

# ***REFLECTIONS***

August 3, 2014

**"You shall have no other gods before me."**

*Exodus 20:3*

## **Ends and Means**

They are often not correctly prioritized, these goals we set. End goals are ultimate results we seek; means goals are the steps to take us there. Imagine this.

Like Robinson Crusoe, you find yourself shipwrecked on a remote island somewhere. You are not alone there and you find life all around is hostile and dangerous. In the far distance is the image of a place you know as home. It is a safe place where people live together in peace. They laugh together, they dine together, and they enjoy the presence of God together. Though you can only see it faintly, you want to join the people there, only you are stranded where you are, virtually alone.

On the beach a small boat lays nestled into the sand. It isn't in good repair and it has no motor, mast, or paddles to help move it across the water. But if the boat could be strengthened and a propulsion mechanism for it available, then it can carry you to the destination. Home is the end you seek. The small boat is the means to reach it.

Perhaps the picture is seen more clearly now. To reach the objective, the boat must first become seaworthy. The boat is the means of transportation, and enabling it to reach the other side becomes the prime objective. But the boat will only be a means to reach the end, not the end itself.

Much of life is dedicated to means goals—preparing the “boat” for the journey. Just as we might search for parts to replace the worn ones, or to build the equipment to propel it, in our daily lives we seek to collect the resources required to supply all that will be necessary for the journey. During almost every day our minds become so resolute in the process of equipping the boat that we are often blinded to the purpose for it. The prize is not the boat. The prize even lies beyond the journey to be taken in it.

*“I do not run like a man running aimlessly,”* Paul explained to the Corinthians, *“Run in such a way as to get the prize,”* he encouraged. Like Paul, the first step is to focus sharply on the prize before turning attention to the means to win it.

Means goals are often found in the work we do, the money we make, or the talents we possess. But the challenge is to use them without losing sight of the ultimate result we seek.

In our story the prize is to reach home. For Apostle Paul, home was to serve God and he did it by spreading the Gospel to the world. We each have a prize in our lives too. Does it honor God and place him above all other goals? And here is a good test to find an answer to the question. Look at where your treasure is.

*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* (Matthew 6:21)

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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