

♥ REFLECTIONS

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We welcome your comments and suggestions. The management and staff of McCreary Journal, welcome letters of community interest. Letters must be original and contain the signature and address and should include the daytime telephone number of its writer. The editors reserve the right to condense or reject any letter and to limit frequent writers. The opinions expressed in the letters to the editor and other editorials are those of the writers and do not reflect the views of McCreary Journal.



THE PASTORS PEN:
DEALING WITH FRUSTRATIONS

By Pastor Steven Temple

Frustration is a common part of our lives. It can arise from personal struggles, family tensions, workplace pressures, financial issues, or the uncertainty of the world around us. Through all of this, frustration can shape our attitudes and how we respond to those around us. Learning how to deal with these frustrations can be considered an art form that we rarely ever master.

We all have things that just do not work out right from time to time. These things cause us anger, hurt, raise our blood pressure, along with many other things. There are times we come home with this built up in us due to the traffic we had to face, the last minute deadline, the phone call we just received, or our plans fell apart. Those that feel the wrath of our frustration may not even have been part of the issue that arose. Many times we can lash out at those around us as we deal with our frustrations. As we lash out we can push those closest to us away without even thinking about it.

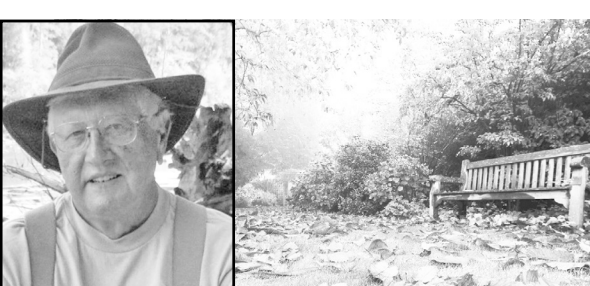
Frustration left unchecked can drain us of our joy. It can take away any pleasurable moments that we expected to enjoy. The simplest of things can

become burdensome to us and we are left dealing with our anger and resentment. Not reacting properly can keep us from finding joy and withdrawing ourselves or worse yet, others no longer want to be in our company. Anger may feel warranted at the moment and we find that as our justification for how we have acted.

I have heard ‘old-timers’ say, before they enter their house, they would wipe the frustrations of the day off and not bring it in on their families. They would leave it at the door and as they left to return the next day they would pick it back up and take it with them. They stood by the thought that they would not allow work to affect home nor would they allow home to affect work. But I wonder if this is beneficial or healthy. Why not learn to deal with it instead of continuing to carry it or pick it back up?

The Bible teaches us in James chapter 1, verses 19-20, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” Now, that sure will smack you in the face

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Following Trails
Grown Dim
By Sam Perry

GOING HOME

He had pondered about it for a long time, rolling it over in his mind like a young boy pushing a click-and-wheel down a dusty road, and had finally figured it all out. He was just not cut out for soldiering. More importantly, he was not cut out for war. The endless marching, the monotony of camp life, the meaningless killing, and the smell of blood had become more than he could bear. He just couldn’t take it anymore. So, he was going home, back to Melinda and the kids, back to his own bed where he could sleep at night without having to worry about being roused from his slumber by a blaring bugle and the rumble of a drumroll.

Of course, it was true that he had raised his right hand and taken an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, both foreign and domestic, and had promised to spend three years in the U.S. Army, but nobody had told him what a soldier’s life was really like. Nobody had told him that soldiers ate, mainly, a tasteless cracker called hardtack that only men with alligator teeth could chew or that there was hardly any meat in the mysterious concoction called Army stew. Nobody had told him that sol-

diers slept on bare ground with only a thin blanket to warm them and a leaky piece of canvas to shelter them from the rain. But that wasn’t the worst of it. Nobody had told him what it would be like to point a rifled musket toward another human being and pull the trigger only to watch him fall like a bale of hay being dropped from a barn loft. And nobody had prepared him for the pleas for water and mercy that haunted him in his dreams each night. That was the hardest part of being a soldier and he had had enough of it.

He had been happy to do his part when the recruiting sergeant came to Scott County, Tennessee and announced that President Lincoln was needing help in putting down a rebellion of eleven states that had chosen to secede from the United States and form their own government. He and several of his friends had left their homes and gone up into Kentucky to a place called Camp Dick Robinson. There, they had taken the oath of allegiance, been assigned to the 2nd Tennessee Volunteer Infantry Regiment, and issued uniforms. He liked the uniform. The robins-egg blue of the wool trousers contrasted well with the darker blue, almost black, of the sack coat and the shiny French horn emblem on the same-colored cap made him look special. He was proud to be a soldier. But now, the uniform had faded after weathering one storm after another, and the wool was infested with lice and other vermin and smelled like the sheep from which it had come. Even the brass emblem on his cap had tarnished.

Army life at Camp Dick Robinson had been boring but not bad. The \$13.00 a month he received in pay each month was more than he could have made on the farm and, although his regiment did a lot of marching and shooting and training with a bayonet, there was always plenty of time in the evenings to roll dice, play cards, and cut up around the campfire.

The easy life at Camp Dick Robinson ended in

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Musings
By Braxton King

“And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.”

God’s blessing on Abraham empowered him to be a blessing to others. Jesus told His disciples, “Freely you have received, freely give.” This principle works in all areas of the kingdom of God. One is empowered to forgive who has received forgiveness. It’s the Fathers’ good pleasure to give us the kingdom, so it should be our good pleasure to give it away, as well. Giving is reciprocal.

Jesus said, “Give, and it shall be given unto you. The more you give, the more you receive, which means you have more to give. You will never out-give God.”

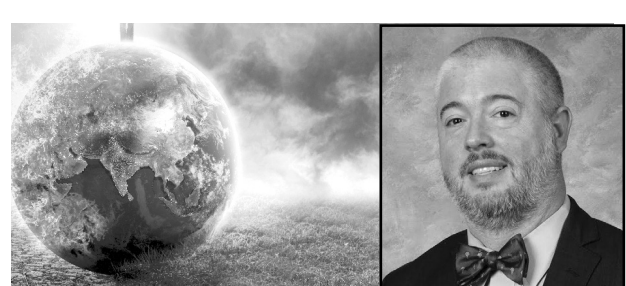
The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. God loves a cheerful giver. The same grace we needed in our distress is the same grace we give when others are distressed.

We are not a pond, but we are to be a river. A pond holds on to runoff, whereas a river has a constant flow. Out of our bellies shall flow rivers of living water. Stingy people are stagnant, but givers are as fresh as a daisy. Stingy people are the root of all evil. Proverbs says, “One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.” John Bunyan penned, “A man there was, though some did count him mad, the more he cast away the more he had.”

Paul wrote, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

God comforted Paul, which empowered him to comfort others. What God does to us, He will do through us. The way to receive in the kingdom is to be a giver. God expects us to be good stewards of what we have freely received by His grace. God the Father is reaping a massive harvest of sons and daughters by the giving of His only begotten Son, Jesus.

We love Him because He first loved us.



THE HUMAN CONDITION
By Tommy Druen

Years ago, I was channel surfing when I stumbled across an old movie called "Murder in Coweta County." Johnny Cash played a Georgia sheriff, and Andy Griffith—yes, that Andy Griffith—played the villain, a wealthy landowner named John Wallace who thought he was above the law.

I couldn't look away.

Here was Sheriff Andy Taylor, America's beloved small-town lawman. Here was Matlock, the folksy defense attorney who always got to the truth. And he was playing a cold-blooded killer who murdered a man and tried to cover it up with the arrogance of someone who'd gotten away with everything his whole life.


The most unsettling part? He was brilliant at it. And it just seemed wrong.

We do this with actors all the time—lock them into boxes based on the roles for which we know them. John Wayne playing Hamlet? Unthinkable. Meryl Streep in a Marvel movie? We'd probably assume we walked in the wrong theater. Once we've decided who someone is, we resist seeing them any other way.

But here's the thing: we don't just do this to actors. We do it to everyone.

The teacher is always the teacher, even at the gro-

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