



CEO Devotional – June 17, 2013

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Recognition

Recently I received an industry award, somewhat akin to a lifetime achievement recognition, for service and support of my profession and our trade. It was a wonderful surprise to everyone but my immediate family, who was present at the conference luncheon and was somehow able to keep a secret for some two months!

Each of us in leadership has from time to time received awards for contributions to our industry, community, or society. It certainly feels good when that happens, and it delivers a wonderful sensation of fulfillment. But that “feel good” moment doesn’t last too long, and as time passes, it inevitably fades away. Jesus Himself experienced such moments from the recognition He received from the crowds, but he knew their praise and attention would fade (John 2:23-24).

I was again reminded of how fleeting that moment can be when my pastor spoke the following Sunday about the God-sized hole in every human heart. Our pastor has been teaching on Genesis, and we were knee-deep into the life of Jacob. For all his greatness as a hero in the Bible, Jacob certainly had his share of problems and a challenge finally committing to the Lord God. Despite the fact that God had revealed His plan to multiply Jacob’s descendants on earth, bring him back to the land of his forefathers, and never leave him until all was accomplished according to God’s plan (Genesis 28:13-15), Jacob subsequently struggled with his commitment to the Lord and in letting God’s favor go to his head.

This reminded me of how often we rely on our own knowledge, talents, and experience when making decisions, often without even an after-thought of seeking the wisdom of the Lord. After all, God has given us those abilities and entrusts us to use them. And we may sometimes be pretty good at acknowledging that. But as leaders, like Jacob, we tend to fall back into ourselves and our own abilities all too often and forget to acknowledge, and credit, God for those abilities.

Receiving an award for our contributions to industry, society, community, or even church, can be very rewarding, but it can also cause us to forget God’s work in our lives or, worse yet, take personal credit for what we have achieved without acknowledging Him. That “feel good” moment never really lasts, and in the end, we are left with emptiness once again without God at the center of our attention, filling the empty space in our heart. The fact that only the joy of the Lord in our lives truly lasts and completes us rang true to me, just at a time I most needed to hear it (John 16:22, 24).

So the next time you’re at the podium receiving recognition or at an affair hearing accolades about yourself, think of how long that will last compared to God’s unending love. Think about how blessed you are to be a child of God, and where you might be without Christ in your life and the Holy Spirit living in you. Then think about God’s promises and how they last an eternity. The feeling I received from my award, and those you will receive from yours, won’t last long. So try to have the proper perspective, and let God fill the hole in your heart instead of trying to fill it yourself. Jesus invites us to “remain in my love” (John 15:9). And by remaining in Jesus’ love, Peter shares that “*when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away*” (1 Peter 5:4).