

Finishing Well

Creating Partnerships to Encourage Men to Finish Well in Life

REFLECTIONS ON *Faith*

Barry Morrow

“MEN LUST,
BUT THEY
KNOW NOT
WHAT FOR;
THEY WANDER,
AND LOSE
TRACK OF THE
GOAL;
THEY FIGHT
AND COMPETE,
BUT THEY
FORGET THE
PRIZE;
THEY SPREAD
SEED, BUT
SPURN THE
SEASONS OF
GROWTH;
THEY CHASE
POWER AND
GLORY, BUT
MISS THE
MEANING OF
LIFE.”
-GEORGE
GILDER

THE RAT RACE...

Paul Valery once remarked, “A businessman is a hybrid between a dancer and a calculator.” And if media companies have their way, they’ll push the limits to keep us busy, entertained, and distracted. Already, vending machines, common purveyors of pretzels, soda and other munchie mainstays, are starting to satisfy cravings for iPods, digital cameras, and DVD movies.

The Wall Street Journal recently reported that Zoom Systems, a San Francisco start-up, soon plans to add more than 100 locations by the end of the year to its existing system of 165 high-end vending machines that sell expensive Bose headphones, iPods, and wireless laptop cards. Zoom plans to be in about 3,000 locations within the next two years, including office campuses and universities around the country.



Developments such as these point out a growing trend in our culture that seeks to have us define our lives as “blessed, fulfilled,” almost exclusively in terms of entertainment and diversion.

FINDING MARGIN...

In his book, *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives*, Richard Swensen, M.D., observes that despite all of the advantages that have been granted in America today, “The formula for happiness has proven to be more elusive than the simple bestowing of these benefits. Somewhere the equation has broken down. Food plus health plus warmth plus education plus affluence have not quite equaled Utopia... We live with unprecedented wealth and all it brings... yet stress, frustration and oftentimes even despair unexpectedly accompany our unrivaled prosperity.”

Perhaps part of the answer lies in recapturing a proper understanding of rest and leisure. Ironically, while many in our society today have more leisure time now than earlier generations, we’re not exactly sure what we’re supposed to do with it. For many, leisure conjures up hazy, if not boring, associations. As a result, we work hard at making sure that we fill our time with activities lest we find ourselves bored with solitude and inactivity.

WHAT IS LEISURE?

While contemporary culture defines leisure almost exclusively as “sport, game, recreation,” the ancient’s understanding of leisure dealt with the cultivation of the self, and a healthy preoccupation with the higher virtues of life: Why am I here? What is my place and contribution in the world? What kind of legacy am I leaving my family, and the world? Interestingly, our English word “leisure” derives from the Latin *licere*, meaning “to be permitted,” in contrast to the Latin word for work, *negotium*, or “non-leisure.” To the ancients, work was thus secondary to leisure. How different in today’s world, which tends to measure everyone, and everything, through the lens of work!

“TO LIVE IN
THE PAST
AND FUTURE
IS EASY. TO
LIVE IN THE
PRESENT IS
LIKE
THREADING
A NEEDLE.”
-WALKER
PERCY

“Today’s business people live in an over-communicated world. There are too many Web sites, too many reports, too many bits of information bidding for their attention. The successful ones are forced to become deft machete wielders in this jungle of communication. They ruthlessly cut away at all the extraneous data that are encroaching upon them. They speed through their tasks so they can cover as much ground as possible, answering dozens of emails at a sitting and scrolling past dozens more. After all, the main scarcity in their life is not money; it’s time. They guard every precious second, the way a desert wanderer guards his water.”
-David Brooks, *Newsweek*

“The only good thing for men therefore is to be diverted from thinking of what they are, either by some occupation which takes their minds off it, or by some novel and agreeable passion which keeps them busy, like gambling, hunting, some absorbing show, in short by what is called *diversion*... That is why men are so fond of the hustle and bustle, that is why prison is such a fearful punishment; that is why the pleasures of solitude are so incomprehensible.”
-Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*

“Looking for God – or Heaven – by exploring space is like reading or seeing all Shakespeare’s plays in the hope that you will find Shakespeare as one of the characters... My point is that, if God does exist, He is related to the universe more as an author is related to a play than as one object in the universe is related to another... How, then, it may be asked, can we either reach or avoid Him? The avoiding, in many times and places, has proved so difficult that a very large part of the human race failed to achieve it. But in our own time and place it is extremely easy. Avoid silence, avoid solitude, avoid any train of thought that leads off the beaten track. Concentrate on money, sex, status, health, and (above all) on your own grievances. Keep your radio on. Live in a crowd. Use plenty of sedation. If you must read books, select them very carefully. But you’d be safer to stick to the papers. You’ll find the advertisements helpful; especially those with a sexy or snobbish appeal.”
-C. S. Lewis, “The Seeing Eye”

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION...

“Unless the Lord builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it;
Unless the Lord guards the city,
The watchman keeps awake in vain.
It is vain for you to rise early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors;
For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.”
-Psalm 127: 1-2, a Song of Solomon

WHAT IS *FINISHINGWELL*?



FINISHINGWELL is a unique and personalized service for men to assist them in balancing their work, family, and faith. In a world of constant pressure and change, we often find ourselves under the “tyranny of the urgent.” The benefits of *FINISHINGWELL* include:

- A relationship based upon strict confidentiality in all matters.
- Realistic strategies to balance your personal and professional life.
- Encouragement to make course corrections in life that you want to make.

Contact me to see how *FINISHINGWELL* might be of benefit to you. A two-page document describing *FINISHINGWELL* is available upon request.