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Encouragement for Today

"In Light of Eternity, Does *This* Really Matter?"

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http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/ss_intro_2006.htm

Key Verse:

2 Corinthians 9:8, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." (NIV)

Devotion:

We had been talking about being "kingdom minded" at Bible Study. How meaningless things of the world really are when your focus is on the Kingdom of God. My friend, Kim, had been telling us she was trying to look at life in comparison to eternity. She asked, "Does it really matter that much that my son's room isn't picked up perfectly? Do I need to get upset over it? Is this really going to matter in the Kingdom?"

Well, the next morning, as I was picking up my husband's shoes, AGAIN, to replace them on the shoe rack, I was starting to grumble and complain. Then, God reminded me of the previous night's conversation about keeping our focus on the Kingdom of God, and not daily trials and irritations. I thought, "Does this really matter that I have to pick up my husband's shoes? In light of eternity, is it really important?" And, God said, "Yes!" But, the messy shoes weren't important to God in the way I expected. In fact, the lesson God taught me was the opposite of what my flesh wanted to hear.

God spoke Scripture to me right away. "Do everything (EVERY THING – even picking up someone else's messes) without arguing or complaining so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life." (Philippians 2:14-16, NIV) Messy shoes ARE important to God, at least regarding to me, because He is watching my reaction to them.

God also reminded me of the Scripture, "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion (or with a complaining heart) for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:6-7, NIV) I have decided in my heart to give grace, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and love and to give them generously and *cheerfully*. It is my heart's desire to please God. I want Him to say, "Well done my good and faithful servant." I want to live my life for Him, with Him and through Him. So, although messy shoes don't or won't matter much in the Kingdom of God, my response to them will!

My Prayer for Today:

Father, I love You and praise You. I pray that I will "do everything without arguing or complaining." I pray that I will become more like You- full of love and rich in mercy. Help me to give grace to others freely, in the way that You have so generously given to me. I love You Lord, and I thank You for Your goodness. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Application Steps:

Think over times recently when you should have given grace to others in your life, overlooking any of their "offenses."

When you are tempted to complain or get angry with someone, ask yourself, "In light of Eternity, does this really matter?"

Reflection Points:

How could you do better with sowing grace, compassion, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and love?

Have there been any situations when you have been continually complaining? How can you change that attitude of complaining to one of gratitude?

Can you think of times when people have extended grace to you, overlooking your shortcomings?

Do you need to apologize to any family members, coworkers, or friends for being “stingy” in your grace-giving?

Power Verses

Philippians 2:14-16, “Do everything without arguing or complaining so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.” (NIV)

2 Corinthians 9:6-7, “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver.” (NIV)

Ephesians 4:2, “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” (NIV)

Colossians 3:12-13, “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” (NIV)

Additional Resources:

The Ultimate Makeover, by Sharon Jaynes

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_ultimateMakeover.htm

Secrets of the Vine, by Bruce Wilkinson

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_secretsVine.htm

Searching for God’s Treasures (4-CD or tape set), by Renee Swope

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_searching.htm