

Distractions

Are relationships your top priority in life?

In his book The DNA of Relationships, renowned author Gary Smalley makes the point that “Life is relationships; the rest is just details.” I am in no position to challenge Dr. Smalley’s point, but I’ve found that the word “distractions” has more personal relevance for me when it comes to understanding those things that compete with the relationships in my life.

Whenever I reflect on my past, I always think in terms of the people who have meant so very much to me. I’m sometimes saddened when I think of the “things” that seemed so very important at the time and that seem totally irrelevant today. Distractions such as the many hours that I spent on the landscaping at all of the houses that we no longer own. Distractions such as feeling the need to be busy all the time – being reluctant to say no to volunteer opportunities or requests for help by people other than my family. And distractions such as accumulating a household of things that now sit on the shelves at Goodwill Industries.

At the end of our lives, the *only* things that will matter are the people who have crossed our paths and the depth of those relationships. As I’ve gotten older, I find myself making different choices almost daily. Time spent with loved ones and dear friends always takes priority over my ever-present “to-do” list. I find myself being far more receptive to spontaneous suggestions by my husband Gary such as “let’s take a break and go hang out at Starbucks for awhile.”

Sometimes I can become a bit melancholy when I think of the lost opportunities of the past. I would give anything to be able to simply sit and talk with our son Nathan for ten minutes. I would love to spend an hour or so cooking with my mother who passed away at the age of 93 in May of this year. But I also don’t want to waste time or be distracted by regrets or guilt over the mistaken priorities of the past. I’ve learned from those mistakes and now my responsibility is to live as if my life depended on the relationships that God puts on my path.

Christ expressed it so beautifully, as captured in the gospel of Matthew, Chapter 6: “¹⁹Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Where is your treasure?