

THOUGHTS TO CARRY INTO MARRIAGE

At the recent rehearsal dinner for our son and his fiancée, a few of us older folk injected one of their last hours of singleness with bits of wisdom learned gleaned through our own struggles in life. If you'll indulge me, I'll pass along a few personal musings that time didn't allow that evening.

The building blocks of life are laid down rough and squared up later.

You need not seek conflicts; they find you soon enough. But the whisper from the created universe is one of hope: "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." Listen and learn.

Having our lives flexed by the opposing forces of joy and sorrow—even triumph and failure—builds strength and unity that come in no other way.

The spoken word, an arrow shot, will find a mark if aimed or not.

What you can't see doesn't diminish its reality, and what you don't understand doesn't negate its power.

No tears are more bitter than those shed over having failed to do what you should have and could have done but didn't.

Embrace three unchangeables and succeed; shun them and flounder. They are these: limitations of time and opportunity are inescapable, restrictions others impose upon us are unavoidable, and benefits from moral restraint are undeniable.

True prayer is not so much what we say, but what God hears.

Those with the power to hurt us sometimes exercise their ability to blot the light from our lives. But the dawn may be more dramatic than the sunset—if we can hang on through the seemingly interminable midnight hours.

Time is the currency of our physical lives, a coin of inestimable worth whose two faces—advance and retreat—seem to turn up randomly. But with its value resting in the integrity of the Giver, we can spend the coin of life with joy, no matter which face we see.

Duty is what we do while waiting for deliverance to come.

There's a corollary to the Golden Rule: If you knew for certain that what you did unto others would swiftly be done unto you, behavior modification would be instant and effective.

If you would like to leave a lasting influence, draw along side those who are struggling. Babysit. Go to the store. Run errands. Write a note. Cook a meal. It's often easier to endure the cloudburst of crisis than the persistent drip-drip-drip of routine that slowly erodes strength and hope.

Rules indiscriminately applied don't replace thinking; being right is no substitute for compassion.

The cares of this world and the urgency of the moment have an irresistible way of spoiling the important, which is seldom in a hurry.

The details you immerse yourself into are the brushstrokes of destiny. And if those details—your decisions, companions, aspirations, observations, meditations, activities—be good, so will be the picture of what you're becoming.

The trophies of parenthood come when our children return to us in like kind—hour for hour, laugh for laugh, tear for tear—the costly treasure we poured into childhood.

May God bless Barrett and Brandi as they embark on this new adventure together!