

THE BOTTOM LINE

“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 9:23-24 KJV)

The “bottom line” as you know, is the last and most important line in a financial statement. It doesn’t matter how many transactions there are, the “bottom line” tells you whether you have won or lost. The same is true in life. On Judgment Day the Lord will consider everything in the entirety of our lives and then let us know whether we are saved or lost! That’s the “bottom line”.

Isaiah reminds us that God doesn’t think the way we think. His thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts (Is. 55:8, 9). Jeremiah emphasizes the same truth by reminding us not to glory in our wisdom, might, or riches. These earthly achievements do not impress God. “Knowing God” is the key to salvation.

When the Prodigal Son returned home in rags he was a total failure. It really didn’t matter, however, because his father was his judge (Lk. 15:11 - 32). Dr. Lynn Gardner tells the story of a little girl waving her handkerchief at a huge boat passing by. The crowd was amazed when the boat turned around and picked her up. The simple explanation was that her father was the captain.

On earth we place great value on wisdom, might, and riches. Most are encouraged to get a good education for this is considered the key to “success”. Similarly, up and coming leaders quite frequently exercise regularly and follow a strict diet. The purpose of this effort is usually to get rich. Those with lots of money are considered “successful” and those without are considered failures.

Jeremiah warns against this kind of thinking. Remember! God does not think the way we think. His ways and thoughts are higher than ours. Jesus once told of a rich man who wore expensive clothing and lived in luxury every day (Lk. 16:19 - 31). He even had a security gate to protect his possessions. By earthly standards he was a great success. At his gate, however, was a beggar named Lazarus who was full of sores desiring to get crumbs from the rich man’s table. By earthly standards he was a failure. The “bottom line”, however, revealed that Lazarus went to paradise and the rich man went to hell.

Being chosen to carry the Christ child is perhaps the greatest honor a woman could ever have. As you know, this honor was bestowed upon a young virgin named Mary who lived in an obscure little village named Nazareth. She was not chosen for this honor based upon her beauty or intelligence, though I assume she had both. She was chosen, as the angel Gabriel explained, because she had found favor with God (Lk. 2:30). As Mary reflected upon this honor she concluded that God had scattered the proud and exalted someone of low degree. The “bottom line” was that from that time onward all generations have called her blessed (Lk. 2:46 - 55).

Someone has said that those who aim at nothing usually achieve what they were aiming for. The apostle Paul set a good example for everyone by setting his sights on knowing Christ (Phil. 3:10). He made the deliberate decision to cast his earthly achievements on the garbage heap and concentrate on knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection. That’s the bottom line!

DO YOU KNOW THE LORD?