer with your wealth." Well, there is a corollary to that when it concerns our medical doctors. This schizophrenic piece comes from the Indianapolis Medical Society Bulletin: "When you are in need of a physician, you esteem him a god. When he has brought you out of danger, you consider him a nobleman. When you have been cured, he becomes a mere human. When he sends you a bill, you think him a devil."

Then there is the tale about the neighbor who had to be admitted to the local hospital for treatment. During a visit his friends remarked that he had a nice pleasant room, although the price seemed quite high. "True," the patient commented. "It does seem like a lot of money, but remember, they give us some mighty long days in here."

Yes, here in the late 20th century, we're now treating diseases so rare they haven't even held a telethon for them yet. But if our doctors and hospitals — truly the world's finest — remain worth their sodium

21. THIS OLD HOUSE

"Look to your health; and if you have it, praise God, and value it next to a good conscience; for health is the second blessing that we mortals are capable of; a blessing that money cannot buy," said Izaak Walton in *The Compleat Angler* in 1653. A century later, old Ben Franklin put it this way in *The Way to Wealth* in 1757: "Early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."

We're all familiar with the bumper sticker slogan, "Don't cuss a farmer with your mouth full." Well, there is a corollary to that when it concerns our medical doctors. This schizophrenic piece comes from the Indianapolis Medical Society Bulletin: "When you are in need of a physician, you esteem him a god. When he has brought you out of danger, you consider him a nobleman. When you have been cured, he becomes a mere human. When he sends you a bill, you think him a devil."

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This Old House

chloride, they'll have us up and complaining about their bills before we know it.

Probably, one source of containing rising health-care costs would be Americans developing more healthful lifestyles. It has been said that health is a crown on a well person's head; yet, no one can see it but a sick person.

We all live, laugh, love, grow, mature and die. Our doctors have trained and dedicated themselves to helping us try to keep those events in that proper order. Wouldn't it be a shame if the answers were right under our nose, and we blew it?

Grow old along with me!

The best is yet to be,

The last of life,

For which the first was made.

Our times are in His hand,

Who saith: "A whole I planned,

Youth shows but half;

Trust God; see all, nor be afraid."

-- Robert Browning

Truly, the longer we live, the more we experience an enlarged sense of both sorrow and joy. It has always been so. One day in the last year of his life, John Quincy Adams was tottering down a Boston street. He was accosted by a friend who said, "And how is John Quincy Adams today?" The former president of the United States replied graciously:

This Old House

Thank you, John Quincy Adams is well, sir, quite well. I thank you. But the house in which he lives at present is becoming dilapidated. It is tottering upon its foundations. Time and the seasons have nearly destroyed it. Its roof is pretty well worn out, its walls are much shattered, and it trembles with every wind. The old tenement is becoming almost uninhabitable, and I think John Quincy Adams will have to move out of it soon; but he himself is quite well, sir, quite well.

And with this the venerable statesman, leaning heavily upon his cane, moved slowly down the street.

Pop and I had the same birthday -- June 15. He was 40 when I was born, and he seemed to truly enjoy poor health and inactivity the second half of his life. He lived to be 86. Those last three years he'd stare back at me from a place I never want to go. Mom lived into her 80th year. I remember her over the years as our family's prime provider and caregiver. She remained alert and active nearly to the end.

Two people, both beloved by us six children. One rusted out and checked out. The other stayed tuned in and connected until she wore out completely. What shall we learn from this? Shall we give up on life when life seems to be giving up on us? Nay.

Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, gives us this perspective, as it is recorded in Ecclesiastes 3:1-7:

This Old House

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven... A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted... A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up... A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance... A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing... A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away... A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.

22. GOING DOWN HILL WITHOUT BRAKES ?

In a lighter vein, nothing heightens interest in the physical challenges which accompany aging as much as writing an "OVER THE HILL" roast, as I did recently, for an esteemed colleague:

Let's put things in perspective: You've got one foot in the grave and the other one on a banana peel. Here are the 7 ages of man: spills, drills, thrills, bills, ills, pills, and wills. So, remember -- nothing lasts forever (with the possible exception of Elvis). You see, the only way not to die is not to be born -- and not being born would take all the pleasure out of not dying.

Don't be depressed at being 50. Did you know that when Mozart was your age, he'd been dead 14 years. I mean, if you died tomorrow, you'd only have one regret -- that you died tomorrow. By the way, did you know that on this date in 1902, Eldon Meriwether died? He was the inventor of the thermometer -- lived to the ripe old age of 98.6 years. His burial was a bit unusual. They held him upside down by his feet and shook-him-down into the ground.

Look at it this way, you no longer wonder what you will be when you grow up. And by now, some people recognize that you were right about a few things after all; and others have given up trying to change you. You realize that

Down Hill Without Brakes

old people know more about being young than the young people do about being old.

At 30, you didn't care what the world thought of you. At 40, you worried about what the world thought of you. At 50, you have discovered that it wasn't even thinking of you. The positive side of prune juice is now obvious to you. Your actions creak louder than your words, and recently you showed someone the way to your house by using the varicose veins on your legs as a road map. A travel tour that includes a guide and planned activities doesn't compromise your sense of independence.

You went to your class reunion. It was a sad occasion. Half of the group was so old, they had to wear name tags so you would know them, and the other half was so old that they couldn't read the name tags. When you were 20, you wanted to change the world; when you were 30, you wanted to change the country; when you were 40, you wanted to change the neighborhood. But now that you are 50, you will have to rev up just to change the sheets.

You've reached the age where the "happy hour" is a nap, and you suspect that by the time you get to greener pastures, you won't be able to climb the fence. You've been around long enough to tell Alfie what it's all about. In the game of office politics, you're already a senator. Artifacts saved from your childhood sell as

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valuable "antiques." You are more reluctant to fix what isn't broken. And you no longer worry about being drafted. Like Scarlet O'Hara, you know there are certain things not worth thinking about until tomorrow.

In your 30's, your heart governed your head. In your 40's, your head governed your heart. At 50, your kidneys govern both. Now, you begin to expect that maybe, after all, happiness doesn't live "over there." And at this point, it occurs to you that if Helen Keller could get through her life, then somehow you can get through yours.

At 50, you realize that you can't be too out of shape to watch a football game. You used to be active in sports, but bad knees put an early end to your athletic career -- you played marbles. We know that you have been a great athlete -- we have seen you throw a wet blanket the entire length of a room. It has probably occurred to you that if your ship hasn't come in yet, it's time to get the tugboats. However, the graduate school loans are finally paid in full.

The verdict is in on whether candy bar theft would turn you into a hardened criminal. The verdict is not in on exactly how you'll become rich and famous. Never forget that you are deeply appreciated. "To his dog," Aldous Huxley said, "Every man is a Napoleon; hence the

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popularity of dogs." You should buy a kennel. Happy Birthday, anyway. Don't think of aging as growing older -- think of it as building seniority.

Fifty isn't really that old. Think of yourself as sort of an apprentice senior citizen. Be positive about life. Get up every morning; read the newspaper Obituary Column. If your name isn't there, be thankful, close the paper, and have a Great Day! Please know that today you are very special -- very special, indeed. Tomorrow, you're nothing! Just remember this: despite all your life's accomplishments, the size of your funeral will be determined by the weather. If it is cold and rainy, don't look for me.

-- Your Friend, Colleague, and Aging
Boy Wonder, Himself, Don Diffine

23. BUILDING SENIORITY FOR THE AGES

I have a dear aunt who passed from this life at 85. I treasured her kinship so very much over the decades. Aunt Marian, my dad's younger sister, was such a wonderful leavening influence in my life. I credit her as being the prime mover in helping me to mature as a young adult, and thereby grow back closer to my dad and mom for whom I once again recaptured that childlike love and devotion.

A few years back, Aunt Marian was in the process of distributing old photos to us adult nieces and nephews. I asked her, "Who is the redheaded little girl in the 1920's scene?" "That's Georgette, your second cousin," she replied. So, on the span of a few months in 1994 and 1995, I went from not knowing I had a cousin to visiting with Georgette Tenley and her husband, Frank, at their retirement village complex in Seminole, Florida. Georgette definitely has the Diffine family humor in her genes. When told of my book project, this became her contribution:

SENIOR CITIZEN'S LAMENT

Thought I'd let my doctor check me 'cause I
didn't feel just right.

All those aches and pains annoyed me, and I
couldn't sleep at night.

He could find no real disorder, but he wouldn't
let it rest.

What with Medicare and Blue Cross, it wouldn't
hurt to do some tests.

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To the hospital he sent me, though I didn't feel
that bad,
He arranged for them to give me every test that
could be had.

I was fluoroscoped and cystoscoped -- my aging
frame displayed.

Stripped upon an ice-cold table while my
gizzards were X-rayed.

I was checked for worms & parasites, for fungus
and the crud,

While they pierced me with long needles, taking
samples of my blood.

Doctors came to check me over, probed and
pressed and poked around,
And to make sure I was living, they wired me for
sound.

They have finally concluded; (their results have
filled a page),
what I have will some day kill me -- my affliction
is Old Age!

The Scriptures tell us that it is not given to man to
know his days. However, Dr. C. Ward Crampton once
said that you are as old as the average of these 7 ages:
(1) number of years lived (chronological); (2) condition
of tissues (anatomical); (3) functional ability of the
organs (physiological); (4) mental capacity
(psychological); (5) condition of the body as a result of
diseases (pathological); (6) normal life expectancy

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(statistical); and (7) average age of ancestors (hereditary).

REFLECTIONS

I am an elderly woman, and I live alone, but I am not lonely because I have some men friends to keep me company.

I wake up with Charlie Horse, eat my meals with Will Power, spend my days with Arthur Itis, and go to bed with Ben Gay. Mr. Clean stays around constantly to assist me with house cleaning.

Things are STILL not the same: Everything is farther away now than it used to be. It is twice as far to the corner, and they have added a hill, I notice. I've given up on running to the bus, it is faster than it used to be.

It seems, too, that they are making stairs steeper than in the old days; and have you noticed the smaller print they use in newspapers now?

There is no sense in asking anyone to read it aloud; everyone speaks in such low voices that I can't hardly hear them.

Even people are changing: they are so much younger than they used to be when I was their

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age. On the other hand, people of my own age era are so much older than I am.

I ran into an old classmate the other day, and she had aged so much she didn't even recognize me!

I got to thinking about the poor thing while I was combing my hair this morning, and in doing so, I glanced at my reflection and, confound it, they don't even make mirrors like they used to!!

Here is the partial text of a letter of encouragement I wrote recently to a close family friend:

Word has reached us of your recent medical test results. We love you with the love of the Lord, and we think of you often.

May I respectfully encourage you and mention some specific ways to maintain that "hope which springs eternal"? These suggestions come from literature by Virgil Fry, a Chaplain representing the churches of Christ at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas:

Live one day at a time -- each day on earth is a gift of God... Claim the promise of God's presence... Seek the support of others -- we are created as social beings... Adjust to limitations without becoming passive... Be creative, letting

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your dreams come alive... Refresh yourself with quiet time and meditation... Read meaningful scriptures, books, and poetry... Recognize the value of the here and now... Cultivate the treasure of genuine relationships -- share yourself with trusted persons... Use imagery to view medical treatment as a friend... Find the renewal that humor brings to the inner self... Begin a journal just for you -- write your life's story... Pray openly and honestly... Ask questions of medical professionals; it is the best way to maintain control of decisions that affect you... Keep a perspective on unsolicited advice and insensitive statements by others... allow yourself to delve into the unanswerable questions -- God can bring growth to such encounters.

To the spouse I wrote this:

The experience of further treatment is probably a time when you and she are continuing to learn additional ways to function and to support each other. Sometimes families find strengths they never fully knew they had until encountering such a medical circumstance. A spouse's role may not always be an easy one, and yet, as I'm sure you know, the supportive

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relationship you choose to offer is a vital part of survival.

Your choosing to redeem each day to the fullest benefits both her and you. Your caring spirit can provide a sense of God's caring presence. May I be so bold as to also recommend Chaplin Fry's suggestions that you can consider to keep a sense of balance and renewal:

Remember that taking care of yourself is a necessary part of taking care of her... Maintain and nurture your relationships with significant colleagues and groups -- Just like her, you also need those with whom you can unwind... Resist the temptation to smother her with attention. Encouraging her to do what she can promotes self-esteem and healing... Seek needed information and clarification regarding medical options -- You have a right and obligation to be as educated as possible... Pray with open honesty. God is not surprised by your feelings, needs, and requests... Find the support you need -- A minister, social worker, counselor, or support group can provide you with a listening ear and spiritual resources.

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In the meantime, please remember that your Creator's compassion is boundless, as it is recorded in Psalms 56:8 that God can actually collect our tears and save them in a bottle. Take care and have courage, dear friends. "The Lord bless you and keep you... The Lord make His face to shine upon you and give you peace..." God bless. For you we are praying,

Fact is, dear reader, we will all die someday because our earthly parents were mortal humans. But praise God, we can all live forevermore because our Father in Heaven is Eternal.

Finally, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., in a speech on his 91st birthday, March 8, 1932, had a wonderful grasp of transition:

The riders in a race do not stop short when they reach the goal. There is a little finishing canter before coming to a standstill. There is time to hear the kind voices of friends and to say to one's self, "The work is done".

24. HARVEST YEARS PERSPECTIVES

Listen to the soothing words of "GROWING OLD":

A little more tired at close of day;
A little less anxious to have our way;
A little less ready to scold and blame;
A little more care of a brother's name;
And so we are nearing the journey's end;
Where time and eternity meet and blend.

-- Rollin J. Wells

It has been reported in *M-K-T-Employees' Magazine* that as a man grows older he values the voice of experience more, the voice of prophecy less. He finds more of life's wealth in the common pleasures -- home, health, children. He thinks more about the worth of men, and less about their wealth. He begins to appreciate his own father more. He boasts less and apologizes more. He hurries less and usually makes more progress. He esteems the friendship of God more and more.

Georgette Tenley also provides this transitional ditty:

Today, Dear Lord, I'm 80 and
There's much I haven't done.
I hope, Dear Lord, you'll let me live
until I'm 81.
But then, if I haven't finished
all I want to do --
Would you let me stay awhile --
until I'm 82?

Harvest Years Perspectives

So many places I want to go,
so very much to see --
Do you think that you could manage
to make it 83?

The world is changing very fast
There is so much in store.
I'd like it very much to live
until I'm 84.

And if by then I'm still alive
I'd like to stay 'til 85.

More planes will be up in the air,
so I'd really like to stick --
And see what happens to the world
when I'm 86.

I know, Dear Lord, it's much to ask
(and it must be nice in heaven)
But I would really like to stay
until I'm 87.

I know by then I won't be fast
and sometimes will be late;
But it would be so pleasant --
to be around at 88.

I will have seen so many things,
and had a wonderful time.
So, I'm sure that I'll be willing
to leave at 89... maybe!

Here is a rendition of "RETIREMENT" (from a child's view) -- a parody also submitted by Georgette Tenley:

Harvest Years Perspectives

After a Christmas break, a teacher asked her young pupils how they spent their holidays. One small boy wrote the following:

We always used to spend Christmas with Grandpa and Grandma, they used to live here in a big red house, but Grandpa got retarded and they moved to Florida. Now they live in a place with a lot of other retarded people. They all live in little tin boxes, they ride in big three-wheeled tricycles and they all wear name tags because they don't know who they are.

They go to big building called a wrecked hall, but if it was wrecked, they got it fixed up, because it's all right now. They play games and do exercises there, but they don't do them very good. There is a swimming pool there. They go into it and just stand there with their hats on. I guess they don't know how to swim.

As you go into their park, there is a doll house with a little man sitting in it. He watches all day so they can't get out without him seeing them. When they sneak out they go to the beach and pick up shells.

Harvest Years Perspectives

My Grandma used to bake cookies and stuff, but I guess she forgot how. Nobody cooks, they just eat out. They eat the same thing every night, early birds. Some of the people are so retarded that they do not know how to cook at all, so my Grandma and Grandpa bring food into the wrecked hall and they call it "pot luck."

My Grandma says Grandpa worked all his life and earned his retardment. I wish they would move back up here, but I guess the little man in the doll house won't let them out.

25. ASPIRE, INSPIRE -- DON'T JUST RETIRE

The following is a roast I wrote for Berniece Diehl as she retired in June 1996 from managing the Fairfield Bay Chamber of Commerce in Arkansas:

BERNIECE -- ASPIRE, INSPIRE, DON'T JUST RETIRE

by Don Diffine, Searcy, Arkansas
June 28, 1996

Retirement, I'd say
Without hesitation
Is day after day
Just one long vacation
Before, you might win
A brief rest from strife,
But now you are in
For the "rest" of your life.

Throughout her many years with the Fairfield Bay Chamber, there were those who said that Berniece didn't always know if she was "coming or going." Tonight, she has definitely resolved that issue.

We're talking about a lady who, in retirement, will have to switch from Type A to a Type B personality. Yes, Bernice now has to learn to exhibit a driving, insistent, irresistible compulsion to do nothing. She really is a hard worker -- shoulder to the wheel, nose to the grindstone and ear to the ground... worst posture you ever saw!

Don't Just Retire

I have asked Berniece about her management philosophy. Here it is -- She said, "Half the people work and the other half goof off; or maybe it's the other way around." At times I have known Berniece to be very indecisive. When I asked her if she had trouble making up her mind, she answered, "Yes and no."

Berniece, retirement is when you don't "lead" -- you don't "follow" -- you just realize that "getting out of the way" isn't all that bad. Not too many people know this, but Berniece has been moonlighting with a rock band called the "No Temptations." As the leading female vocalist, she has popularized some all-time office hits such as:

"You'll Never Work Alone"... "Rock Around the Time Clock"... "It's My Project And I'll Cry If I Want To"... "I'll Walk the Deadline"... "Desk Over Troubled Waters"... "Coffee Break Hotel"... "The Way We Work"... "It Ain't Heavy -- It's My Paycheck."

Yes, retirement is when you graduate into a brand new world -- Magna Cum Loiter. The first few months of retirement are always a difficult period. It's when Berniece asks Stan, "What in the world did you do all day while I was at work?" And Stan will answer, "Better."

Don't Just Retire

This is a great time. You suddenly realize that all those wonderful things you didn't have as a child, didn't have as a teenager, didn't have as an adult, and didn't have after the kids were grown -- you now won't have them in retirement as well.

Berniece may be retiring at exactly the right time because, with the population growing older, experts predict problems in the years ahead. The Social Security Fund could be in trouble again; Florida will be full; and perhaps the most serious problem of them all -- a worldwide shortage of prune juice.

Of course, the best exercise for retirement is the sit-up and deep breath exercise. When the alarm goes off in the morning, you sit up, take a deep breath -- then you go (raspberry) and go right back to sleep again.

You are in transition, because you know that old people know more about being young than young people do about being old. Youth is when you were "lean and mean" and wanted the world on a string. Retirement is when you are "wheezy and queasy" and settle for the TV on a cable.

Yes, there are some positives to retirement. You celebrate going from being the "young and restless" to being the "old and stressless." Berniece, retirement from the chamber means

Don't Just Retire

you don't have anything to do, you don't start that until noon, and by bedtime you have it only half done.

It isn't easy being retired. People really do think you have nothing to do. Next winter when it snows, a kid will come to your door and ask if you want to shovel his walk.

Stan told me this. The bank called Stan and scolded him for all those insufficient funds and overdrafts. And Stan said, "It's not my fault, it's Berniece's fault." And the banker said, "Well, why don't you stop her?" And Stan said, "Because I'd rather argue with you than with her!"

Think of it this way: Most of your life you've been in the army of taxpayers. Now, in retirement, you are joining the reserves. To give you an idea how long Berniece has been around -- At the time she started her working career, the Dead Sea was only sick.

Yes, Berniece and Stan have been building seniority down through the years. I got them aside and asked them, "What's the secret to long life?" And I tell you, it was like talking to Bob and Ray.

Stan said, "Well, you eat like a horse," and then Berniece said, "Yea, and you think like a fox," and then Stan said, "You work like a dog,"

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and then Bernice said, "You play like a rabbit," and then both of them in unison capped it off with, "Yeah, and then don't forget to see your veterinarian twice a year."

Bernice, I know you looked forward to retiring, but did you have to write "The End" on your resume? Don't think of yourself as retired. Think of yourself as a recovering workaholic. Seriously, you're doing it right. Retire while you can still enjoy it. Too many people live in the fast lane and miss the turnoffs to the scenic route.

And isn't it great to sit at your desk that one last time, consider all the problems yet to be solved, all the hassles in search of resolution, the rocky road yet to be trod and say, "Th-th-th-th-th-That's All Folks."

Finally, and seriously, this is from Proverbs 31 and it personifies Bernice:

Who can find a worthy woman? For her price is far above rubies... The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her... she will do him good all the days of her life... Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land... Give her the fruits of her hands; and let her works praise her in the gates...

And all the people said, "AMEN!"

26. ENJOYING LIFE'S SIMPLE PLEASURES

Viewing life in its totality is a wonderful exercise. "In the church I heard men praying," said the puzzled young boy. "It must be awfully hard for God." "Why?" asked the preacher gently. "The woodcutter was praying for cold weather, the fruit seller prayed for mild weather, the farmer prayed for rain, and the brick maker prayed for dry weather."

"They are godly men. How does God know how to answer all their prayers?" "How is the weather now?" asked the preacher. "Dry -- and mild." "And last week?" "Let me see -- on Monday and Tuesday it rained... and on Thursday it was cold." "See?" said the preacher.

Consider this profound ditty (author unknown, but wisdom eternal):

To the preacher life's a sermon,
To the joker life's a jest,
To the miser life is money,
To the loafer life's a rest.

To the soldier life's a battle,
To the teacher life's a school,
Life's a great thing for the thinker
But a folly to the fool.

Life is just one long vacation
To the man who loves his work,
But it's constant dodging duty
To the everlasting shirk.

Life's Simple Pleasures

Life is what we try to make it,
Life's a story ever new:
To the faithful, earnest worker
What, my friend, is life to you?

It has been said that we can't control the length of our life, but we can control its use. We can't control our facial appearance, but we can control its expression. We can't control the weather, but we can control the moral atmosphere that surrounds us. We can't control the distance of our head above the ground, but we can control the height of the contents in our head. We can't control the other fellow's annoying faults, but we can see to it that we do not develop similar faults.

Here's how Arthur Pell, author of The Human Side, colorfully put it:

When the blues hit, don't get into a funk. The bright orange sun is still there. It is only temporarily hidden. The path to those silver linings may be barred by green envy of others, distorted by purple rage, or impeded by yellow lights that may make you overcautious. Visualize your goals with crystal clarity and fan those red flames of your zeal to overcome your problems to a white heat of strength that will enable you to leap over the pits and change the color of your life from grey to glittering gold.

So, why worry about the things we cannot control? Let's get busy controlling the things that depend on us. Don't be a pessimist, one who feels bad when he feels

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good -- for fear that he'll feel worse when he feels better.

In the *Christian Herald*, Nancy Turner wrote this:

God often has His largest shares in the smallest houses. Remember this in blustery times, when the roof leaks and the larder is lean; when there are more children than beds and more beds than blankets. Keep cheerful and do your best, and the largest Shareholder in the little shack will see that it weathers the storm.

It has been duely noted that the great soul prays, "Lord make me as big as my problem." The little soul prays, "Lord, let me off easy." The giant soul asks, "Lord, give me strength sufficient for a hard day," while the small soul begs, "Lord, let me have a lighter load." The busy soul prays, "Lord, stand with me until I finish my task," while the weak soul says, "I got tired and quit."

After all, John Milton was without sight, but that did not prevent him from seeing beauty and sharing it with the rest of the world. Louis Braille could not see, but that did not prevent him from opening new horizons to many thousands of people. Helen Keller could neither see nor hear, but that did not prevent her from understanding the world, and explaining it to others.

The world has changed a great deal in the more than 200 years between the death of John Milton and

Life's Simple Pleasures

the birth of Helen Keller. In many ways, it has changed even more in the shorter time between Helen Keller's era and our own. It will change even more in our lifetime, and our children's.

27. MOST IMPORTANT TITLE: GRANDPARENT

At this point of my life, the most important title I answer to is "Grandfather." Today, one-third of all Americans are grandparents. The following are excerpts from our recent "annual reports" to friends and loved ones, showing that life continues to be a beautiful choice, especially from our perspective:

A baby is "...The next generation... A well-spring of pleasure... A messenger of peace and love... A resting place for innocence on earth... A sweet new blossom of humanity... A living jewel dropped unstained from heaven... A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded... Such a nice way to start people... God's opinion that the world should go on" -- so say the great writers over the ages.

Yes, there is nothing like having a baby around to make you realize that it's a changing world, for out of the mouth of babes comes -- cereal. And no one can plan a family's activities like a newborn baby. It has been said that sooner or later, every person opens his mouth and puts his foot in -- but only a baby is admired for doing it. Truly, a baby is the world's longest suspense story: you have to wait a generation to see how it turns out.

"GRANDPARENTS' VOCABULARY" (courtesy of Hallmark Greetings):

ANYTHING: What a grandchild can ask for without being unreasonable.

Most Important Title: Grandparent

BRAG: When grandparents do it's nothing but the plain and simple truth.

DAILY: Frequency at which grandchildren get smarter, better-looking, and more talented.

FAULTS: Little personality defects to be found in other people's grandchildren.

HAUL: What grandkids take home from the grandparent's house at Christmas.

HOLIDAY: Any day the grandkids visit.

NO: This word does not exist in a grandparent's vocabulary.

PHOTO ALBUM: Vast collection of pictures which Grandma shows to strangers.

SPOIL: An immoral act, except when committed by grandparents.

TELEPHONE: Instrument which renders grandchild's mouth completely silent.

TOY STORE: What grandparents buy out on their grandchild's birthday.

UNIVERSE: Area in which your grandchildren are the cutest.

VERY, VERY, VERY, VERY: How much grandchildren love their grandparents.

WRONG: The one thing a grandchild can't do.

YES: A grandparent's answer to any question that starts with "Can I have..."

Just what are grandparents for? From his extensive interviews with grandchildren, Dr. Arthur Kornhaber, M.D. has uncovered five roles which they express to be especially significant:

Most Important Title: Grandparent

♥ **Historian.** Grandparents represent realistic access to "the olden days" -- another dimension in time. As family historians and guardians of the heritage -- grandparents are the only way distant or long-dead relatives can be brought to life. In the role of official biographers of a child's parents, grandparents offer expanded access to a child's roots -- the knowledge of where I came from and therefore I really am.

This is accomplished as grandparents affirm family history, and through holiday and other rituals thrust the past into the present. The religious faith and values they transmit are of enormous significance in a grandchild's development.

♥ **Mentor.** The real magic of learning comes when occasionally one finds a mentor who can imbue his deep love for a subject into a student. The emotional attachments which draw grandchild and grandparent together make a grandparent's lessons stick forever in a child's mind. And the curriculum is limited only by the grandparent's interest and the child's capacity to understand.

♥ **Role Model.** Today's grandchildren will be grandparents for nearly half their lives. And their performance will depend largely upon the images of grandparenting they will carry inside of them. Grandparents serve as strong models of the aging process, family values, attitudes,

Most Important Title: Grandparent

moral ideals, talents and of how to nurture one's own grown children. Grandparents are living examples of what grandchildren can expect one day to become.

♥ Wizard. Being old is in itself a source of amazement to children. But a grandparent's capacity to draw upon wide and divergent experiences almost magically lavishes an excitement of the unexpected upon a child's narrow world.

♥ Nurturer. These "Great Parents" are truly able to look after the physical and emotional needs of their grandchildren much as they did with their own children, but with an added bonus -- to the child, their time and attention is viewed as a pure gift without obligation.

Parents, says Dr. Kornhaber, want desperately to meet every deep emotional need of his or her children. The resources natural or even surrogate grandparents represent are obvious. So by phone, letter, photo albums, audio and video cassette and personal visits, he suggests that we do all we can to keep those grandparent connections in our family alive and well.

28. ONE BODY -- MANY MEMBERS

I have read that to "...scrutinize the trivial (such as an ordinary pencil) can be to discover the monumental." We were always taught in school that "it is an art to be able to write with great warmth (and charmth)." The pencil, which creates and reshapes ideas, may be mightier than the pen. And that may make the pencil more permanent. The world pencil market is 14 billion pencils a year (2 billion are made in USA).

Voted Economist of the Century, Nobel Economist Milton Friedman once wrote a classic example titled, "THERE ISN'T A SINGLE PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO CAN MAKE A PENCIL." It stresses cooperation, specialization, and interdependence:

The wood from which the pencil is made comes from a tree in Washington state. To cut down that tree, it took a saw. To make the saw, it took steel. To make the steel, it took iron ore. The black center of the pencil, the compressed graphite, comes from mines in South America. The eraser, a bit of rubber, probably comes from Malaysia, where the rubber tree isn't even native. It was imported from South America by businessmen. The brass ferrule? Who knows where it came from, or where the yellow paint came from, or the glue that holds it together.

Thousands of people cooperated to make one pencil, -- people who speak different languages, who practice different religions, who might not readily like one another if they ever met. What induced them to make this pencil?

One Body -- Many Members

The magic of the marketplace got them to cooperate, so that you and I might buy a pencil for a trifling sum. In the process of trading a few moments of our time, we have become involved in the lives of thousands of people. This is why free markets are so essential: not only to promote product efficiency, but even more to foster harmony and peace among the peoples of the world.

Pencils are amazing all right, but I'm convinced that America's greatest natural resource is our young people. Here are three important numbers. If you have a pencil, write them down. It's on the test. The first number is 15,000 -- The second is 2,400 -- The last one is 312.

According to reliable estimates, by the time you graduated from high school, you had watched TV for an average of 15,000 hours -- and who knows what you were watching? Between kindergarten and high school graduation, you attended Bible study and church a maximum of 2,400 hours. Your Dad, during those 12 years, devoted less than 312 hours to training you by personal attention.

There are the numbers (K-12): 15,000 hours of TV -- 2,400 hours of church -- 312 hours of personal training. You see, we pass into adulthood mostly programmed by secular influences. And so, I write now as one who grew up in that secular world, not knowing about New Testament Christianity, nor about Christian

One Body -- Many Members

education, nor of Harding University until I was a young adult.

After being in this business for a quarter century -- long enough to have taught some of my students' parents (many of whom carried pencil boxes and slide rules), it strikes me all the more, that Christian schools and colleges have become a highly sought after alternative to the secular world from whence we came.

And, by the way, Bible-centered schools existed in America 217 years before there were public schools. Sometimes we are so close to it that we can't see it. Did you know that 104 of the first 119 colleges and universities of America were founded by those who professed Christianity and who wanted schools in which those principles could be advanced? Of the first 40,000 college graduates before the Civil War, 10,000 entered the ministry.

Many of those colleges are now openly hostile to Christianity. What happened to them? Gradually they became more concerned with "the things of this world" than they were about the reasons they were established. And yet, what better place has there been this year to secure an education than on a college campus where God is honored -- where the principles of the Bible are taught as the principles of life? You get Biblical faith in the Science laboratory, in the History class, and, yes, in my Economics course.

As our students progress through Harding University and beyond, we will probably rejoice most when we

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hear of their trustworthiness, their unrepachable character, their faithfulness to Christ, and their service to the church. With pencils-in-hand, we, their learning partners, believe that the honorable pursuit of a professional career in education, in science, in business, or in any other area, is consistent with a righteous life.

We would join the Apostle Paul to tell our students this. It's recorded in Philippians 4:8 -- "Brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

Do you know how much mileage you can get out of a properly-used pencil? Thirty miles -- for a nickel, so the experts say. Along the way, we want so much for our students to be able to discern right from wrong, wise from unwise, good from bad, and righteousness from unrighteousness. It is important to "put our pencils to it," and remember that the greatest of all gifts is the power to estimate things at their true worth.

How many pencils can our students wear out in a college career? Don't know. However, while they are here, we encourage our students to keep on developing a set of convictions that will guide them through any situation or temptation. Keep developing a quick conscience. Never forget that integrity is in short supply and great demand. It's a seller's market! Judge everything that is said, written, and done -- Judge it all by the "Book of Books."

One Body -- Many Members

Whenever I come across Friedman's "PENCIL" example, I think of the diversity found in I Corinthians 12:

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

Upon inspection of a school, Dr. L. P. Jacks asked the master, where in his schedule he found time for teaching religion. Here's the school master's reply:

We teach it all day long, the schoolmaster replied. We teach it in arithmetic by accuracy, and we teach it in history by humanity. We teach it in geography by breadth of mind; we teach it in astronomy by reverence; and we teach it in the playground of fair play. We teach it by kindness to animals, by courtesy to servants, and good manners to one another, and by helpfulness in all things.

As a private enterprise educator, I have spent my life encouraging people to join me in preserving and

29. THE MEANING OF LIFE

Freedom -- whether spiritual, intellectual, political, or economical -- is indivisible. People who enjoy private economic freedom have greater liberty to search for intellectual truth and personal spiritual growth in all its variety.

Here is how Thomas Macaulay puts it before us:

The real security of Christianity is to be found in its benevolent morality; in its exquisite adaptation to the human heart; in the facility with which its scheme accommodates itself to the capacity of every human intellect; in the consolation which it bears to the house of mourning; in the light with which it brightens the great mystery of the grave.

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As a private enterprise educator, I have spent my life encouraging people to join me in preserving and

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spreading the word about the human side of free enterprise, so that those of us who have been blessed so abundantly can commit ourselves to leaving our country and our way of life a little better for the next generation than it was when we found it.

Helen Keller gives us this insight:

Dark as my path may seem to others, I carry a magic light in my heart. Faith, the spiritual strong searchlight, illumines the way, and although sinister doubts lurk in the shadow, I walk unafraid toward the Enchanted Wood where the foliage is always green, where joy abides, where nightingales nest and sing, and where life and death are one in the presence of the Lord.

I want to go on record that the successful pursuit of a professional career in business, in education, or in any other honorable vocation is inherently consistent with a righteous life. Furthermore, I believe the close adherence to New Testament principles enhances -- not hinders -- the probability of professional success.

In the course of the last 28 years of teaching economics to young people, and in order to be sure we're keeping them on the "straight and narrow," I make it a point to include the following question at some point in one of their multiple choice examinations:

If you gained the whole world and lost your soul, you would:

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- a. be a fat cat
- b. be a big-man-on-campus
- c. have made an excellent trade off
- d. have made a poor bargain indeed

If you did not pick the last option from the above choices, please start again at the beginning of this topic.

I sometimes kid my students by saying that " ...you have to be an economist to go to heaven." Far from it, actually. What I do want for them is that they consider "...being about their Father's business..." whatever their vocation.

We must be honest with ourselves regarding earthly riches. I hope that they don't really believe that they can convert it all to traveler's checks and take it with them. Neither can the unbeliever, not even in an asbestos-lined suitcase.

If you would chance to visit my office, you would see that I collect plaques that quote bits of time-honored wisdom (and maybe even some occasional humor). One of my favorites is this one which helps us with our priorities:

Yesterday is a canceled check.
Tomorrow is a promissory note.
Only today is ready cash.

How would you spend it,
if it were the last shopping day you had left?

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Herein, I have tried to give the reader some of the possible keys to God's storehouse of wealth. If this topic can contribute to helping you unlock the true wealth that comes from righteousness, and thus make life pleasant and eternity happy, then my purpose shall have been fulfilled.

Remember that real charity doesn't care if it's tax deductible or not. If you do it right, with good integrity and stewardship, there's no reason why fulfilling one's self and making money hand-over-fist can't be synonymous. Be the laborer who is worthy of his hire. Be worth your sodium chloride.

30. THE QUEST FOR TRUE RELIGION

In 1787, James Madison's illustrious political career almost came to an abrupt, early end when he broke an important promise to the religious people of Virginia. He had promised to get the "free exercise of religion" written into the Constitution, but he changed his mind. Patrick Henry and George Mason branded him to be unreliable and unfit for election to public office because of that one scandalous broken promise.

Consequently, Madison promised the preachers and voters that he would (1) never break his promise again, and that he would (2) work hard to correct his mistake. There are those who say that the incident resulted in our First Amendment liberties, and possibly the entire Bill of Rights!

The lesson? Politicians in any country do their best only when the decent voters of the land level with them. Edmond Burke said it best, "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing."

A half century later, Alexis de Tocqueville journeyed to the United States in an attempt to discover the secret of democracy. He wanted to know what it was that made the democratic experiment in the New World a success.

He visited our people in the mines, in the fields, in the forests, and in the great halls of commerce. But he wrote that, "Not until I went into the churches of America and saw her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power."

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America is great because America is good -- and if America ever ceases to be good, it will cease to be great."

American church religion, he wrote is "...a political institution which powerfully contributes to the maintenance of a democratic republic among the Americans..." by supplying a strong moral consensus amidst continuous political change.

The main passage dealing expressly with civil government is Romans 13:1-7:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

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Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment, but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Christians are strangers and sojourners on this earth. All of us are but passing through; none of us are staying. We look to the city whose builder is God. Our citizenship is in Heaven. We also have earthly responsibilities. There is a duty to Caesar as well as to God. In fact, in the duty which we owe to God, He has bound on us obedience to civil government.

This chapter is not about the plan of salvation. However, it is a good requisite starting point to securing the goal cited in our chapter's title:

1. Hear -- Rom. 10:17
2. Believe -- John 8:24
3. Repent -- Luke 13:3
4. Confess Christ -- Matt. 10:32-33
5. Be Baptized -- Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38,
Acts 22:10 & 16
6. Continued faithfulness to Christ --
Rev. 2:10

That's it in a nutshell. We make our peace with our Creator on His terms, and then try to live with His Word

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in our heart and on our lips. Our contributors have provided a wealth of advice here; test it against the scriptures of the New Covenant.

"The Little Faithful Christian" was written by Jimmie B. Hill as published in the *Firm Foundation*:

One evening the little faithful Christian was teaching other church members a lesson on visitation. He took his lesson from Matthew 25:34-46. During the lesson, many church members gave him hearty "Amens!" for truths that he pointed out from God's word. At the close of an excellent lesson, the little faithful Christian asked the other church members several questions.

"Who will help me feed the hungry and quench the thirst of the thirsty?" he asked. "Not us!" replied the other church members, "We have too many fellowship meals to plan." So the little faithful Christian took it upon himself.

"Who will help me to house the homeless?" said the little faithful Christian. "Not us!" said the other church members, "We're expecting guests from out of town." So the little faithful Christian opened up his home to the homeless.

"Who'll help clothe the naked?" the little faithful Christian asked reluctantly. "Not us!" cried the other church members, "We've got to buy new Easter outfits and you know how tight

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money is." And so the little faithful Christian took his own money and bought and gathered clothing, and gave to those in need.

And finally the little faithful Christian asked, "Who'll visit the sick, the fatherless, and those in prisons?" And the other church members said, "Not us! We're going on vacation for a much needed rest." And so the little faithful Christian visited as many as he possibly could.

Not too long after the little faithful Christian presented this lesson, the Lord returned. He asked, "Who'll go with me to heaven?" and all the church members said in unison, "We will, we will." But the Lord said, "Depart from me, ye cursed. To him that knew to do good, and did it not, to him it is sin. You were to be doers of the word and not hearers only and inasmuch as ye did nothing for the poor and less fortunate, ye did nothing for me. Depart into everlasting fire."

But to the little faithful Christian the Lord said, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

What is the moral of this story? Well, you figure it out.

Sometimes our own young people rationalize their behavior by saying, "Well, I'm only human." Only human? Do we know what we're saying? We are the best of God's creation -- a royal people -- made in His

The Quest for True Religion

image. We are the only ones who can think His thought, the only ones who will survive this planet. We live, move, and have our very being because of God. That's the "Good News" we want to pass on to our young people.

31. LEARNING PARTNERS FOR ETERNITY

We, the learning partners of our children, grandchildren, and students, believe that the honorable pursuit of a professional career in education, in science, in business, or in any other area, is consistent with a righteous life.

We want them to plan their lives to take advantage of the uniqueness that church leadership positions will provide them. We want them to continue to develop their identity with the Restoration Movement. We ask them to accept their Brethren as well as they will come to accept their mate -- not only because of, but in spite of. Be partners with God in all that you do.

All the while they are with us, we encourage our young people to develop a set of convictions that will guide them through any situation or temptation. Be worthy -- not worldly. Develop a quick conscience. Our young people have completed the First Quarter of the human race. And at this point, they are ahead! But it is an awfully long trip through Eternity, and we do want them to make it as sure as they can. We know our young people have committed the Golden Rule to memory; they must now commit it to life, for they are long on desire but short on experience. Our desire is that they, and we all, may view every day, every effort, every activity in the context of Christian living.

Each and every one of us can be involved in Christian Education. Now, I could say, "But, I'm not a Bible teacher. I teach Macro- and Micro-Economics, Comparative Economic Systems, and Economic History of the U.S., and Applied Economic Theory for Business.

Learning Partners for Eternity

Therefore I'm not really involved in the actual process of Christian education." But I am -- in a real and most vital way! It is in my teaching of the secular subjects that the student gains the Christian perspective. The principles of the Bible become the principles of life indeed!

Example: if I am an instructor of economics, though I do not actually teach the Bible as a text, it is in my showing of the relationship of economics to Christ's teachings that the student obtains the Christian view of economics. Unless we who teach secular subjects in Christian schools relate those subjects to Christ, we fail our unique position as a teacher in a Christian school. Students can obtain business and economics, and all other secular subjects at any state college at a lower cost.

I want my students to develop an indomitable spirit that they can achieve anything. That's the theme of the book of Ecclesiastes: enjoy life, and never break with God. I remind them that although it's great to be young, it is their responsibility to outgrow it (try outgrowing old age).

My goal for them is the same that I have for the Diffine young people -- I want them to be successful and go to heaven forevermore. Live and enjoy, I tell them -- And remember that the only purpose for your being here on Earth is to determine where you will spend eternity.

32. Learning Partners for Eternity

Our desire, as a colleague has said, is that they view every day, every effort, every activity, every dream, and every aspiration in the context of Christian living... so that every facet of their lives is knit together in a harmonious, continuous, and consistent system of values. We believe that the successful pursuit of a professional career in business, in education, or in any other area is inherently consistent with a righteous life. Getting involved in people's lives takes time and money earned through exercising marketable skills.

We admonish students not to leave their religion behind when they leave and enter a not-so-lovable world, desperately in need of the "Good News" they have. We instill in them that we all were created to love God. And if they don't, nothing can fill the hollow, emptiness inside.

Our lives as teachers encourage students to be partners with God in all that they do. We realize that most students want to know what's right, even if some are indifferent about doing it. We plead for purity in all things, that they may truly be the famed "back to the Bible" people. We know they have committed the Golden Rule to memory; here, we try to get them to commit it to life.

We try to be the kind of teacher we'd want our children to have (without neglecting our own families in the process). We know that these years are crucially important in determining their future direction. Generally what they are now is what they will become.

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Four years from now, they will be products of the books they read... the people they meet, etc.

We are aware that some of them still falsely believe there is no life after death. And life, to them, has become a very cruel joke. We tell them that there is a God, and man is His child. And we will all die someday, because our mother and father were human. We will live someday, because our Father in Heaven is Eternal.

We remind our young people that there are 1001 ways in the work-a-day-world to slip across Christian principles to others we meet, before they can realize what has happened. We ask them to judge everything that is said, written, and done -- judge it all by the Book of Books. There are so many issues today, but they all come back to one -- the authority of the Scriptures.

We try to remind our students that there's a "Christian way" to do everything we need to do. We can do the right thing with the wrong attitude, and it won't be Christian. We constantly remind them that the best thing in life is to be a Christian -- there's nothing quite like it. It's better than anything else.

32. GAINING WHOLESOME PERSPECTIVES

With our help, encouragement, and prayers, hopefully none of our extended family will need to be ashamed of yesterday, nor fearful of tomorrow. We have a guarantee that no hostile power in our universe can lead the Christian away from God. Adversaries may advance, maybe even in pairs, but God's love is so great that we have full and complete salvation when we are found in Christ. This is Romans 8:35-39:

35. Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36. (As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.)

37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.

38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor to come,

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So, if God is for us, and Jesus is our advocate at the right hand of God, and the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, who shall

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separate us from the love that so guards us. Shall we let the things brought upon us discourage, dishearten, and turn us back, and cause us to forfeit these honors and glories purchased for us by the blood of Jesus Christ, our redeemer? Surely not.

A boy of nine was being questioned by an older lad about his religion in a somewhat cynical vein and the youngster acquitted himself with credit. Finally, the older one challenged: "I'll give you two dimes if you tell me where God is!" "I'll give you two dimes if you tell me where God Isn't!" Oh, to have that wonderful faith of a child. A little girl, repeating the 23rd Psalm, said it this way: "The Lord is my Shepherd, that's all I want."

From the *Christian Leader* comes this account:

An old mariners' chart of the East coast of North America and adjacent waters, drawn by an unknown cartographer in 1525, and now in the British Museum, has some interesting and fearful directions on it. The mapmaker wrote across great areas of then unexplored land and sea the following inscriptions: "Here be giants." "Here be firey scorpions." "Here be dragons."

At some time in its career the chart fell into the hands of the scientist Sir John Franklin. He scratched out the fearful old markings and wrote across the map: "Here is God."

Paraphrased after the gospel hymn "There is a Sea," by L. I. Zahn, the following piece by Bruce Barton titled

Gaining Wholesome Perspectives

"Two Seas" compares and contrasts the processes of getting giving:

There are two seas in Palestine. One is fresh, and fish are in it. Splashes of green adorn its banks. Trees spread their branches over it and stretch out their thirsty roots to sip of its healing waters.

Along its shores the children play, as children played when He was there. He loved it. He could look across its silver surface when He spoke His parables. And on a rolling plain not far away He fed five thousand people.

The river Jordan makes this sea with sparkling water from the hills. So it laughs in the sunshine. And men build their houses near to it, and birds, their nests; and every kind of life is happier because it is there.

The river Jordan flows on south into another sea. Here is no splash of fish, no fluttering leaf, no song of birds, no children's laughter. Travelers choose another route, unless on urgent business. The air hangs heavy above its water, and neither man nor beast nor fowl will drink.

What makes this mighty difference in these neighbor seas? Not the river Jordan. It empties the same good water into both. Not the soil in which they lie; not the country round about.

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This is the difference: The Sea of Galilee receives but does not keep the Jordan. For every drop that flows into it another drop flows out. The give and receiving go on in equal measure.

The other sea is shrewder, hoarding its income jealously. It will not be tempted into any generous impulse. Every drop it gets, it keeps.

The Sea of Galilee gives and lives. The other sea gives nothing. It is named the Dead. There are two kinds of people in the world. There are two seas in Palestine.

Sometimes in this life and, in an attempt to give God the credit, we shortchange Him. We pray, but we don't spring into action and put feet to our prayers. With the hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes of late, I am reminded of the fable of the man who was stranded on his front porch by rising flood waters. The rescuers arrived in a four-wheel drive vehicle, but he declined, saying "The Lord's going to take care of me."

Hours later, we find him sitting on his roof as the rescue boat comes by. "No thanks," he said. "The Lord is going to take care of me." Late that night he is sitting on his chimney, with the flood waters lapping at his feet. The rescue helicopter makes one last attempt to get him to climb aboard, but nooooooo, "The Lord is going to take care of me."

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Picture him in the next scene arriving at the Pearly Gates, and Saint Peter says, "What are you doing here -- it's not your time." And the man replied, "I don't know -- I thought the Lord was going to take care of me." And Saint Peter indicted him with this reply, "Man, the Lord sent you a four-wheel drive vehicle, a boat, and a helicopter -- what in the world do you want more than that?"

... Others speak, sit not when others stand, and walk not when others stop... Let your discourse with men of business be short and comprehensive... Show not with your superiors in argument, but always submit your judgement to others with modesty... When a man does all he can, though it succeeds not well, blame not him that did it.

... Show not yourself glad at the misfortune of another, though he were your enemy... Detract not from others, but rather be excessive in commending... If two contend together, take not the part of either unconstrained, and be not obstinate in your opinion... Reprehend not the imperfection of others, for that belongs to parents, masters, and superiors... Let your recreations be manful, not selfish... Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the detriment of anyone... Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.

Ben Franklin also documented his pursuit of excellence. As a young man, he made a list of 12 qualities, and proudly showed that agenda to his preacher. What qualities made the list? "Temperance,

33. CODES OF CONDUCT

Several of our founding fathers, while they were still very young men, penned codes of conduct. Here is George Washington's "CODE OF CIVILITY" -- written at the age of 16:

When your superiors talk to anybody, hear them; neither speak nor laugh... Speak not when others speak, sit not when others stand, and walk not when others stop... Let your discourse with men of business be short and comprehensive... Strive not with your superiors in argument, but always submit your judgement to others with modesty... When a man does all he can, though it succeeds not well, blame not him that did it.

Show not yourself glad at the misfortune of another, though he were your enemy... Detract not from others, but neither be excessive in commending... If two contend together, take not the part of either unconstrained, and be not obstinate in your opinion... Reprehend not the imperfection of others, for that belongs to parents, masters, and superiors... Let your recreations be manful, not sinful... Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of anyone... Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.

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Silence, Order, Resolution, Frugality, Industry, Sincerity, Justice, Moderation, Cleanliness, Tranquility, and Chastity."

Ben was so proud of his list that the preacher suggested that Ben add "Humility." Franklin then concentrated each week on one of the items on the list; he went through the list four times a year, once a quarter. How did it work out for young Ben Franklin? His statement later was that, "I was surprised to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined, but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish."

Here is "FREEDOM'S CODE" developed by the American Institute for Character Education. These are the standards of informed and self-reliant people of good will:

Be honest -- be generous -- be just -- and live honorably among all people. Be kind to those whose lives you touch, and do your fair share to help those in need. Have convictions and courage, and yet be tolerant of other people's faults and opinions.

Make credible use of your time and talents, and provide reasonable security for yourself and your dependents -- understand your obligations as a citizen and fulfill them credibly.

Stand with all people of good will everywhere for truth and be an unyielding defender of the basic human rights that provide freedom,

Codes of Conduct

justice, and equality for the people under an honest government of law. This is the measure of a good life among free people. These are the standards people must live by to be free.

And, yes, there is a "CODE OF THE WEST": "Write it in your heart. Stand by the code and it will stand by you. Ask no more and give no less than honesty, courage, loyalty, generosity and fairness. Ask no more and give no less."

This was a favorite of Del Belden, our benefactor. It is titled "THE GUY IN THE GLASS:"

When you get what you want in your struggle
for self, And the world makes you king for a
day,

Then go to the mirror and look at yourself,
And see what that guy has to say.

For it isn't your father, or mother, or wife,
Whose judgement upon you must pass.

The fellow whose verdict counts
most in your life,
Is the guy staring back from the glass.

He's the feller to please, never mind all the rest,
For he's with you clear up to the end,
And you've passed your most dangerous,
difficult test,

If the guy in the glass is your friend.

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You may be like Jack Horner and "chisel" a plum,
And think you're a wonderful guy,
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum
if you can't look him straight in the eye.

You can fool the whole world down the pathway
of years and get pats on the back as you pass.

But your final reward will be heartaches and
tears if you've cheated the guy in the glass.

An entrepreneur extraordinaire, this was also a favorite of Del Belden -- THE ENTREPRENEUR'S CREDO by Dean Alfange:

I do not choose to be a common man. It is my right to be uncommon, if I can. I seek opportunity, not security. I do not wish to be a kept citizen, humbled and dulled by having the state look after me. I want to take the calculated risk; to dream and to build, to fail and to succeed.

I refuse to barter incentive for a dole; I prefer the challenges of life to the guaranteed existence; the thrill of fulfillment to the state calm of Utopia. I will not trade freedom for beneficence nor my dignity for a handout. I will never cower before any master nor bend to any threat.

It is my heritage to stand erect, proud and unafraid; To think and act for myself, to enjoy

Codes of Conduct

the benefit of my creations and to face the world boldly and say: This, with God's help, I have done. And this is what it means to be an Entrepreneur.

The following is attributed to an unknown Confederate soldier:

I ask God for strength, that I might achieve
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey

I ask for health, that I might do greater things
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.

I ask for riches, that I might be happy

I was given poverty, that I might be wise

I ask for power, that I might have the praise of men

I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God

I ask for all things, that I might enjoy life I was given life, that I might enjoy all things

I got nothing that I ask for -- but everything I'd hoped for

Almost to spite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered

I am among all men, most richly blessed.

Codes of Conduct

BEATTITUDES FOR A HOUSEWIFE

Blessed is she whose daily tasks are a labor of love, for she translates duty into privilege.

Blessed is she who mends stockings and toys and broken hearts, for her understanding is a balm to humanity.

Blessed is she who serves laughter and smiles at every meal, for she shall be blessed with goodness.

Blessed is she who preserves the sanctity of the Christian home, for hers is a sacred trust that crowns her with dignity.

-- Cheerful News

MOTHERS

Mothers are life's richest treasures
To be found anywhere on this earth;
No mortal could bring greater pleasures,
No mortal could measure their worth.

No one can bestow greater comfort,
No person can show deeper care;
Though the rest of the world may forsake you,
You'll find that your Mother is there.

Mothers are rare combinations,
They're teachers and nurses and wives;
Mothers not only have babies,
They baby them all of their lives.

Don't look at her wrinkles and wonder
What caused them to be on her face,

Codes of Conduct

They are furrows where she has plowed under
Life's troubles she wants to erase.

Mothers are creatures of habit,
Their habit, to work with a smile;
Mothers are angels in aprons
Who God lends to us for awhile.

Whenever our Mothers must leave us,
There must be a smile on God's face;
He has no intention to grieve us,
Mothers just help Him brighten His place.

-- Dave Wadley

THE ART OF PARENTHOOD

Our children are watching us live, and what we are
shouts louder than anything we can say.

When we set an example of honesty, our children will
be honest.

When we encircle them with love, they will be loving.

When we practice tolerance, they will be tolerant.

When we demonstrate good sportsmanship, they will be
good sports.

When we meet life with laughter and a twinkle in our
eye, they will develop a sense of humor.

When we are thankful for life's blessings, they will be
thankful.

When we express friendliness, they will be friendly.

When we speak words of praise, they will praise
others.

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When we confront failure, defeat, and misfortune with
a gallant spirit, they will learn to live bravely.
When our lives affirm our faith in the enduring values of
life, they will rise above doubt and skepticism.
When we surround them with the love and goodness of
God, they will discover life's deeper meaning.
When we set an example of heroic living, they will be
heroes.

-- Wilfred A. Peterson

SAY IT NOW

If you have a friend worth loving,
Love him. Yes, and let him know
That you love him, ere life's evening
Tinge his brow with sunset glow.
Why should good words ne'er be said
Of a friend -- till he is dead?
If you hear a song that thrills you,
Sung by any child of song,
Praise it. Do not let the singer
Wait deserved praises long.

Why should one who thrills your heart
Lack the joy you may impart?
If you hear a prayer that moves you
By its humble, pleading tone,
Join it. Do not let the seeker
Bow before his God alone.
Why should not your brother share
The strength of "two or three" in prayer?

Codes of Conduct

If you see the hot tears falling
from a brother's weeping eyes,
Share them. And by kindly sharing
Own our kinship in the skies.
Why should anyone be glad
When a brother's heart is sad?

If a silvery laugh goes rippling
Through the sunshine on his face,
Share it. Tis the wise man's saying --
For both grief and joy a place.
There's health and goodness in the mirth
In which an honest laugh has birth.

If your work is made more easy
By a friendly, helping hand,
Say so. Speak out brave and truly
Ere the darkness veil the land.
Should a brother workman dear
Falter for a word of cheer?

Scatter thus your seeds of kindness
All enriching as you go --
Leave them. Trust the Harvest Giver;
He will make each seed to grow.
So until the happy end
Your life shall never lack a friend.

-- Unknown

34. THE BOOK OF BOOKS

Secular examples are pretty good, if we find the right ones. But if we want to make our very salvation "as sure as we can," what about some examples from the New Testament?

In this first example, the Apostle Paul concludes his letter to the Church at Philippi with a list of Christian duties. Here is Philippians 4:8 -- "Brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, if there is any virtue, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

The second example of a code of conduct is, of course, The Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3-11. There are nine beatitudes; each pronounces a blessing upon those who have certain characteristics:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven... Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth... Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy... Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God... Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely

The Book of Books

for My sake... Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.

Our third example of a code of conduct is from Galatians 6:22-23 -- the well known passage on "The Fruits of the Spirit": "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such there is no law." How many other examples could you find?

Here is "THE DISCIPLE'S CHARGE (author unknown)":

I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of His. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed; my present makes sense; my future is secure. I'm finished. I'm done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tame visions, mundane talking, chintzy giving, or dwarf goals.

I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions, platitudes, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now love by presence, lean by faith, walk by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by power.

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My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions few, my God reliable, and my mission clear.

I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, meander in the maze of mediocrity!

I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, preached up for the cause of Christ. I'm a disciple of Jesus. I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and work till He stops me.

I especially wish I knew the authorship of "THE TEACHER OF THE CLASS:"

I dreamed the pearly gates were opened wide,
And I entered in, for I had died;
And now must give account for all my acts,
I saw a Book there opened with these facts.

I thought, "My role upon this earth was small,
Just teaching a Bible School my call."
For I saw all the saints of God up there,
And mine was, at most, a meager share.

I heard the Master call for my report;
I stood afraid, for mine... was short.
I trembled and felt I would not pass.
Then whispered, "I just taught a Bible Class."

The Book of Books

And from the Throne I heard His voice, "Well
done, Come in and share eternal life, my son;
Although your place was humble and obscure,
You led the thirsty to the Waters Pure."

And then it seemed that from eternal plains,
There came the sound of voices in refrain
That rolled across the mighty sea of glass,
"There are the great... the teachers of a class."

When I awoke, I thought of those I'd taught.
And their lives, what glory God had wrought,
I prayed to God, and all that I could say,
"Make me a better teacher day by day."

And you who teach the Christian way to live, may
feel sometimes you're asked too much to give.
But someday you will reap eternal joys,
Because YOU led to Christ these girls and
boys.

RULES FOR HAPPY LIVING

1. Count your Blessings, Not Your Troubles. Other people don't need your troubles. They have enough of their own:

Bring the whole title into the storehouse,
that there may be food in my house.
"Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty,
"and see if I will not throw open the
floodgates of heaven and pour out so
much blessing that you will not have
room enough for it." Malachi 3:10.

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2. **Live One Day At a Time.** You can control and conquer any sin if you will learn to live one day at a time.

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." James 4:13-14.

3. **Learn To Say, "I Love You."** Break the "alabaster box" of kindness to as many people as possible each day.

While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? If it could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly. "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her: She has

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done a beautiful thing to me." Mark 14:3-6.

4. **Learn To Be Giver and Not a Getter.** If you are failing to get out of life what you want, it is because you are expecting to get instead of give:

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Luke 7:38.

5. **Seek For Good In Everyone and In Everything.** Be a "good" seeker and not a "fault" finder:

Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you owe, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay not attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Matthew 7:1-5.

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6. **Pray Every Day.** Reserve a time in your day to thank God for His many blessings and ask for His guidance:

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. Luke 18:1.

7. **Do at Least One Good Deed Each Day.** Plant the seed of "goodness" and it will produce after its kind.

Here are some more favorites that have caught my attention over the years:

GI JOE FINDS GOD

Look, God, I have never spoken to You,
But now, I want to say, "How do You do."
You God, they told me You didn't exist,
And like a fool I believed all this.

Last night from a shell hole I saw Your sky,
I figured right then they'd told me a lie;
Had I taken time to see what You made,
I'd have known they weren't calling a
spade a spade.

I wonder God, if You'd shake my hand;
Somehow I feel you will understand.
Funny I had to come to his hellish place
Before I had time to see Your face.

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Well I guess there isn't much more to say,
But I am glad God, I met You today;
I guess the zero hour will soon be here,
But I'm not afraid since I know You're near.

The signal -- Well, God I'll have to go.
I like You lots; this I want You to know.
Look now, this will be a horrible fight --
Who knows, I may come to Your
house tonight.

Tho I wasn't friendly to You before,
I wonder God, if You'd wait at the door.
Look I'm crying. Me, shedding tears!
I wish I'd known You these many years.

Author Unknown, Wisdom Eternal

THE DISTINGUISHED TEACHER

Jesus is the world's most distinguished teacher. It was not an award that men presented to Him, but a recognition by millions who have sat at His feet for nearly 2000 years. He had no classroom, except the one the moment provided. It might be a hillside, a boat, or a garden.

He received no salary, for when John's disciples asked for His credentials, He responded, "The poor have the gospel preached unto them."

The Book of Books

He set no age limit for His students. Little children were admitted as well as the aged. He had no textbook but His Father's Word. He held no college degree, yet scholars were instructed by Him.

Never a teacher had such KNOWLEDGE. He knew students and their needs. He knew all about the past and the future. He knew every atom of the universe. He even knew what students were thinking.

Never a teacher had such AUTHORITY. When He finished class one day, His students were "amazed at His teaching, because He taught them as one having authority and not like their other teachers."

Never a teacher had such INCENTIVE. There was a responsibility laid on Him that caused Him to teach, even if it meant public ridicule, arrest, imprisonment, and death itself. That incentive was always student-centered.

Never a teacher had such RAPPORT with students. He was "gentle and lowly in heart," and His students learned from Him. He used ordinary things and events like lamps, salt shakers, sowers and reapers, losing sheep and coins, and a young boy kicking up his heels, running off, and getting into trouble... things students could identify with.

The Book of Books

He never had a class too large or too small. One student who came to fetch a pail of water was given as much attention as 5000 hungry students in a class just before lunch. He had a night class when only one student showed up, and an early morning class when at least three students fell asleep.

His examinations were killers because each question called on the student to examine his own life within the context of the principles clearly taught in class.

Many failed, went back home, and "walked no more with Him." Even His twelve majors checked out before the end of the semester. Yet thousands thronged to enroll, with one little fellow willing to sit in a tree, just so he could see the teacher.

Scholars have come and gone, and sages have philosophized about the meaning of life and the purpose of the universe, but all must agree that "never a man spoke like this" Distinguished Teacher from Galilee.

-- Dr. Ray Muncy
Beloved Colleague
April 24, 1991

35. ROLE MODELS AND POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

All the world's a stage,
and we're the players,
Shakespeare wrote.

To this I'd like to add
a mere explanatory note.

Some are the stars,
in leading roles.
With praise and much attention,
But most of us have merely
walk-on parts
And rarely get a mention.

-- Author Unknown

Recently I asked members of the "Golden Agers" Bible Class this question: "Who of your generation do you admire the most? Why?" Here are their responses (very personal references are abridged).

- Winston Churchill
- My husband
- My daughters are all three wonderful, brilliant, genuine Christians -- no hypocrisy.
- Besides my Mom, President Roosevelt. He got this beautiful country through the Depression.
- Sister -- She is witty, zealous, honest, and willing to do things for others.
- The young people who show interest in working for the Lord when there is so much attitude against Christianity.
- The Elders that truly shepherd the flocks.
- All my good friends.

Role Models and Positive Attributes

- My sister-in-law -- because she thinks about everyone.
- My wife most, but a lot of people second...
- Bob Hope for his devotion to our armed forces.
- My ancestors -- for the faith they taught me in Christ.
- President Bush -- because he is kind.
- Those that love the Lord.
- Outstanding gospel preachers
- Barbara Bush -- because she is so down to earth.
- My parents -- they taught me the difference in "do" and "don't."
- My children and grandchildren -- they are loving.

Benjamin Franklin is one of my favorites. His advice is as useful today as it was two hundred years ago. Probably the most famous of these comes from his approach to someone bearing a grudge. A fellow Philadelphian had opposed Franklin's appointment as clerk of the Pennsylvania legislature, was outvoted, and then took offense.

Franklin, knowing that his disappointed adversary owned "a certain very scarce and curious book," wrote to him asking for the loan of it. The book was sent swiftly, and the two men gradually renewed their friendship. The lesson: Instead of trying to heal a personal falling out with gifts, ask your antagonist to do you a favor.

Mr. Franklin revealed his approach to raising money for a worthy cause in a conversation with the popular revivalist minister Gilbert Tennent:

Role Models and Positive Attributes

In the first place, I advise you to apply to all those who you know will give something; next to those whom you are uncertain whether they give anything or not, and show them the list of those who have given; and do not neglect those who you are sure will give nothing. In some of them you may be mistaken.

The following item is typed just as it is presented below and occupies prominent spaces in my wallet, by my phone, etc.

IT IS HARD

- To forget
- To apologize
- To save money
- To be unselfish
- To avoid mistakes
- To keep out of a rut
- To begin all over again
- To make the best of all things
- To keep your temper at all times
- To think first and act afterwards
- To maintain a high standard
- To keep on keeping on
- To shoulder blame
- To be charitable
- To take advice
- To admit error
- To forgive

BUT IT PAYS!!

Role Models and Positive Attributes

How can we adapt to the times? Climbers in the Austrian Alps recently found a 4,000-year-old Bronze-Age man frozen in a glacier -- a historical discovery that has scientists humming. Why is he important to our careers today? He had a profession -- searching for metal ore. And many things about him show that he was pursuing his job with intelligence we'd admire today. Consider these lessons from one unsigned account of the discovery:

- He was searching for new opportunities. Recognizing that opportunity lay where others had not looked, he was five miles from the nearest valley, apparently traveling alone. Yet his tribal tattoos show that he was part of a group. Clearly, he was able to join with others, yet take highly individual action when required to advance his career.
- He armed himself with the most high-tech items of his day -- a bronze axe and a small fire-making kit that contained kindling and sticks. While he did not neglect the basics such as heavy fur garments and straw-lined leather boots, he was on top of new developments and was using them on the job.
- He was prepared to adapt. He carried wood-tipped arrows for birds, stone-tipped ones for larger game, and pitch so he could construct new arrows or weapons if needed. He knew that preparation and flexibility were the keys to success in a hostile world where new challenges

Role Models and Positive Attributes

were commonplace. The soundness of his thinking still rings remarkably true today.

There is a wonderful story about four people, called "EVERYBODY, SOMEBODY, ANYBODY and NOBODY:"

There was an important job to be done, and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody, when actually Nobody asked Anybody to do it.

These are the "SEVEN SINS IN THE WORLD" by Mahatma Gandhi:

Wealth without work
Pleasure before conscience
Knowledge without character
Commerce without morality
Science without humanity
Worship without sacrifice
Politics without principle.

I WILL DO MORE

I will do more than belong.

I will participate.

I will do more than care.

Role Models and Positive Attributes

I will help.
I will do more than believe.
I will be kind.

I will do more than forgive.
I will forget.
I will do more than dream.
I will work.
I will do more than teach.
I will inspire.

I will do more than earn
I will enrich.
I will do more than give.
I will serve.
I will do more than live.
I will grow.
I will do more than be friendly.
I will be a friend.
I will do more than be a citizen.
I will be a patriot.

-- William Arthur Ward

This is titled "IF YOU WERE MY FACULTY ADVISER."
It is a newsletter printed by the American College
Testing Program -- ACT -- (written by Sally Felker,
student). Here is how it reads:

This is what I would want you to know, as you
work with me: Please realize that I am frightened
of you -- I may hide my fear with hostility or
apathy; the fear is still there. Society has taught
me to fear you; I will distrust you at first no

Role Models and Positive Attributes

matter how compassionate and understanding you may be. I want you to know that I have much to offer, if only you can listen, make me feel safe, and give me the idea you sincerely care.

You can be clumsy with me, as long as you diligently work at helping me learn and grow. You can hurt me, as long as your intent is not to destroy me; but to help me realize things about myself which I may not know. Look at me and see that there are many possibilities lying deep down in me. You may be the one holding the key to unlocking them.

Know also that I probably will not appreciate you; that I may forget that you, too, are human -- but I do not want you to forget that about me. Confirm the best in me. I seem to need it. I become a better person when you do this to me. Help me see myself clearly. Please do not give up on me. If you do, I fear I may give up on myself. Believe in me, so that I may believe in myself.

It is because of wonderful teachers like this proposed model, and the one I married, that I am not in a penitentiary somewhere. I shall be eternally grateful.

36. WHAT IF YOU HAD TO DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN?

Children enter our home and make so much noise for twenty years we can hardly stand it -- then depart, leaving the house so silent, we think we will go mad. Harry Chapin recorded "CATS IN THE CRADLE" in 1969. His wife wrote these haunting lyrics (she knew of that which she wrote):

A child arrived just the other day.
He came to the world in the usual way,
But there were planes to catch, bills to pay.
He learned to walk while I was away.
And he was talkin' before I knew it
and as he grew,
He said, "I'm gonna be like you dad;
you know I'm gonna be like you."

Chorus: And the cats in the cradle and the silver
spoon,
Little Boy Blue and the man and the moon.
When you comin' home dad... I don't know when
but we'll get together then son;
you know we'll have a good time then.

My son turned 10 just the other day
He said, "Thanks for the ball, dad; come on let's
play,
Can you teach me to throw?" I said not today,
Got a lot to do. He said, "That's OK."
He turned away but his smile never dimmed,
He said, "I'm gonna be like him; yeah, you
know I'm gonna be like him."

(Chorus repeats)

If We Had It to Do All Over Again

He came from college just the other day,
So much like a man I just had to say,

"Son, I'm proud of you,
Can you sit for a while?"

He shook his head and he said with a smile,

"What I'd really like dad is to borrow the car
keys,
See you later, can I have them please."

(Chorus repeats)

I've long since retired, my son's moved away.

I called him up just the other day;

I said, "I'd like to see you if you don't mind."

He said, "I'd love to dad if I could find the time.

You see my new jobs a hassle and the kids have
the flu,

But it's sure been nice talkin' to you, dad, it's been
sure nice talkin' to you."

And as I hung up the phone it occurred to me he'd
grown up just like me,

My boy was just like me.

And the cats in the cradle and the silver spoon,

Little Boy Blue and the man and the moon,

When you comin' home son, I don't know when,

But we'll get together then dad, you know we'll
have a good time then.

I hate that song. That's why I keep copies in my
desk, files, briefcase. So, let's not forget this haunting
message. Parents, redeem the time whenever you can,
in any way you can, for as long as you can. Be there
for them.

If We Had It to Do All Over Again

This anonymous piece is entitled "Ten Mistakes to Avoid:" REMORSE over yesterday's failure. ANXIETY over today's problems. WORRY over tomorrow's uncertainty. WASTE of the moment's opportunity. PROCRASTINATION with one's present duty. RESENTMENT of another's success. CRITICISM of a neighbor's imperfection. IMPATIENCE with youth's immaturity. SKEPTICISM of our nation's future. UNBELIEF in God's providence.

Yes, there is much to reflect on as we go down the western slope. Because life is both fragile and precious, our Heavenly Father is aware of our needs, our will to keep on keeping on, our desire for balance and equilibrium in daily routines. Life is never going to be perfect. It wasn't before, and it won't be now.

The longer we live, we experience both an enlarged sense of both happiness and sadness. When Christ went to a funeral, these amazing words are recorded. "Jesus wept." (John 11:35). Because he had our humanity, and was touched with the feeling of our infirmity when He went to the cemetery, He wept -- in spite of the fact that He intended to restore life.

At anxious times of life, it is okay to hurt, to cry, to rest, and to get away now and then. Our Creator's compassion is boundless. Sometimes, when words fail, tears start to flow. But that's okay. God will never forget the crises in our lives that cause our tears.

A feeble, old, rich man, confined to his bed with the infirmities of age, pointed out the window at a husky

If We Had It to Do All Over Again

teenager who was having a laughing conversation with a pretty girl. "I wish I was as rich as he," said the old man. "But he has no job, his family has ten mouths to feed and he doesn't even know whether he'll be able to go to college," the rich man's nurse said. "Yes," said the rich man, "but he has health and youth and hope -- he is rich in all the things that money can't buy."

And suppose, in retrospect, we know we have all made mistakes. Any sin you or I may have committed in the past that may make us feel unworthy -- God has already forgiven that in others before. Is it not the essence of the Gospel of His grace that He can repair the things that are broken, reset the joints of the bruised reed, and restore the broken heart? Let us, then, be grateful for the blessings God has permitted us to enjoy, and accept the painful experiences of life as also a part of His total Providence.

We are not to judge the inner secrets of any man's heart. We know not what emotions stir others' souls nor what secret communion they might have had with God. All any of us can do is make our peace with God on His terms and then live as to neither be ashamed of yesterday nor fearful of tomorrow.

We do know this. God is a great and loving God who always does that which is right and best. So with confidence, we leave our loved ones in the hands of a merciful Heavenly Father, knowing that God's way is the best way and His thoughts are far above ours.

If We Had It to Do All Over Again

God has been so good to prepare us for the Great Adventure into the Beyond. He surrounds us with every influence to direct us and lead us to Himself. He gives us an open Bible, in which we learn the way of life everlasting. He gives us the church, where we learn of a hope in Christ, and whose direction points us to Heaven.

God gives us a conscience, which points out our sins and nudges us to the better life. He gives us the prayers of friends and loved ones. He gives us sorrow to bring us to Himself. Above all, let's be thankful for the hope which reigns in the human heart, and which knows no defeat. Job, one whose tribulations were exceedingly great, put it this way: "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

37. THERE'S A FUTURE IN NOSTALGIA

More than 50 years have gone by now since the end of World War II. We are survivors!!! Consider the changes we have witnessed (this is a blend from several sources -- all anonymous):

We were born before television, before penicillin, before polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, plastic, contact lenses, Frisbees and the pill. We were before radar, jet aircraft, credit cards, split atoms, lasers, and ballpoint pens.

Before pantyhose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, disposals, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes... and before man walked on the moon. We got married first and then had the honeymoon. How quaint can you be? In our time, closets were for clothes, not for "coming out of." Bunnies were small rabbits and rabbits were not Volkswagens.

Designer Jeans were scheming girls named Jean or Jeanne, and having a meaningful relationship meant getting along well with our cousins. We were before house-husbands, computer dating, dual careers and commuter marriages. We were before day-care centers, group therapy and nursing homes.

We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, CDS, faxes, cellular phones, word processors, artificial hearts, yogurt, and guys wearing earrings. For us, time-sharing meant togetherness... not computers or condominiums; and "chip" meant a piece of

There's a Future in Nostalgia

wood, hardware meant hardware and software meant nothing.

In 1940, "made in Japan" meant cheap goods, "making out" referred to how you did on your exam. Pizzas, "McDonalds" and instant coffee were unheard of. We hit the scene when there were 5 and 10 cent stores, where you bought things for five and ten cents.

For one nickel you could ride a street car, make a phone call, buy a Pepsi or enough stamps to mail one letter and two postcards. You could buy a new Chevy Coupe for \$600, but who could afford one; a pity too, because gas was 11 cents a gallon! One car per family was just fine, thank you. Two meant you were living on credit or in the wrong neighborhood.

In our day, "grass" was mowed. "Coke" was a cold soda pop drink, and "pot" was something you cooked in, and then was scrubbable. "Rock music" was "Rock-a-bye-baby" and "Rock of Ages," and "aids" were helpers in the principal's office.

"ERA" stood for Earned Run Average. The bully on the block was the kid who threw sand. Every kid in America wore mouse ears and wriggled with hula hoops. Howdy Doody and Uncle Miltie got top billing. Whitewall tires really had white walls. We got our first television set and sat for hours mesmerized by the test patterns.

There's a Future in Nostalgia

If we needed money, we scrubbed floors, mowed lawns, baby-sat, dug weeds, ran errands (not drove, ran), raked leaves, or ironed shirts. A "joint" was an elbow or a knee, and "Give me five" means, "Could you lend me 5 dollars till payday?"

"Snow" was shoveled, "Smack" was what we got for talking back. "Fuzz" grew on a peach. "Speed" was what papa did if we were late for church. "Upper" was a happy story. "Downer" was a depressing tale. "Smoke" meant fire. "Pig" was an animal. "Bad" wasn't good, and "mean" wasn't great.

No wonder there is a generation gap! But we survived. What better reason to celebrate?

There was a time -- a very good time when people knew how to get along, and when Americans -- most of us -- knew what was important. Do you remember this? It's "A TIME TO REMEMBER," by The Americanism Educational League:

- When taxes were merely a necessary nuisance?
- When a man was a man and dressed like one?
- When a woman was a woman and dressed to please the men?
- When the poor were too proud to accept charity?
- When clerks and repairmen tried to please you?
- When the clergy really preached about religion?
- When songs had a tune and the words made some sense?

There's a Future in Nostalgia

- When people expected less and valued what they had more?
- When just about everybody knew the difference between right and wrong?
- When things weren't perfect in the United States, but you did not expect them to be?
- When hippie meant big in the hips.
- A trip involved travel in cars, planes, and ships?
- Hooked was what grandmother's rugs may have been.
- When fix was a verb that meant mend or repair.
- When groovy meant furrowed with channels and hollows.
- And bread came from bakeries and not from the mint.
- When roll meant a bun, and rock was a stone.
- And hang-up was something you did with the phone.
- When the flag was a sacred symbol?
- When criminals went to jail?
- When you weren't afraid to go out at night?
- When a boy was a boy and dressed like one?
- When a girl was a girl, and dressed like one.
- When college kids swallowed goldfish, not acid.
- When people knew what the Fourth of July stood for.
- When you never dreamed our country could ever lose a war.
- When you considered yourself lucky to have a good job, and proud to have it.
- When you weren't embarrassed to say that this is the best country in the world.
- When America was a land filled with brave, proud, confident, hardworking people!

There's a Future in Nostalgia

- When you bragged about your hometown and native state?
- When not everybody felt they were entitled to a college degree even at the taxpayers' expense?
- When a Sunday drive was a pleasant jaunt and not an ordeal?
- When politicians proclaimed their patriotism and really meant it?
- When your government stood up for Americans everywhere in the world?
- When you knew the law would be enforced and your safety would be protected?
- When the law meant justice and you felt a little touch of awe every time you saw a policeman in uniform?
- When the United States was filled with courageous, honest, clean, confident, and proud people -- American people?
- When charity was a virtue, not a telethon.
- When lights -- not people -- were turned on and off.
- When instant recall was a sign of good intelligence, not bad manufacturing.
- When trouble in the streets meant potholes.
- When movies were rated on how good they were, not on who was allowed to see them.

38. BEING ALL WE CAN BE

So you didn't make it to the "top of the heap": in this life? Be ye grateful and "BE THE BEST OF WHATEVER YOU ARE," says Douglas Malloch:

If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill,
Be a scrub in the valley -- but be
The best little scrub by the side of the rill;
Be a bush if you can't be a tree.

If you can't be a bush, be a bit of grass,
And some highway happier make;
If you can't be a muskie, then just be a bass --
But the liveliest bass in the lake!

We can't all be captains, we've got to be crew,
There's something for all of us here;
There's big work to do, and there's lesser to do,
And the task you must do is the near.

If you can't be a highway, then just be a trail,
If you can't be the sun, be a star;
It isn't by size that you win or you fail --
Be the best of whatever you are!

Great things sometimes come from obscure sources, such as this item from the Senatobia, Mississippi church bulletin. It is titled "RULES FOR DAILY LIFE:"

Begin the day with God:
Kneel down to Him in prayer:
Lift up thy heart to His abode
And seek His love to share.

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Open the Book of God,
And read a portion there
That it may hallow all thy thoughts
And sweeten all thy care.

Go through the day with God,
What'er thy work may be:
Where'er thou art -- at home, abroad --
He still is near to thee.

Converse in mind with God,
Thy spirit heavenward raise:
Acknowledge every good bestowed
And offer grateful praise.

Conclude the day with God,
Thy sins to Him confess:
Trust in the Lord's atoning blood
And plead His righteousness.

Lie down at night with God,
Who gives His servants sleep:
And when thou tread'st the vale of death,
He will thee guard and keep.

The following "20 SECRETS FOR SUCCESSFUL LIVING" are paraphrased from Romans 12:9-21:

1. Have no imitation Christian love.
2. Have a genuine hatred for evil and a real devotion to good.
3. Have real, warm affection between brothers.
4. Be willing to let the other person have the credit.

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5. Do not allow slackness to spoil your work.
6. Keep the fires of the spirit burning as you do your work for the Lord.
7. Base your happiness on your hope in Christ.
8. When trials come, endure them patiently.
9. Steadfastly maintain the habit of prayer.
10. Give freely to fellow-Christians in want, never grudging a meal or a bed to those who need them.
11. As for those who try to make your life difficult, bless them. Don't curse, bless.
12. Share the happiness of those who are happy; share the sorrow of those who are sad.
13. Live in harmony with each other.
14. Don't become snobbish but take a real interest in ordinary people.
15. Don't become set in your own opinions.
16. Don't pay back a bad turn by a bad turn to anyone.
17. See that your public behavior is above criticism.
18. As far as your responsibility goes, live at peace with everyone.
19. Never take vengeance into your own hands. Stand back and let God punish if He will.
20. Don't allow yourself to be overpowered by evil. Take the offensive -- overpower evil with good!

"A town is only as successful as its inhabitants choose to make it," says Tommy Jackson, Editor of The Daily Citizen newspaper:

Progressive towns are full of people who unselfishly give of themselves to make their home an even-better place to live. With that in mind, I am impressed with a brief article in an issue of

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City & Town, the official publication of the Arkansas Municipal League. The article is entitled "MY TOWN," and it says very aptly that not only do we just live and work in our towns, but we have responsibilities as well. It reads as follows:

My town is the place where my house is found, where my business is located and where my vote is cast. It is where my children are educated and where my neighbors dwell and where my life is chiefly lived. It is the hope spot for me.

My town has a right to my civic loyalty. It supports me and I should support it. My town wants my citizenship, not my partisanship; my friendliness, not my dissensions; my sympathy, not my criticism; my intelligence, not my indifference.

My town supplies me with protection, trade, friends, education, schools, churches, and the right to free moral citizenship. It has some things that are better than others. The best things I should seek to make better; the worst things I should work to suppress. Take it all-in-all, it is my town, and it is entitled to the best there is in me.

This is titled "THE NEW YEAR." As with so many others, the author is unknown. For that we are disappointed, because we'd like to say "thanks." Perhaps we can do so by turning over a new leaf:

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I am the New Year. I am an unspoiled page in your book of time. I am your next chance at the art of living. I am your opportunity to practice what you have learned during the last twelve months about life. All that you sought the past year and failed to find is hidden in me; I am waiting for you to search it out again and with more determination. All the good that you tried to do for others and didn't achieve last year is mine to grant -- providing you have fewer selfish and conflicting desires. In me lies the potential of all that you dreamed but didn't dare to do, all that you hoped but did not perform, all you prayed for but did not yet experience. These dreams slumber lightly, waiting to be awakened by the touch of an enduring purpose. I am your opportunity to renew your allegiance to Christ, who said, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). I am the New Year.

The *Christian Bible Teacher* related this account about 30 years ago. Whenever I chance to read it again, I am profoundly moved by the fact that life, as wonderful as it can be, isn't always fair:

Charlie Brown in the famous "Peanuts" cartoon cried out, "How long O Lord?" And his friend Lucy proceeded to tell him his quotation was from Isaiah the sixth chapter. She then wore him down with her explanation and in her usual manner, jerked the football away when he kicked at it. Charlie Brown fell down and she explained, "How long? All your life, Charlie Brown. All your life."

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We see the wisdom of this character in explaining that all through life we face problems. All through life there is never a time when we are free of them.

CONCLUSION -- LEAVING A LEGACY

Dear reader, God had a unique purpose for our days to this time. To smile and touch a human being's life at his point of need, and to give him hope, are just some of the great things God had in mind for us. If we fear or question the future, we have not come to a true realization of Jesus' counsel, "Let not your heart be troubled; I go to prepare a place for you... that where I am, there ye may be also."

God is, even now, nurturing us as part of an Eternal Investment in us. He will give us the wisdom to make sound decisions regarding all the days of our life. As we go forward, may the Lord bless us and keep us; may the Lord make His face to shine upon us and give us peace.

As published in the *Christian Herald*, this letter to his unborn child was found on the body of a soldier. I appreciate so deeply his fond farewell:

My child, sleeping now in the dark and gathering strength for the struggle of birth, I wish you well. At present you have no proper shape, you do not breathe, and you are blind. In time and through the life of your mother, whom I deeply love, there will be something in you that will give you power to fight for air and life. Such is your heritage, such is your destiny as a child born of woman -- to fight for light and hold on without knowing why.

May you seek always and strive in good faith and high courage, in this world where men grow

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so tired. Keep your wonder at great and noble things like sunlight and thunder, the rain and the stars, the wind and the sea, the growth of trees, and the return of harvests. Keep your heart hungry for new knowledge; keep your hatred of a lie; and keep your power of indignation.

Now I must die, and you must be born to stand upon the rubbish heap of my errors. Forgive me for this. I am ashamed to leave you an untidy world. In thought, as a last benediction, I kiss your forehead. Good night to you -- and good morning and a clear dawn.

Old Benjamin Franklin, before his passing, composed his own epitaph which reads:

The body of Benjamin Franklin, printer (like the cover of an old book, its contents torn out, and stript of its lettering and gilding.) Lies here... Yet the work itself shall not be lost, for it will, as he believed, appear once more, in a new and more beautiful edition, corrected and amended by The Author.

As cited earlier, hinted at, and oft quoted throughout the introductions and summaries in this book, are sections from my 22-page letter to our own children at graduation (and, as stated earlier, the personal remembrances really were omitted). Again, no trust is violated in printing the text; before they read it in their Senior letter, it was presented by me as part of a topical series on Sunday mornings in teaching a 10th grade

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Bible class over many years. Here are the capstone comments that rounded out my legacy to our new young people who had survived adolescence intact:

We believe that you are well on your way to becoming a well-adjusted, productive young adult. We haven't scrimped on our love for you because we know that it fosters a sense of security, belonging and support. We've taught you right from wrong, discussed our own moral values, and tried to live up to them, setting an example of courage and integrity.

We have insisted that you treat others with respect and kindness. We have tried to discipline constructively and tried to be clear about standards of behavior, explaining reasons behind the rules. We have tried to listen and give you our attention, and to also understand your viewpoint.

We have tried to foster independence by slowly giving you more freedom to make your own small decisions first and then more important ones later. Although it has been very difficult, we have tried to spend time together, having some working-vacation trips together as a family, too.

You can glean a lot from the Bible, if you will take the time to see what it has to say about your role as a citizen, employee, spouse, partner, and parent. Adversity can make you a

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better person. That has certainly been true in my life. Always remember that it is better to be hassled than to be ignored. If you are hassled, it means that we care.

We parents apologize for not always being there. We know that if we weren't there, then your parents missed it. We have had to work so hard and so long to establish our careers, and to pave the way for a bright and promising future for you (and to pay all that tuition, too).

As the recently popular song goes, "Everything I do is because of you -- that's my job, you see." We know it has been frustrating for all of us, but here is how Mom and I are going to make it up to you, if you can wait another half dozen years or so: We are going to be terrific grandparents (that day has since come in all its glory).

We are so pleased that you have chosen to further your education at what we believe to be a great Christian university. God can bestow no greater compliment upon us than to place His book in our hands and call us Christian educators. You are about to secure a college education on a campus where God is honored -- where the principles of the Bible are taught as the principles of life. You will get the biblical faith in the science laboratory, in the history class, and the economics course.

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Please know that the successful pursuit of a professional career is inherently consistent with the righteous life, as long as you live by the Golden Rule and New Testament Christianity. And if you ever feel like rationalizing your behavior by saying that you are only human, please remember that we are made in the very image of God. We live and move and have our very being because of God.

We are the only beings who can think the thoughts of God, and we are the only ones who will survive this planet. By being "only human" you have been given dominion over the earth, you are the greatest of God's creatures -- the object of His love. So, as Solomon said, enjoy life, but never, never break with God. Always develop a quick conscience and decide ahead of time how you will handle temptation.

Develop a set of convictions that will guide you through any situation or temptation. Hold the line on spirituality, and live a clear margin between right and wrong. Judge everything as written, said, and done -- judge it all by the Book of Books.

And when you do move away from home, don't leave your religion behind when you enter the not-so-loveable world that is so desperately in need of the good news that you have. You were created to love God. And if you don't, nothing can fill that hollow, emptiness inside.

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Nothing. So, be partners with God in all that you do.

Try to accept your brethren, your classmates, as you'll someday accept your mate for life -- not only because of, but in spite of. Continue to develop your identity with the Restoration Movement. Remember that at a Christian university, you can continue to develop an identity that is worth having and keeping. It is even a nice place to have problems.

Truly, you have completed the first quarter of the human race. And at this point you are ahead. It is an awfully long trip through eternity; you continue to make it as sure as you can. All in all, we are so thankful for your exuberance and confidence that comes from being a young person. Without it, young people your age would probably droop and perish away at the frightful prospect of someday being as dumb as their parents.

The letter concluded with the same theme on which it began: "Please know that you are really special to me, and you are getting more special every day. You are the best -- truly World Class. You'll always be in my Hall of Fame. You make me so happy and proud -- so much so, that I just have one final request -- can I have your autograph?"

All My love -- Now and Forever, Dad

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Over the years, those of us adults in the harvest years have read extensively and lived long. Therefore, it would be difficult to attempt to give credit for all the axioms we have drawn from the literature and, indeed, life itself. Nevertheless, we have attempted to preserve and recreate an accurate list of contributors and sources without whom this project would still be a pipe dream.

A great many sources have been consulted in the preparation of this material, and credit has been given to various sources as they were available. Hopefully the References section will also give due credit and enable those who desire to do further study to consult those sources. Every effort has been made to include only reliable information.

The author would welcome knowing about any possible omissions or errors. If any acknowledgments have been inadvertently omitted, the author would appreciate receiving information so that proper credit may be given in any future printings. Care has been taken to trace authorship of select quotes and poems, with gratefulness to past scholars and collectors for

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their preserving and supplying us with such a rich literary heritage.

Above all, care must also be taken to evaluate every teaching or position in the light of Scripture, which is the ultimate authority for our beliefs and practices. Hopefully, the material herein will motivate people to further study and also toward a greater understanding of God's will on life's issues.

One may not agree with every word printed in this book nor should one feel he needs to do so. It is hoped that the reader will think about the points laid out in the book, and then decide for himself or herself.

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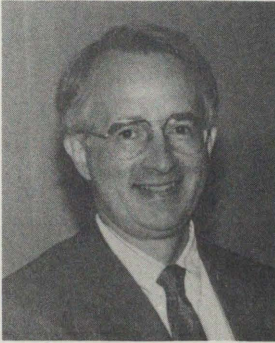
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INVESTING IN FUTURES -- A Normative Profile for Generations is dedicated to hearty souls who are both old enough to know the score and also young enough to enjoy the game of life as it was meant to be played according to the Designer of the Universe. In this values-based time capsule, the reader will sketch through the following somewhat chronological topics:

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If we all do our jobs well, we will guide our young people to be responsible individuals. No one really "gets by" with anything here or in the hereafter. Nearly 2000 years ago, the Master Teacher provided our mandate: "Take heed that ye despise not one of those little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10).