

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

# 378

Dearest grandchild,

Last week we wrote about Hetty Green who was said to be “The World’s Greatest Miser”. Fortunately, as you know, not all rich people are misers. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all rich and yet are remembered as great heroes of the faith. Solomon was once the richest man in the world and yet has bequeathed to us his inspired philosophy of life which focused on fearing God and keeping his commandments (Eccl. 12:13). A rich man named Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Jesus and buried him in his own tomb (Matt. 27:57-60). Mary the mother of John Mark had a large home where the church met. She even had a servant girl (Acts 12:12-17). She did not need to sell her property as others did because it was already dedicated to God (Acts 4:32-37). Thankfully, there are rich people who are dedicated Christians and devote their riches to God!

As some of you know, for twenty two years I had an hour long radio program five days a week over KOBC in Joplin, Mo. It was called “Family Forum”. The usual format was to interview someone with spiritual insights to help families. Some of these people were very rich, and also very godly. For example, I interviewed Roy LaTourneau, the son of the millionaire R. G. LaTourneau. The family became famous for living on 10% of their income and giving 90% away. During the interview Roy shared how he was investing heavily in the evangelism in twenty Latin America countries. Thousands became Christians because of their generosity, My friend, the late Tim Valentine, was also a godly millionaire who was inspired by the example of the LaTourneau’s and also gave away 90% of his income to the cause of Christ.

Today’s letter will focus on another wealthy man who was also both very godly and very generous. He was the late Truett Cathy. As you may know, he founded the original fast food restaurant, “Chick-fil-A”. He came to Joplin when they opened a new restaurant in the North Park Mall and it was my good fortune to interview him for an hour. Sadly, this godly man passed away on Sept. 8, 2014. He died in his home in perfect peace surrounded by his family. He was 93 years old.

Cathy said that began merchandising as a small boy. He would go to the store and buy a carton of six bottles of Coca Cola for 25 cents. He would then scavenge some chipped ice for free from the floor of an ice truck and go door to door selling ice cold Coca Cola. When all six bottles were sold he had made 5 cents profit.

Cathy began working in restaurants in 1946 but established his own “fast food” restaurant in 1967. It was in Hapeville, Georgia which is a suburb of Atlanta. Because it was so small he called it the Dwarf House. At the time I interviewed him the Dwarf House was still in operation. Cathy realized that because a large chicken breast with a bone took a long time to cook, he sliced it into boneless filets which could be cooked quickly. This became his signature sandwich.

Cathy was a devout Christian. Chick-fil-A's corporate purpose statement begins with: "to glorify God by being a faithful steward to all that is entrusted to us." He advised others to "put principles and people ahead of profits" and to "invite God to be involved in every decision." Cathy encouraged his restaurant operators to give back to their communities by supporting local schools, hospitals, and little leagues. Thankfully, he practiced what he preached. He was a member of the First Baptist Church in Jonesboro, Georgia where he taught a Sunday School class for over 50 years. In his desire to honor God every Chick-fil-A is closed on Sunday. This practice grew out of his own personal

need to worship God and be in church on Sundays. Cathy was also a generous philanthropist giving to numerous charitable causes. He opened summer camps for boys and girls and gave away millions in scholarships. He started a marriage enrichment retreat at Berry College. Cathy said that “Children will never believe in the covenant of marriage unless they see it with their own eyes.” Predictably, his convictions about marriage have outraged the LGBTQ community. On a positive note, Shane Windmeyer, national director of the gay rights group Campus Pride, “came out” as a friend of Truett Cathy’s son, Dan. Shane also confessed that he was also a friend of Chick-fil-A. He told fellow activists in an article in Huffington Post “to stop having a cow about the Cathys’ chicken restaurant”.

Truett Cathy was a generous man who wrote four books to motivate others to be generous. He also contributed to the anthology *Conversations on Success*. He co-authored with Ken Blanchard *Generosity Factor: Discover the Joy of Giving Your Time, Talent, and Treasure*. As you know the word “miser” and “miserable” are associated. Misers are miserable! Truett, however, was neither a miser nor miserable. He was a generous, spirit filled follower of Jesus whose life was filled with joy.

Dave Bohon of the *New American* pointed out that Cathy wanted to be remembered “*as one who kept my priorities in the right order. We live in a changing world, but we need to be reminded that the important things have not changed. I have always encouraged my restaurant operators and team members to give back to the local community. We should be about more than just selling chicken; we should be a part of our customers’ lives and the communities in which we serve.*”

It is my prayer that each of us will also keep our priorities in the right order too!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce