



REFLECTIONS

July 9, 2017

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

James 1:2

Pure Joy

Zach is starting over. He gave his all in his first big entrepreneurial venture, only it didn't work out as he planned. Disappointed of course, but not discouraged. So for now, he dabbles in some things to put food on the table while he ponders "what I want to be when I grow up."

Zach has a laundry list of thoughts and ideas dancing through his mind. Where does the money lie, especially in the areas of his competence and experience? What strengths were found in his business experience; and what areas were weakness or dissatisfaction revealed?

Not yet 40 years-old, there's plenty of time for Zach to sort out those questions, but with a wife and four children there isn't much of it to waste. Besides it's pretty common for people to pose the "what I want to be" question around the time of their 40th birthday. And it's a good question to ask. But maybe a better question would be, "Who do I want to be when I grow up?" Or better yet, "Who does God want me to be?"

Discussion with Zach posed those questions. God blessed him with intellect, energy, and innovative curiosity. Those gifts led him into the business that didn't work out, but the experience served as a great training ground for something else. From the experience, he learned what he did well and what he didn't. He learned what he enjoyed and what he didn't. So, somewhere in the mix, there's a sweet spot to find. I believe the sweet spot is defined by joy. Doesn't it make sense that joy is a pretty good indicator of God's will? But let's be careful not to confuse joy with pleasure.

Joy embodies pleasure, but pleasure doesn't always result in joy. Pleasure ends. Joy lasts. Pleasure makes one feel good. Joy makes one feel *right*. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds," Such trials seldom make one feel good. But God uses trials to refine our lives for his purposes. I find joy in the mere thought that God would choose my life for a purpose to serve him regardless the pain.

Zach will sort through his questions, and with his entrepreneurial spirit, he will launch a new career. God equipped him to serve an important purpose in this life. He opens doors that can't be closed, and He closes doors that can't be opened. God is molding Zach's life to make him just as He wants him to be. All Zach must do is believe.

And like Zach, God has equipped you and me to serve an important purpose in this life. He opens doors that can't be closed, and He closes doors that can't be opened. He molds our lives until He makes us just as He wants us to be.

All we must do is believe.

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