

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

#286

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will feature the words of Moses to the Hebrews whom God had just delivered from slavery in Egypt: **“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the Lord your God, for it is He Who gives you the ability to produce wealth” (Deut. 8:17,18).**

We may naively think that if we work we will make money. If we work hard we will make more money. If we really work hard we will get rich. This is not true! The Hebrews knew this! They had worked hard in Egypt and didn't get any money at all for they were slaves. When the Pharaoh made them work harder by refusing to provide straw for their bricks, they still didn't get rich (Ex. 5:6-9). In fact, when they complained to the Pharaoh they were not given money, they were beaten.

The Bible warns against saying: **“Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money. Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow” (Ja. 4:13,14).** James recommends that we should always say: **“If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that”**. Only God knows what tomorrow will bring.

My father, and your great grandfather, H.B. Mouton was a hard worker. He even made hunting into hard work. I remember one hunting trip in particular when we arose before dawn, chipped ice off of the car windows, got a jump start, then trudged through deep snow in the bitter cold to get our limit of quail. This was the way dad did everything! On Feb. 12, 1988 dad got up early to go hunting. While he was standing in front of the mirror shaving, however, he suffered a paralytic stroke and never worked again. In fact, he couldn't do anything to take care of himself. For the next seven years mom was his faithful care giver. No matter how hard he tried he couldn't even sit on the edge of his bed. Finally, and at 2:15 p.m. Dec. 5, 1995 he passed away at home. In our own family we have had other dramatic reminders that we can only work and make money if it is the Lord's will. Do not ever forget our dependency on God for it is He Who gives us the ability to produce wealth.

Some of the hardest workers I have ever met live in India. Sadly, it is not at all uncommon for a man in India to work hard for 12-14 hours a day without earning enough money to even buy a bicycle. Nobody in America recycles broken glass for broken glass is worth almost nothing. At the city dump of Matamoros, Mexico, however, I have seen desperate families gather bags of broken glass with the hope that earning even a few centavos will keep them from starving. A brother in Christ from Joplin went on a short term mission trip to Haiti. While there a young Haitian boy got a translator and asked him: *“is it true that Americans go to the bathroom in drinking water?”* Yes! It is true! Our wealth in America has made us the envy of the world. One man in India told a friend *“I want to immigrate to a country where even the poor people are fat”*! No wonder so many are risking everything to come to America!

In 2015, Bill Gates, the co-founder of Microsoft, said: *“If anything kills over 10 million people in the next few decades, it's likely to be a highly infectious virus rather than a war . . . Not missiles, but microbes.”*

His words seem prophetic. In recent weeks humanity has been humbled by the realization that our own power and strength are not sufficient to insure that we can produce wealth. Ancient Egypt was

one of the world's oldest and greatest civilizations. It reached the zenith of its power around 1570 B.C. This was around the very time that Moses went to the Pharaoh and asked the most powerful man on earth to release his Hebrew slaves. The arrogant Pharaoh replied: **“Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him and let Israel go?” (Ex. 5:2).** Ten plagues later, when he was burying his own firstborn son, the Pharaoh found out who the Lord was.

The ten plagues God brought upon Egypt were not random. They were specifically designed to discredit their pagan gods and the Egyptian economy. (1) Water into blood – the god Hopti. (2) Frogs – the god Heket. (3) Gnats – the god Geb. (4). Flies – the god Khepri. (5.) The plague on their livestock – the god Hathor. (6). Boils – the goddess Isis. (7). Hail – the god Nut. (8). Locusts – the god Seth. (9). Darkness – the sun god Ra. (10). The death of the firstborn was directed at the Pharaoh himself. He arrogantly claimed to be the greatest god in Egypt. Please remember that the greatest country on earth was powerless to stop any of these plagues. The first plague made it impossible for the powerful Egyptians to even drink a glass of water. The last plague punished their firstborn with death for their national impudence and rebellion. Finally the Pharaoh came to realize who God was! Do we?

Joe Garman has a prison ministry called ARM (American Rehabilitation Ministry). As a part of that ministry he conducts Bible seminars in prisons all over America. Joe says that invariably a prisoner will come up to him and say that being put in prison was the best thing that ever happened. It was in prison that his eyes were opened to his need for Christ. Out of prison he was on his way to hell. In prison he received Christ as Savior and are is now on his way to heaven.

Perhaps someday we will look back upon our present crisis and see that God used it to change our focus from the temporal things of earth to eternal treasures in heaven. Remember! **“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the Lord your God, for it is He Who gives you the ability to produce wealth”.**

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce