

Building a Life Part II

A Foundation of Wisdom



One of the most heart-wrenching questions, when faced with a serious problem or tragedy, is “What can we do . . .?” Often, if not normally, nothing can be done. It is a valid question, but often asked years too late to do any good.

Now, fast forward 10, 20, 30 . . . years. The question of wisdom is: “Is there anything we can do NOW to significantly improve our situations 10, 20, 30 . . . years from now?”



The essence of wisdom is looking ahead, seeing a challenge or opportunity and beginning a process of minimizing the challenges and seizing the opportunities – maturity is developing good “eyesight” for the future and this is done with thought and practice. Maturity is earned through discipline – increasing knowledge combined with experience.

Proverbs 12 relates the truth as to why so many adults are stupid:

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but he who hates correction is stupid.

The difference between being a stupid slave to future events versus managing them to the extent possible is asking the “What can I do NOW to significantly impact my life later” question. And then, through effective disciplines, becoming mature in knowing what to do (and doing them!) to significantly affect our future.

We are in a cosmetic society with a “You get what you see” mindset and approach. Why go to all the trouble to do the hard work when no one cares about anything but the surface? We can cover any blemish! “What can we do . . .” is no longer a question of “How can I make myself better?” but “How can I make myself look better?” So we exchange character for cash (admiring idiot rich people more than wisdom), honesty for personality, decency for physical beauty, integrity for “fun,” health for pills . . . all short-term coverings of hypocrisy. Because of modern “miracles” we have elevated hypocrisy to its highest level ever! With a minimum of effort we can pass a pig off as a princess. Hard work is so passé! Until 10, 20 or 30 years from now when we WILL ask ourselves “What can we do . . .?” And then find nothing works, it is too late!

Jesus made it clear many times that the outside is important, but the ONLY way to truly make the outside “clean” is by an inner work and cleansing:

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.” Mt 23:25 – 28

And the same is true about our physical health – all this working on the body’s façade and outward looks is a short-term fool’s game: you may deceive yourself and others for a while, but 10, 20 or 30 years from now you will be asking “What can I do . . .?” So, look ahead,



seek wisdom, begin the process of minimizing the challenges and seizing the opportunities through disciplines – increasing knowledge combined with experience.

Do not live a Proverbs 12’s life of stupidity:

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but he who hates correction is stupid.

Because 10, 20 and even 30 years is rapidly approaching!

A good foundation? Develop the spiritual disciplines of Bible reading, prayer, being with God’s people (people seeking to be good – even though fallibly) rather than being with those trying harder and harder, more and more to have “fun,” be accepted . . . Physically, START exercising – don’t worry too much about “how” – as NIKE says: “Just do it!” There will be outward results and rewards for these disciplines that will pay dividends now as well as 10, 20 or 30 years from now!

One of the most heart-wrenching questions, when faced with a serious problem or tragedy, is “What can we do . . .?” Often, if not normally, nothing can be done. The question of wisdom is: “Is there anything we can do NOW to significantly improve our situations 10, 20, 30 . . . years from now?” The answer is “Yes!”

Begin to embrace disciplines as the friends they are and not as the enemy so many see them as and avoid at any cost.

As I look back, I can see times when I have expended more time, effort and energy trying to avoid good and helpful disciplines than simply accepting and doing what they demand; and in the process, receiving none of the benefits!

Older is wiser? Only to the extent we look to and for disciplines for help, rather than continuing to be stupid!

This is a great prayer:

LORD, show me the disciplines that will make me better and then give me the grace to do them in the face of my tendency to hypocrisy! Show what you would have me do NOW so that in 10, 20, 30 . . . years (indeed for eternity) I will not be paying the price of stupidity!

Be my shepherd.
Make me lie down in green pastures,
lead me beside quiet waters,
restore my body and soul.
Guide me in paths of righteousness
for Your name's sake.
Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
give me faith so I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
Prepare a table before me
in the presence of my physical and spiritual enemies.
Anoint my head with oil;
so that my cup overflows.
Surely, then, goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever!