

August 19, 2019

By Ken Korkow

BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

Two years ago, after having subscribed to the Wall Street Journal for more than 40 years and to the Omaha World-Herald for more than 30, I canceled both. They were consuming my time and I had concluded most of the news only represented a record of what our spiritual enemy, Satan, had done the day before.

Then, after returning to my home in Omaha, Nebraska, U.S.A. after a weekend at my family's ranch, I canceled my Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts. Again because I have limited time and energy, and want to expend it while being focused on God's higher purposes. I have finally come to this conclusion: I must concentrate on knowing God more intimately – and living for Him more intentionally.

Every day I ask the Lord to provide divine appointments and keep the time-wasters away – and He does it. I am allowed to participate in His divine purposes in ways I could never orchestrate. Life's Highest Adventure is seeing where God is working and getting involved with what He is doing.

Recently I had an appointment with a Marine Corps veteran. We had no previous contact, so as we sat over lunch I went first in telling my story. When I do this, my intent to “blow them out, or blow them in” – because if someone isn't serious about dealing with issues in their life, then now is not when they are ready for change and my time is better invested in other ways. But even if they do not seem interested, I do my best to leave the door open so that when

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their pain hurts enough, they might remember I cared enough to be honest and transparent – and that I said that I would be available.

Midway through sharing my story, this person stopped me. With tears he asked, "Can you be a Christian and still consider suicide?" Then this Marine veteran told me about a very serious suicide attempt the day before. He admitted that he should have been dead.

We did meet again, and the life transformation of this Marine has been amazing. The overflow of his life into the lives of other veterans is equally amazing. Others now want to meet, come to our ranch where we minister to veterans dealing with wartime trauma, or find out how a personal encounter with God might heal their pains.

I look at the life of Jesus Christ and recognize the truth of a statement Oswald Chambers made: "The greatest competitor of devotion to Jesus is service for Him." Christ ministered to people, but that ministry resulted from the overflow of God's Spirit. In a similar way, I recognize more and more the necessity of marinating in God's Word, and being alone to pray and listen. Which means eliminating unnecessary distractions.

Forty-eight years ago I earned my master's degree in business administration. Today I recall only one thing of value from that huge investment of time and expense. That thing is: BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND.

My personal observation is that very few people who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ finish well. They lose their desire to seek, grow and obey in their walk with God. When asked what they see the Lord doing in and through their lives, most people recount a story from 10 years ago. But I have been blessed to watch a few men finish well. You might not recognize their names, but they include Ted DeMoss, Dean Parrack, Ted Hubbard, Hank Grasmick and Jim Wilson. All finished their lives still devoted to knowing and serving their Lord.

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Will you be one of those who finish well? Will I? We decide each day – by how we allocate the time, talent, and treasure God has entrusted. If we do not finish well, we will have no positive eternal impact in the lives of others.

Ken Korkow lives in Omaha, Nebraska, U.S.A., where he serves as an area director for CBMC. This is adapted from his "Fax of Life" column. Used with permission.

Reflection/Discussion Question

1. What do you think of the writer's decision to terminate subscriptions to publications he had received for many years? Do you think this is necessary, based on his reasoning? Have you ever done anything like this? Explain your answer.
2. How might interesting but unnecessary distractions keep us from pursuing the things God might have for us to do?
3. What do you think the statement, "Begin with the end in mind," means? How would you apply it to your own personal and professional circumstances?
4. Many years ago a British missionary named C.T. Studd wrote a poem that ended with these words: "Only one life 'twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last." Think about that for a few moments. Do you agree with what he said? How do you think someone can seek to apply that perspective in their everyday life and work?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Ecclesiastes 3:1-17; Galatians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:16, 6:10-20; Colossians 4:5-6

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