



REFLECTIONS

August 20, 2023, Refreshed from the Archives of March 11, 2007

**Sing to the Lord, all the earth;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.**

1 Chronicles 16:23-24

Personal Referrals

Recently, we visited a new restaurant someone told us about. Without the personal referral, we probably would never have tried it. I don't know about you, but I am far more likely to try a restaurant, see a movie, or select a personal service provider based on a recommendation from someone I know than from any form of advertising or promotion an enterprise may offer.

Personal referrals are powerful influences because of the stories that usually accompany them. The late writer, Fredrick Buechner, in a piece entitled *Our Stories*, explained it this way:

But I talk about my life... because if, on the one hand, hardly anything could be less important, on the other hand, hardly anything could be more important. My story is important not because it is mine, God knows, but because if I tell it anything like right, the chances are you will recognize that in many ways it is also yours.¹

Now what grabs my attention is that each of us hears our own stories in the stories that others tell of themselves. Stories make personal referrals effective. And if that is so, then the most convincing spiritual encouragement we can give may not come from a Bible quotation, or even the explanation of how Jesus gave his life for our sins. The most convincing stories we can tell could be how Jesus changed our own lives. Those stories are easy to tell; and they are important to tell not because they are our stories, but the chances are those who hear them will recognize that, in many ways, they are their stories too.

The power of personal referrals—
I wonder how many lives might be changed by them.

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +

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¹ *Listening to Your Life* Fredrick Buechner, copyright © 1992 by Fredrick Buechner, HarperCollins Publishers, 10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022

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