

From Dave's Laptop

Tuesday, September 24, 2013

I want to begin this week by encouraging you to visit two web pages. The first page is rightnow.org, which is our online church media resource library. If you're a reader of this column, you're eligible for access to this library, and if you haven't already received an e-invitation to sign up, just reply to this email and I'll send one to you.

Life, Money, Hope! Actually, the page I want you to view is <https://www.rightnow.org/Media/Series/73#1>. You can access this page by going to www.rightnow.org and clicking on the *Life, Money, Hope* icon on the left side of the home page, or you can get there by pasting the longer address into your browser search window.

Either approach should take you to three thirty-minute videos by Dave Ramsay, which are our discipleship videos for this month, selected by our DISCIPLESHIP Team. They're very good, and worth your time!

Then on next Tuesday, October 1, at 7 p.m., we'll have a discussion of what we've learned in the CBF chapel, led by Charles Long, our DISCIPLESHIP Team Leader. I hope to see you there!

Journey Through the Bible. The other web page to which I invite you is shown below, and can be accessed at this web address: www.dcstancil.com/a_summary_of_the_bible. If you go to this page, you'll see the image below, which will allow you to download any or all of the sermons and PowerPoint presentations that have chronicled our ten-week journey through the Bible over the summer.



A Summary of the Bible

(for some reason, CHROME isn't working well with this link, but FIREFOX and INTERNET EXPLORER are currently working)

The link above will take you to the text of ten sermons delivered at the Columbia Baptist Fellowship in Columbia, Maryland during the summer of 2013, together with their supporting PowerPoint presentations. The sermons attempt to give a "bird's eye view" of the trajectory and message of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures from the perspective of a Baptist pastor who has loved these texts for nearly sixty years and who has preached from them for more than thirty years.

While the PowerPoint slides support and illustrate the sermons, many more slides appear in this document than were actually used in worship. In this document I have tried to include a full—but certainly not an exhaustive—selection of key texts that have been pivotal for Christians' understanding of the Message of Jesus.

My prayer is that you who actually make your way through this document will find yourselves captivated by God's amazing and persistent love, and that you will, in responding to that Love, discover the fulfillment of the deepest longings of your spirit.

The combined document is quite long, with 5-10 pages for each sermon and about 75 PowerPoint slides for each.

If you'd rather take it in pieces, here they are:

- The [Torah](#) (Torah [PowerPoint](#))
- Old Testament [History](#) (History [ppt](#))
- Old Testament [Poetry](#) (Poetry [ppt](#))
- OT [Major Prophets](#) (Major Prophet [ppt](#))
- OT [Minor Prophets](#) (Minor Prophet [ppt](#))
- The [Gospels](#) (Gospels [ppt](#))
- NT [History](#) (NT History [ppt](#))
- [Paul's Letters](#) (Paul's Letters, [ppt](#))
- The [General Letters](#) (General [ppt](#))
- NT [Prophecy](#) (NT Prophecy [ppt](#))

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The Three-Minute Rule. On another subject, I'd like to invite you to join with me in a covenant to follow what is sometimes called "the Three-Minute Rule." The idea here is that guests who join us for worship are usually the first people to head for the door after the benediction, and if we talk to other CBFers after the benediction, our guests will be gone without our greeting and welcome.

The first thing necessary in order for the Three-Minute Rule to work is that we need to pay attention to the people around us in worship. Then, the first thing we do after the benediction (having noticed the people around us throughout the service) is to try to engage people we don't know, introducing ourselves and thanking them for worshipping with us. Only after having done that do we strike up conversations with other CBFers. In this way, we become more and more "a Velcro congregation" than "a Teflon congregation"!



And yes, in so doing you may introduce yourself to someone who has worshiped at CBF for years . . . but you'll also have begun a new and deeper relationship! Just remember that once you allow yourself to become afraid of such momentary embarrassment, you have stopped learning new names, and your circle of CBF friends will begin to become smaller. You don't want that to happen!

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One really easy way to learn the names of people you're likely to see on Sunday morning is to read through our 40th anniversary pictorial directory every couple of days until you have the names and faces connected in your mind. I can promise you that the difference you'll experience when you come to worship will be amazing! The directory has gone to the printer, and should be available pretty soon!

One of the Keys to Successful Relationships.

Finally, I want to share with you something my Dad shared with me when I was a teenager. What follows are the last two pages of Part Two of *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. Although his career was that of one of the most successful negotiators, statesmen, and diplomats of his day, Franklin's career didn't begin that way at all. Here's how he told the story:

"My list of virtues contain'd at first but twelve; but a Quaker friend having kindly informed me that I was generally thought proud; that my pride show'd itself frequently in conversation; that I was not content with being in the right when discussing any point, but was overbearing, and rather insolent, of which he convinc'd me by mentioning several instances; I determined endeavoring to cure myself, if I could, of this vice or folly among the rest, and I added Humility to my list, giving an extensive meaning to the word.

"I cannot boast of much success in acquiring the reality of this virtue, but I had a good deal with regard to the appearance of it. I made it a rule to forbear all direct contradiction to the sentiments of others, and all positive assertion of my own. I even forbid myself . . . the use of every word or expression in the language that import'd a fix'd opinion, such as certainly, undoubtedly, etc., and I adopted, instead of them,

I conceive, I apprehend, or I imagine a thing to be so or so; or it so appears to me at present. When another asserted something that I thought an error, I deny'd myself the pleasure of contradicting him abruptly, and of showing immediately some absurdity in his proposition; and in answering I began by observing that in certain cases or circumstances his opinion would be right, but in the present case there appear'd or seem'd to me some difference, etc. I soon found the advantage of this change in my manner; the conversations I engag'd in went on more pleasantly. The modest way in which I propos'd my opinions procur'd them a readier reception and less contradiction; I had less mortification when I was found to be in the wrong, and I more easily prevail'd with others to give up their mistakes and join with me when I happened to be in the right.



“And this mode, which I at first put on with some violence to natural inclination, became at length so easy, and so habitual to me, that perhaps for these fifty years past no one has ever heard a dogmatical expression escape me. And to this habit (after my character of integrity) I think it principally owing that I had early so much weight with my fellow-citizens when I proposed new institutions, or alterations in the old, and so much influence in public councils when I became a member; for I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in language, and yet I generally carried my points.

“In reality, there is, perhaps, no one of our natural passions so hard to subdue as pride. Disguise it, struggle with it, beat it down, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive, and will every now and then peep out and show itself; you will see it, perhaps, often in this history; for, even if I could conceive that I had compleatly overcome it, I should probably be proud of my humility.” [Thus far written at Passy, 1784.]

Humbly Yours,

Dave

