

## The Messed Up Pages of Life

Lately, my grandson, Aidan has been teaching and reminding me of some important lessons of life. I write these words on the last day of 2004. I pulled out the pages of my organizing calendar for the year 2005. When I began to examine and arrange them for use, I saw the benign damage done to them by my small grandson Aidan. I smiled and these thoughts came to me.

After all the years of living in Houston and seeing our family reared, I used the kitchen, dining room or part of our bedroom to study and read and do exactly what I am doing now. Well, my dear wife got me a desk, a chair, extra bookshelves, and painted one of the former bedrooms to become my home office. As the kids began to come home and claim their space for the Christmas holidays, Aidan got my office. In one of my new shelves I had carefully placed some very special calendar pages for my organizer. They were pages given to me quite some time ago. I was not able to implement them into the middle of my year, so I have been waiting until now to start using them. Aidan found them and was fascinated by them, so he distributed them over the room, crumpled some, tore a little, and overall enjoyed January through December of 2005 in one felled swoop. My daughter, his mom retrieved the pages and carefully straightened out as best she could and placed them back in order. Today, as I arrange the pages for use, I shall for the rest of the year be reminded of my little grandson's visit. My daughter felt badly about the incident, but I am perfectly alright about it (is that the grandfather coming out in me?). My kids may be saying, "Who is this man that I once knew as Dad; has he gone soft?" We often learn too late in life to value the people over the stuff.

So, as I set up my calendar these few thoughts come to mind:

### I. The Second Law of Thermodynamics

Observe The Encyclopedia Britannica's definition: "The second law of thermodynamics has to do with the nature of thermal energy (heat) and temperature. It reflects the experience that heat flows from a higher to a lower temperature but it does not do the reverse. The second law is best formulated in terms of entropy (measure of disorder at the molecular and atomic levels)." Now, with a little help from Webster on what entropy means: "a process of degeneration marked variously by increasing degrees of uncertainty, disorder, fragmentation, chaos, etc.; specif., such a process regarded as the inevitable, terminal stage in the life of a social system or structure." To use layman's terms, it simply means from the time we are born, we biologically grow, live and inevitably diminish toward chaos or dissipation. Last Wednesday I was talking to Homer Wiggins, now sixty-eight years old. He was telling me how when he young he used to lift objects weighing two hundred pounds. Once he lifted something on the scale hook that weighed three hundred seventy-two pounds. Then he sadly said to me, "Brother Pope, growing old is not for sissies." He then explained a little of what he and his wife had experienced, the cost of health and funding to take care of these expenses, then he interrupted himself with these words, "There's no way you are prepared for the deterioration of your health."

We sometimes live as though we drink from the fountain of youth and chaos cannot come. Yet the Word of God says, *"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"* (Psalm 90:12). The length of our years is not an infinite number. Not to be sad, but as you awake this morning, you are one day nearer death than yesterday. *"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away"* (Psalm 90:10).

### II. The Law of Diminishing Returns

Britannica says this is, "economic law stating that if one input in the production of a commodity is increased while all other inputs are held fixed, a point will eventually be reached at which additions of the input yield progressively smaller increases in output. This is known as the law of diminishing returns or

principle of diminishing marginal productivity. With this in mind, we should therefore, learn to spend our time (like money) wisely. We need to let the output of our life neutralize the cost of up-keep. There was a great advertisement a few years ago. Encouraging our youth to continue their education, saying, "A mind is an awful thing to waste." Operating in life wisely brings profit to you and future generations; acting sinfully or foolishly diminishes the prospects of profit. Solomon said, "*Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good*" (Ecclesiastes 9:18).

### **III. The Law of Sowing and Reaping**

This principle is stated succinctly in Scripture, "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*" (Galatians 6:7). Early on in our existence as parents, we came to the undeniable conclusion that our kids had a strong will. Dr. Dobson came out with a book close to the same time we had our first of four children. His book was entitled, *The Strong Willed Child.*" We read it and re-read with every child. During the child rearing process, one of our children grabbed the book and marked it with scribbling designs. Ah! An autographed copy, not by the author but by the subject of the book. My oldest daughter now has a son that just entered his "terrible twos." Appropriately, she has now purchased without our recommendation, "*The New Strong Willed Child.*" I was tempted to send the original autographed copy to encourage her. Now as I look back at the book, I smile and say, "Thank you, Lord!" All the unpleasant memories fade in humor as we see the investment of prayer, play and discipline was not in naught.

So, with my new autographed calendar, I shall allow my grandson to serve as a reminder of what and who is really important in life and invest these remaining days into constructive usefulness. What we sow, we reap. "*Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy...*" (Hosea 10:12).

- Pastor Pope -

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