

THOUGHTS

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Thoughts
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FACING THE REALITY OF AGING

I remember my father, pastor Paul, talking bluntly with me about the effects of aging on the body. I was only a young man in my early 20's, but I knew I should pay attention as he recounted the frailties besetting him; tinnitus, arthritis, pains in his back and leg – and this was prior to his bouts with congestive heart failure, diabetes, and cancer! The man has gone through a lot physically. Perhaps you have seen your loved one(s) suffer the effects of aging as well.

I am fairly certain I would not have read a book such as Being Mortal by Atul Gawande at that young age. However, now that I have pushed past the half century mark I am interested. The book discusses how in Western culture and increasingly around the world in the name of caring for the elderly the science of geriatrics and care facilities are treating the body, and all but imprisoning the old people of our culture in drab, lifeless facilities in the name of safety. Old age has become not a blessing with family surrounding and supporting, but a curse where one exists in a sterile facility. Our culture has not adapted terribly well to caring for the old and frail members of our society. Instead of making accommodation for them at home and rallying with children sharing responsibility to care for our parents, we want to carry on with “our lives” and put them into facilities to do that for us. Sadly, often the outcome is the complete elimination of any estate, destroying generational wealth building which could not only bless children of the elders, but also grandchildren.

One particular doctor pushed through a “radical” change to a care facility by introducing lots of living plants, two dogs, a couple cats on each floor of the facility and 100 birds, one for each room. Also included was a generous sized garden and an activities shop. It was resisted at each step of the way, but he persevered. The result was a *38% drop in medication use among residents, mostly psychotropic drugs, and 15% lower mortality rate that year!*

HOSTILE “CHRISTIAN” WITNESS

The other day I encountered a man at the health club I visit who was wearing a t-shirt with an image of Jesus and the phrase, “Y’ALL NEED JESUS.” I thought that was a nice, bold witness in a thoroughly secular public place. So, I moved closer to compliment him.

It turns out he may be anything but Christian. He was wearing earbuds, and as he might not hear me I reached out and gently touched his arm to alert him that I wished to talk to him. He angrily interrupted my planned compliment, “DON’T TOUCH ME,” nearly yelling the words. I was taken aback for a moment, but said, “I was just going to compliment you on your T-shirt.” He snarled, showing utter disgust and lack of love. This was one of the rudest receptions I had ever received from a supposed believer. A woman who knows me as a pastor saw the exchange and was as shocked. What a disconnect between his shirt and actions, proclaiming “Y’ALL” need Jesus, but not showing a shred of love!



*The Bible is God's Word . . . Jesus is God's "Word" made flesh . . .
His death and resurrection, the message needed Today.*

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As I discussed this with people I knew would sincerely pray over the matter, one suggested that perhaps the shirt is not intended as a positive witness. I checked online, and it is sold at Spencer Gifts, a store stuffed with tacky, irreverent and in many ways disgusting paraphernalia. It seems the intent of the shirt is mockery, not promotion of Christianity. No wonder he reacted so vehemently, filled with contempt toward me. I presume he has noted my many Christian witness shirts I wear weekly and decided to advertise his contempt of Christ. *So be it.* We Christians should expect overt hostility occasionally. Consider it a privilege to be mocked for Christ. It puts you in good company, with the early believers who were scorned for their love of Jesus!

IT'S OK FOR CERTAIN PEOPLE TO HATE (SO THEY THINK)

In our topsy-turvy culture conservative Christians are painted with a broad brush of bigotry and hatred, while Hollywood is given a pass. Movies such as the latest Christian-bashing "Mother!" are full of sacrilege and disdain of the faithful. It reminds me of Jesus' words about removing the log in one's own eye (see Matthew 7:1-6). A materialistic culture is not friendly to Christians, and we should not emulate Hollywood icons. To do so is to fall prey to idolatry. The ungodly idolize such cultural icons, and reap the consequences.

Inevitably someone asks me, "Did you see the movie?" I typically answer in the negative, then explain that it is not necessary to participate in evil to condemn evil. But, what if the movie is "thought provoking", not as much an assault as an expression of artistic viewpoint which can be taken either way? *Then it is a waste of time and unworthy of a Christian's attention.* We are not to be spending our time in dissipation, worldliness, and fruitless frittering away time.

LOVING JOGGER

As I drove through the parkway one morning on my way to church after running an errand I saw a jogger – nothing unusual about that. As I passed him I saw he was clutching in one of his sweaty hands a bundle of picked flowers. They bounced vigorously as he pounded the pavement. He was clutching them as he headed toward home, I presume, to deliver them to his lover. I prefer to think that his lover is his wife, not a "partner" as the world would vilify marriage and justify fornication. I hope his delivery had the intended effect, a huge smile and a boosted relationship! He was wise to be aware of the need of strengthening not only his body, but also his family!

EGOTISTICAL TRUTH

Occasionally someone gives me a book of jokes. [A Laugh a Day: A Daily Dose of Heavenly Humor](#) recently presented this lighthearted fact: Remember, only you can prevent narcissism!

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder