



REFLECTIONS

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For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Matthew 16:26 NKJV

Provision or Purpose

He was a valued long-time factory worker. As a millwright he served in a key position, yet no one knew much about him. One day he died, Max DePree recounts in his book, *Leadership Is An Art*¹. So, the business owner visited the millwright's family to pay his respects to them and to honor his long-time employee and friend. During the visit, the millwright's widow began to read poetry to those present. She read one beautiful poem after another. Struck by the magnificence of the poems the business owner asked the widow who the poet was. "My husband," she answered.

As the story goes, there has been a question around the factory since that time. Was the worker a millwright who wrote poetry, or a poet who worked as a millwright?

We may never know the answer this man would have given, but we can discover the answer to a similar question in our own lives. Is the provision of our work the treasure we seek, or is our work the provision for a greater purpose?

Apostle Paul answered that question for himself when he described himself as a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. (*Romans 15:16*) Yet the provision for his ministry came from his work as a tent maker.

While Paul was very clear about his own purpose in life, most of us live with less clarity. Our work consumes so much of our daily lives that we easily confuse the provisions we need from it with the true ends we seek to serve. In our quest to sustain ourselves, or beyond that, to gain wealth, pleasure, power, and fame, we forget that these are provisions from our labor, but not the fruit from our lives.

A few of us are blessed to engage in work that serves as both a provision and a purpose; but for most, the provision from work is the means to reach another end. The millwright in the story may have made a difference in the world by how he made a living. But his work served as the provision that allowed him to use his God given talent, painting poetic pictures of God's beautiful world.

Provision or purpose, the pursuit of the means can blind us to the end we really seek. Provision comes as a gift from God. The fruit of our lives comes as we use those gifts to the glory of God's kingdom.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

www.reflectingthesavior.org

¹ Max DePree, *Leadership Is An Art* (New York, a Currency book, Doubleday Publishing, 2004)

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