

WHAT MAKES LIFE INTERESTING?

If you are like me, there are so many things in your day-to-day life that they have become routine. Perhaps it's the commute to work, or getting the kids ready for school, your exercise routine, or even work itself. All of us have some set of regular activities woven into our lives that are, or have become, routine that we do them without even thinking. For me it's the treadmill.

This morning the Lord opened my eyes to something—the difference between routine and interesting. If you have ever run or walked on a treadmill, and then later in the day or week ran outside; there is an immediate difference in your attitude and the "feel" of the run. When you are outside in an ever-changing environment, facing one challenge after the next as you climb each hill or turn each corner, you discover that it's the challenges that make the run interesting—challenges you don't typically experience on the treadmill.

Pondering this further, I realized that this analogy is just as true for work, or for raising our children, or even for the daily commute. It's the challenges, the unexpected, and the daily stream of events that add interest to our lives—and even at times some enjoyment from something that, at one time or another, was just routine.

Today the Lord showed me that this is also applicable for our walk with Him. These days at Southview are a great example, as we face multiple challenges in rapid succession. Whether it is financial, ministerial, or spiritual, we are surrounded, or so it seems, with challenges that can at times appear overwhelming.

I realized exactly what James meant when he wrote in James 1:2-8 "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do." [NIV translation]

If we realize that the challenges God lays down in front of us are for our good, for our spiritual growth,; and that He is doing these things because He loves of us, then we should indeed "count these days as pure joy". We need to celebrate the fact that God is calling us to a great work, that He is preparing to work through us in mighty ways. How exciting is that?!

God has provided us a vision for Southview that goes beyond anything we could imagine on our own. His vision takes us way out of our comfort zone, completely out of the routine; and it points us down a path that none of us have traveled. Can being a follower of Christ be any more interesting, any more exciting, any more challenging?! And the blessing of it all is that God already thinks that we are ready for the challenges ahead. He will use them to grow us spiritually as we carry the gospel to unknown people in new places.

Could we remain as we are, following the routine that we are all accustomed to? Of course we could, but of what value would that be? How excited would we be to spread the gospel if we simply remained in our routine. No, in order for us to truly follow Christ, challenges have to be met and conquered, and as surely as James would count all of this as joy, so too will Christ. He tells us in Matthew 6:33 not to worry about the material necessities of life, clothing, food, and so on; and he promises us that if we seek God's kingdom first, "all of these things" will be added to us.

With the advent of Southview Chapter 2 and the continuation of Project 57, life at Southview just went from routine to interesting, from the daily grind to the daily thrill. We know that if we are in God's will, whatever we need, whatever we ask for, will be provided. (See Matthew 7:7-8.) We are not limited by resources; rather, we are limited by our faith. James admonishes us to ask for wisdom and, in spite of who we are, God will provide it. Life these days at Southview has gone from just interesting to extremely exciting, and, given the level of challenges facing us, I think that God has large plans—a God-sized vision—for Southview. How wonderful that He is including you and me in it! Let's praise Him today for pulling us out of the routine and the mundane, and giving us new work to accomplish for Him in His kingdom!

In Christ,

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