



REFLECTIONS

February 25, 2018

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.

Philippians 3:14-15

Ordinary Men

Most mornings there's a few minutes to jot down whatever thoughts drift through my mind arising from devotional readings or other spiritual material. Recently, I looked back at some of those ramblings to discover that many referred to ordinary things—cats being cats, people being people, nature being nature, and God being God. And the point of those ordinary things is that in spite of our compulsion to separate ourselves from the ordinary, that's exactly where God's work is most often found.

I recalled the leadership of George Washington to win the war for our country's liberty, and of William Wilberforce who championed a cause to eliminate slavery in England. Their achievements gained them hero status in their day. But what makes their lives most notable today isn't found in their extraordinary achievements back then. Each of these men passed up opportunities to gain extraordinary status and power that would have set them apart. Instead they chose to answer God's call live as ordinary men for a greater goal. The word describing their choice is sacrifice.

"Sacrifice is part of love," I recently wrote. "Can there be true love without it? Love seeks the well-being of [others.] More than *wanting* well-being for someone else, sacrifice makes the selfless steps to make it so. Sacrifice is loving your neighbor."

Jesus set the example long before Washington and Wilberforce entered this world. Jesus rejected the devil's temptations to yield to human desires. *He made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant; and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death,* (Philippians 2:7) And just as any ordinary man, Jesus wept, washed his disciples' feet, and he refused to come down from the cross surrendering the power to do so. Jesus came with a greater goal.

And that same commitment separated George Washington and William Wilberforce from many well-known leaders in our history books. Washington passed up the opportunity to become King George of America; Wilberforce declined the invitation to serve as Prime Minister of England. Best, they answered God's call as ordinary men.

A call to serve a greater goal.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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