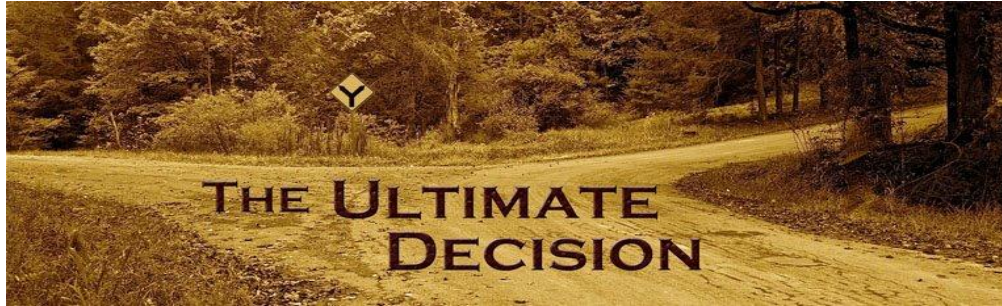




31 PROVERB DEVOTIONALS

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This morning the Lord gave me an idea for a new series of devotionals out of the book of Proverbs. I am going to write a devotional each day for 31 days since there are 31 Proverbs.

Now here is the great thing about the book of Proverbs. Many people have a tough time deciding on what to read in the Bible. After we are done with this series the best way to read the book of Proverbs since it has 31 Proverbs is to read the Proverb for the day of the month that you are on. If it is the 14th of February then read Proverbs 14.

King Solomon who was King David's second born child to Bathsheba (their first child died) was given great wisdom from the Lord plus many riches. With this wisdom he wrote the book of Proverbs along with "Agur, son of Jakeh, and Lemuel". NIV Quest Bible

Lord, thank you for saving me but at times I still seem far from you. I know it is not you that has left me but it is I who have wandered into the world and left you behind. Lord please forgive me and help me to stay close to you and not the world. Help me to be in "Awe" of who you are instead of awe for what mortal people can do. Jesus please make this the day that I turn everything over to you and worry no more. Thank you for always hearing my prayers Jesus. I am a sinner who desperately needs you." Amen

Jesus is always willing not only to forgive but to wipe the slate clean and remember it NO MORE. It is us that brings it up so today let IT go.

Have an awesome day and look for those who are hurting. God will put them in your path.

Brad



Proverbs 1

Proverbs 1:33 “but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.”

A lot of us live in fear. I know because of all the e mails I receive each day. I also know this because of who I am. My name is listed under the word fear in Webster’s Dictionary!! I am a lot better but the Lord has allowed this fear to draw me close to Him. Thank you Jesus for knowing me and knowing everyone who is reading this right now.

Over the years I have had the weirdest things happen. From being shot to having multiple auto/bike accidents, broken bones and that was just in one day? OK I am exaggerating about the one day!! The problem is that once we get accustomed to having “Bad” things happen to us if we are not careful we can come to expect them. It is when we expect bad things to happen is when

WE LOSE OUR JOY.

Then we will have a fear of harm. I know that all of you desperately desire your joy back. I know you don’t want to live in fear. But the key to having joy is being willing to risk “Hope”. Without Hope of something better we fall back into fear of trials of many kinds. But our hope has to be ONLY in Jesus. So how does this hope in Jesus give us joy? Glad you asked as I have been searching for the same things for many years. I used to put my hope in everything BUT Jesus. I was the one who got on the bandwagon to say why can’t we go to a bar and order a Valium. They have the same effect as a beer or any other drink and just as addictive. I say this sentence for one reason.

Jesus saved me and my life and my heart were changed forever. I did not change, Jesus changed me. He will change you too IF, IF you let Him. Jesus is a gentleman and because of our free will He will not impose His rules upon us. But it is those very rules that keep us from harm, that keep us from eternal death.

What rule am I talking about? Well for death it is that if you never confess that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, repent and believe then you will spend eternity in hell. When you read the book of proverbs there are hundreds of rules that if you adapt will keep you out of harm’s way. The problem is a lot of us hate discipline. You are the only one who can allow Jesus to work in your life. You can either let Him in or fight Him, The choice is yours. You can also allow Him into every part of your life EXCEPT for that little corner of hidden sin that no one knows about

EXCEPT Jesus and you. Once you have that hidden then it is all hidden. Sin is sin and will put up a barrier between us and God unless you repent and turn from what you were doing to freedom.

Today, please start to listen to Jesus. He speaks to you every day through His word, His Spirit or through other people.

“Lord I am tired of living in fear of _____. I seem to be so overburdened even though I have put my faith in you. At times I don’t know how to get out of the pit of worry. BUT today Jesus please give me your hope to know that I will recover and be put upon firm footing. Please help me to know in my heart that right now you are working out everything in my life for your perfect purpose. Help me to know how much you love me Jesus. I am tired and worn out and I desperately need you.” Amen

When I say that Proverbs are great rules, living by rules will not get us into heaven but they will help us to stay out of a lot of trouble here on earth. Let us not spurn discipline but embrace it. No athlete can be great without discipline. Let us as followers of Jesus have this same discipline to throw off everything that hinders our walk with the Lord and learn His word and pray. When you do, worry will fade away.

Have an awesome, joyful day. Jesus is still on the throne.

Brad

Proverbs 2



Have you ever wondered how far you could push God? A lot of times we preach that “God is love”, 1 John 4:8. But many times the other side of that love is not preached or very little.

Job 10:14 “If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offense go unpunished.”

I know a number of people now that are experiencing the effects of sin because they have not repented. Repent means to turn from the sin that you and I are in and to be remorseful then to try

to not do it again in the Lord's grace, power and mercy. BUT if you continue to be disobedient "If you are a believer" there are consequences. God loves you enough to get your attention. He may send sickness, hardships or a host of other trials to make you stop and see that what you are doing is causing anguish to God. If your children continue to sin you set up boundaries. If they continue to sin without any remorse the actions become harsher. God cannot lie and God is just as much as He is love.

Now if we look at John Chapter 9 with the man born blind, Jesus disciples asked Him who sinned that this man was born blind. Jesus said that neither this boy nor his parents sinned but this happened so that the glory of God would be revealed in his life. There is a big difference between being used by God for His glory and continuing to live in willful, sinful behavior. If you are saved then be afraid if you think the Lord is not looking or has better things to do than correct you. God is patient but you cannot tell me when His patience will stop and loving persecution to get your attention will start.

Having God's wisdom will keep us from sexual sin, worry, pride, anger and a host of others issues that can entrap us in our own little kingdom. Any kingdom we set up other than the Lord's is sin. But this is how you can gain the wisdom of the Lord.

Proverbs 2:1-5 "My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God."

To gain the knowledge and wisdom of the Lord we need to do a number of things. First of all we need to

1. Accept the Lord's word as truth and store up His commands in our heart.
2. Call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding. Sometimes we need to "Plead" to God. If you are not earnest and treat God as just another person we have lost reverence for who He is.
3. Treasure hunters lose everything trying to uncover that elusive find. Will you lose everything of this world to seek the true God? Or is something more important that you are holding onto?

If we do these things then the Lord will give us His understanding. Don't treat God as man. On this earth He was 100% man but 100% God not 50/50. Now in His Glory Jesus is 100% God. He is due our respect and if we will fully take grace flippantly and sin consistently then judgment will come. It has to, God is just and perfect. So before the hammer drops on disobedient sin please pray this with me.

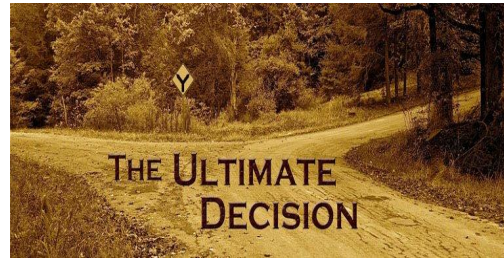
"Lord I am stuck in sin that has entrapped me. I want to let go but am afraid. I hate this evil desire so please Jesus take it away from me. Please give me the strength to stop _____ and to trust in you. Please do not pour out your anger upon me. Please forgive me and to help me to come clean with you Lord. Then please help me to stop sinning in this area. I desire to feel your love and I know that I have quenched your Spirit inside of me for far too long. I plead with you today Jesus to forgive me and to help me lead a Spirit filled life. Help me to not view the world

as I have been seeing it but to see the world as you do Lord. Jesus thank you for forgiving my sin and please restore my footing on firm ground.” Amen

Be careful in the world as there are many snares. Plead for the Lord's wisdom and watch every step.

Brad

Proverbs 3



One of my favorite passages in the Bible is in Proverbs 3:

Proverbs 3:5,6 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Most of my plans have failed not because of lack of hard work but because I leaned on my own understanding. But you and I have to ask ourselves this next question and be honest with our answers. God will make our paths straight (keep us from being snared) if in all our ways we acknowledge Him. Have you done that? If is no wonder that sometimes our life is a mess. God desires to lead us out of the dense forest only if we CAME BACK TO Him.

The world is full of guilt ridden Christian’s that have heard the wrong gospel of Jesus preached. The church is for sinners, not people who think they are saints. Sometimes we even take grace too far. Not on the side of Jesus but we start to think that we have such freedom that we forget the passage of our weaker brother. REMEMBER even though we can sometimes doesn’t mean that we should. Be very sensitive to those around you. Pray for everyone around you.

The Lord over the past 3 years has grown Julie and I in ways that we could never imagine. This journey of Full Time Ministry has been the toughest and best 3 years of our lives. The problem was I started out “leaning on my own understanding” on what I should do to reach the lost. I even gathered some great counsel from many people. The problem was I didn’t gain counsel from the One who created me. The One who created you and the One who holds back the heavens. Why? Sometimes I am too immature and impatient to wait upon the Lord. Things seem impossible so instead of trusting AND believing that we serve an awesome God I start to doubt in how long my answer is taking and then head out on my own. BIG MISTAKE!!!!!!

The past two weeks have been the best two weeks of my life and I am not ashamed to tell you the most emotional two weeks of my life. I have had more tears flow than the past two years. Here is why. Before we are saved we do not have the Spirit of God living inside of us. When we call upon the name of Jesus, ask for forgiveness of our sins, repent and acknowledge what Jesus did on the cross for us He saves us. He immediately sends His Holy Spirit to dwell what was an empty shell of a soul that we used to have and now “We are a new creation” We have been brought from death to life. Now this is very important. We now have the same spirit that raised Lazarus and Jesus from the dead living inside of us. When we first believed a lot of us had joy but sometimes through life’s trials we have allowed the worries of the world to take over and we quenched the spirit of God living in us.

Just recently I have allowed (Free Will) the Spirit of God to take back over. Many of you wrote into me last week when we went through the exercise of closing our eyes and looking down on YOU. You could see that you were a new creation but somehow you stopped believing that you had the power to live a life of joy again. Many of you were moved to change when you stopped micromanaging your life and allowed God to take over.

Jesus has moved in my heart so dramatically. His Spirit has been giving me insight, joy but most of all His presence to Feel Again. I can read a couple words in the Bible or hear a word preached and tears will flow. It's not me being emotional as much as it is the spirit of Jesus is finally having reign in everything I do.

I finally let go and you need to do the same if you want to live a life that is taken over by the One true God. Either God can do everything or nothing. You can't pick and choose what problems you will give Him if you want your paths to be straight and your heart to feel joy.

Please pray this with me and keep praying this prayer so the presence of God will be free to lead you minute by minute, hour by hour an day by day. I guarantee you that your joy will overflow.

“Jesus, please forgive me for putting you aside and leaning on my own understanding. I have become too impatient in my spirit to listen to you and right now I want to change. I need you Lord right now more than ever. Please take away all those things that are hindering my walk with you and make them apparent to me. Help my faith to increase and for my reliance on myself to decrease no matter what I see in front of me. Lord please direct my paths and my steps and help me to come back to you in every part of my life. Please protect my heart and my mind from the evil one who constantly is trying to distract me from coming back to you. Thank you Jesus for forgiving and forgetting my sin and restoring my faith.” Amen

Now go out into the world and BELIEVE that you are protected. Constantly talk to the Lord who knows what is ahead. He will make your paths straight but remember to always acknowledge Him.

Brad



Proverbs 4

It is interesting that a father and son wrote two books that are back to back in the Bible. David wrote the Psalms and Solomon wrote the next two books Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. The Psalms seem to be like one crying out for help and deliverance of enemies. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes come from someone who has had everything but nothing. Ever been there?

Solomon had so many riches, over 1,000 wives and concubines and the list goes on and on. God said to Solomon that He would give him all of this but he must not do one thing.

1 Kings 11:1-6 “King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh’s daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, “You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.” Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molecha the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done”.

Because of Solomon’s disobedience God would strip the Kingdom from his hands but not till after he had died. What a horrible fall from grace. Solomon had it all. That’s the problem, he had it all and the soft lifestyle led his feet into different paths, not the one true path. David had to fight, Solomon didn’t. A lot of times in life we pray that things would get easier, that our bills would be paid on time and that we would have not only enough but maybe a little abundance. The problem with abundance is that we then tend to relax our mind and our sinful nature takes over if we aren’t careful. We can look at the abundance and think that we created it. Then pride wells up inside of us and a downward slide has begun with no end in sight. We start to trust in self instead of needing to rely upon the Lord.

There is a lot to be said for simplification in life. Living below your means and desiring to live for the Lord’s desires instead of your own. The Lord has great plans for YOU. Do you know what they are? The tougher your current circumstances the more you will seek the wisdom and the plans of the Lord. The easier things are in your life the easier it is to just cruise along with no real need to know our creator.

Proverbs 4:23 “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

Wellspring - a plentiful source or supply of something Encarta Online Dictionary

The source of everything good that we need in this life flows from God. God is the source, not the things and hard work we do. Whatever we do will never be good enough. Ask yourself what you are doing to guard your source of your water supply. Do you have a barrier around it or can anyone come in and poison it without you knowing. Be very careful what you pray for. If you are a believer in Jesus then the Holy Spirit will help you pray as a lot of times we do not know what to ask for. Please pray this morning and be open to what God has to say to you. It may not make sense now but it will over time. Be very careful with a lifestyle that does not test you. It is when we are comfortable that the devil can lull us into a sense of well-being and then he strikes. Above all else **GUARD YOUR HEART**.

Pray today and be open and listen to what God desires. He will speak to you through His Spirit when you pray.

Have a great day and help those around you.

Brad



Proverbs 5

Proverbs 5 is a book about being snared in Adultery and the steps we can take to protect ourselves from falling. But the wisdom that the Lord gave Solomon in these verses is just words. Let me explain. The entire Bible is just words if your heart is not ready for change. If your heart becomes discontent then no amount of “Words” will keep you from adultery or sex outside of marriage. Just reading a passage to read a passage will not generate change. God is the only one who can generate change and protection.

So if I am living or have lived a horrible lifestyle how do I stop bringing up my past failures? I find it odd that when someone commits adultery that many in the church are the first to condemn and start the discipline process. I believe the church is a hospital for sinners not saints! If people are in leadership they may have to step down for a time but **PLEASE** don't send them out of the church. Anger is sin and so is adultery. So if you do not have sin in your life then cast the first stone.

Proverbs 5:21 “For a man’s ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths.”

Don't take matters into your own hands without first seeking the Lord's direction. People in this life are shamed and have guilt enough. You never know someone's past. We are great to judge one another but very impatient in the compassionate department.

If you have the desire to have an affair God is the ONLY One who can stop you as Satan is full steam ahead in this process. What you have to do is "Burn All Ships" to your past thought life. The only way to do this is to ask the Lord for His help. You can't will yourself enough to stop. Oh, you may try to for days and maybe even years but if your heart is not changed by the Lord Jesus you will eventually fall.

But there is hope and only in one person, Jesus.

"Lord I have so many unhealthy desires that at times I am sick to my stomach of my sin. I desire to live a life for you but my mind takes me elsewhere. Lord please protect my mind and help me to "Burn All Ships" to thoughts from my past failures. You have forgiven me but I have not forgiven myself. I desire to live a life for you Jesus. Please keep my feet from the wayward person, the wayward lifestyle and to stop the evil desires that my flesh produces. Lord PLEASE change my heart today and please give me your strength to fight." Amen

God is just but God is also compassionate and forgiving when we come to him with a repentant heart. Remember it is only a heart change that will produce genuine fruit. Let today be the day that you Burn All Ships of self-defeat to the past and be thankful that you do have a glorious future in Jesus.

Brad



PROVERBS 6

Proverbs 6 has a lot of wisdom but a couple verses that I would like to discuss today has to do with diffusing an argument.

Proverbs 6:2-5 "if you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth, then do this, my son, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbor's hands: Go and humble yourself; press your plea with your neighbor! Allow no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids. Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler."

Have you ever gotten into trouble with your words? Sometimes our words can get us into a lot of trouble. I had owned a bottled water company almost 20 years ago. We had signed up a player

from an NFL team to be our spokesperson. He was well known and a great role model. One evening I get a call from the Players agent that I was taking advantage of his client. Now first of all I would never do that. Plus this agent had to show that he was doing something of worth so he invented some schemes that were not true. But it didn't matter that I was not at fault; I was distraught. I finally got on the phone with him which only made matters worse.

I couldn't sleep that night wondering about all the implications of this mess. In the end I did nothing wrong but I still humbled myself before this person to get the situation rectified. Sometimes in life we need to take a few arrows of injustice by coming back with humility even though it is the other person who wronged us. Why? Because we are followers and disciples of Jesus. Jesus did not do anything wrong and He was nailed to a cross. He had every right to blow away his accusers with one call to His angels who would have obliterated all mankind in one word. But Jesus knew what He came to do. He took the abuse even though He was right because it was the only way to save us.

Today you may be in the right but are having some real tough issues with someone or something. It may not be your fault at all but Jesus calls us to be His followers. What does that mean? We need to be peacekeepers and we need to always humble ourselves to fight another day. We have all been in situations where words escalate a problem. Today can YOU be the one who takes a humble approach and says you are sorry. You don't have to be sorry that you serve a glorious God but you can be sorry that there is evil in this person's heart. Coming back with words will only escalate the problem and then you will have a tough chance to ever explain your side.

“Lord help me to be humble because a lot of times I have a prideful heart. Help me to be more like you everyday Jesus. Help me to see the bigger picture which is being a light in a dark world. Help me to take punishment like you took it for me so that I could be saved. Help me to do the same for others knowing that I serve You and You alone Jesus and not man. Lord I cannot not do this in my strength but I desperately need you to help me in these and this situation. Please give me the right words and a tender heart to let my pride go.” Amen

Today diffuse all chaos in the name of Jesus. Don't run from it but know that this chaos may be the very opening that will eventually give you a chance to share where your strength lies.

Have an awesome day and don't worry about ANYTHING.

Brad

Proverbs 7



In Proverbs 5-7 Solomon talks a lot about Adultery. Solomon was an expert in this subject. Not only did he have over 700 wives but he also had over 300 concubines. Talking about being led astray. Solomon's life started on a good path but ended poorly. God gave him so much and asked that he not do only ONE thing. That one thing was not to intermarry with other woman so that they would not lead him astray and worship their idols. But the one thing Solomon was not allowed to do he did.

The human heart is the same in Solomon's time as it is today. God has given you and I so much but we are all sinful and want more. We desire what we cannot have. So how do we stop going down the road to the path of destruction?

Proverbs 7:1-4 "My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you. Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call understanding your kinsman;"

"Store and keep my commands means to "Learn Scripture." Most of us maybe know one verse. But the enemy (Satan) will use that to his advantage. No wonder we have trouble. We are using worldly weapons (Our own will) to fight a spiritual battle.

Ephesians 6:12 "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"

In Luke Chapter 4 Jesus was tempted by Satan. Jesus did not throw Satan off a cliff or grab him by the neck and crush him. For every temptation that Satan used against Jesus, **Jesus used scripture to fight.**

SHOULDN'T WE DO THE SAME?

I would ask you as a lesson to start to memorize scripture. That is your weapon. You will always have it with you and can call upon this power to fight off attacks of evil. As part of this lesson please e mail back to me the scripture verse or verses that mean the most to you when times of trials and temptations come. I would like to share this with other readers so we can learn together.

Thank you for helping us in our ministry in so many ways. We need to stand strong and fight the schemes of the devil with the word of the Lord. Let us store up the Lord's words within us.

Have a great day and keep on fighting against evil.

Brad



Proverbs 8

Proverbs 8:19 “My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver.”

What would you rather have; buckets full of gold or wisdom from the Lord? On paper we would say “Yes give me wisdom.” But what if rent is due today or your electric is to be shut off? Do you still desire wisdom? That’s the challenge we have in life.

WAITING UPON THE LORD.

There is a “Prosperity Gospel” gospel but the one I am talking about has nothing to do with money. There is some false preaching going on today that God is a slot machine. “If I work hard, if I am positive, if I do this and that then I pull the lever and cha-ching money comes forth. There is nowhere in the Bible that says that this will happen. Actually in most cases the opposite happens. Followers of Jesus WILL experience trials of many kinds. Not to get wealthy but to have a wealth other than silver and gold. So throw away the other “Prosperity” gospel as there is none.

Matthew 16:24,25 “Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.”

Denying yourself and storing up for yourself are two opposite phrases. You have to choose who you will serve, God or money. Now I am not saying don’t work and just follow Jesus. We are told to work as hard as we can with the talents Jesus has given us. But most of you would attest to something about wealth. I know many people who work hard and they work smart. The ones who are not prideful would agree that it is only the Lord that allows victory whether it is in wealth, increased sales or a championship. It is God and God alone that allows us to HAVE.

So back to the first verse; why is God’s fruit better than gold when we don’t have any money for rent?

Galatians 5:22-25 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong

to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.”

The fruit Jesus is talking about has true peace. We try to get peace in our lives by trying to accumulate _____ which is like a vapor. No wonder we are frustrated at every turn.

“Lord help me to be patient and to wait upon you. Help me to have the faith to endure the trial and not cave into the pressure of life. Help me to see how much you love me. Please direct my steps and my path as I have failed so many times Lord. I desire to have peace in my life and I seem to always be chasing after the wrong things. Please help me today Jesus see that you are the only One who can give me this peace I so desperately desire in my soul. Help me to stop chasing after things and chase after you.” Amen.

Have a great day and pray that you would not fall into any of the devils schemes but fall into the arms of Jesus.

Brad



Proverbs 9

Would it matter to you if you could not reach God? A lot of times we take God for granted (like our phone always working) and feel like since we can talk to Him anytime we want we will WAIT till we are ready. But what if God shut down the heavens? Would it matter to you by looking at your life now? If you do not talk to the Lord a lot or ask the Lord about your decisions in life then chances are it would not be a big deal to you. But that is what we have to guard against. We need to make sure we do not lose that connection.

We are saved by the grace of God and have fellowship with God but many times we take that for granted. We think “I can’t lose my salvation so I will talk to God when I am ready”. It is true we cannot lose our salvation but if we do not have the desire to speak with God we have to question if we were saved in the first place. We may have head knowledge but no heart knowledge. People ask me all the time if they can lose their salvation. Instead of debating scripture we have to see if we were truly saved in the first place. If we were truly saved then the Spirit of the living God now lives in us. Since that is the case then we should be bearing fruit. Are YOU?

Proverbs 9:10a “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

A Commentary by Gills says this about the fear of the Lord.

“fear is an awe and reverence of the divine Being, joined with love to him, trust in him, and a desire to serve and worship him in a right manner; no sooner is a man converted, but presently there is in him a fear of offending God, from a principle of love to him”

Many of us act as if God is ready to drop the other foot on us. We read the verses of fear and truly fear out of a “Law” instead of a reverence of love. These are two highly polarizing views. If we can see God in awe of who He is, know what He has done for us, know how much He loves us then there is no way we would every want to offend God by our actions. That is fearing God out of love instead of fearing God out of fear.

“Lord I seem to fail all the time. I try to do what is right but I get tripped up by the same thing over and over. The guilt in my heart at times is overwhelming. A lot of times that guilt I know is from the evil one who doesn’t want me to feel your love. The evil one wants me to feel shame. Today Jesus please free me from my sins of the past. Help me to see your TRUE love for me that is not based upon anything I can do but who I am in you. Lord. I know in my head that would free me to love but please change my heart to believe that Jesus. Help me not to love anyone or anything more than you Lord.” Amen

Don’t look back but strain ahead to the glorious future that the Lord has planned for you, Yes YOU.

Brad



Proverbs 10

Proverbs 10:6 “Blessings crown the head of the righteous, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.”

Our family loves Frisbee Golf. It is free and it is a great chance get out in nature and get some exercise. The object like real golf is to throw the Frisbee and try to get it into a metal mesh net that will catch the Frisbee with the right throw. The past two times we have played there has been a young man that has been standing near the 18th hole with his Frisbee. He doesn't play but just watches. Yesterday when we walked up to the 18th tee I asked him if he would like to join us but he just shook his head no.

After we played 18, I walked back to speak to him but he seemed a little shy. He walked over to the tee and threw the Frisbee but instead of it going 200 feet it only went about 20 feet. I asked him what type of Frisbee he was using and his face really lit up. I would have probably not felt compassion for this young man if or son Chase was not Autistic. I spoke to Ralph for a little bit and then we left. I pray that next time he will join us in playing a game of Frisbee golf. As we were driving out of the complex yesterday I could see that Julie had tears in her eyes and I knew what she was thinking. That could be our son Chase 4 years from now. Would he be standing alone as people walked past him or would someone look past his obvious difficulties and show compassion?

This morning as I was praying the Lord brought Ralph to my mind and I just didn't cry, I wept. Sometimes we as men if we can't fix it we stuff it. Since I can't heal Chase I don't allow my mind to go to certain places. “What would he be like if he was healed”? “Will he ever be able to leave our home and experience a somewhat normal life” will he, will he? But as the tears rolled down my cheeks I felt better. The Lord knew I needed a good cry this morning not just about Chase but for all those that are outcast from our world. I love the verse in 1 Samuel when Samuel was looking for the next king.

! Samuel 16:7 “But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Romans 3:10 “As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;”

If blessings crown the righteous and if none of us are righteous then does anyone get the blessings? Does, Ralph, does Chase, do you and I? The good news is YES. It is not us who are righteous but there is ONE and ONLY ONE who took our place so that when we have put our faith and trust in Jesus, God sees us as righteous. NOT BECAUSE OF ANYTHING we have done but because of what He did for us. As I was speaking to Ralph and Chase they have an innocence that cannot be bought, an innocence that cannot be faked. You see Chase and Ralph would not know you were making a joke out of them. At this point in their lives even though they are in their teens they still don't understand that the world can be a mean place at times. In a unique way I would like a heart more like Ralph and Chase. Blessings will come but probably not the blessings we are expecting as God has so much better for us when we come to Him with a repentant heart.

“Lord please forgive me for always concentrating on the outward appearance of a person and what they can do for me. Please help me to see that you created everyone perfectly. It is I who see imperfectly. Help me to stop this merry go round of selflessness and to love like you love Jesus. I am tired of trying to put on a front for others. I just want to be who you created me to be. But most of all I desire to have a love for those who cannot further my career or possibly do anything for me. Help me Lord today to see the heart not only of those around me but to see my own heart. Please help me Jesus and to give me your peace so I can love like you”. Amen

Have a great day and look for opportunities to help and lift up the brokenhearted. If you are brokenhearted please e mail me and we will pray for you.

Brad



Proverbs 11

Proverbs 11:21 “Be sure of this: The wicked will not go unpunished, but those who are righteous will go free.”

This is a verse that has to do with our eternal life. Since there is NO SIN allowed in heaven and none of us are righteous some One must be punished for our sin. That leaves us with a big problem. The outline below which is also on our website will give you not only comfort but security in how to know for sure how you can be assured of heaven. PLEASE COPY AND PASTE then send TODAY TO PEOPLE WHO NEED ETERNAL SECURITY.

A lot of you have asked "How do I live like a Christian"? Well in order to live a spirit filled Christian life you first of all need to be saved. Evangelism Explosion is a great course that explains the gospel in a 13 week study. Roughly 18 years ago I took the course and it helped me not to only have the tools to share the gospel of Jesus but it helped me understand my own faith.

The bible was written so that we may know how to inherit eternal life.

1 John 5:13 "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

"If you were to die today and God were to ask you, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" what would you say?" Over the years I would have to say that 85% of the answers I get are "I have tried to be a good person, I have tried to be a good parent, I have tried to go to church and

teach Sunday school and I have tried to give money to the poor." The key words in all these answer are I HAVE TRIED. Instead of me telling you that answer is wrong I am going to tell you that I have good news for you and that is

"Heaven is a free gift." Romans 6:23 says that "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now if someone were to give you a gift and you tried to pay even a penny for it then it would not be a gift anymore, would it? Of course not. But in this world we associate all good things with something that we either have to work hard for or sacrifice a lot to get. It is hard to wrap our minds around heaven as free. Well it is free to us but cost Someone His life.

A lot of people in this life try to do THINGS that would put them into a favorable position with Jesus. If I do _____ then Jesus should love me. Plus my life has had so many trials that God will take pity on me.

Ephesians 2:8,9 "For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast."

Here we see that God's grace is what gets us into heaven but look at what God's grace is. God says that no amount of works, not even ONE will get us into heaven. God does not want anyone to boast because of his works. So now you may be thinking "If I have done ALL these things over the years then how do I get in to heaven?"

First of all we need to realize that everyone on this earth is a sinner. Sin is any word, thought, deed or attitude that falls short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God."

So if we all fall short and no sin is allowed in heaven then we are starting to see that we are in deep trouble.

Exodus 37b "Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished."

Since God is a Holy and just God, God MUST punish sin. So here we have a huge dilemma. Heaven and God are perfect. Since we now know the definition of sin let's say that you only committed 5 sins a day. Since sin is any thought or deed by the time you get to work in the morning you may have already committed 10 sins, maybe even more. By the end of the day you may have 100 sins accountable to you. But for numbers sake let's just use 5 a day. Five sins a day times a year is over 1,800 sins a year. Over and average lifetime we would be well over 70,000 sins. If we stand before God and NOT ONE SIN is allowed into heaven then YIKES. God would look at not one page but a book and we would be finished.

So God saw a need that you and I are dead in our sins with the need of a Savior. There is NO WAY that we can get to heaven in what we do or who we are. Now in order to save mankind God needed a perfect sacrifice, one without sin to pay for all those of us with sin. Jesus was born of a virgin and Jesus was God in the flesh.

John 1:1,14 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Amen for God's mercy to send Jesus to this earth. Jesus lived with us BUT DID NOT SIN. Jesus knows your pain, how we are tempted and how we hurt. But in order to pay for our sins Jesus had to be sacrificed. In the Old Testament animals without blemish were sacrificed and that blood atoned for the peoples sins. But they had to keep doing that over and over and over again. That is why Jesus is called the "Lamb of God". He willingly submitted himself to insults, being spitted upon and hung on a cross for YOU and for Me. We are the ones who deserved to be crucified not Jesus. But God needed a perfect sacrifice to save mankind. Jesus

John 19:30 "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

Yes Jesus paid the price and now Satan is rejoicing. Jesus is dead. Probably many people thought that the work of Jesus was finished and there was nothing more He could do. BUT, death could not hold Jesus. On the third day God raised Jesus from the dead. He conquered death so that we would not only have forgiveness for our sins which keep us out of heaven but that we would have one who would take us to heaven with Him.

But how can we have that assurance that we have heaven in our future? There are three types of faith and only one will work to get into heaven. There is a temporal faith where we may pray to God to get over a sickness or pass a test but after the crisis is over we forget about God and get back to business as usual. Then there is an intellectual faith. A lot of people believe in Jesus like they do George Washington or Abraham Lincoln. They believe that He lived and that He died but that He has no power.

James 2:19 "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that and shudder."

You see, Satan and his demons believe in the person of Jesus but they are not going to heaven. The only Faith that will work is a "Saving Faith." So what is a saving faith? Since I love to fly let me use this analogy. Let's say you are flying from New York to Los Angeles and you are waiting in the terminal for the boarding announcement. That plane will carry you to Los Angeles but you first of all have to get up where you are and board that plane. Even though you look at that plane and know in your heart that that plane can take you to LA. You need to get up and take action. You need to get up walk down that Jet Way and find your seat.

I believe that NOTHING happens by chance. It is not by chance that you are reading this devotional today on "How To Be Sure You Know You Are Going To Heaven".

Acts 2:21 "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

The great news is that EVERYONE can inherit eternal life with Jesus. It is everyone who calls on the name of the Lord by a "Saving fait

h" as no amount of works we do will get us into heaven. Some of you may be asking then why do good works? We do good works for what God has done for us not what we can do for God. There is NOTHING we can do to get us into better standing with our creator. We will be joyful believers when we do all things out of thankfulness instead of duty.

So here is the moment of truth in everyone's life. Do you believe that Jesus came to this earth, was God in the flesh, lived a sinless life, died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for your sins and to purchase a place for you in heaven? If so then if you pray this prayer and it is the desire of your heart then YOU WILL BE SAVED for eternity. But also remember God calls us we do not call Him. God is the one who changes your heart. If you read this devotional and your heart was stirred for God then God did that. He is bringing YOU unto Himself. If you read this devotional and had no feeling about the gospel then no prayer will get you into heaven. It is only the prayer of a repentant heart that sees his or her need for a Savior. Please pray this prayer if it is your desire to spend eternity in heaven.

"Lord Jesus I am a sinner and finally realize that my works will not get me into heaven. Forgive me for my sin, for trying to be the captain of my destiny and trying to control my future. It seems that everything I have done has been futile and my joy has been incomplete. I know Jesus that you died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for my sins. Jesus please come into my life now and take over. I desperately need your help. I turn my life over to you and trust in you Jesus for my salvation. Jesus thank you for saving me. Please help me to get to know you more each and everyday." Amen

If you prayed this prayer and it was your heart's desire then you are now a child of THE King with an inheritance in heaven. Nothing can take that away. Satan may throw roadblocks at you as He cannot take away your salvation but he can try to do things that stop you from trying to share this good news with others. Now that you have prayed this prayer Jesus has sent His Holy Spirit to now live inside of you FOREVER, AMEN!!!!!! When you read the bible now it will come alive, when you pray you will have promptings to do things. Your life now will have new meaning. If you have made this decision please e mail or call me so we can send you some literature to help you grow in your faith. This is the most important decision that you could ever make in your life. Rejoice in the Love of God that He sacrificed His Son so that you could have eternal life.

That is the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen to God's love and Amen to those of you whose names are now written in the Lambs book of life.

Have an awesome day and please pass this e mail along to others who need to know about the Good News of Jesus. The link for this devotional will be on our website "How to get to heaven" at link <http://www.theultimatedecision.com/howtogettoheaven.html>

Thank you all for spreading God's word and the greatest news ever. If you did make this decision today please e mail me so we can send you free resource materials to help you grow in your faith.

Brad

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Proverbs 12

Proverbs 12:3 "A man cannot be established through wickedness, but the righteous cannot be uprooted."

Saturday I went to the mail box and in it was a Christmas card that had been sent to our old address. This card was sent way before Christmas but just arrived Saturday. In the card was a picture of my friend and his family. But what caught my attention was an 8 x 12 sheet of paper with "Proverbs 12" copied on the paper???? Today's lesson Proverbs 12. If this card had gotten to me on time it would not have been unusual. No one could have orchestrated this reminder that we are on the right track but God Himself. You see God is still in the miracle business, God is still on the throne for now and forever, God is still in control, God is still planning our course and directing our steps. God is God. The question today is

CAN YOU REST IN HIM?

Or is your power too strong to relent to a God that you view much like yourself? We worry when we think we don't have control. I hate to tell you but we have no control at all over our circumstances. We may try to will ourselves to do certain things but at the end of the day God's will, WILL be done. So why not sleep all day?

The story of the "Talents" in Matthew 25 talks about using our "Talents" (not just money but our gifts from God) to the best of our ability. Not to honor ourselves but to honor the God who gave them to us. Why did God give me Proverbs 12 in the mail when I was writing about Proverbs 12? The more we try to figure God out the more frustrated we will become. God is infinite we are finite. God can hold back the oceans, holds billions of stars and planets in orbit, creates life in the womb and a trillion other things in a second. Today can you stop trying to figure out where God is taking you and just enjoy the ride.

Isaiah 55:9 ““As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

No matter what you have going on today God KNOWS!!!!!! When you and I worry about today, tomorrow or whenever we are really saying that “God may not be able to handle it”. REALLY! That is a lie from the evil one.

The above verse says that man cannot be established through wickedness. Oh, a man may be in power for a while if he is wicked but eventually he will be brought down. Joe Paterno is a great example of a man that fell prey to a house of wickedness. Joe Paterno may have done what he thought was right considering the circumstances. We don't know because we were not there. But one thing I do know is that God loves children. God will destroy those who hurt children. It is sad that a legacy was tarnished by one man's actions. (The one accused of these evil deeds) But it is even sadder that young boys lost their innocence in an evil manner. Joe Paterno is like any CEO or any Captain of an airplane. When I was a Captain for an airline if someone was directing me in and we banged a wingtip it still would have been my fault. It would be my ultimate responsibility for the safety of the people that have been entrusted to me. We can easily place blame today on many circumstances but if you desire to live a life where you will not be uprooted then FOLLOW AND OBEY JESUS.

We may be uprooted from our job but we will not be uprooted by our faith or our secure position with Jesus if we are saved. Things fell apart at Penn State not because of Joe Paterno but because Football became more important than the well-being of “the least of these.” I still gain a lot of wisdom from former business partners Paul and Elaine They were a great couple who have helped countless people. But one thing Paul always taught me in every decision was “Will it pass the front page of the paper”? At first I was confused by Paul's question until I understood what he was after. If all your decisions in life can be put on the front page of the paper and you are OK with that then chances are most people will be too. When you start to cover up things or not tell the entire truth wickedness seems to creep in.

No matter what you thought of Joe Paterno this situation is not about him. We need to pray for a grieving family who lost their dad, spouse and coach. We need to more importantly pray for those kids who have lost something that can never be returned. There is enough blame to go around for any problem we have in society. But there is only One who can heal, restore and bring justice. He is Jesus. Follow Him, don't have Him follow you and you will not be uprooted but kept from evil.

Brad



Proverbs 13

Proverbs 13:24 “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.”

When I was young I was not spared the rod. I think I had a few rods with my name on it. I can remember coming home with a bad report card knowing I would get the rod. All I could do was laugh because I knew it was coming. My ADD and Dyslexia did not help me with getting good grades. It just looked like I was lazy. I do know if I gave up but I just expected the consequences.

In the above verse there is one word that I feel many parents, teachers and people in authority fail to follow. When people read “DON’T spare the rod it is a license to enact a form of punishment. A lot of times the punishment is justified. But the key word in this verse is “CAREFUL” to discipline. First of all I believe in the rod. I believe in setting boundaries and some of those boundaries need to be painful. Time out only goes so far. Kids are smart; they know how far they can take you. If they learn there are no consequences for their bad actions then later in life they will be doing worse things since they have not learned that there are consequences for EVERY decision.

It is easy to correct a child with the rod. Most people correct out of anger and frustration. But it is the extremely loving parent who not only corrects with the rod but is careful on how to use the rod. It takes explaining to be careful. Parents, it takes discipline to use the rod wisely. A lot of times we discipline like our parents disciplined us. Then there are those who were disciplined so harshly that they don’t discipline their kids at all. The reason most parents, bosses and people in leadership aren’t careful in discipline is that IT TAKES TIME AND EFFORT. It takes work.

Today you are going to be facing decisions on how to raise a child or there may be an issue in the workplace that needs addressed. It is easy to fire someone and it is easy to use the rod. It is tough to sit someone down and talk to them about their actions. It is tough to take the time to explain “Why” you are going to discipline and why they need discipline. Then when you use the rod it is now tougher on you than the one getting the rod. That is because your anger is gone from “The Event” and you are now thinking clearly. It is tough to use the rod when you discipline out of love instead of anger.

Now you can get a glimpse of how God disciplines us that He loves,

Hebrews 12:6 “because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”

Don't get mad when you're disciplined as it is for your own good to keep you from going farther down the path of destruction. Parents and those in authority

PLEASE NEVER DISCIPLINE OUT OF ANGER.

Then when you discipline it may hurt you more than the one you are disciplining but it will be for all the right reasons. Please e mail me today your prayers on this matter. Many are going through discipline right now and we need to pray for you.

Brad



Proverbs 14

Proverbs 14:31 "He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God."

As I was leaving the doctor's office for my neck issues I saw a man that was blind trying to get out of the automatic doors. For some reason I just stopped and I told him I would stand in the doors to make sure they stayed open. He let out a smile that pierced my heart.

So another story in my life starts that God orchestrates. He was going to wait for his son to come pick him up so I stayed and chatted with him. This man had been injured in Vietnam and when the VA went to operate on him an infection set in and he ended up losing sight in both eyes at the age of 26. He is now 60 years old. So here was a man that couldn't walk (me) and a man that couldn't see (him) making up a healthy pair. I say healthy pair because for the next 15 minutes all we talked about was Jesus.

I had asked him how he lost his sight. Then I told him what I did and that opened the door to Jesus. Jesus was our common bond. He also had nowhere to go but Jesus. It is great to meet people that are at the end of their rope, who have seen that life is futile without knowing the King!!! He told me his son just started driving and that he was coming to pick him up. He joked that his insurance rates doubles to 400 dollars and his son didn't even own a car yet.

When I was in the doctor's office I was going over a verse on my phone that I had written down. When I got downstairs and was talking to this man I read him the verse that was on my phone.

John 9:1-3 "As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life"

This verse was for this man. My appointment ran late. There is no way if my appointment had stayed on time that I would have met this man. YES, God is in control. He said that God has used him in so many, many ways. He is a Christian musician and he gave me his cell number so hopefully we can stay in touch.

All of a sudden this man's son pulled up and hit the cement post in front of the building. He didn't hit it hard but this man heard it. Apparently when you are blind your other senses are much stronger. We had built up such a great report in the last 15 minutes that when he said "What was that noise" I grabbed his shoulders and started laughing. I said to him "Your insurance just went from \$ 400 dollars up to \$ 1,000 dollars. He laughed along with me. He knew what is important in life and it isn't THINGS.

I was not kind to this man to honor God but in being kind I was able to honor God without even knowing it. This man looked poor and could do nothing for me but in the end he did everything for me. He gave me joy; we connected as brothers by ONE Spirit. I have a feeling that we will be speaking again. So the next time you have places to go and things to do slow down and hold the door open for a blind man, a woman, a child or a King. You may never get a chance to see the Spirit of God working if you think you are the only game in town.

Have a great day and SLOW DOWN.

Brad



Proverbs 15

Proverbs 15:13 “A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit.”

There are many of you who have written in that have a crushed spirit. You're “Heart Aches” desiring for the pain of loss to be over. But what if you have a loved one who has died and they will never come back? What if your retirement was wasted by an unethical company? What if..... “

The last thing a lot of us desire to hear at a funeral is “They are in a better place”. Now while that may be true we still miss them terribly and always will till we are called home.

Proverbs 13:12 “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life”

So how can we STOP “Heart Ache”? In 2005 when I did the Ironman in Lake Placid I had gone 130 miles and I had only 10 miles to go when severe leg cramps set in. The amount of salt that I was taking in was nowhere what I needed for my muscles to function properly. I had been out on the race course for over 11 hours and my body was starting to say “Enough is Enough”. Heartache and a crushed spirit would not be finishing the race. So many people were praying for me and I was trying to raise money for Autism Awareness. This race was more than me just competing. I needed to finish.

When I got into the Olympic Oval for the finish with only 200 yards to go, Julie, Bryce and Chase were able to run the last 100 yards with me and we finished together. There were at least 30 times that I wanted to quit in that long day. But the finish line was my goal no matter what. I can't explain to you the pain but the awesome emotion that I felt when I broke the tape at the finish line made me forget all that pain. (A longing fulfilled)

Today you may feel like you can't go on. That the finish line is too far off, that you are alone and don't have anyone to help you or that you feel “Why even try”. If you are feeling this way today

PLEASE DON'T QUIT

Find small victories to hang onto. The devil does not want you to finish this race of life with joy. He desires to crush you and for you to crush others. I think so many people that are believers are not allowing the Holy Spirit to give them His strength because

1. We don't ask
2. We don't believe
3. We are too busy
4. We feel too far gone

But it is the same Spirit that gave Lazarus life and conquered death that lives inside of you today. The only way to stop heart ache is to look BEYOND our current circumstances to the Finish Line of when we meet Jesus. All will be well and finally make sense. But until that time do not let the devils schemes get you down. Jesus has so much more in store for you if you just say "I am yours".

"Lord please forgive me for being fearful at times when I am in a trial. Please increase my faith and help me to see that you are in control. Please restore the joy that was once in my life that I have quenched by needless worries. I have suffered some world losses Jesus that at times have made me bitter. Lord I don't want to be bitter anymore but better. I desire to live a Spirit filled life of hope and not despair. I desire to live a life that says "Bring it on" as I know that in and through you Jesus I can do all things for your glory. Please make today the day I stop being timid and to start living a life of power and purpose." Amen

Live for the Lord and don't look back.

Brad



Proverbs 16

Proverbs 16:9 "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps."

This has been one of my favorite verses in the Bible. It gives me comfort knowing that if I make a mistake God WILL still orchestrate that mistake for His perfect purpose. May times we live our lives full of guilt for either a wrong decision or a decision that we were forced into by others. This side of heaven an evil presence will always be felt by the Prince of this world (Satan). Prayer is one of the few things that stops this evil in its tracks.

In the new book I have out “Failing Doesn’t Mean You’re A Failure” I have certainly taken the circuitous route. But no matter what mistakes, failures, blunders, sin and on and on that has happened God is still working IT all out for His glory. Nothing catches Him by surprise, Nothing. Now some of us are mad at God because we want to go one way and He directs us another way. We don’t know why we lose a job or have to move. But when God has something better He will move you. Please do not be afraid of God’s plans for you as we are all sinners who desperately need a Savior each day of our lives.

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Isn’t that it? We all want a hope and a future that brings joy and not despair.

“Lord please help me to stop trusting in my clever ideas and hard work. Help me to know that no matter what I do that You will determine the outcome for your perfect purpose. Help me to work hard but to also not dwell on my failures. Help me to dwell within you and you alone Lord. At times I am so worried about life that I seem paralyzed to move. Help me Lord to feel your love for me. Help me to know that your plans are not to harm but to prosper me in your mercy and grace.” Amen

Live and don’t worry, God has EVERYTHING under His control.

Brad



Proverbs 17

Proverbs 17:3 “The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart.”

The Lord “Tests” us and the devil “Tempts” us. What is worse?

James 1:2-4 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

1 Corinthians 10:13 “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

Testing is for improvement but tempting is for destruction. The Lord desires our faith to increase. That can only happen through prayer and trials. I do not know of anyone whose faith has been built through times of success. I know many whose faith has been tested in times of drought, hospital stays, business failures, lack of _____ and on and on. I would not change one day of my life. Those desperate days were the very essence that refined my faith in the fiery furnace of God’s love. God loves you and I enough to let the trials come so that the impurities of greed, pride, lack of faith and doubt will be burned away and a true faith will surface from the impurities. A faith of joy will be revealed.

Satan on the other hand desires to not just hurt you and I but he desires to destroy us. But even when we are being chased by the devil God still intervenes and provides a way of escape. But it is up to us to “Flee”. Flee is one of the best weapons against the devil’s schemes. You get flattering words from your secretary, FLEE. You have a chance to raise profits quickly but a little unethically, FLEE, you can choose to take the easy road and not confront a situation to make things right, FLEE towards justice.

Each day has many snares and traps. Each day also reveals the glory of the Lord. The glory of the Lord is revealed when we FLEE and see the wondrous plan of God’s salvation. If we do not FLEE we get stuck in the filthy mire of sin and good luck trying to see through this sin to the power of the Lord. But each new day brings hope. A chance to repent and make things right with the ONLY one who can forgive your sin and set your feet upon firm footing. But first of all you need to repent. Repent means to turn. Turn from the wickedness of sin that first looked enticing but now is as bitter as death itself. God is the only one who can forgive and release you from this burden. But YOU have to be the first one to FLEE.

Until you take your last breath the “Testing” and “Tempting” won’t stop. Will you be ready for the next barrage of stuff that will either refine and define you or ruin your legacy and turn to death? The choice is yours. Proverbs is all about the Lord’s wisdom. Today please choose wisely. The choice is yours.

“Lord I have been selfish and a lot of times my own desires prevent me from serving others. I want to serve you and not be selfish but it seems that I am trapped. Please Lord release me from the devil’s grasp and place me on firm footing. Please keep me from the devil’s snares and help me to stop chasing after everything else but you Lord. Please make this the day that I change for eternity. That I change and finally follow you instead of trying to make you follow me. Thank you Lord for listening to my prayers and healing my heart. Please protect me Jesus”. Amen

Now go and don’t worry. Go and don’t fret about what is to come. God will always provide a way out. But don’t cower in the face of adversity but embrace it in the power and the love of the Lord.

Brad



Proverbs 18

Proverbs 18:13 “He who answers before listening – that is his folly and his shame.”

Ouch!!!! There have been times I thought I knew where my wife Julie was going in a conversation so I ended the sentence for her. Ever been there? Not a good idea. It is not only rude but it is also arrogant. When we answer quickly without thinking we can say all sorts of things we regret. On the other side people have said things to us that were hurtful that we will remember the rest of our earthly lives.

James 1:19 “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry”

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care”

“This is a saying that has been credited to many people, such as Cavett Robert and John C. Maxwell. The saying appears to have started in the medical profession, emphasizing that caring for patients is just as important to them as a medical professional’s book knowledge. The earliest citations (both medical-related) are from 1962 and 1968. www.barrypopik.com

We are all salespeople. Whether we are trying to get our children to eat vegetables, sell insurance, cars or our services we all sell. The key to being great in any sales position is to

LISTEN MORE THAN YOU TALK.

When you start out a conversation talking about what you have done, who you know and what you can do that is arrogant and self-fulfilling. It is much better to listen and ask questions to find out what people really want **FIRST**. When was the last time you

1. Listened before answering?
2. Thought of others more than yourself?
3. Thought of other peoples answers with true interest – not just a means to an end?

I am not here to beat you down but if you are wondering why things aren’t going right it just may be because you are talking much more than listening. And I mean really listening. I know people who go into a meeting holding their tongue and do a good job at it. They listen to all the wisdom from other people and seem genuine doing it. The problem is they have already made their mind up of what they were going to do before they even came into the meeting. How arrogant is that!

Did God put us on the throne? Or did God put other people on this earth with different gifts so that we could gain wisdom from them?

Today you will face many challenges. It is much better to listen and then listen some more. Don't show how smart you are as that can come to a crashing halt in just a few short words. Pray for wisdom, care about other people more than yourself and THEN you will have a chance to gain wisdom from others. Then and only then can you offer a soothing word of advice that people will cherish instead of showing off how much you know.

Have a great day and LISTEN.

Brad



Proverbs 19

Proverbs 19:27 “Stop listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.”

Ask yourself this morning “Who do you listen to”? Every day we get bombarded with people either trying to sell us something, tell us how to live, what to watch, what to avoid and how to right a wrong. The media. Talk shows, friends and coworkers might all give us different answers for the same problem. How do we know who is right?

How many of you listen to the devil to make your decisions? I know, some of you are saying “I don't listen to the devil at all”. Let me give you a brief view into the spiritual realm.

Ephesians 6:2 “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places”.

So why would Satan pick on you and I?

If you are a believer in Jesus then you are sealed for eternity and you will live forever in heaven with the Lord. BUT since Satan cannot break this bond he can try to make your life miserable so you are an ineffective witness. Have you even wondered that sometimes when you get close to

Jesus the attacks pick up? Satan hates it when you learn how to pray, when you call upon the name of the Lord. That is because prayer is the most powerful weapon against Satan. Remember we aren't fighting against "Flesh and Blood" but against evil in the spiritual realm.

John 10:27 "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

If you want to live a life unto yourselves you will not heed the Lord's knowledge. If you do not pray and read God's word then how do you know the difference in your spirit between the voice of Satan and the voice of Jesus? Jesus says that His sheep know Him. If you do not know Jesus this link on our website is the most important decision of your life here on earth. Please read it now.

<http://theultimatedecision.com/howtogettoheaven.html>

If you made a decision to accept the free gift of Jesus please e mail me so we can pray for you and send you some study materials to help you grow in your faith.

Today make the wise decision to LISTEN to all wise counsel. Before you make a decision don't have your mind made up before you ask. Be open to what God may say through other people. Please do not stray from the straight and narrow path as there are snares and traps all around you. Satan does not want to hurt you he wants to destroy you. When the above passage says "Stop listening to instruction" the opposite would be to gain instruction daily by praying and reading God's word in the Bible. When you pray things are set in motion in the heavenly realms that if we could see we would be praying from morning till night.

If you are discouraged today because of some wrong decisions or you are afraid to make a decision please pray for wisdom and ask God. Yes ask God. God gives GENEROUSLY to all who sincerely seek to follow Him. God desires to show up in a huge way in YOUR LIFE. Let Him show up today.

Have a great day.

Brad

Proverbs 20



Proverbs 20:9 "Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin"?"

How many times have we judged someone because we felt they have either harmed us or someone else? Then if we are not careful we can think that we are better than them. Going to church, being kind to the poor and being baptized does NOT get you into heaven and they do not make you righteous.

Ephesians 2:8,9 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”

“Works” are a smokescreen to a “Righteous” person. In our world today we can view righteousness as someone who gives a lot of money to the poor, teaches Sunday School, is kind to others and lives a meager lifestyle. BUT

NO ONE ON THIS EARTH ARE RIGHTEOUS, NONE.

It is only Jesus living inside of us (If we are saved) that makes us righteous before a Holy God. When God looks down He sees the blood of Jesus not our sin if we are saved. It is NOTHING we can do or have done that makes us righteous. If there was something we could have done then Jesus died for nothing. So please never think of yourself as better than someone else. That is a travesty to God. When you think of yourself better than anyone and I mean anyone then look at this next verse.

Proverbs 17:5a “He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker”

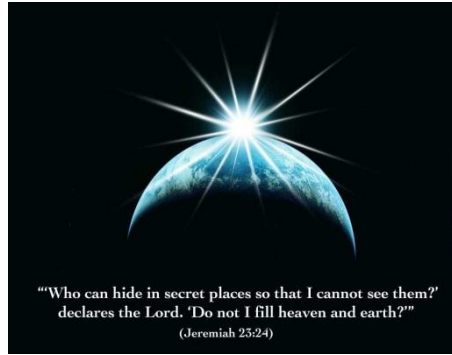
Our life would be a lot less hectic we when stop trying to be like _____. The person you think has it all or is a role model of sorts IS STILL A SINFUL PERSON. The only One we should be looking up to is Jesus. How would your life be different if Jesus was your only role model? Would you stop caring what other people think? Of course you would, WHO CARES!

“Lord forgive me for thinking that others have it better than me. I know that your plan is perfect for my life. Help me not to fret and worry but know that each second of everyday is ordained for your perfect purpose. Help me to stop the anguish when I see someone that has more things. Help me to live for you Jesus and not the applause of man. Lord I have such a tough time understanding real love. But I desire to experience the love you have for me. Lord please help me today to see your love for me. I know that if I can see that then I would worry no more. I believe you are the Christ who rose from the dead to pay the penalty for my sins. Thank you for saving me Jesus.” Amen

Have a great day and DON'T FRET!!! Give everyone the benefit of the doubt.

Brad

Proverbs 21



Proverbs 21:30 "There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord."

So why do we not ask the Lord what we should do if all plans will fail WITHOUT His counsel? Our new book "Failing Doesn't Mean You're A Failure" is stories upon stories of Failure. I write about this for two reasons. The obvious one is to never give up no matter what obstacles may be in front of you. The second is not so obvious. As you read through the book, at least early in my life, I had no relationship with the Lord and made decisions as I pleased. Everything I touched turned into a failure for lack of God's counsel.

Today you may be wondering

1. Where God is in your pain
2. Where God is in your failure
3. Where God is in your provisions
4. Where God is in anything you do.

Many times we can read the verse

Hebrews 13:5 "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

We have in the back of our mind the promise that God says He will never leave or forsake us but then why do we have all these troubles??? If God was here He would provide, if God was here He would stop the pain, if God was here He would see and then stop my tears.

Deuteronomy 5:7 "You shall have no other gods before me"

This is the time where you need to get in a quiet place and pray. Please ask the Lord to reveal to you what you have made a god before God. I would have to say that at times I have made a god of my former business, my kids and my wife. I have put them ahead of God. I have been more concerned about losing them than losing God. God created our children. Some of our worst nightmares are if God takes back what He has made. Every god we make up and start to worship God made. We then take what God made and start worshipping it instead of our creator (God). That is where the troubles starts and ends. When we put ANYTHING ahead of our love for God then we will suffer.

Will live in a frantic world where information is immediate and our minds can be filled to overflowing. If we are not careful we find many things more important than God to fill our time with. Today you may think you are the captain of your ship and in control of your destiny. If you are like this then I would ask you to repent and ask the Lord for forgiveness because He WILL get your attention. It may take taking everything away from you but God loves you enough for you to come back to Him.

“Lord I have wondered so many times “Why” these things were happening to me. I have felt at times that you were mad at me and never once considered that you loved me. Lord please forgive me for my sin of creating other gods and not coming back and putting you first. I have wandered so far from you that I don’t know how to even start to come back. Please Jesus forgive me for my wandering spirit and to start to put you first in my life now. I know that nothing good will come into my life that you have not ordained. I pray that I can come to you Lord will all my cares and concerns and to wait upon you before making any decision. Please calm my heart Jesus as I have been so distraught and desperately need the peace that only you can give. Thank you Jesus for loving me no matter how far I have strayed from you.” Amen.

Jesus desires for us to put Him first. Why don’t you make today the day and never look back on past regrets? God can make you whole again.

Brad



Proverbs 22

A number of years ago when we were trying to build a business I was on the phone constantly. The one thing I hated was voice mail. Whenever I heard to hit 1 or 2 or 3 or 4, I would just start tapping 0,0,0. I don’t know how my wife Julie got the message but she said that a Mr. Lyon wanted to speak with me and that it was urgent. OK a new client. I called up the 800 number and got voice mail. OK 0,0,0 tap, tap, tap and finally a woman appears on the line. I told her my name and said that I was returning a call from Mr. Lyon. She said “We don’t have anyone here by that name.” I knew I had the number right so again I said "I know that a Mr. Lyon is there can you check your records as he said it was urgent. “This woman said to me “I think someone is trying to pull a joke on you, This is the “Columbia Zoo”. Mr. Lyon was a Lion?
JULIE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Proverbs 22:13 “The sluggard says, “There is lion outside “ or I will be murdered in the streets.”

The entire book of proverbs talks about issues that affect us everyday. I didn't used to feel like a sluggard till severe depression set in. Worry, fear and a sense of hopelessness crept in. It got so bad that I didn't feel like going outside. A lot of people who have never experienced this evil will think “Just shake it off” but depression is much more than just shaking something off. It is an evil that takes on physical symptoms. But God allows this type of suffering so we can finally see God.

Hebrews 12:1 “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

The sluggard can come back to life BUT only if the sluggard turns his life over to His creator. The wealthy man can finally have pure joy without money when he turns his life over to the Lord. There are many snares in this life. Have you seen in the movies where snares are covered under leaves and if you step in one and it then pulls you up in a tree to be caught or worse? Each day has snares all around you. Some of you have been caught in so many snares that either you are afraid to go outside or afraid to try again.

2 Corinthians 7:10 “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”

All the verses we have just talked about come down to one thing. Repentance! Not sorry you got caught but sorry that you and I sin each day before a Holy God. God desires for us to be whole not have a hole in our heart. There is a hole in our heart that we try to fill with everything imaginable. But that hole can only be filled by God. If you desire to finally have peace in your life then you need to “Repent” and ask God to fill that void in your heart with Himself. You need to turn from the THINGS that you have been trying to fill that hole with and be whole with Jesus. It is an action that starts with YOU. But when you take that first step God takes 20 towards you. If you feel alone, tired, confused and worn out then please pray this prayer with me.

“Lord please forgive me for creating so many other gods in my heart besides you. At times it feels like I can't even get up in the morning. Then when I do I feel that I have no purpose. Lord please come in and take over my life. Please have access to every part of my life that has been a snare to the peace that you so desire for me to have. Lord help me to lead a life that is pleasing to you and not myself. Because I know when I am following you that true peace will flood my soul. Lord thank you for listening to my prayers and for healing me.” Amen

Try to have joy today knowing that God is working in you. He loves you enough to want to do a miracle through YOU. Stand back and watch His glory.

Brad

Proverbs 23



Proverbs 23:35 ““They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?"

My grandfather was a unique man. He had stories upon stories and had such a raspy contagious laugh that it made you laugh with him. I don't know if my grandfather was an alcoholic but he did hide bottles of liquor out in in the trees in the yard. My grandmother didn't like him drinking so in his spare time (A lot of spare time) he learned to be a Gardner. He was a Doctor but his passion was gardening (Drinking). So out he would go for a couple hours to take care of the lawn. On one occasion he fell asleep after too much drinking and finally awoke and came inside. Little did he know that a snake had crawled into the bottom of his pants so now he has a snake loose in the house.

He had many sayings but one of his favorites was “Who Hit Me.” Grandpa used to quote scripture all the time, yes scripture. So maybe he knew what it was like to be drunk and knew the verse we are talking about in proverbs. As my cousins and my mom could attest we sure miss our grandpa.

So can we drink? This is one of the most polarizing, legalistic questions in the Christian faith.

Proverbs 23:20 “Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat.”

Now this would say join those who do not get drunk but drink occasionally. That is if you are not prone to gluttony or to alcoholism. Some will say “Jesus turned water into wine”. That is true but Jesus obeyed his mother when she asked him to do this when the wedding banquet ran out of wine. Jesus made the best wine possible because he makes everything perfect. The question is whether we should drink or eat in front of someone that is taken over to gluttony or alcoholism. Let's look at this next verse.

1 Corinthians 10:23 “Everything is permissible”—but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible”—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others”

I could drink till dawn, eat till I throw up and that would be permissible but that would not be beneficial.

1 Corinthians 10:31-33 “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.”

There are a lot of times I am out with a group of non-believers who are drinking. I can't drink because I cannot stop at one. I don't hold drinking against anyone as that is my problem. If I denounced the unbeliever then they would think I was just another religious person telling them what they can and cannot do. But as believers we are called to a greater standard. We are called to give up so others may not stumble. A lot of times we can think in our mind, “I am going to drink; no one is going to put a yoke around my neck”. All I will say to that is to be very careful to

NOT BE A PARTY TO CAUSING ANYONE TO STUMBLE.

I can still hear the ice cubes in a tumbler with vodka and I WANT a drink. It has been 19 years since I had a drink and I still want to go to the ABC store and buy a 5th. God has not released this desire from me even though I have asked MANY times. I am not sure why. But the worst thing I can do is condemn those who drink. The best thing I can do is to be compassionate of those who struggle with excess. So after all this writing there is not an answer to whether you should or shouldn't drink. The only question you have to ask yourself IF ANYTHING YOU DO will it cause another to stumble? Jesus came to this earth so we could be free but a huge price was paid. Better to do with little than have feasting and strife.

People are hurting today in and in addictions of many forms. I know many people addicted to exercise. If I go out running with one, am I leading them down the path of destruction? Life is complicated without the Sprit directing us. Be careful and wise in all that you do. Seek the Spirit's direction and pray that you are not the one who causes anyone to stumble. Just because we can doesn't mean we should.

Brad

Proverbs 24



Proverbs 24:19,20 “Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of the wicked, for the evil man has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out. “

Who are you hitching your horse to? Are you working for evil men or women because of the money and prestige? If you are, when that evil person dies you will be left all alone. People will remember that you sold yourself out. I have met a lot of evil people in the world that have one motive. Victory at all costs! My question today would be to you is “Who are you following and why”?

Have you taken a position with an evil man or woman for a paycheck? If so that is selling yourself out.

Proverbs 16:8 “Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice”

The Lord will not be mocked and the Lord will not be fooled. If it means losing your job you have to do the right thing if you are a believer. We should all try to do the right thing but if you are not a believer in Jesus then your moral compass is off. You will never get right with the world till you get right with Jesus.

If you have fear of man then you are allowing evil men to have more power than Jesus. I know that one stings but that is true. You either need to quit your job and tell your boss that you are tired of him or her treating people poorly and being their front man. You are only harming yourself and your testimony. If you are that man or woman then you need to repent. No matter how much money or security you have it can be taken away in an instant. You can never have enough money or worldly security to stop God’s righteousness. A healthy fear of the Lord is a great thing. If you are treating people unfairly remember this one thing.

You are against One who can breathe out stars a million times bigger than the sun. Is that who you really want to take on?

Today you have a choice who you will serve. Will you serve up a plate of injustice for security of a paycheck or will you leave and let God put you in a better position? Evil people always corrupt others. Pray for them but don’t hang around them. God HATES and despises unequal scales. God loves the brokenhearted, the poor in spirit and the rich who are poor in spirit that desire to seek after Him.

Don’t fret today if you are persecuted by evil men. YOU are on the side of the true King. The one who can deliver a fatal blow to anyone in this world at anytime. Make sure you are chasing after God and not selling yourself out.

Brad



Proverbs 25

Proverbs 25:11 “A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in setting of silver.”

Some commentaries have said that this would be a beautiful centerpiece. Plus that would be a lot of gold which would make it very expensive. This brings me to the question “Why are we here and what are we doing”?

Philippians 2:3,4 “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Based upon these two verses one of our main priorities in this life is to be a light unto a dark world. First of all we need to be saved to go out in the Lord’s power. Then we need to help others MORE than ourselves. A lot of times we will help others after we get our fill. After we get our promotion. What if you lived your life for others? There are two ways to do this.

Most of the people in this world will do this with a selfish heart. I am going to help you BUT I want my reward and I want acknowledged.

But very few help people not expecting anything in return.

The only way to do the right things which is the second response is to be led by the spirit of God. Anytime our flesh gets involved our motives are always tainted. So how do we stop living by the flesh and start living by the spirit?

PRAY! To live a supernatural life we need to turn over all we have to the Lord. We need to be set free from OUR own desires and live for the Lord who gives generously. The problem is most of us want our reward, comfort and accolades now instead of waiting to hear them from the Lord when we see Him in heaven. If you desire something better in life then please pray this prayer with me.

“Lord please forgive me for my selfish motives. I desire to serve out of love instead of trying to get something back. I have failed so many times in this area Jesus that I need your help. Lord please fill my entire body with your spirit and take over those deep dark places in my life that I have kept hidden. Please bring out everything into the light and forgive me for doing things in my own power and strength. I pray that right now Lord that I would start living a supernatural life dedicated to you instead of trying to build MY kingdom instead of yours. I am tired of

holding onto things that always fly away. Lord help me to serve you only and to hold onto you Lord.” Amen

You can lead a life fulfilled when you pray and allow God to lead you. This is not a one-time prayer but one that you may need to pray and keep on praying. The devil desires for you to be selfish and to take all that you can. Stop the devil in his tracks by quoting scripture, denouncing him in the name of Jesus and praying for God to lead you. Then and only then will you be able to lead a life that is for others.

Have an awesome day and look to encourage those who are hurting. By the way that is everyone!

Brad



Proverbs 26

Most of the verses in Proverbs 26 have to do with the folly of a fool. The other Proverbs have been about wisdom, correction, discipline and ways to stay out of trouble in life. But for some reason Solomon was led to talk about “Fools”. So what type of fool is he talking about?

Fool - a silly or stupid person; a person who lacks judgment or sense.

Foolish - lacking forethought or caution.

Folly - a foolish action, practice, idea, etc.; absurdity: the folly of performing without a rehearsal. Dictionary.com

Proverbs 26:12 “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”

But here is the most interesting part of this Proverb. In everything talking about a fool and his folly it seems that “Arrogance” is worse than this. A man wise in his own eyes. Matthew Chapter 25 talks about doing the most that you can with the “Talents” God has given you and not being a fool. Talents can be your own talent God has given you or your money. If we do not use it wisely then God will take whatever talents we have left and give it to someone else. Now that is a scary thought. That should spur us onto using our talents wisely and not being a fool.

Proverbs 8:13 “To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.”

A fool is subdued and left to their own folly BUT God HATES “Pride and Arrogance”. When God stripped away all that we had we had nothing left but God. We could either curse God or trust in His promises and know that not only did He love us but that he had a better plan. So what was the better plan? Allowing us to serve Him full time and to be able to write our new book.

I have received numerous testimonials from our new book. These were a couple I received yesterday.

“Brad,

All I can say is, “Thank You”.....

Thank you for blessing my life with the writings of your life story in your new book, “Failing Doesn’t Mean You’re a Failure”.

The same Power of the Holy Spirit that allowed you to compose this book, allowed me to sit still for over 3 hours on my couch in front of my fireplace on this cold, February Sunday a read your book “cover to cover”. AMAZING!!!

The only other time in my life that I have read a book in one day was when I read Josh Hamilton’s story “Beyond Belief”.

You touched me on every page, and each chapter uniquely paralleled my life and journey in some “special” way that ONLY GOD knows!

Keep looking UP and count on me to share your book with people everywhere I go.

Blessings and Love”

“This review is from: "Failing Doesn't Mean You're A Failure" (Kindle Edition)

I purchased this book yesterday afternoon and finished it this morning. I could not put it down! Brad Henry has an amazing ability to share his love for Jesus! We all live through bad situations and are quick to turn to our Father for help in those times. Brad tells his story and shares how we need a relationship with our Father ALL the time. Just because we feel we may be being punished for something because we aren't getting exactly what we prayed for, doesn't mean He doesn't love us, and in fact he may have something better in store for us than what we prayed for. I'm not what you call a regular reader. In fact I think I may have a touch of ADD as I get very sleepy whenever I try to read a book. Not this one! Thank you Brad for writing this book and sharing your story!”

Thank you Jesus for taking the worldly things away. All the attacks of the evil one has been worth it to see God’s glory revealed. There have been many times that God has prevented me from acting like a fool and showing up in an arrogant spirit BUT God knew better. God took away EVERYTHING that would be a distraction to me and my walk with Him. Today can you let go of _____ and let God into all those places that you keep hidden. You will not have joy till you do so.

“Lord I have spurned discipline, have been foolish at times by being wise in my own eyes and thinking more of myself than others. Please forgive me Lord for all my sin and help me to feel as white as driven snow. Please also help me to forget my past sin as you have Jesus and to allow

me to have a fresh start in life today. Please lift my feet upon firm footing. I have felt like I have no anchor and have drifted to and fro with no compass. Lord I am tired of drifting through life and I desire to live for you and to finally have purpose in my life. Lord thank you for hearing me and for loving me.” Amen

As we are on our last week of Proverbs let us reflect that God desires in us to work to the best of our abilities with the talents that we have. But God is not performance based like the world is. God loves you just as you are. BUT He desires that you get better. Not get better to be loved more but to get better so His glory may be revealed in YOU. Yes the God of the universe loves YOU and He wants to use YOU. Please never forget that.

Brad



Proverbs 27

Proverbs 27:21 “The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives.”

In ancient times they used a crucible to draw out the impurities of silver and a furnace to draw out the impurities of gold. But in today’s world a lot of our personal impurities can come out by people praising us. When you look at Professional Athletes who make more money in one day than most of us make in a year they are put in a tough position. It may seem that they have it great but heap tons of praise 24/7 for years and it would be very tough to not buy into your own press. I have also seen account people handed an executive job in a high profile position and within months they have changed to an arrogant self-fulfilling person. Having the power and then getting false praise from others is a set up for moral and personal failure.

But you don’t have to be a professional athlete or a high paying CEO to fall from the accolades of praise. We can get snared by praise from our assistant or our friends. If we think that we are the ones who have the talent then we can start to get an arrogant spirit. I am here to tell you today that all your hard work, training and working countless hours will NOT guarantee victory.

Proverbs 21:31 “The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD.”

God gives us our talents, WE DO NOT EARN THEM. He gives us an aptitude for physics or for English, a body for football or one for swimming and a spirit that needs Him. When you can

finally understand that God is in control and He ALONE is the one to be praised then when people praise you, you can say Thank You and let it go. They are not praising you, they can't. Because it is not you who is doing great works. It is a great God who has done a great work in you.

When Jesus was being accused before his crucifixion on the cross he could have easily said "How Dare You" talk to me like this, don't you know who I am? Why did he take the abuse and lack of praise for the very people He created? Because He knew this very profound statement.

John 19:11 "Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

So the next time you think or say "How Dare You" when someone harms you think of Jesus. God knows when people harm you and He delights in making uneven scales even. (Proverbs 20:23) Please don't fall for the praise of men and women. Just fall for the Lord and then everything else will fall into place.

"Lord I feel so arrogant and prideful and times. Please forgive me for this sin. Lord all I desire is to see the love you have for me. If I could feel that love I would not desire any praise from another. Lord help me to slow down and listen to you. Please come into my life Lord in a mighty way. Please strip off all that is hindering my walk with you and to help free me from the desire of praise. Thank you Jesus for listening to my prayers and for healing me". Amen

Now go out today and look for those who are hurting. Jesus will put you in front of them. Then when people thank you for a job well done say thank you and then look up into the heavens and say "Thank You Lord" for working through me. You and you alone Lord deserve all my praise.

Have a great day.

Brad



Proverbs 28

Proverbs 28:12 "When the righteous triumph, there is great elation; but when the wicked rise to power, men go into hiding."

Over the years I have seen a lot of corporations that have had CEO's that ruled with an iron fist and fear and then there were those who trusted in the Lord for the outcome. The ones who trusted in the Lord still worked hard and diligent but they were not tyrannical. When a boss, a father or a leader of any kind is tyrannical then people go into hiding.

Today we live in a world where John Chapter 12 says that Satan is called the "Prince" of this world we live in. But a Prince ALWAYS has a King. That King is Jesus. Before Satan can do anything to you he has to first consult the Lord. What Satan does for harm God can ALWAYS turn it around for His glory. Just be patient.

Today no matter whether you serve a tyrant or a boss or are in an abusive home, know this! The righteous One did triumph. Over 2,000 years ago Jesus conquered death and broke the back of Satan so that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life. If you do not know for sure if you have heaven in your future please click on <http://theultimatedecision.com/howtogettoheaven.html> If you make that decision to follow the Lord please let me know so we can send you a Bible and some other free resource materials to help you grow in your faith.

But what about today if you are suffering injustice at the hands of imperfect people? Jesus is righteous and He did triumph. Jesus created all that are on this earth, even the tyrant. God controls him or her like a puppet even though they would beg to differ. Just be patient. Use this time of turmoil and uncertainty as a time to trust, lean and cry out to God who will hear and answer your prayer. He will draw you close to Himself and your anguish will turn to a calmness of spirit. Jesus is the ONLY one who can do that. Most of us do not draw close to the Lord in times of success. So if you are in a trial thank the Lord that He is using this trial to draw you close to Him. Just think, the creator and sustainer of the universe saw fit to give you a trial because He desires for you to know not only His power but His love that He has for you.

Today DON'T WORRY about others but be thankful for a mighty God that knitted you in your mother's womb. He knows YOU.

"Lord forgive me for fearing man more than you. Please forgive me for letting man steal my joy and then I steal the joy from my family over worry. Lord I don't want to worry anymore. I want to trust and rely upon you and you alone Jesus. Please forgive me for what I have done and restore my feet upon firm footing. I have failed in so many ways but I know Jesus that you will forgive me my sin when I ask with a repentant heart. Please help me to not live in fear but to live in victory under your steady and comforting hands." Amen

Now go out in the power and the name of Jesus who holds back the oceans and breathes out stars. Can your tyrant leader do that? I didn't think so. Go out in joy and know who is King,

Brad



Proverbs 29

Proverbs 29:25 “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord will be kept safe.”

How can trust in the Lord keep us from evil men and evil circumstances? There are a lot of verses that talk about trusting in the Lord.

Psalms 115:9 “O house of Israel, trust in the LORD--he is their help and shield.”

Proverbs 3:5 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;”

Psalms 118:8 “It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.”

But the key verse is this:

Psalms 111:10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.”

We suffer sleepless nights when men threaten us with our job, our family or _____. We all have been there. In essence we fear men more than the God who created men. There are a couple reasons for this.

1. We can see men and their rebuke is immediate.
2. Faith, trust and WAITING upon the Lord is tough.

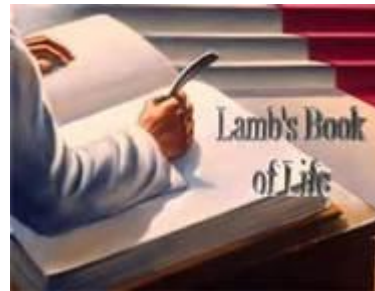
So how can we take what we have in our head and let our heart be changed? How can we be still and know that God is on our side? How do we know God will protect us? Because the Bible says so. Either you believe every word of the Bible or you don't. You can't choose what you believe. In the same context God cannot lie, it is impossible for Him to lie. Men lie everyday and we trust in man more than God. No wonder we get shell shocked when trials come. But we can change. Let today be the day that you and I stop running away in fear and STAND behind the Lord. If you get out ahead of the Lord it is tough for Him to be your shield. He is our shield when we are STILL and let God do our bidding, fighting and make the unjust just.

“Lord I am tired of living in fear. It seems that if I don't have anything to be fearful of I will find something. I desire rest in so many ways but my mind is constantly worrying about the future. I now know that this worry is from the evil one. Please Lord protect my mind and help me to love like you love me Jesus. You say that love is patient and kind. Help me to be patient and kind.

You say that perfect love drives out fear. Lord I desire to be loved by you but I have a hard time understanding your love for me. Lord I give over everything to you today. I know you can do so much more with my life than I can. Please come into every part of my life right now Jesus and restore my joy, restore my energy and please Lord increase my faith in you and you alone.”
Amen

Please don't fear man as that is not trusting God. God knows what's going on and that's all that matters. Talk to God more and the more you speak with Him through prayer, worship and reading of His word in the Bible the calmer you will become. You will finally see that God IS YOUR shield. Now go out in the power and name of Jesus.

Brad



Proverbs 30

Proverbs 30:5 ““Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.”

A lot of times we can read scripture and the verse sounds so pleasing to our soul BUT then we wonder “How do I do that”? I want God to be my refuge, I want Him to be my shield, comfort in times of trouble and I want to know how much He loves me. I can't stress this enough but in order to have the power of the Holy Spirit of God YOU first of all need to be saved.

WE ALL HAVE A SOUL BUT NOT ALL OF US HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

A soul is eternal. The soul we have will enter hell or heaven depending on ONE decision here on earth. Before, did I say BEFORE you take your last breath on earth you need to have made the decision to accept Jesus as Savior and Lord of your life. When we die we all see Jesus. If you have not made that decision no amount of crying or wailing will save you; IT IS TOO LATE. Then you will spend eternity in hell FOREVER separated from God with no hope again of salvation. Please read this link on our webpage on how you can know for sure how to be saved.

<http://theultimatedecision.com/howtogettoheaven.html>

Once you make that decision or recommit your life please e mail me so we can send you free resource materials to help you grow in your faith. Now back to God being our shield. When I

was an unbeliever God still protected me. In our new book “Failing Doesn’t Mean You’re A Failure” a lot is written about demons and angels. God protected me when I was not saved. WHY?

Hebrews 1:14 “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”

Yes I have had encounters with angels in my life and our new book talks about those encounters. Before I was saved God was still protecting me. BUT now that I am saved how can I live without fear? How can I ALLOW God to be my shield. That is it “ALLOW”. We have a choice in life. We can accept God as our Savior or we can accept His free gift to be Lord and Savior of our life. Which one are you. In order for you to lead a spirit filled life, one that depends on the Lord for all that you do God needs to be your Lord and Savior. That means that God and God alone has full reign in your life. Not just 99% but 100%. When you can give all your worries and concerns over to Him then and only then will you be free.

“Lord I want to be free in this life. I know in my head that your desire me to be free by what you did on the cross for me. But Lord I have a hard time giving up_____. Please right now take this burden and what I have been holding onto and help me to release it over to you. I know that until I do that I will not have joy and my trust will not be in you. Lord I desire for you to be my shield and my strength. Please forgive me for the sin in my life Jesus and help me to have the faith to love you and to give EVERYTHING I have to you today”. Thank you Jesus, Amen.

Today is the day. Many new names will be written in the Lambs book of life. Please pass this devotional onto others who need to be saved and who are holding onto some thing too tightly. Let God be God in your life. Don’t hold back anything.

Take care

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Proverbs 31

I have enjoyed doing our series on Proverbs. I am sorry to see it end. But please remember the one thing about Proverbs. For a devotional that is easy to remember there are 31 Proverbs and a maximum of 31 days in the month. Whatever day it is just pick that Proverb to read.

Proverbs 31:8,9 “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

In the world we live in today a lot of us are self-absorbed because we can be. We have a Starbucks, McDonalds and a host of other choices all over. Technology has sped up our life to the point where the evening paper is obsolete. The Internet is Immediate and we are accustomed to immediate news. There is a commercial on TV about 3G and 4G for Smartphones. The people who are 20 seconds faster in getting info slam the people that are only 20 seconds behind in speed of information.

I remember twenty five years ago when the fax was a game changer. Now almost everything is done via the internet. Now most faxes are scanned and sent via e mail. Immediate does something to us that is very disturbing. It makes us not only impatient but speeds our thought process up so quickly that we don't have time to slow down and help those who have fallen behind.

Speak, Up, Speak Up, Speak Up for those less fortunate. Help those who seemingly can't help themselves. SLOW DOWN to look around you. STOP and see. This video is an incredible story of a man's love for his son. Most of you know we have a special needs son named Chase. Our plans for Chase when he was born are far different that they used to be. But that was “Our” plans not God's plans.

Until we become aligned with God's plans we will worry, be stressed, do things for the wrong reasons and be full of chaos. Chase has taught us what is important in life and he has challenged us to slow down and to stop thinking about what other people think. Chase loves to ask people what movies they have seen. That is because his vocabulary is very limited. Now that may not seem too bad but when he has asked you that question 10 times in 10 minutes it can be a little distracting. A lot of people don't know how to answer Chase. But our family has a friend named AJ who when asked what movie he likes he keeps telling Chase in a soft voice the same answer

over and over again. Now when we go to church the first person Chase looks for is AJ. You see even though Chase is Autistic he still has feelings. During the church service Chase will lean over to me and keep telling me "There is Mr. AJ". Yes I guess we all need more "Mr. AJ's" "in our lives just like this father in the video.

Please ask yourself this question. Is this life "That is not our own as we were bought with a price" ALL YOURS or are you using the breath that you have been given to help others along this path we call life. Are you encouraging those who cannot possibly help you in return or are you only helping those who can further your career? At some point in time THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN DETERMINED you will take your last breath. Will you be known as one who only stuck to his or her own agenda or did you help other people who could not help themselves. Did you slow down enough in life to bring along the stragglers? Jesus loves the stragglers and so should we.

Have a great day and pray that we would all serve like Jesus.

Brad

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May the Lord be the Glory.

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