

REFLECTIONS

June 4, 2006

**Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the whole [duty] of man.**

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Activities

“Activity suggests a life filled with purpose,” Captain Georg von Trapp stated cynically in the enduring story captured in the musical play and movie, *The Sound of Music*. And isn’t it true how we bury ourselves in activity as if it will bring meaning to our lives. We fill our days with activity in our effort to gain approval from our fellow workers, friends and family—or even ourselves. Activity should serve our meaningful goals not be a distraction from them.

Recently I was talking with a man who was in the process of transitioning the leadership of the family business to his son. As is usually the case in these situations, he was troubled by relinquishing the day to day responsibilities because he coupled his own identity with his daily business activities. He feared that by assigning those duties to someone else, he would lose that identity.

In the course of our discussion, I asked him if he had considered his epitaph. I observed to him that, “He will live a certain number of years then one day someone will stand before a crowd of mourners, and in the course of 15 minutes, summarize his life.” I asked him what he would want that summary to be. After a few moments of thought he replied, “To be a friend...to be there for others in times of need.”

William Pollard in his book, *The Soul of the Firm*, explains that we have end goals and we have means goals. For this man his desire for his life was to be a friend. The success of his business served to provide resources to meet the needs of those around him. But he allowed his identity to be defined by what he did in the business instead of by the way he used the business to become who he wanted to be.

Activity should serve our goals, not just fill our day. Jesus made that point to Martha as she busied herself in the kitchen. She allowed her busyness to distract her from more important things.

I think we all fall victim to the malady of allowing activity to distract us from more important goals. We become so addicted to filling our day with activities that we lose sight of the purpose we set about to serve. Perhaps it would be helpful to begin each day with the question “How will the activities I plan for today serve God’s Kingdom?”

It’s a question worthy of continuously asking ourselves.

“You are the light of the world.”

Richard +

Permission is hereby granted for reproduction and redistribution of this edition of Reflections provided all applicable copyright laws are properly observed.

Your comments are welcomed and encouraged. Richard may be reached at richard@reflectingthesavior.org.