

A Building Process

Townsend, the developer of the laser, was once asked if he didn't have a tremendous sense of achievement in all he had accomplished with his invention; such as methods for precision measurements, laser disc, weapons technology, etc. He remarked, "Not really." He said that he could easily identify with the beaver and relayed the following story:

The beaver and chipmunk happened upon the Hoover Dam while out strolling one day. They were caught off-guard, completely overwhelmed with amazement and awe at the size and magnificence of this structure. Once the beaver recovered, he remarked, "well, actually, I didn't build it myself, but it's based upon an idea of mine."

Like much of scientific advancement, spiritual growth is a building process. We took the spiritual training our parents gave us and have built upon it, and we expect our children to take the training that we give them and build upon that. We fully expect them to accomplish some great things in their lives, things that we may not have built ourselves, but which are based on spiritual principles we taught them.

Paul was referring to this process when he said of Timothy, "I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also." (1Tim. 1:5). Do you ever wonder if Lois and Eunice ever even imagined all that that little boy Timothy would accomplish in his lifetime?

You may not feel like you're accomplishing much, but if you are instilling in your children or in others a strong faith in God, who knows what they will accomplish in the years ahead.

Danger! Laziness!

Upon entering the little country store, the stranger noticed a sign saying "DANGER! BEWARE OF DOG!" posted on the glass door. Inside he noticed a harmless old hound dog asleep in the middle of the floor in front of the cash register. He asked the store manager, "Is THAT the dog folks are supposed to beware of?"

"Yep, that's him," he replied.

The stranger couldn't help but be amused. "That certainly doesn't look like a dangerous dog to me. Why in the world would you post that sign?"

"Because", the owner replied, "before I posted that sign, people kept tripping over him."

When we mentally make a list of the "worst sins" in the Bible, laziness doesn't usually come to mind. But sometimes those people most "dangerous" are those who just lie around and do nothing but get in the way. Solomon had much to say about the sluggard, or lazy person.

"The lazy man says, 'There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!' As a door turns on its hinges, so does the lazy man on his bed. The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; It wearies him to bring it back to his mouth" (Prov. 26:13-15).

Talk about lazy! When one is too lazy to eat, there's no hope for him. Absurd image, yes? But an image designed to make us think, to realize how "dangerous" it is to become lazy.

Learn from Your Mistakes

The story is told of two hunters who got a pilot to fly them into the far north for elk hunting. They were quite successful in their venture and bagged six big bucks. The pilot came back, as arranged, to pick them up. They started loading their gear into the plane, including the six elk.

The pilot objected and said, "The plane can only carry four of your elk. Any more than that would overload the plane. You'll have to leave two of the elk behind."

The two hunters were both infuriated and insistent. They said, "Last year, we shot six elk and that pilot let us put them all on board. And that plane was the exact same model."

Reluctantly, the pilot finally permitted them to put all six aboard. But about fifteen minutes after taking off, the engine started to sputter, and within seconds they were hurtling to the ground and crashed into the wilderness.

Climbing out of the wreckage, one hunter said to the other, "Do you know where we are?"

"I think so," replied the other hunter. "I think this is about a mile from where we crashed last year!"

We are mighty slow to learn at times. We make a mistake, and you would think we would learn never to make that mistake again, but we often do. We think, "This time it will be different. This time it won't end up the same way." But it often does. Hopefully, we eventually reach a level of maturity where we can learn from our mistakes.

Huxley once said, "Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him." And Solomon said, "A wise person will learn more from a warning than a fool will learn from a hundred lashings" (Prov. 17:10, NCV).

Remember the Scars

In an article entitled "Don't Forget the Scars," Joe Barnett relates the following story about General John B. Gordon, who many years ago waged a campaign for a seat in the United States Senate. A former army comrade was a part of the voting body which was to decide if his name would be placed in nomination. The two men had been fellow officers, and through the years a terrible resentment had developed between them. Everyone knew this man would fight Gordon's bid to become a senator.

As the balloting began, General Gordon felt the intense gaze of his enemy. He was staring at the ugly scars that disfigured the general's face -- marks of his willingness to suffer and bleed for a cause he believed in.

When it was time for the vote, all eyes were on the bitter general. The old soldier was stricken with remorse. He said with great emotion, "I cannot be against him; I had forgotten the scars -- I had forgotten the scars!"

What a difference it makes in our lives when we remember the scars. With so many things to distract us, we don't often take time each day to reflect on what Jesus went through on the cross for us. But, when we are tempted to stray, it is a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice that has the power to draw us back to Him.

"And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, 'Peace to you!' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.' And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'" (John 20:26-29). Take a moment and "remember the scars."