

Taking Advantage of Opportunities

Thelma was an energetic, outgoing person who took life's little setbacks in stride. However, when she was widowed at the age of 75 for the third time, she went into a state of gloom and sadness that just wouldn't go away. She wouldn't eat, she wouldn't go out; she seemed to care for nothing anymore. In despair, her children finally put her in a senior assisted living facility until the time would come that she would pass away, too. Instead, she gradually began to take an interest in life. Daily she went from room to room, visiting and talking with the residents who were bedfast. She organized and directed activities, and encouraged all of the seniors to get involved at some level.

In appreciation, the nursing home threw a large surprise birthday party for Thelma when she turned 80. During the birthday dinner, she noticed a new man sitting at the end of the table, and she started to stare and to become very quiet. All through the meal, and the cake, and the presents, she kept looking at this fellow as if she had seen him before, but forgotten who he was. Eventually, she got up and walked over to him and said, "Pardon me for making you so uncomfortable. I just couldn't help staring at you all evening. You look so much like my fourth husband."

"Fourth husband!" he said. "How many times have you been married?"

"Three," she replied, with a spreading across her face.

The wedding was a few weeks later.

- 1) Regardless of our environment and circumstances, we can find a way to make life meaningful (Phil. 4:11).
- 2) We find our greatest joy and fulfillment when we are serving others (Mark 10:45).
- 3) Take advantage of opportunities (Matt. 9:37-38; Col. 4:2-4; Acts 17:16, 34).

Fable of the Porcupine

It was the coldest winter ever. Many animals died because of the cold. The porcupines, realizing the situation, decided to group together to keep warm. This way they covered and protected themselves; but the quills of each one wounded their closest companions. After a while, they decided to distance themselves one from the other and they began to die, alone and frozen. So they had to make a choice: either accept wounds from the quills of their companions or disappear from the Earth. Wisely, they decided to go back to being together. They learned to live with the little wounds caused by the close relationship with their companions in order to receive the warmth that came from the others. This way they were able to survive.

Moral of the story: The best relationship is not the one that brings together perfect people, but when each individual learns to live with the imperfections of others and can admire the other person's good qualities. The real moral of the story... learn to live with all the people in your life.

Roses Among the Thorns

"Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life..." (Phil. 2:14-16).

Benjamin Franklin once said, "The sentence which has most influenced my life is, 'Some persons grumble because God placed thorns among roses. Why not thank God because He placed roses among thorns?' I first read it when but a mere lad. Since that day it has occupied a front room in my life and has given it an optimistic trend."

Let us not be constant complainers, but rejoice and thank God for His manifold blessings.

Politicians vs. Statesmen

What the ancients said about politicians sounds eerily familiar to us. Our own civil leaders behave more like Ahab, Jereboam, and Jehoram rather than like Moses, Hezekiah, and Josiah. One can respect the office held by civil leaders and deplore their immoral conduct and decisions.

"You have all of the characteristics of a popular politician: a horrible voice, bad breeding, and a vulgar manner" (Aristophanes, *Knights*, 424 B.C., line 92).

"This is what extremely grieves us, that a man who never fought, should contrive our taxes to pilfer; one who for his native land, never to this day had oar, or lance, or blister in his hand" (Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 422 B.C., line 1117).

"Those who treat politics and morality apart will never understand the one or the other" (John, Viscount Morley of Blackburn, *Rousseau*, 1876).

"No man can climb out beyond the limitations of his own character" (John, Viscount Morley of Blackburn, *Critical Miscellanies*, *Robespierre*, 1908).

What I find more troubling than immoral and foolish politicians who falsely promise money to the masses are the materialistic, professed Christians who enable them with their vote.

Thank You, Lord

Even though I clutch my blankets and groan when the alarm rings each morning, Thank you, Lord, that I can hear. Many are deaf.

Even though I keep my eyes closed tightly against the morning light, Thank you, Lord, that I can see. Many are blind.

Even though the first hours of the day are hectic, when socks are lost and toast burns, Thank you, Lord. Many are childless.

Even though our breakfast table never looks like the picture in the ladies' magazines, Thank you, Lord, for the food we have. Many are hungry.

Even though the routine of my job is often monotonous, Thank you, Lord. Many are unemployed.

Even though my wife complains that I don't listen to her words, and pays less attention to my wise instructions, Thank you, Lord, that we have each other. There are so many who have no one.

Even though I don't always approve of the way our country is run, Thank you, Lord, that I live in the greatest nation on earth.

Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day to day and wish my modest circumstances were not so modest, Thank you, Lord, for the gift of life. Help me to show I am grateful.

A Moments Wisdom

- A man can do what he ought to do; and when he says he cannot, it is because he will not.
- There is but one question, and that is the will of God. That settles all other questions.
- People do not lack strength; they lack will.