

The Inevitable and the Immovable

There are times in life when we find things in our way that we cannot move. Even after persistent, fervent prayer, the cup of suffering is brought to quivering lips and we must drink of it—right down to the bitter dregs.

Abraham Lincoln said, “Some troubles are like the stump an old farmer had in his field—too hard to uproot, too knotty to split, and too wet and soggy to burn.” When asked what to do in a spot like that, he replied, “Well, I’d just plow around it.”

Some situations are like that stump. They are there and cannot be changed and must be accepted. May God give us grace and strength to accept the inevitable and plow around the immovable.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is . . . longsuffering . . .”
—Galatians 5:22

Syntax – and other wisdom

Some grade school teachers keep journals of amusing things their students write in papers. A few examples: Syntax is the money collected at church from sinners. The future of “I give” is “I take.”

The parts of speech are lungs and air.

The inhabitants of Moscow are called Mosquitoes.

Define H₂O and CO₂. H₂O is hot water and CO₂ is cold water.

The general direction of the Alps is straight up.

A city purifies its water supply by filtering the water then forcing it through an aviator.

The people who followed the Lord were called the twelve opossums.

The spinal column is a long bunch of bones. The head sits on the top and you sit on the bottom.

The four seasons are salt, pepper, mustard, and vinegar.

The word trousers is an uncommon noun because it is singular at the top and plural at the bottom.

A person should take a bath once in the summer, not so often in the winter.

“Jesus rejoiced . . .” —Luke 10:21

Kids Know Dogs

A nursery school teacher was delivering a car full of children home one day when a fire truck zoomed past. Sitting in the front seat of the fire truck was a Dalmatian dog. The children started discussing the dog’s duties.

“They use him to keep crowds back,” said one youngster.

“No,” said another, “he’s just for good luck.”

A third child brought the argument to a close. “They use the dogs,” she said firmly, “to find the fire hydrant.”

“A merry heart doeth good.” —Proverbs 17:22

Who I am Makes a Difference

A teacher in New York decided to honor all of her high school seniors by telling them the difference they had made. She called each student to the front of the class, one at a time, and told each how he or she had made a difference to her and the class. Then she presented each with a blue ribbon, imprinted with gold letters, which read, “Who I Am Makes a Difference.”

She later decided to do a class project to see what kind of impact recognition would have on a community. She gave students three blue ribbons each and instructed them to go out and spread this acknowledgment ceremony. They were to report back in three weeks on who was honored and what the results were.

One boy went to a junior executive in a nearby company and honored him for helping him with career planning. He pinned the blue ribbon on his shirt and gave him the other two ribbons. He explained, “We’re doing a class project on recognition, and we’d like you to find somebody to honor. Present him a blue ribbon and then give the extra one so he can acknowledge a third person to keep this acknowledgment ceremony going. Report back to me what happened.”

Later that day, the junior executive went in to see his boss, who had been kind of a grouch lately. He told his boss that he deeply admired him for being a creative genius. The boss seemed very surprised. He then asked him if he would accept the gift of the blue ribbon, and would he give him permission to put it on him. He said, “Well, sure.” The junior executive placed it right on his boss’s jacket, above his heart. He gave him the last ribbon, saying, “Take this and pass it on by honoring someone else. The boy who first gave me the ribbons is doing a project in school, and he wants to keep this recognition ceremony going and find out how it affects people.”

That night the boss sat his fourteen-year-old son down and said, “The most incredible thing happened to me today. I was in my office, and a junior executive came in and told me he admired me and gave me a blue ribbon for being a creative genius. Imagine! He thinks I’m a creative genius! Then he put this ribbon that says, “Who I Am Makes a Difference,” on my jacket. He gave me an extra ribbon and asked me to find somebody else to honor. As I was driving home tonight, I started thinking about who I would honor, and I thought of you. I want to honor you. My days are hectic and when I come home, I don’t pay a lot of attention to you. Sometimes I scream at you for not getting good grades in school and for your bedroom being a mess. But tonight I just want, well, to let you know that you do make a difference to me. Besides your mother, you are the most important person in my life. You’re a great kid, and I love you!”

The startled boy started to sob. He couldn’t stop crying. His whole body shook. He looked at his father and said through his tears, “Dad, I’ve been sitting in my room writing a letter to you and Mom, explaining why I had killed myself, and I asked you to forgive me. I was going to commit suicide tonight after you were asleep. I just didn’t think that you cared at all.” His father walked upstairs and found a heartfelt letter full of anguish and pain.

The boss went back to work a changed man. He was no longer a grouch but constantly let his employees know that they made a difference. The junior executive helped other young people with career planning, and never forgot to let them know that they made a difference in his life . . . one being the boss’ son. And the young boy and his classmates learned a valuable lesson, “Who you are DOES make a difference.”

“They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheneth with the hammer him that smote the anvil . . .” —Isaiah 41:6-7

NEIGHBORLY NEWS

WHERE ARE THE ATHEISTS?

For the better part of a month and a half in 2004, our collective conscience was focused on Florida. The state had been devastated by a series of powerful hurricanes. The cumulative effects of Charles, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne prompted President Bush to ask Congress for \$7.1 billion in repairs and clean-up. Then in 2005 came Katrina, the third strongest hurricane to make landfall in the U.S. Over 1800 people lost their lives and over \$82 billion in property damage.

It was interesting to note all of the religious entities that stepped in to help in disaster recovery. These church-related



groups worked in concert with the federal government (i.e., FEMA) in an effort to relieve the hurting masses. They donated goods and clothing, provided child care, offered stress-management counseling services, provided temporary shelter, repaired

housing, set up food kitchens and shower facilities, furnished laundry details, provided hot meals, distributed cleaning supplies, sent out chain saw crews, and rendered other humanitarian aid.

While we commend those who gave of their time, effort, and monies to hurricane recovery, I think we need to ask a question: “Where were all of the atheists during that crucial time?” Really. Thousands of humble people pledged their hands and hearts to storm victims, but not the unbelievers. Why not? How many meals did they serve? How many homes did they repair? How did they help carry the financial burden in the storm-stricken South? Where was their organizational structure for lifting the hurting throughout Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi?

You see, according to skeptics, religion is a farce. Faith is a crutch for the weak. Belief in God is a tragic waste of time and energy. Ironically, whenever fellow citizens cry out for support and care, atheists are no where to be found. They look at the ravages of the storm and say, “There is no God,” while religionists roll up their sleeves and say, “How can we honor God in service?” (Matthew 25:31–46).

Isn't that fascinating? Unbelief has no redeeming value. It never wipes away a tear, it never rescues the fallen, it never renders kind regard. It never does anything. It is selfish and self-serving. It lacks compassion.

I now think I understand David a little bit better when he said, “The fool has said in his heart, There is no God” (Psalm 14:1; cf. 10:4). — adapted

