

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 170

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will first focus on the Mensa Society. This is a non-profit organization of geniuses. Membership involves being at or above the 98th percentile based on a standard supervised IQ test. When your cousin Jude was about three years old he was going through the house hitting himself in the head with a rubber hammer. Uncle John decided not to mention this on his Mensa application.

The Mensa Society began in 1946. By 1954, however, they had less than 100 members and only four showed up for their annual meeting. Two of the four were Victor Serebriakoff and his wife Winifred. When Victor became the president of Mensa, however, it immediately began to grow. Under his capable leadership their membership grew to over 100,000. His tenure was so successful that he remained president of Mensa until his death Jan. 1, 2000 at the age of 87.

But now let us focus on Victor Serebriakoff himself for his story is both interesting and inspirational. Victor was born in the slums of East London Oct. 17, 1912, the son of a Russian father and cockney mother. This brilliant man, however, apparently didn't realize his potential and wasted the first thirty years of his life doing odd jobs and manual labor. He even dropped out of school. His low self esteem was reinforced by being fired from his first job at a lumber company because he didn't pay attention to detail. When the Depression hit he continued doing manual labor and suffered through several periods of humiliating unemployment. Late in World War II, however, he was conscripted into the army and given the standardized Army Intelligence Test. The highest score on the test was an IQ of 161, and Victor was so smart that he went over that mark and off the chart. Now, perhaps for the first time, Victor came to realize how capable he really was. He really didn't have to do odd jobs and manual labor any longer. The Army also recognized his potential and assigned this "uneducated" genius to train recruits. After the war the trajectory of his life changed and he became an internationally known inventor and author. Many of his books have been translated into foreign languages, and as we have already said, he became president of the prestigious Mensa Society.

Fortunately, in Christ it is not necessary to be a genius to do great things. The focus of our faith is on God, not ourselves. As Paul said, we can do all things through Christ Who strengthens us (Phil. 4:13). The original 12 disciples, as you know, were very ordinary. No one was rich, well educated, or famous. Not one had a track record of influence over his own neighbors, let alone the whole wide world. Not one had traveled over 100 miles from the place of his birth. Their success depended on the promise that Jesus would be with them. Their success came because the Holy Spirit provided them all the power they needed. Remember! They were strictly forbidden to go anywhere until they were endued with power from on high (Acts 1:4, 8). When Jesus commissioned them to go into all the world Matthew informs us that "some doubted" (Matt. 28:17). What did they doubt? Certainly they did not doubt the resurrection for Jesus for He was standing in their presence with the wounds of His crucifixion in plain view. Perhaps their self doubt was much the same as ours. Perhaps God had greater faith in them than they had in themselves.

Peter is a prime example in this regard. When he first met Jesus he was given a new name. His name would no longer be “Simon” but “Peter” which means “A stone” (Jn. 1:42). Jesus would transform Simon from a vacillating and unreliable person to be the “Rock Apostle” whose name heads each listing of the twelve. In fact, the power of God to transform became the primary reason for his faith. While Peter was present for virtually all the miracles of Jesus from changing water into wine to the miracle of the resurrection, the thing that really convinced him that he was not following cunningly devised fables was what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration (2 Pet. 1:16 - 19). Peter not only saw Jesus transformed before his very eyes, but he also witnessed the same kind of transformation in his own life as well as the lives of thousands of others. Peter recommended that his readers focus on the Bible like a light shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the day star arises in your own heart (2 Pet. 1:19).

After 2,000 years this same kind of evidence is still available! In the most remote places on earth Stone Age savages are being transformed into kind and benevolent followers of Christ. On every college campus there are multiple examples of drug addicted failures who have been delivered from their dependency by Christ. The late Ballard Flint was once the town drunk in Fairland, Oklahoma. When he gave his heart to Christ, however, the transformation of his life made him the most famous man in town. When he died he was honored by having the largest funeral ever conducted in the county.

Please do not limit what Christ can do through you for He is able to do exceeding, abundantly above all that you can ask or imagine (Eph. 3:20)

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce