



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR APRIL 19, 2013

GOD IN OUR LIVES, PART 2

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... (Deuteronomy 8:10-11, NIV)

THE MARGIN BETWEEN SUCCESS AND FAILURE in a golf tournament is, in the common expression, razor thin. Ask Angel Cabrera.

The moment between success and failure in a stock investment is often just that: a moment.

The words recognized as a blessing and those heard as a curse are made up of the same small letters, varied only slightly. Indeed, they may turn too on the almost imperceptible nuance of tone.

Do you see it now, that slightness of difference? So tiny. So huge.

As we noted yesterday, not seeing God’s sovereignty in our lives can also be the difference between pride and humility, between recognizing that God is God and thinking instead that we are.

One place where we can be reluctant to give God his due—perhaps because it is so closely tied to our own work—is the wealth we enjoy. Certainly wealth is relative, and we all tend to skew our own wealth downward by setting it against the riches of the guy we know who has so much more. But whatever the extent of our wealth, we make a habit of calling it our own, usually on the basis of our intellect, determination, grunt work, or impeccable timing.

Here’s the thing: that self-appreciative perspective is thousands of years old. When Moses reviewed the history of God’s hand in the people’s lives in the ancient book of Deuteronomy, he warned them: “You’re going to be tempted to take credit for your own wealth. Don’t. You wouldn’t have a dime if it weren’t for the ability God gave you.”

Such a caveat exalts God and lends a new sense to our reading of Psalm 24:1: “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it.” If this is the case, we have to keep asking ourselves, “Just what shall I do today with God’s money?”

Opening questions: Close calls

What are some close calls in your life that have gone in your favor or against you? Looking back now, to what extent do you see God’s hand in those events?

Life’s circumstances

Read Genesis 40. Who governed the lives of the baker and the cupbearer? How much would their own strength or smarts have helped them in this situation?

Such accounts—and the seemingly capricious circumstances of our own lives—can turn us into cynics. How prone are you to this? What keeps you from giving in to cynicism?

Gratitude and hope

A hearty defense against fatalistic perspectives includes a pairing of gratitude for the things we have been given and hope for the things yet to come. Read the following passages and make notes about how they allow you to see God’s work in your life: Psalm 105:1-7, Joel 2:23-32, Matthew 6:25-34, Matthew 7:9-11.

Closing question: God’s riches

If God is sharing his riches with you through the things he has done in your life, how does knowledge of this influence your use of the wealth you have?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2013 Links Players International.