

2021

Vaccination

and

Navigation

Part II

“And the Lord answered me:

‘Write the vision;

make it plain on tablets so he may run who reads it.”

(Habakkuk 2:2) (RSV)

From Grandpa With Love

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Part II

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#1

Our Institutional Crisis

Institutions are the walls that protect us from total chaos. Today they are in crisis. Like people everywhere, I have felt the unraveling, and have been looking for answers.

Set forth below are some thoughts I hope might be helpful. Many of them repeat what I have written elsewhere, but seem timely for our discussion. Remember, these are one old man's comments trying to follow a Biblical view, and we all err. So, as usual, hold onto what is good (of God)—and discard the rest.

I. The Four Institutions

God has given us four institutions to keep order in this world: Government, Family, Church and Work Place. Each has rules and laws to help them function.

1. Family: “Propagation” – (To carry on life)

Only the Family is ordained by God in scripture to produce people. The Church doesn't; the Workplace doesn't; and the Government doesn't. Instead, each of these other three institutions need and use the people produced by Families to carry on their work. In recent years our emphasis on careers outside the Family, for both men and women, has diminished the perceived value of full time service to our Family. We give lip service to family life, but many parents, Christian and non-Christian, encourage both young men and young women to concentrate their lives in one of the other three institutions. As a result, our birth rate has also dropped. Despite the repeated Biblical command to multiply (e.g. Genesis 1:28; Jeremiah 29:6), we have relied in recent years on increasing longevity and high immigration to sustain our population

2. Church: “Purpose” – (To deal with the meaning of life)

Down through the ages, the Church has centered its mission on determining and acting upon the reason and purpose for life. While

there is much overlapping among the four institutions, only the Church has uniquely dealt with such issues as: “Why was I born?” “Who is God?” “Is there eternal life, and judgment, after this life is over?” It is the institution of the Church that codified the writings that answer these questions in the book we call the Bible. And only the institution of the Church continues to major in wrestling with these eternal spiritual issues in every generation.

3. Workplace: “Production” – (To sustain and improve life)

Although profit is necessary to survive, the primary purpose of the Workplace is production. We need profit, but that is to be a result and not the purpose of our work. Only the Workplace produces the physical goods and services we need to live. The Family doesn’t (although it provides the people who do the production in the Workplace); the Church doesn’t; and the Government doesn’t. Instead, these other three Institutions live off the goods and services produced in the Workplace just as the institutions of Church, Workplace and Government use the people produced by the Family.

4. Government: “Protection” – (To protect life)

Only the Government has the overarching authority and power to keep peace among its constituent citizens and domestic institutions. And only the Government has the resources and capability to defend us all from outside aggression. The Family doesn’t; the Church doesn’t and the Workplace doesn’t. Although the Government, in recent years has become a provider for much of our population (by taxing some to distribute to many), its Biblical role is to be a protector (e.g. I Timothy 2:1-2; I Peter 2:13-14).

II. Balance

In recent years we have seen an obvious over-emphasis in our society on the Workplace and the Government with a decreasing emphasis on the Family and the Church. The institution of the Family under-girds the other three institutions and is the foundation of all society. Today, we are cannibalizing the Family and using the people it produces to

operate the Workplace, the Government, and the Church, while the Family itself is stumbling with divorce, illegitimacy and turmoil. Unless sufficient believers understand the value of the Family and are willing to make this their major life work, rather than leaving for careers in the Workplace, the Government or the Church, the Family crisis may worsen and ultimately destroy all four institutions.

We need all four institutions, but we also need them to be in balance.

III. Separation

One major problem is occurring because we are mixing the traditional functions of the institutions. As that happens the institutions stop being helpful and, like Frankenstein's monster, begin to turn and destroy what they were meant to benefit

When we mix Government and Family, we produce Royalty. When we mix Government and Church we produce Theocracy. When we mix Government and the Workplace, we produce Fascism or Communism.

In the 1930's and 1940's we watched as Nazi Germany called itself "socialist" but actually combined business and government to produce Fascism and place an iron hand on its citizens. Today, as we see the rapid combination of Big Business and one of our Political Parties, it brings back the nightmare of those years.

We need to keep the institutions separate, since they will quickly and silently destroy other institutions and begin to control us when they are combined or merged.

IV. Is Big Better?

Our current culture seeks ever bigger companies, governments, programs, and charitable organizations, and looks for great leaders to show us the way—and the effect is often to paralyze us from being individuals who do what God has created us to be and to do.

We are often encouraged to organize and bring all our combined force and might against our adversaries. We become uniform, a regular

army. We rely on a leader to guide, direct and then to control us. We are not free to move except as we are told and in the way we are told. We submit ourselves to worldly institutions hoping and sometimes believing that they can accomplish what we want and bring a utopia here on earth. We are told that if the right people can just get in control of the government or the company or the group, then our belief system will prevail.

But we look around and see our culture and our institutions are not what we expected or hoped for.

V. The Choice

If we use the institutions as created by God we are then named and defined and controlled by Him. If we allow these institutions to be created by Worldly governments, then they have the right and ability to name, define and control what they have created.

The government provides “free” schools, grants corporate charters with limited liability, unlimited life, and often tax breaks and subsidies for married couples, churches and other organizations. But the price is the right to control what the schools can teach and what those couples, churches and other organizations can say and do. If we want all the “goodies” offered by government, we must also accept its restraints and control. When the two clash, we must make our decision who we will serve.

We are to be “in” the world, but not “of” it. We are to “*give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s*”. We are to be loyal members of our nation, but only when it does not require us to go against God’s order. When it requires ungodly conduct, we must, like Daniel, continue to honor the God whom we serve. We cannot take oaths to follow the constitution and laws of worldly government, accept their benefits and then refuse to carry out the function we have agreed to uphold.

For years we have been told we should be like the New Testament Church. It appears increasingly likely that we may soon have that

opportunity. And we aren't going to like it! No tax relief, no limited liability, and deciding how to proceed if we are told what to say, who to hire and who to marry, even if it violates God's instructions to us.

VI Our North Star

Each of us must decide our guide and standard for what we do, and how we will live and interact with those around us. It gives us direction and a foundation for life. It has been called "Our North Star". For me that is the Bible and the Person of Jesus.

Many years ago a young man told me, "I was worried about Bangladesh and the World that I could nothing about. I decided to concentrate on my little world and do what I could here." He died a few years ago and the funeral service was packed!

Our "news" is about the Government and national and international issues we can do little or nothing about. By contrast, our lives are predominantly local and greatly affected by what we do personally with the people we know in our Family, Church and Workplace, (including all the businesses and organizations in our community.)

I pray and support the efforts of leaders I believe can help us retain a Government "under God". But I need to live in the areas of Family, Church (my spiritual family) and Workplace.

Life begins with Faith and Family. When those are in order it will affect our Workplace and ultimately the political world of Government.

If I want to change the World, I have to start by letting God change me. When enough of us go His Way instead of Our Way, He will change the Nation and the World!

From Grandpa With Love

2

Multiplying by Dividing

God's first command is in Genesis 1:28: "*God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth...'*"

God, in His Wisdom, did not accomplish this by "*addition*"; rather He commanded us to "*divide*" and "*scatter*" our children after they were grown: "*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*" (Genesis 2:24)

By using God's "Family Method" of "Multiplying by Dividing", the population of the earth has increased from one Man to Billions of people.

By contrast, Man, in his wisdom and pride, wants to build his organizations by "*addition*". Like the Tower of Babel, in Genesis 11:4, we seek to build our "*towers*" to reach Heaven on our own, "*make a name for ourselves and not be scattered*"! But, like the builders of the Tower of Babel, we get to a certain size and then we are "*scattered*" by forces we can't control.

As a result, the church in the Western World is rapidly declining in numbers and influence.

Our whole culture seems on the verge of change. If we see the church as *God's Family*, we may also find we can reach more for Him by following *God's Method*: "*Gathering*" (adding) into small groups and then "*scattering*" (dividing), i.e. "*leaving and cleaving*" to raise up new small "*families*" which grow and then divide, ad infinitum.

Attached is a little poem by an old man looking back on life, grateful for "*the church*" helping him and raising up believers in order to send them out to be used by God to start new Spiritual Families.

As usual, remember we all err and this is just one man's opinion. So, hold onto what is good (of God)—and discard the rest.

From Grandpa With Love

3

Embrace Growing Older!

*“Life starts simple—
gets more complex—
then goes back to simple.”*

Some time ago, a younger (than I) woman who had been dealing with the problem of aging, said rather contentedly, *“I fought turning 40. I embraced turning 50!”* After turning not only 50 but also 60, 70, 80 and 95, I conclude she is right.

It’s O.K. to grow older, as long as we learn to embrace the advancing years. Ecclesiastes 3 says there is *“a time to be born and time to die.”* But it also says God *“made everything beautiful in its time.”* That has to include old age. I have found that in many ways, life gets richer each year. **If people don’t want to age, they must think this world is better than Heaven— since old age, for most of us, is the gateway to heaven!**

Looking Ahead

I no longer believe *“Time began when I was born and will end when I die”*. I think we can see ahead about as far as we have lived. So I am trying to look ahead 95 years to 2116 A.D., and into eternity, and pass on what I get to those who are here today and those who are following. I want to be like Jeremiah who bought property as he planned ahead for his family to return from captivity after 70 years—not like Hezekiah, who received 15 years of extra life, and when he learned that his kingdom would fall after his death, thought, *“Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?”*

Advising

I don’t give much specific advice now. Advisors need to know all the facts as well as the context and circumstances. This becomes increasingly difficult as we age and new generations are in charge. **I**

believe my principal job now is to provide love, continuity and a sense of perspective from life and the Bible for those seeking answers.

Becoming Children

I was told that the trip through the birth canal is terribly hard. It's probably good we don't remember. The trip through the final road into heaven is also often hard, but the goal is worth it. Jesus impressed on us the need to be "*like a little child*". Life starts simple—gets more complex—then goes back to simple. As we age we get rid of lots of fluff. We get down to the essence. The years remove much of the dross. **Maybe that's why we call our older years a "second childhood."**

Receiving

We all start our lives as "receivers". We are totally helpless and dependent on others when we enter this world. It seems natural for a child to receive. But, by adulthood, we often become "givers". Many know Acts 20:35: "*It is more blessed to give than to receive*". It is also more fun! There is nothing as exhilarating as being the "giver". But it can build pride. By contrast, "receiving" is very humbling.

Although we start life as "receivers", once we have known the thrill, and sometimes the power, of "giving", it often becomes very difficult for us to humble ourselves and be the receivers. That is one of the reasons we "*fight growing older*". We dread being humbled and increasingly forced to be dependent and "receive" from others, like a little child. But "receiving" is as important as "giving". It is part of what makes life have value. **If we ever eliminate all the poor, sick, elderly, imprisoned and needy, we will eliminate "love" from the world. Because every act of love requires not only a "lover" but also a "lovee"!** So I must play my part, sometimes as a "giver", and sometimes as a "receiver". And there are times the latter may be the most important!

Letting Go

Sometimes I feel like I'm in an airport waiting for them to call my flight! I've found one key to contentment is being willing to "let go"—of everything: our bodies, minds, abilities, status, usefulness, money, as well as our old friends and our loved ones— and then truly being grateful for whatever we still have left each day. (Matthew 6:33-34)

When that happens, we are not bothered by the **BIG** things the world thinks are so important, so we can concentrate on the things that God says are important: **God, His Love and His Word, and People.**

After making most of the trip, I encourage everyone to **live life to the fullest at every age—but don't forget to Embrace Growing Older!**

At the end, it's kind of nice to get back to the simple things, and "*receive the kingdom of God like a little child.*" (Luke 18:17)

From Grandpa With Love

***"I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive
the Kingdom of God like a little child
will never enter it."***

(Luke 18:17)

(Adapted from *Letter From Grandpa # 16*, from *Passing It On*)

4

Memorial Day, '21

My oldest brother, Leon H. Martin was killed in a B-24 air crash over England on March 14, 1945, at age 24, just a few weeks before World War II ended in Europe. He would have been 100 years old this year.

He was survived by his wife, and a two year old daughter and an unborn daughter who have borne his loss for the past 76 years.

A few days ago I discovered a letter I wrote 75 years ago today to my parents, from Guam where I was stationed waiting to return home. They, too, were suffering greatly from the death of their son.

The letter opened with the following paragraph:

Memorial Day, '46

Dear Mom and Dad-

"Today is a day of mixed emotions for both of you at home and me over here. Sadness for it is a commemoration of Leon's and all the other men and women's death who gave their lives for their country and gladness for the fact that our family will be reunited within the month. However, we can only place our faith in God and trust his judgment and decisions."

Memorial Day is the day each year we honor all those who gave their lives serving our country.

A Tribute

***"We salute and thank Lt. Leon Martin,
and all the other military men and women
who have given their lives in defense of our nation,
for their priceless gift to us all."***

A Grateful Brother,

*"Greater love has no man than this,
that he lay down his life for his friends."*

(John 15:13)

5

Historical Truth

Nearly 30 years ago I spoke to a local service club (and later other groups) about the *Historical Truth* the United States has used “*Trying to Do Right*.” Three decades later that debate now threatens the very existence of our Nation. I decided it was time to redistribute (with a few modifications) the following portions of that address.

I pray it is helpful.

From Grandpa With Love

“I believe most of us, if we were asked, would say that we, are “trying” -- “trying to do right.” I’m sure that has always been difficult. But it seems especially hard today. In our fast-changing, pluralistic society, with its multiple ethnic groups, varying traditions, religions and objectives, mixed with the current “anything goes” philosophy, it often seems confused and unclear as to what “right” really is.

Since both laws and ethical standards vary from place to place, change from time to time, and are subject to error, we find ourselves asking, “*How can we succeed in our quest of ‘trying to do right?’*”. Every time we are faced with a decision, we consciously or subconsciously ask ourselves this question.

It is at times like these that we empathize deeply with Pilate who, as he struggled with whether to free Jesus or to crucify Him, finally cried out in frustration, “*What is truth?*”

While abiding by the “law” of a particular government or other institution may bring order and the approval of those in authority, and abiding by the “ethical standards” of our peers may bring us the approval of a majority of that particular group, neither of these will assure that we are “doing right.” We can only be sure that we are doing what is “truly right” when we know and abide by the “Truth.”

How, then, do we answer this haunting question, “*What is Truth?*”

Here is my definition:

“Truth” is Reality.

It is what is. It is an infinite and omniscient view of life and how it should be lived. Truth is perfect. It is eternal. It never changes. Truth is the same everywhere. It brings harmony and order. It does not bring about bad, but good. Truth is always reliable.

But where do we find this “truth”? If we cannot always trust the laws of those in authority over us or the ethical standards of our peers around us, to whom or to what do we look to give us this perfect, eternal, unchanging, reliable truth?

Every individual and group must ultimately face their own "moment of truth." For me, this occurred during the chaotic years of the 1960's and 1970's. When I realized that there was no certainty in laws and standards of ethics which changed with the times, places and persons involved, I was deeply troubled. I was a lawyer, husband and father. How was I to carry out my roles and responsibilities in a world of changing values, traditions and morals? Buildings were being burned and public figures assassinated; women's roles were topsy-turvy as they were moving out into the work world; promiscuity was rampant; our nation was at war with itself over an unpopular, undeclared war in Southeast Asia; a presidency was in jeopardy over Watergate; economics was in crisis as inflation soared worldwide and business integrity seemed to be crumbling.

Out of desperation, I turned to the Bible. Not for an intellectual exercise, but for real answers. To find out what was really right -- what was unchanging, always reliable and true.

Through this Book, God gradually began to reveal His answers. It was His truth which had remained constant and unchanging for thousands of years that began to set me free. In the Bible I found that there was a reliable basis for all of life, including stable and enduring marriages and families; help in resolving disputes and avoiding litigation in an increasingly litigious society; aid in choosing and

enjoying a life work; and an eternal view of time and the chapters of life.

But as I probed deeper over the years, I have come to realize that Biblical truth is a common heritage for all of us who live in this wonderful country.

While we are now becoming a multi-cultural society which seems to be fragmenting and somewhat directionless (or more accurately, being pulled in many directions by many traditions and cultures), there is no denying that historically both the Law and Ethic in the United States have come from a belief in God and the teachings of the Bible. It is God and the Bible which have been the traditional source of "truth" in our society. For example, when witnesses in the United States have been called to testify in court proceedings, they have historically placed their hands on the Bible, and they have been asked, "*Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?*" or words of similar import.

Much of our civil and criminal laws can trace their origins to biblical roots. Items such as murder, manslaughter, theft, contracts, divorce and punitive damages are all discussed at length in the Scriptures.

And it is not only our laws, but our entire ethical culture which has been permeated by the principles of both the Old and New Testaments. The "Wisdom of Solomon," the "Good Samaritan," and principles such as the "Golden Rule" form a bedrock for the ethical values of our nation.

The impact of religion upon our laws and ethics began with the earliest explorers and has continued to this day.

1492

For example, Christopher Columbus, in describing his first trip to the New World in 1492, said:

"I set forth in the name of the Holy Trinity....And in a little_while I say that, not by [my own might], but by the

grace of God, I discovered three hundred and thirty-three leagues of Tierra Firma...."

1620

The Pilgrims who landed in New England in 1620 to plant the first colony in that area of the New World, established their form of government and signed the document now known as the Mayflower Compact in which their trust in God and their desire to advance the Christian faith was set forth:

"In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign Lord King James, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, et al, having undertaken for the glory of God, and the advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and of one another, covenant and combine ourselves in a civil body politic...."

1776

The Declaration of Independence which was drafted in 1776 clearly reflects our forefathers' conviction about God and truth as it states:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. . ."

1861

The Kansas constitution, adopted in 1861, like the constitutions of most other states, begins with a public dependence upon God:

"We, the people of Kansas, grateful to Almighty God for our civil and religious privileges, in order to

ensure the full enjoyment of our rights as American citizens, do ordain and establish this constitution of the State of Kansas. . ."

1892

In 1892, the U. S. Supreme Court, after reciting 400 years of our religious history in *Rector of Holy Trinity Church vs. United States*, concluded:

". . . There is no dissonance in these declarations. There is a universal language pervading them all, having one meaning. They affirm and reaffirm that this is a religious nation."

Notwithstanding our long history, there has been unleashed in recent years a broad-scale effort which seems designed to remove God from public expression. We are being increasingly told that religion is a private matter, and that it is improper to speak or acknowledge our dependence upon God in the public arena.

As we publicly separate ourselves from God and act independently of His moral principles, our nation has become increasingly imperiled. We now have many in positions of leadership and authority who have turned away from God and the institutions of the family, the church, and business, and are increasingly asking and expecting the one institution of government to solve all problems. At the same time, they attempt to expunge God and many of His principles from this final institution.

I submit to you that it will not work. The basis for law, order, peace, security and prosperity of any nation is an underlying dependence upon God. This is not an option.

As George Washington stated in his first Thanksgiving Proclamation in 1789:

"It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits and humbly to implore His protection and favor." (Emphasis added).

The primary purpose of both laws and ethics is to protect mankind from itself. Both the Old and New Testaments inalterably link the proper treatment of our fellow man with public acknowledgement and respect for God. A paraphrase of the first four of the Ten Commandments tells us that we are commanded to put God first, not to worship false idols, not to take His name in vain, and to keep the Sabbath holy. It is only when we acknowledge our Creator and obey His commands that we treat His world and His creatures properly. When we have a proper respect for God, we also tend to respect other people by trying to abide by the last of these commandments by honoring our father and mother, and by not murdering, not committing adultery, not stealing, not bearing false witness, and not coveting what our neighbors have.

The New Testament is even more succinct as it couples these same two concepts of respect for God with proper treatment of our fellow man as it sets forth what has become known as the Great Commandment:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Luke 10:27) (NIV)

We cannot have the benefit of the principles of a Godly society without upholding God publicly. When we attempt to expunge God from our public vocabulary, but then expect people to follow His principles, we expect too much.

Proof of this can be seen by looking briefly at three critical examples which show how our society has fared in recent years as we have increasingly charted our own course rather than relying on the timeless principles of God:

1. Debt The Old Testament warned the early Israelites if they followed Him their nation would lend; and if they failed to follow Him they would become borrowers; and that the lender would control the borrower. We have become a nation of borrowers. Our current economic crisis is clearly apparent from the multi-trillion dollar private, corporate and governmental debt structures which have been used to spark the economy in the past and which are now approaching the point of no return.

2. Sex Recognizing that society cannot succeed without strong, committed families, the Bible restricts sex to marriage. Many now openly flaunt this tradition and cohabit without marriage in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships. The media and government are constantly discussing incest, rape, gangs, violence, and mal-functioning family units. They give lip service to the concept of a "family," but seldom to commitment, sexual purity and other biblical principles that make such families functional.

3. Dependency God made us to be dependent upon Him. As we become more and more self-centered and increasingly attempt to run our society without dependence upon God and His principles, large sections of our population are drowning in crime, violence, drugs and despair.

This attempt to disengage God from public life decries everything that our history reveals. We spoke of the early settlers' open expression of their dependence upon God. Let's look also at some additional evidence presented in a book entitled "*The Rebirth of America*" showing that God has been not just a part of our tradition, but has been the foundation and cornerstone of our republic from the beginning. For example:

1. The inaugural addresses of all Presidents have made reference to God.
2. The oath of President of the United States is taken by the President with his hand on the Bible.

3. Every session of Congress opens with a prayer.
4. A small room in the Capitol just off the Rotunda is available for private prayer and meditation of congressional members. It contains a stained glass window showing George Washington kneeling in prayer and the words from Psalm 16:1, "*Preserve me, O God, for in Thee do I put my trust.*"
5. In the Rotunda of the Capitol is a picture of the Pilgrims about to embark from Holland on the sail of which is their motto, "*In God we trust, God with us.*"
6. The phrase, "*In God we trust,*" sits opposite the President of the Senate and is inscribed in the House of Representatives.
7. In the Supreme Court building, the Ten Commandments are displayed on the wall. For many years, each session of the Court has opened with the words, "*God save the United States and the Honorable Court.*"
8. On the top of the Washington Monument are the words, "*Praise be to God.*"
9. Quotations from Scripture appear in the Library of Congress building, such as, "*What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God.*" (Micah 6:8).
10. The Lincoln Memorial sets forth the words of Lincoln at the end of the Gettysburg address, "*That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.*" (This same declaration that we are a "*nation under God*" also appears in our

Pledge of Allegiance which is recited regularly by millions of our people.)

11. Jefferson's words appear on his memorial, *"God Who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever."*

Conclusion

What, then, is our conclusion? It is simply this: "Laws" and "Ethics" are very necessary and important as we "try to do right." We need to know and abide by these standards unless they violate our individual consciences. But most important of all we need to know and to declare publicly our dependence upon God and His "Truth," so that the laws we make and the codes of ethics we attempt to follow will also be "right" and "true."

As we "try to do right," we have to be overwhelmed with a deep sense of gratitude for the past. For God and His goodness to us as a people and for our debt to our forebears who were willing not only privately, but publicly to state their dependence upon God on their money and in their written instruments, their inscriptions upon buildings, and their public proclamations, which we now draw upon for strength and support.

But we must also be grateful for the present -- for members of this generation who are faithfully and sincerely acknowledging the presence and sovereignty of God in the affairs of all mankind, and endeavoring to live according to His principles. Such actions encourage us also, as we "try to do right" in our sphere of influence.

Finally, we can and should give thanks for the future. As I prepared this material and read various bits of information, I came across the last verse of "The Star Spangled Banner." As I read it, I realized it publicly reiterates our dependence upon God and the blessings which

can come in the future when and if we "try to do right" by following Him.

Let's close by reading this final stanza of our National Anthem (emphasis added).

"Blessed with victory and peace, may

*this **heav'n-rescued** land*

***Praise the power** that hath made and*

preserved us a nation!

Then conquer we must, when our

cause it is just;

*And this be our motto: **'In God is our***

trust!

And the star-spangled banner in

triumph shall waive

O'er the land of the free, and the home

of the brave."

Marvin J. Martin

April, 1992

Epilogue

Now it is 2021. My concerns in 1992 have steadily increased. Forces inside and outside our Nation make it clear they intend to change us into their view of a Utopian Society. We now face an imminent, critical “*Institutional Crisis*” in the Family, Church, Workplace and Government. If we allow “*Cancel Culture*” to erase or alter their Biblical base, they will be distorted and ultimately destroyed.

**God gives us a life and responsibility
in our small portion of the world.**

I pray we will each be faithful where we are placed.

From Grandpa With Love

(Cf. Volume IV *Vocation* in *From Grandpa with Love* series)

6

Law and Order

***“Do not think I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets;
I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”***

(Matthew 5:17)

Our Current Crisis

Our Nation suddenly finds itself struggling with the issue of “**Law and Order**”. Political Protests have recently set our major cities ablaze with burning, looting, periods of anarchy, and calls for “defunding the Police” which has only exacerbated the problem. Homeless “tent cities” dot the nation. Crime rates and other problems have skyrocketed in our major cities and caused a mass exodus to smaller, hopefully safer communities.

After the 2020 Presidential Election, exuberant followers of former President Trump stormed the Capitol Building that set off cries of “insurrection” and calls for his “impeachment”. President Biden has invited Central American citizens to come and seek amnesty. This brought thousands of unaccompanied children and a flood of illegal migrants with new Covid concerns, gang members and potential terrorists. Local communities have been overwhelmed and cry out desperately for help.

All this has made us suddenly aware of the fragility of our Representative government and the need for **Law and Order**.

The Good and Bad Side of Law

Law is one of God’s great gifts to Mankind. Laws are the enforceable rules by which institutions (including not only civil Government but also the other three institutions of Family, Church, and Workplace) govern their activities.

Laws provide the order that we need to live together. Properly used, the Law is one of man's great blessings. It is the rule of Law which allows us to sleep peacefully in our homes at night, to travel in an

orderly way over busy streets and highways, and to engage in much of life as we know it.

Although the Law is necessary to keep order, it is also amoral. It is neither "right" nor "wrong" in and of itself. It is simply force which can be used for good or for evil. It is like nuclear energy, which can be used to light up or to blow up a city.

Laws vary from place to place and from time to time. The Law reflects the mores and moral codes of those currently in power. It is a changing, ever-evolving set of rules by which society is governed. Since I started practicing Law 70 years ago, we have witnessed the elimination (and possible return) of racial segregation, the approval of cohabitation without marriage, and the creation of a "Constitutional" right to abortion. Now a razor thin majority in Congress threatens to change the Law relating to our courts, our economics and our entire system of voting.

Obviously, it isn't "justice" or "fairness" or "right" or "wrong" which have changed. Instead, those persons now in power have views which differ from the views of preceding generations. They are changing the Law to fit their interpretation of what is "just" and "fair" and "right" and "wrong."

We need the Law for order and security. But we also need the Law to be based on "eternal truth" or it will be used for great harm instead of for good. That brings every generation to the issue Pilate faced as he decided Jesus' fate: ***"What is truth?"*** (John 18:38)

The Answer

Over time God has moved us from "Chaos" to "Truth". For centuries we were Pagans wanting only our own way:

"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time." (Genesis 6:9)

About 1500 B.C., He gave us the "Old" Law to "*control our actions*" outwardly by rules and regulations: (Deuteronomy 30:16)

*“For I command you today to love the Lord your God,
to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws;
then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God
will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.”*

2000 years ago Jesus and the “New” Testament brought us to maturity by “*changing our hearts*” to follow God’s commands voluntarily. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:17-37) He chooses three of the 10 Commandments to make His point:

- Don’t Murder—Also, refrain from angry responses and retaliation so they don’t lead to action;
- Don’t commit Adultery—Also, refrain from lustful looks so they don’t lead to action; and
- Don’t bear False witness—Also, refrain from oaths and be truthful at all times.

The Decision

As our society continues to unravel, we will likely be increasingly faced with new, sometimes onerous, laws for our Families, Churches, Workplaces and Government. Like every generation, we must decide the road we will travel.

It is easy for me with not much time left to choose God. It will be more difficult for those who are younger with so much life ahead. I pray He will give you the necessary Wisdom and Courage you will need.

I also pray all of us will learn and live God’s Laws. And that we will follow Joshua’s plea 3500 years ago (Joshua 24:15):

***“...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...
But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”***

From Grandpa With Love

#7

Climbing the Mountain of Time

It seems we see differently at different periods of **TIME** depending on our age. I think it is a little like climbing a mountain. When we enter this world, we are starting our ascent. At first we are so close to the foothills that we can't see very far ahead or behind. But as we age and climb up higher, we begin to get a little broader view. When we reach our middle years and look out over our own history and the history of the world, we have an even larger perspective. Then, as we enter the final years of life, the eternal Kingdom of God grows closer and the Kingdom of the World begins to fade into the background.

As we make this journey through Life, our perspectives about History and Eternity also seem to enlarge as we travel from birth and the tiny world we see at the beginning, and on into the eternal Kingdom of God. Of course, the concepts we are going to discuss may become apparent to us at various ages—but as I look back across my 96 years, the following pattern best describes the way the realization unfolded for me, and I suspect for many others whom I have observed, as we traveled through the four chapters of life described in “*Four Generations: A Journey Through Life*”.

Generation I “A Time to Learn”, Age 0-25 (Beginning our climb).

I believe we can see ahead about as far as we have lived. At the beginning we see a dim concept of our own small world and immediate surroundings. By the time we reach age 25, many of us see to about age 50. During these early years, life is an exciting adventure, calling us to live to the fullest and for our own individual ambitions and pleasure. History is a vague uninteresting era behind us, and Eternity is too far away to be of much interest, except as we are startled by an occasional, uncomfortable, awareness that, “someday”, old age and death are waiting for us. During these years we see “**NOW**” and ask ourselves, “*What will I be and do in life?*” And ask the question “*How do I see me?*”

Generation II “A Time to Do”—Age 25-50 (Reaching the “mid-point”) The years fly quickly by from age 25 to our mid-thirties and early forties, at which time we are often interrupted by the depressing sense that we can see the “end of the road”. We realize, like every preceding generation, that we really are going to die! We are concerned that we aren’t where we thought we would be by now, and it causes us to run all the harder. Now we can see a “LIFETIME” and ask, “*How do others see me?*” as we, like the builders of the ancient Tower of Babel “*try and make a name for ourselves*”.

Generation III “A Time to Teach”—Age 50-75 (Seeing the Visible and Invisible) As our children grow up and grandchildren arrive, we see clearly that we are no longer living for ourselves alone. We realize our time is running out and we want to leave our mark. To prove there really was a purpose in our being here. So now we look at the future and ask “*How will ‘HISTORY’ see me?*” Now our buzz word is “LEGACY”, and we focus on writing our books, building our pyramids, preparing our grave monuments, or having our names remembered as long as possible by having them on a building on a college campus.

Generation IV “A Time to Finish”—Age 75-100 (Letting Go and Reaching Upward) By age 75, we know life here on earth is nearing the “finish line”. We find ourselves looking back across our own life and history. As many of us move into our eighties we begin to feel a kinship to Solomon as he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes and described the pleasures, possessions and position/power of this World as “*meaningless*” and “*chasing the wind*”. By our nineties we can relate to Moses as he stood on Mt. Nebo gazing at the “Promised Land” that he longed to enter.

Now we realize that **TIME** will soon give way to **ETERNITY** which will continue **FOREVER!**

During these latter years we increasingly see the goal was never really about **ME** and how I was viewed or what I accomplished for God. **Rather, it was about what God was doing in and through me and**

all the Saints to bring about the ONENESS that Jesus described at the close of his prayer in John 17.

And we realize that our **LEGACY** wasn't ever a goal for me to create. Rather it is a result of letting God have His Way with me and use me to bring others into the Kingdom of God in this world, so we may all share in the Kingdom of God for Eternity!

The “space and time” Kingdom of the World is a little like being in school—it is not the real world. But when we are young students, we can get so caught up in our studies, the ball games, the proms and all the excitement that we *think* it is the real world! It reminds me of a friend who tried to dispel this false conclusion for College Seniors as he taught a Sunday-School class emphasizing, “*There is life after college*”.

In fact, there is much more fulfillment, and even excitement, in the real (invisible) Kingdom of God than in the temporary (visible) Kingdom of the World where we now live. Since, only God, His Word, His Love and His People are going to Heaven, why would we work only for other things—and then leave them all here?

Our visible, “space and time” world is like the “*Titanic*”. It is dying and it is going to sink. Our job is to get off into the Kingdom of God, and show and tell others so they can get off into what may seem like a cramped, uncomfortable, but actually very safe, life boat.

The closer I get to the end, the closer God becomes and the clearer I see His Perspective. Somehow what was murky and cloudy earlier in life, now becomes more understandable—and credible.

I finally developed a little maxim that has wrapped it all up for me in one short thought:

*Young people believe they can “fix” the world
and make it right.*

Old people know we didn't.

We *do* accomplish great advances in living conditions which are wonderful. But as we grow older, we realize the wars continue, and the earth has been getting warmer since the last Ice Age. We reluctantly conclude only Jesus' "new Kingdom" will get it *completely* right!

So, each generation either gets disappointed and finally dies while still wondering deep down what it was all about—or we surrender and accept Jesus and move into the Kingdom of God.

We will always see only "dimly" what God is doing. But as we near the top of The Mountain of Time, we know in our hearts that after we arrive Home in the Land of Eternal Life and look back at the space and time in the Kingdom of the World from which we are being freed, we will finally be enabled to see and understand it all from *His* point of view.

Then we will receive Our Eternal Reward and Inheritance!

***For me, I Believe It will Be
the Presence of God and All the Saints for Eternity!***

See You in Heaven!

From Grandpa With Love

8

An Older View of Life

Life is a Journey. We “Learn” in Generation I (Age 0-25), and we “Do” in Generation II (Age 25-50). But by Age 50 we find ourselves asking, “*What lies ahead. What will Generation III (Age 50-75) and Generation IV (Age 75-Onward) hold for us? And what will it mean to be “OLD”?*”

Looking back I realize much of our view of **Life** was about **Us**--and what **We** are to be and do. By contrast, by Age 96, it becomes increasingly clear that **Real Life** has been about what **God** was doing, through His whole Body, although this does include the nemesis of **Me**.

So, here are some thoughts, from an Old Man’s perspective, of *An Older View of Life* as we move into and on through Generations III and IV.

Our Motivations may grow

Motivations are much about Gain or Loss: hope of Gain or fear of Loss in the future, and Gratitude (or Revenge which is off-limits for believers) for what we have already gained or lost in the past.

Hope of Gain or fear of Loss in the future can motivate us to act now in order to get “more” for me and mine in the present world, or to gain a “well-done” in Heaven and/or to avoid Hell. But both are about future Rewards for **Me**. In essence, they are about what **I** am to be and do—whether I receive my **Reward** in this world or the next. As such, the emphasis is on what **I** am to be and/or do.

By contrast, motivation from what has happened in the past shifts the emphasis to the other person, e.g. a parent who sacrificed for me in this world, or the Person who sacrificed for me for eternity. When I am motivated by Gratitude for what God has done by giving me physical life and eternal life, making me His child, equipping, guiding, sustaining, and walking with me through the past and

promising to care for me in the future, the emphasis shifts to **God and what He has done and will do**—rather than placing the emphasis on **Me** and what **I** am to do or have done. As a result my motivation is one of **Gratitude**.

I am not sure we can get to past motivation (Gratitude) until we walk through future motivation (fear of loss and/or hope of gain). Also, I have a hunch future motivation produces more action and good works than past motivation. Perhaps God means for us to be motivated by the future when we are younger and more able and active, and shifts to the past when we are older, less able and now motivated by what **He** does.

Our definition of Success may grow

When I was younger, a woman in her eighties challenged me: “*What is your definition of success?*” My answer was: “*To become the person and do the work God had planned for me.*” As I have aged and matured, so has my definition. It would now be: “*I am successful to the extent I surrender my will to God and let Him use me for His purposes.*” He has increasingly become the Actor, and I and all believers are the people He uses for His actions. I don’t mop the floor for Him; now I **am** the mop. (Joseph was a good example of a man who constantly said it was God who was the actor, e.g. interpreting dreams, etc. Genesis 40:8; 44:16.)

Our view of Oneness may grow

A great paradox is that life is not to be about **Me**—but it is about **Me**. As Christians, we argue it isn’t about **Me**, while “**I, you and Me**” appear on page after page of our writings. The reality is, I cannot divorce God and man. We are made in His image, and we can’t escape this “Duality Dilemma”. God seems often more interested in “both/and” than “either/or”. **I believe the underlying issue involves who is in charge, calls the shots and gets the credit.** It is obvious that Person is God. (cf. the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer,

and the Great Commandment). But even the Catechism combines them as we seek to “*Glorify God and enjoy Him Forever*”.

As I age it has worked best to the extent I become One with the Lord and other believers (John 17 and Ephesians 4), and figuratively sit on the fence watching while He uses me and others to do His work.

Our Understanding of Pleasure, Possessions and Position/Power may grow

The “*Three P’s*” have been a consistent theme and challenge for me and many others throughout history and the Bible. I have tried (like many others) to understand their meaning and what God was teaching us as we have traced this theme through the Bible. They seem a blessing and/or a curse depending on how they are obtained and used. I have been struck that God’s first blessing and command involved this trio in Genesis 1:28-29. Eve was tempted by Satan with these three in Genesis 3. They are in the account of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 and Solomon found them to be non-fulfilling and “*chasing the wind*” in Ecclesiastes. I was most struck by the way Satan used them, unsuccessfully, to tempt Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13). And they are summarized, of course, in 1 John 2:1, as “*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life*“ (RSV)

I have wondered if they may mature through the years. For example, the pull toward Pleasure (especially of Sex) may be strongest in our younger years in Generation I. Ages 25 to 50 in Generation II appear to be the time we strive so hard to obtain Possessions, (although we later find they aren’t the answer, either). The desire for Power and Position (the Pride of life) then reaches its peak as most of us reach the climax of our major life work in Generation III, Ages 50-75. At that point we try to build our pyramids or write our books or have our names on buildings so they can be our Legacy and we will be remembered after we have departed.

But most interesting (and most rewarding) has been Generation IV, Age 75-Onward. During these years the desire for the *Three P’s*

began to fade away as I became increasingly “*unable, invisible and irrelevant*”—not to our loved ones or the Lord, but to what is currently going on in the world. Like old Solomon, **we** conclude that seeking the desires of the world was simply “*chasing the wind*”. Now **Relationships** become our goal and our desire.

Although we are increasingly less relevant to the World and it grows increasingly irrelevant to us, God’s Eternal, Infinite Kingdom becomes more important with each passing day!

Learning to Receive may cause Humility to grow

Let me conclude with one subtle, but very important lesson God has been teaching me. It took many years and much struggle to finally accept it. But it has totally changed my sense of completion and contentment in these final years.

Gradually, I came to realize Life has been one long gift; and I have discovered that the humbling, often unrecognized gift that underlies all God’s other gifts, is the ability to **Receive**. My wife Ellie named it “*The Gift of Receiving*”. It totally changed my life when I finally understood I do not start as a Giver (which builds Pride) but as a Receiver (John 1:11-12) (which builds Humility). Then I have the opportunity, and responsibility, to enjoy, increase and distribute God’s gifts in His name. (1 Corinthians 4:7)

Although we start life as “Receivers”, once we have known the thrill, and sometimes the power, of being in charge, and being the “Giver”, it often becomes very difficult to embrace growing older or infirm. As we approach Age 75 and Generation IV, we dread being humbled and increasingly forced to be dependent and receive from others, like a little child.

But receiving is part of what makes life have value. If we ever eliminate all the poor, sick, elderly, and needy, we will eliminate love from the world, because every act of love requires a “lovee” as well as a “lover”!

We each must play our part, sometimes as Givers, and sometimes as Receivers. **And there are times Receiving may be the most important—and for sure the most humbling—as we concentrate more and more on being the Receiver and letting God do the Giving!**

Conclusion

It is time now to conclude our brief discussion. I hope this little summary will be helpful as you chart your own journey through the last half of life. We have, of course, covered only a few of the areas you will be facing. I urge you, therefore, to seek out older believers and visit with them. It's Biblical, and I think you will find it encouraging and enlightening. It certainly has been for me, and I thank every one of them for their willingness and graciousness in passing on to me, free of charge, what they have learned.

Then be ready and willing to pass on what God is teaching you to those following you.

Finally, remember, what I have tried to convey is just One Old Man's perspective, and we all err. So, hold onto what is good (of God)—and discard the rest!

From Grandpa With Love

9

Imponderables

Many years ago one of our sons and I had a conversation that turned into a great gift to me. We were standing in front of our fireplace pondering a deep problem. I concluded by telling him I had no answer to the issue. He looked at me and exclaimed, “*Dad! Don’t ever give me a problem without at least telling me your solution.*”

Over the years I discovered that his youthful reaction was a common one. Receiving an inconsistent or unanswerable issue with no apparent solution upsets our paradigm. We want things “decently and in order”. When it is beyond our finite mind, we often discard it or refuse to contemplate it.

Man sees problems and inconsistencies among various writers and statements because we are finite creatures with a limited perspective. By contrast God resolves these seeming inconsistencies because He sees from infinite dimensions and infinite perspectives.

I sometimes call these issues “*imponderables*”, which Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines as “*incapable of being weighed or evaluated with exactness*”. But they do have a purpose. The Bible says “*God sees not as man sees*”. (1 Samuel 16:7) What is “*imponderable*” for us is clear to Him. **The very fact that we can’t understand or solve the riddle, makes us aware of our own limitations and brings us into the Presence of God.**

Set forth below are two “*imponderables*” from the Bible that seem inconsistent or unfair from our viewpoint, but show how they drew both men to maturity and closer to God.

Job

This story opens in the first verse by telling us, “*This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.*” The “*imponderable*” stage is then set as we learn he loses his family, his property and his health. For over 30 chapters we listen to him cry out

to his wife, his older friends, a younger friend and to God trying to understand what has been defined as, “*Why do bad things happen to good people?*”. It is only after God questions him for four chapters that Job accepts “*who he is and Who God is*”. Only then (Job 42:1-6) does Job surrender with the answer all of us must ultimately accept if we are to move from the Kingdom of the World to the Kingdom of God:

*“I know that you can do all things;
no plan of yours can be thwarted.
You asked, ‘Who is this
that obscures my counsel without knowledge?
Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me to know
You said. ‘Listen now, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you shall answer me.’”*

Job finally “*sees*” what all of us must “*see*” if we are to join Him and the Lord:

***“My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.
Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”***
(Job 42:5-6)

Solomon

Our next story involves the son of King David who asked God for wisdom to rule the people. God granted his request and also gave him tremendous wealth and power. Solomon has been described as “the richest and wisest man in the world.”

It is believed he wrote the amorous “*Song of Solomon*” in his early years; the book of wise sayings called *Proverbs*” in his middle life; and *Ecclesiastes* at the close of life as he reflected on the false hopes we have in using our lives to pursue worldly pleasures, possessions, power and position. **Nine times he cautions us against the “*meaninglessness*” of “*chasing after the wind.*”**

It is heartbreaking to hear this wise and wealthy man look back on one of the most gifted lives ever granted by God and realize he has squandered it. But his new understanding has been a gift to countless others who can now look back on their lives and see the answer of Hope Solomon finally gives to us all.

As I look back at myself and others living in a Retirement Center, his description of old age in Chapter 12 is a verbal mirror. He seems desperately trying to caution younger readers to surrender to God while they are young and give their lives real “meaning and purpose” rather than the “*meaninglessness*” he looks back on.

*“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth,
before the days of trouble come and years approach
when you will say, I find no pleasure in them.”*

But it is never too late! The thief on the Cross next to Jesus didn’t have time left to “change the world” before he died. But he did have time to accept Jesus and receive His Promise “*Today you will be with me in paradise*”. (Luke 23:43) The Apostle Paul was a mature man when he had a vision of Jesus on the Road to Damascus and spent the rest of his life serving Him. I was Age 44 when I finally surrendered, stopped going “My Way” and began going “God’s Way”. One old friend of mine used to say he “Received Social Security before he received Eternal Security.” Solomon was an old man when he finally concluded:

*“Of making many books there is no end,
and much study wearies the body.
Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the whole duty of man.”*

God gave us what is “*imponderable*” from our perspective so we would Surrender and Trust Him to Lead, Love and Care for us.

For Now That Is All I need to Know!

From Grandpa With Love

10

Upside Down

*The Kingdom of the World
Won't ever "get it right",*

*Because it is Upside Down
From The Kingdom of God.*

Many years ago I sat in the sanctuary of a beautiful church building listening to the Pastor's sermon. He pointed to the massive beams on the ceiling, and said, in essence,

"A church sanctuary is built like a great ship. Those beams up there on the ceiling are the ribs of that vessel.

The ship is plowing through the heavens of God, but it is upside down!"

I have concluded that his analogy is quite appropriate, because the teachings of the Bible, and the lives of Believers, are often upside down from the ways and the teachings of the natural world. The world, like earth's gravity, pulls us downward, but God's gravity pulls us upward to Him.

Let's illustrate it this way. Suppose you walk into a house and the furniture is all on the ceiling. You would say, *"What a strange and crazy house! I don't fit here."*

But then one day, you surrender your life to Jesus and are *"born again"*. When you walk into this same house the next time, you realize that your feet are planted on the ceiling. God's gravity for you has now shifted from earth to Heaven.

And you realize that the furniture wasn't upside down.

You were!

In order to confirm my conclusion, I decided to do a little experiment. As I read through the New Testament one year, I used upside down

stick figures to mark various places where the Bible's teachings were opposite to those of the world. It was an amazing exercise, as I began to see upside down stick figures sprinkled throughout the pages of the scriptures.

The Kingdom of God is invisible, infinite and eternal. The Kingdom of the World is visible, finite and dying. It is our choice which Kingdom we will embrace.

When I was a young man, I thought it was my job, and the job of every generation, to help perfect the World, hoping we could go to the Kingdom of God when we died.

After I surrendered to God at age 44, I began to see that I had become a citizen of God's Kingdom! Gradually, I realized I was an "*alien and stranger*" in the World, trying to live "*Right Side Up In An Upside Down World!*"

Now I am "old". I have concluded, like most realistic old people in every generation, that our generation did not perfect the World. We still have the same wars and problems—they just have new names and new circumstances for the new generations to face!

**It has finally become clear to me that no generation can perfect
the World,
because "man" himself is imperfect.**

**Our job is not to try and perfect the World.
It is to surrender to God, and become God Centered Believers
who live, show and tell others about
His alternative to the World.**

**Then we can live as citizens of God's Kingdom—
in this World and for eternity.**

From Grandpa With Love

(Cf. "*Turning the World Right Side Up*" in Volume II *Faith in the From Grandpa With Love* series))

11

Finishing Well

Much is being discussed recently about “*finishing well*”. We all want that for our lives. But what is “*well*”? And how do we achieve it?

Set forth on the following pages are two summaries. The first is a list of late in life statements by Jesus, three Old Testament and three New Testament Biblical Models who told us what was important to them as they came to the “*Finish Line*”. The second is a list of some practical steps I hope will help us ‘*Finish Well*’.

Unfortunately, everyone does not “*Finish Well*.” One of the saddest was Gideon who ended his career by asking his followers to each give him a gold earring from their conquest which he made into a gold ephod the people began to worship. The account ends:

“All Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family.”(Judges 8:27)

I have concluded that “*finishing well*” does not require that we complete our lives and our work in a way that will give us approval and recognition during our life-times, nor eulogies and monument markers that extol our accomplishments after we are gone. Instead, I think our lives will be pleasing to God, when we surrender our “*will*” to His “*Will*”, and rely on Him and His grace to care for us, and to use us as He wishes to Glorify Him and to Love and Help Others.

At first this sounds harsh and unrealistic, until we finally understand that He is drawing us “*Onward and Upward*” to a far better eternity with Him, when our short span of years here on earth is completed.

I pray the following Biblical Models and Practical Steps will help us be ready to “*Go Home*” whenever we are called.

From Grandpa With Love

(Cf. Age 75-80 of *Four Generations: A Journey Through Life and Seven Last Messages*)

Biblical Models To Help Us Finish Well

1. Jesus

*“I have brought you glory on earth
by completing the work you gave me to do.”*
(John 17:4.)

Have I “*completed the work*” God gave me to do?

2. Peter

*“I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent
of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord
Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to
see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these
things.”* (2 Peter 1:13-14)

**Have I made every effort that after my departure those following
me can *remember* what I leave with them?**

3. John

*“Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the
antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is
how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did
not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us,
they would have remained with us; but their going showed
that none of them belonged to us.”*
(1 John 2:18-19)

**Am I watchful, so I will be aware
the “*last hour*” is approaching?**

4. Paul

*“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the
time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have
finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*
(2 Timothy 4:6-7)

**Have I “*fought the good faith, finished the race
and kept the faith*”?**

5. Moses

“This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him.

(Deuteronomy 30:19-20a)

Have I “chosen life”

so I and those following me will “live” and “love” the Lord?

6. Samuel

“Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the Lord and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these, I will make it right.”

(I Samuel 12:3)

**Have I offered to “make right”
anyone I may have wronged?**

7. Solomon

“I have seen all the things done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.”

(Ecclesiastes 1:14 et seq.)

*“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is
the whole duty of man.”*

(Ecclesiastes 12:13)

**Have I stopped “chasing after the wind” and realized my duty is
to “fear God and keep His commandments”?**

10 Practical Steps to Help Us Finish Well

- 1. Time** Think in chapters—at least to age 100 (also to the 4th Generation)
- 2. Work** Stay useful—going “to something”, not just “from something”
- 3. Health** Be proactive—diet, exercise, moderation
- 4. Money** Plan ahead—so it will last, and perhaps have some “left-over”
- 5. Home** Be sure it fits our current chapter—and our spouse’s needs
- 6. Travel** Go where we are “called”—and do it while we can
- 7. Relationships** Love others and be at peace—forgive and ask forgiveness
- 8. Pass it on** Decide what is valuable—and then pass it on to others
- 9. Be Ready** Get our affairs in order—so survivors aren’t burdened
- 10. Draw Near** Come close to God—and to family, old friends and God’s people

“But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus”

(Philippians 3:13b-14)

12

The Trip

At the beginning of a journey the way often seems dark and unknown. And that is a good thing. If we knew what is ahead we might be overwhelmed and wonder how we would survive.

Looking back is totally different. Now we realize we have been on a trip much like the traveler in *Pilgrim's Progress* written so many years ago. Those who have left the "City of Destruction" (i.e. decided to go "God's Way") recognize many of the encounters along the way (e.g. "Slough of Despond", "Wicked Gate", etc.) until we reached "the Cross" and then travel onward toward the "Celestial City". Each of our journeys, like the *Pilgrim's*, is difficult. But the reward is almost unbelievably beautiful!

As I look back on my Life and the Life of Mankind, I see how God starts us as "Infants", takes us through the mystery and confusion of "Adolescence" through our own Death on Our Cross of Total Surrender as we move toward "Maturity" (Oneness with *Christ*).

I am convinced how much we are individually and collectively on the same journey. We start out thinking we are different. The generalities don't apply to us. When we come to the end, it is apparent God made us individuals, but we start the same place and we will all end with the same option.

We can surrender to Jesus as our Lord and King now and walk with Him through "*Eternal Life*". Or we can become so intent on achieving the "*Good Life*" here—that we become separated from Him and the Saints for Eternity!

*I pray God will grant each of us the Faith and Endurance
to Surrender Daily and walk with Him for Eternity.*

*As an old friend used to say,
"It is one great big 'Yes'—and a lot of little bitty, 'Uh Huhs'".*

See You in Heaven!

From Grandpa With Love