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EXTENDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD...ONE PERSON AT A TIME

ONE-TO-ONE[®]

Autumn 2009

A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie is looking through black binoculars. The lenses of the binoculars show a red, fiery landscape with tall grass. He is wearing a blue wristband on his left wrist. The background is a city skyline across a body of water under a clear blue sky.

INVESTING
FOR THE LONG-TERM

Contents

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THE **POWER** OF YOUR TESTIMONY

REMEMBER GOD'S GRACE, GIVE THANKS, AND TELL SOMEBODY ABOUT IT!

By Stephen Simpson

FROM THE EDITOR

BACK IN THE OLDEN DAYS, also known as "my childhood," I was very fond of the song, "Count Your Blessings." The opening verse says:

***When upon life's billows
you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged,
thinking all is lost, Count
your many blessings, name
them one by one, And it will
surprise you what the Lord
hath done.***

Now, laying aside for a moment the fact that I thought the lyrics said, "pillows," I managed at my young age to get the gist of the song, which is that sometimes, we need to stop and remember the great things the Lord has done...to meditate upon His goodness and give Him thanks.

Since that time, I have been tossed upon many billows—and, come to think of it, pillows—but I have always found that even in the middle of these tempests, it is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord. Thanksgiving takes our eyes off of ourselves and our circumstances which are temporal (no matter how formidable they may

seem), and focuses our vision on the eternal, faithful, unshakable, wise God and His Kingdom. We are lifted out of the pit of self-awareness and up to a higher perspective.

Autumn is traditionally a time of year when we focus on thanksgiving for what God has done in the past, and we begin looking ahead to what He will do in the future. We "count our blessings," and consider our future investments—where we want to sow our time, energy, money, faith, and hope. We sow in expectancy, and with a sense of ongoing gratitude, that "He Who promised is faithful."

This year, 2009, has been a significant one for us at CSM, as we have celebrated 40 years of continuous publishing. During that time, we've seen enormous change take place in terms of how communication is conducted, and we have sought to grow and innovate in that environment. We have greatly expanded and improved our website at **www.csmpublishing.org** to include more specialized content, audio downloads, and interactive discussion.



We have continued to publish **One-to-One** Magazine and the Monthly Pastoral Letter from Charles Simpson, and to provide other media resources for you.

However, nothing is more effective than face-to-face fellowship and outreach, which is why we are already planning our annual **CSM LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE** in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, which is scheduled for April 14-16, 2010. We'd love to see you there, and we will be getting more information to you soon about this event.

Between now and then, all of us should be engaged in the business of giving thanks and sharing the Good News with others. Your testimony has power! The Psalmist says, ***"Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD***

say so.... Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:1-2;8).

My encouragement to you is that regardless of your current circumstances—smooth or difficult—take some time to remember what the Lord has done in your life, thank Him for it, and tell somebody about it. As you share, you'll be encouraged, and it may be the key to someone else's deliverance.

"Count Your Blessings" Words: Johnson Oatman, Jr.; Music: Edwin O. Excell (1897) 121

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WE ALL INVEST; THAT IS, WE EXCHANGE CURRENT RESOURCES FOR A FUTURE HOPE. We delay an immediate pleasure in order to receive a greater long-term benefit. We may invest in education, business, stocks, or mere intangible possibilities such as church, family, or some charitable activity. But we do invest.

Wrong investing—sacrificing now based upon a false hope—can bring disillusionment and disaster. When the “bubble bursts,” the consequence is bad. Such has been the case for many in the current world economy, leaving them with seemingly little to invest in the future. But as long as we live, we invest time and energy into the future.

Many people have become cynical about investing, and increasingly employ resources for immediate pleasure, investing in sensual stimulation, or temporary excitement. But such “investing” brings momentary results, followed by long term emptiness.

The Bible is the “ultimate handbook” on investing. It not only gives advice; it gives examples of those who invested these lives the right way or the

wrong way. It points us to the blessings of sound, even eternal investing. I will give three examples of those who sacrificed immediate results for long-term blessings—blessings that others would enjoy. That is the ultimate long-term investing. Indeed, these are blessings that we continue to enjoy today. If our descendants are to enjoy the blessings of God, then we must regain that mentality.

JOSEPH

Joseph, son of Jacob, was a dreamer. Investors are dreamers. Good investors dream the right dreams, as did Joseph. He had a God-given dream that he would rule. This dream was a repeated, consistent, and determining factor in his life. As is often the case, that dream was not appreciated by his peers or parents. So he was hated, sold into slavery, imprisoned, and forgotten. But he never forgot his dream and kept a right attitude through it all. He had long-term confidence in God.

by
**Charles
Simpson**



In the end, Joseph's dream came to pass in unimaginable ways. He was promoted to Prime Minister in a foreign land, Egypt. He saved Egypt's economy and his own family.

When Jacob died, Joseph's brothers became very concerned that Joseph would turn against them. Since they had so mistreated him and now he was very powerful, that would be disastrous for them. But Joseph was not vengeful. In his success, he was gracious, even humble, because he understood God's purpose in it all.

I will paraphrase four statements from Genesis 50 that Joseph made to his brothers that reflect his attitude toward them, toward God, and toward investing in life. We do well to heed his thoughts.

- **I am not God—it is not my job to judge you.**
- **You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.**
- **I will continue to be generous toward you and yours.**

■ **God will visit us again after I am gone—take my bones with you (that is long term investing).**

Books could be written on those statements and reveal why Joseph was a great leader—it was all about the God-dream, not about him. Great leaders are trustworthy in nature, decisive in action, visionary in purpose, wise in counsel, and humble in achievement. That describes Joseph.

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah is another classic example of someone whose hope was in a long-term outcome, even beyond his own lifespan. He foresaw devastating events and told them to his own hurt. Like most really good investors, he went against the grain of current thought. When others were buying, he sold. When others were selling, he bought.

Jeremiah saw that Babylon would destroy Jerusalem. He was called "the weeping prophet". For his truth-telling, he was imprisoned and cast into a pit. He may have

ultimately been killed—we are not told. Nevertheless, he encouraged those who would hear, that the Lord would restore Jerusalem and that even in captivity they should invest in the future (Jeremiah 29:10-14).

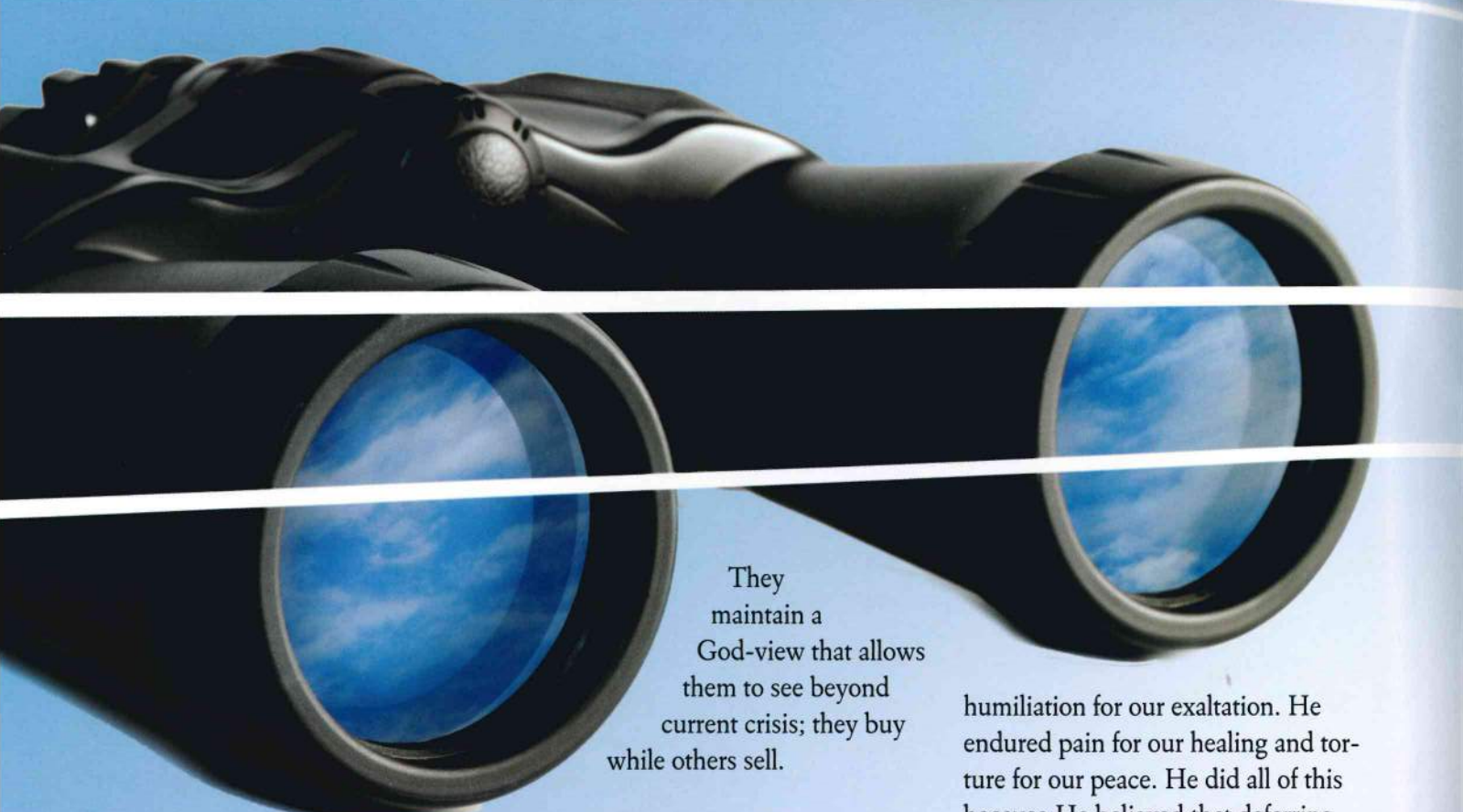
But Jeremiah did more than telling others to invest; he also invested as well. The Lord told Jeremiah that he would have the opportunity to buy his uncle's field, and that opportunity came. So, Jeremiah, in spite of his knowledge of short-term disaster, invested in long-term hope (see Jeremiah 32:1-15).

It is generally believed that Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations. Recently, a friend called my attention to Lamentations chapter 3. Jeremiah was heartbroken over the immediate tragedies that would come both to Judah and to himself. He understood the justice of God and reason for it. But, he also understood the redemptive nature of God's purpose. And he refers to both in detail.

In chapter 3, he reveals his ultimate confidence in God and makes statements that should comfort us in temporary trial.

LONG-TERM INVESTING

KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT IS TRULY VALUABLE AND WHAT IS NOT



They maintain a God-view that allows them to see beyond current crisis; they buy while others sell.

- **“His compassions do not fail”** (verse 22).
- **“Great is your faithfulness”** (verse 23).
- **“The Lord is my portion”** (verse 24).
- **“The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him”** (verse 25).
- **“It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord”** (verse 26).
- **“Let us lift our hearts and our hands to God in heaven”** (verse 41).

In sorrow, Jeremiah maintains perspective. In that regard, he demonstrates long-term investment wisdom. Investors are prophets; some are true prophets, others are false prophets. True prophets and true investors do not allow their perspectives to bounce with the daily market, or situation.

JESUS

Now let us look to the Ultimate Investor, Jesus Christ our Lord. His long-term view is unparalleled! Jesus also lived in difficult times: Roman rule, poverty, religious hypocrisy, and a litany of misery. Yet, He understood the Father’s purpose to use difficulty to break us out into the entire world.

Though He foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem, persecution, and sorrows, He saw beyond all of that to the redemption of multitudes beyond the city walls. The “walls” had to fall in order for God’s purpose to be fulfilled. He said harsh things to those who only invested in present personal interests, but said good things to those who would invest in the Father’s long-term plan.

Then, of course, came the Cross, the ultimate investment. He literally endured the curse of the Cross in order to bless us with salvation. He endured death to give us life. He endured

humiliation for our exaltation. He endured pain for our healing and torture for our peace. He did all of this because He believed that deferring immediate rewards would lead to eternal blessings. He believed in the Father’s eternal purpose, mercy, and grace. He was and is the “Ultimate Investor”.

Jesus understood that the greatest investment is the kingdom of God. In Matthew 13, He gives several Kingdom parables—stories about the Kingdom. In them, He tells us a lot about the government of God:

- **The seed of the Kingdom is the Word of God**
- **The soil of the Kingdom is the human heart**
- **The field for the Kingdom is the entire world**
- **The purpose of the Kingdom is to bring us to spiritual maturity that glorifies God. To this end, He gave His life.**

Recently while riding in an airplane, I had a conversation with a

young person who wanted to spend her life helping others. A good investment.

"What will you tell them?" I asked. The young person was unsure, and that led to a conversation about Jesus. This young lady knew very little about Jesus but had rejected religion. We discussed how Jesus also came to help people and what He did to help them. He invested the truth in them.

Anything less than the truth leads to a bad investment—even if it is well-motivated.

We live in a season where the truth is elusive. So many have given themselves to things, thoughts, and pursuits that proved not to be true. The way to discern truth is to see what endures, and to invest in that. The truth endures to all generations—including ours. It is beyond long term; it is eternal and produces eternal life. It is worth living and dying for.

Conditions and circumstances are no gauge for truth (see Joseph, Jeremiah, and Jesus). Temporary circumstance offers no long-term indications for investing. The truth is the best and only lasting investment. Proverbs 23:23 says, "Buy the truth and do not sell it."

So, what is the truth? That is what Pilate asked Jesus (John 18:38). "What is truth?" Jesus did not answer because Pilate wasn't seeking the truth; he only wanted to please the public. Sound familiar? But Jesus had already defined the truth. "I am the truth," He had said (John 14:6). And John the disciple tells us that Jesus was "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

The truth is not a situation; it is a person. In Him we find the truth—the truth that sets us free from situations and circumstance. The truth is our salvation and our eternal investment.

ONE LIFE TO INVEST

We only have one life to invest; we do not get to practice. The greatest tragedy is to invest one's only life in a lie, and there are many alluring lies. Sensuality, riches, selfishness, vengefulness, tale-bearing, and pride are all lies—to name only a few. Yet tragically, so many invest so much in those endeavors.

I could not close this treatise without asking: where is your investment taking you? I do not mean, "Do you believe in Jesus?" I mean, do you believe in Jesus sufficiently to invest your life in His will for you? Have you heeded His word, "Seek first the Kingdom of God—and other things will be added?"

Can you look beyond the present and see His will at work? Do you believe that whatever you give up now will pay off later—a hundred-fold (see Luke 18:28-30)? Whatever we have today is because some thought that way: prophets, soldiers, missionaries, and servants of God of all kinds. Whatever future generations will have depends upon how we think today. The gospel of "cheap grace" is not good news. A crossless gospel is not good news. "Entertainment value" is not very valuable. Image is not substance. "Spell-binding oration" may just cast a spell, and waking up may be a nightmare.

The best investment advice that I know is this: give your life to Jesus Christ and His will; be filled with His Spirit and faithful to His call. Sacrifice with joy or tears, but do so unto Him, for He is good and true. Read Romans 5:1-5 again, and invest in a hope that will not disappoint. 121

Charles Simpson is Editor-In-Chief of One-to-One Magazine. He ministers extensively throughout the United States and among the nations.



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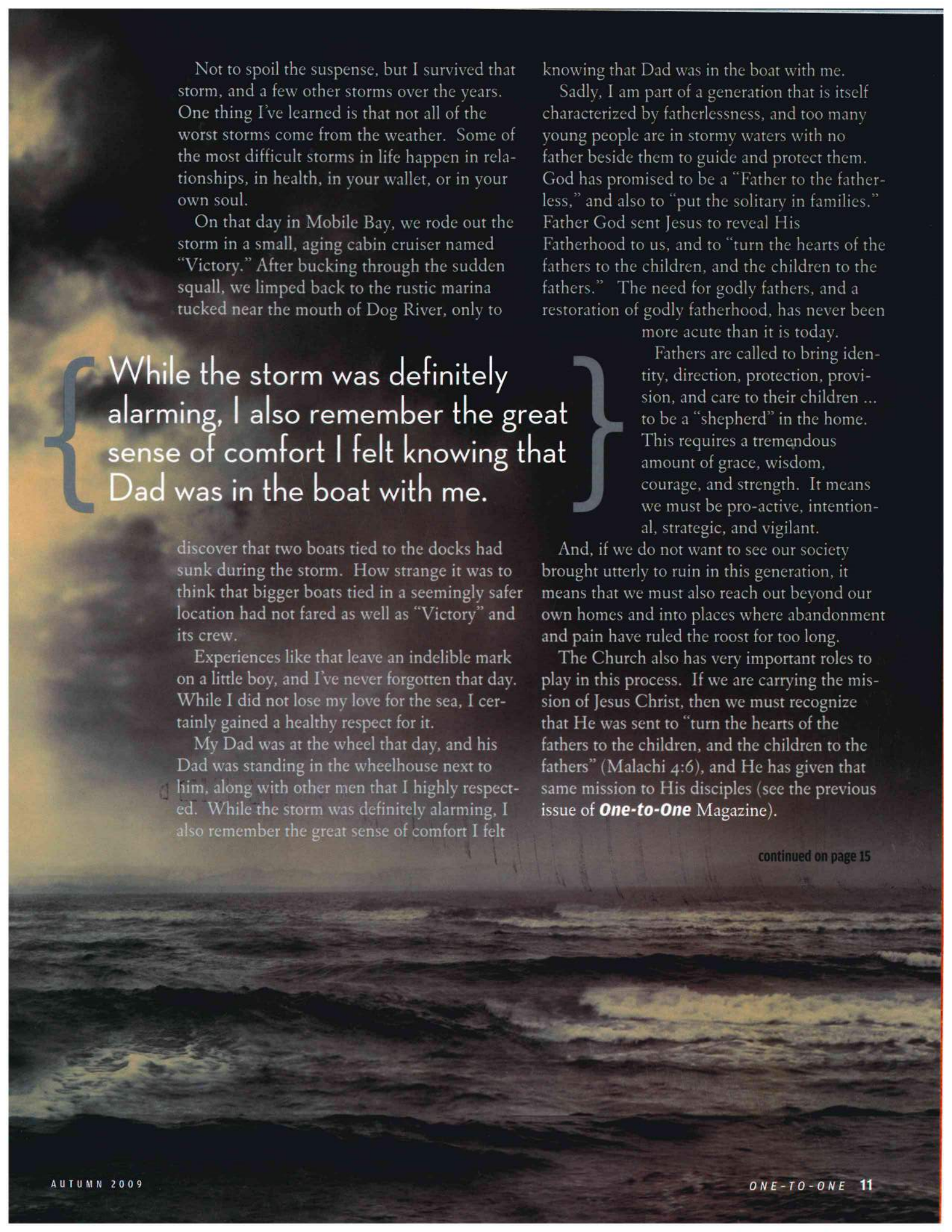
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Shelter^{in the} **STORM**

FULFILLING OUR CALL IN THIS GENERATION
BY STEPHEN SIMPSON

THE WIND-WHIPPED GRAY MIST enveloped our boat and danced with the salty spray blown from the tops of chocolate-colored waves. Shallow Mobile Bay was being roiled by a wild waterspout and we were right in the middle of it.

I was just a little boy, just getting acquainted with life on the water, along for the ride with some well-seasoned boaters. I had never been in a waterspout before.



Not to spoil the suspense, but I survived that storm, and a few other storms over the years. One thing I've learned is that not all of the worst storms come from the weather. Some of the most difficult storms in life happen in relationships, in health, in your wallet, or in your own soul.

On that day in Mobile Bay, we rode out the storm in a small, aging cabin cruiser named "Victory." After bucking through the sudden squall, we limped back to the rustic marina tucked near the mouth of Dog River, only to

knowing that Dad was in the boat with me.

Sadly, I am part of a generation that is itself characterized by fatherlessness, and too many young people are in stormy waters with no father beside them to guide and protect them. God has promised to be a "Father to the fatherless," and also to "put the solitary in families." Father God sent Jesus to reveal His Fatherhood to us, and to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers." The need for godly fathers, and a restoration of godly fatherhood, has never been more acute than it is today.

Fathers are called to bring identity, direction, protection, provision, and care to their children ... to be a "shepherd" in the home. This requires a tremendous amount of grace, wisdom, courage, and strength. It means we must be pro-active, intentional, strategic, and vigilant.

And, if we do not want to see our society brought utterly to ruin in this generation, it means that we must also reach out beyond our own homes and into places where abandonment and pain have ruled the roost for too long.

The Church also has very important roles to play in this process. If we are carrying the mission of Jesus Christ, then we must recognize that He was sent to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers" (Malachi 4:6), and He has given that same mission to His disciples (see the previous issue of **One-to-One** Magazine).

continued on page 15

{ While the storm was definitely alarming, I also remember the great sense of comfort I felt knowing that Dad was in the boat with me. }

discover that two boats tied to the docks had sunk during the storm. How strange it was to think that bigger boats tied in a seemingly safer location had not fared as well as "Victory" and its crew.

Experiences like that leave an indelible mark on a little boy, and I've never forgotten that day. While I did not lose my love for the sea, I certainly gained a healthy respect for it.

My Dad was at the wheel that day, and his Dad was standing in the wheelhouse next to him, along with other men that I highly respected. While the storm was definitely alarming, I also remember the great sense of comfort I felt

EXECUTING TRUST



Trust Is Being
Extinguished at a
Great Cost.
What's Our Part in
Bringing it Back?

by JONATHAN SIMPSON

ON SEPTEMBER 19, 1985, 7:17AM, MILLIONS OF MEXICO CITY'S RESIDENTS AWOKE TO THE GROUND UNDULATING BENEATH THEM. FOR FIVE AGONIZING MINUTES, TALL BUILDINGS SWAYED UNCONTROLLABLY, CRASHING INTO ONE ANOTHER WHILE THE CITY'S INFRASTRUCTURE RIPPED APART. MEXICO CITY HAD SUFFERED AN 8.1 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE, FELT AS FAR AWAY AS LOS ANGELES AND HOUSTON, RESULTING IN THOUSANDS OF DESTROYED HOMES AND BUILDINGS AND AN ESTIMATED 10,000 DEATHS.

Earthquakes are great metaphors for crises of all kinds. While an earthquake manifests abruptly, we know there are preceding hidden events that fester underneath the surface before its culmination. When the shaking reaches the

POLITICIANS, CORPORATE EXECUTIVES, AND EVEN RELIGIOUS LEADERS SEEM TO FAITHFULLY PROVIDE US A CRISIS DU JOUR. MORNING COFFEE AND AN EARTHQUAKE HAVE BECOME OUR BREAKFAST COMBO...

ground beneath our feet, we seek out the unshakable. When it's over, only that which is trustworthy remains.

Politicians, corporate executives, and even religious leaders seem to faithfully provide us a "crisis du jour". Morning coffee and an "earthquake" have become our breakfast combo. One feeds our energy, the other our cynicism. In our increasingly interconnected world, we're all moving closer to the epicenter of each quake. We are positioned, at a minimum, to feel the tremors and aftershocks from each seismic event while losing confidence in what is perceived untrustworthy.

We are witnesses to the casual snuffing out of trust in what were once bedrock sectors of society. Should we be surprised that emerging generations perceive politics as corrupt, business as evil, and church representatives as hypocrites? We've put ourselves on a course that

automatically labels those in positions of trust as untrustworthy.

As if this wasn't enough to sort through, our savvy media outlets whip up "breaking news" drama to interrupt their regularly produced drama, complete with



swooshing audio/visual effects to make sure they have our undivided

attention before announcing the breakup of a Hollywood couple.

Modern media promotes trust's erosion through salacious, agenda-driven, over-covered incidents that are packaged in mind-numbing gimmicks in-between commercials that pry at our last buck.

TRUST LOST COSTS

Low-trust environments suffer jacked-up costs of doing business. Untrusting environments produce a decline in sustainability; likewise, unsustainable environments egg on a loss of trust. Consider the time and fees spent on creating "iron-clad" contracts versus building relationships.

Consider the effects of a low-trust atmosphere on employee retention/attrition or the brand value. Consider the inefficiency of second-guessing hidden agendas and political navigation versus the ability to make quick decisions.

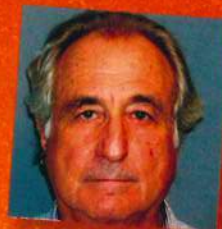
Landscapes of distrust are like mine fields; they bog us down causing casualties and a wavering advance. Meanwhile, competitors with agility and speed take the edge.

People don't primarily trust institutional entities, they trust other people.



SOMETIMES, THE MOST DIFFICULT TASK IS TO ACCURATELY PERCEIVE OURSELVES AND OUR MOTIVES.

Consider **BERNIE MADOFF**, the author of the largest "Ponzi scheme" this side of Social Security. Bernie was thought to have the "Magic touch" as an



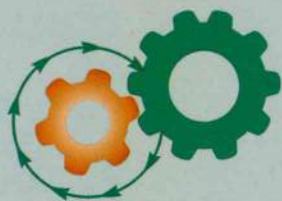
investor, offering the sustainability of double-digit returns. Even those closest to Madoff saw a kind and honorable man; a loving father and husband; generous to his employees and charities. Fellow investors saw, a wise elder statesman who invested client's money with minimal risk.

Perhaps the most surprising part of his story is the length of time his fraud went undiscovered. Like the earthquake that no one predicted, suddenly investors with Madoff found their ground shaking and discovered they had traded their life savings for a pile of lies.

BRINGING TRUST BACK—PULLING THE TRIGGER

Besides eroding trust and destroying lives, what effect are our modern-day business scandals having? Do they serve as ethics course material for college credit and a fancy diploma on the wall? Are we merely sharpening talents as master illusionists instead of masters in our calling? Will we attain the wisdom of George Costanza who once said, "Just remember, it's not a lie if you believe it".

We are accountable for what has been entrusted to us. For our business, this means more than a BBB sticker on the window or a mission statement that makes our employees giggle. Scriptures tell us that trustworthy people hate dishonest gain, refresh the spirit of their



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masters, bring healing, are trustworthy even in small matters and, like Daniel, are neither corrupt nor negligent.

Sometimes, the most difficult task is to accurately perceive ourselves and our motives. Like the 300lb teacher of a weight loss seminar, the terry cloth sweat suit doesn't serve as credentials. Trust evokes more than rhetoric that is at best a pep talk with no real consequences.

Taking personal inventory is a painful process, but self-confidence without self-awareness leads to self-destruction. You've probably heard the quote "Feedback is the breakfast of Champions." It is healthy to regularly ask ourselves how our trustworthiness is rated by our colleagues, our employees, our vendors, and our boss. Everyone wants to be trusted, but trust is not static. Trust's measurement ebbs and flows with our consistency and the congruency of our words and deeds.



"I LOOK FOR THREE THINGS WHEN HIRING PEOPLE. THE FIRST IS PERSONAL INTEGRITY. THE SECOND IS INTELLIGENCE, AND THE THIRD IS A HIGH ENERGY LEVEL. BUT IF YOU DONT HAVE THE FIRST, THE OTHER TWO WILL KILL YOU."

—WARREN BUFFETT, CEO of Berkshire Hathaway

Striving for trust and neglecting character becomes manipulation. Trust is really a byproduct of our character. WARREN BUFFETT, CEO of Berkshire Hathaway says, "I look for three things when hiring people. The first is personal integrity. The second is intelligence, and the third is a high energy level. But if you don't have the first, the other two will kill you."

A favorite axiom of RONALD REAGAN was "Trust but verify." Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev once told him "You repeat that at every meeting," to which Reagan

"TRUST BUT VERIFY."

—RONALD REAGAN,



answered, "I like it." Ironically, this saying originated from a Russian proverb which probably made Reagan enjoy it all the more. Perhaps this needs to be our approach today with ourselves and those with whom we need to rebuild trust.

When we take personal inventory and discover that we've become the guy in the sweat suit, it is difficult to know where to begin to make changes. To save us from lengthy pontification and analysis, Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan, authors of *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*, offer this approach: "We don't think ourselves into a new way of acting, we act ourselves into a new way of thinking."

No matter the environment, trust is

fragile, easily vanquished. Nothing can undermine your business more completely than lack of trust. The world is watching to see how being a follower of Christ affects our businesses. Will we demonstrate that we are more than astute magicians? Will we withstand the earthquakes? Will we give opportunity for trust to be rebuilt? **121**

Jonathan Simpson is Director of the Construction Services Team for Apex III, a construction firm based in Mobile, AL. He also coordinates Marketplace Exchange for CSM and provides management assistance for the Hidden Treasures Costa Rica ministry.

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Churches are called to be both proactive and restorative; that is, we are called to grow strong and healthy families that are able to bear good fruit, and we are also called to bring healing and restoration to those who are in peril or broken.

This means that we work on two fronts: equipping and discipling new families, and also bringing redemption to those who have suffered in dysfunctional families. In particular, men must be trained how to be good sons so that they can be good fathers. Fathers must be encouraged and focused on protecting, providing, and praying for their wives and children. This means that spiritual fathers and churches must devote more time, energy, and resources toward this kind of practical training.

Likewise, churches must also develop resources for ministering to those in dysfunctional and even dangerous situations. So many children today are suffering in broken homes; some even must endure terrible abuse. Bringing help and healing is seldom a neat, simple, or easy process, and spiritual fathers must be prepared to roll up their sleeves and get in the trenches.

Christian Dads and Moms must, of course, start first in their own homes with their own children and extended families. However, as disciples of Jesus, we must also be willing to get into the boat with those who are tempest-tossed and guide them safely into harbor. **121**

Stephen Simpson is the Editor of *One-to-One* and Senior Pastor of Covenant Church of Mobile.

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