



CEO Devotional – October 22, 2013
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All Glory to God

I went to a memorial service about a month ago for a dear lady whose story and life inspired me. Rho was born in 1930, the start of the Great Depression. As a child, she helped on the family farm by doing chores and picking cotton, but the Depression soon cost them the farm. As her dad sought work, there were times the family spent apart and then, when they joined him again, many moves to unfamiliar places. Her background labeled her as a hillbilly.

When college became an option, she worked a variety of jobs, like cleaning houses, to cover school costs. College also led to her meeting her future husband. Together they raised two children—until he died suddenly when she was just 42. Rho had already lost both her brother and her dad. She continued teaching at a junior high and began a catering business to supplement her income, requiring 80 hours of work a week. This morphed into her cooking during the summers for various camps and ministries.

Rho was the person we all want to be—to the glory of God! But how do you go from what was by all appearances pretty tough circumstances throughout life to a memorial service where it was common knowledge and completely agreed that she exemplified the fruit of the spirit (love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)?

- First, whatever glory there was in her life was reflected glory. She simply pointed to Jesus.
- Second, she lived out the truth, found in Genesis 1:26-27, that every human being is “created in the image and likeness of God.” Even her own strong sense of self-worth wasn’t rooted in her accomplishments but in her conviction that she, too, was an image bearer.
- Third, she spent countless hours in prayer and in meditation on God’s Word. She also prayed that God would direct her own steps . . . then she listened . . . then she followed. Her favorite verse was Proverbs 3:5-6: “Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”
- Finally, her abiding hope was deeper, deep enough to sustain her in all the circumstances of life. It asserted that the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe knew her by name.

There’s nothing new in this, but, by the grace and strength of God, she just did it, irrespective of what life threw at her and with strength and conviction that can only come from God and from knowing God. And the end result? Embodying the fruit of the spirit. What an honor (and how humbling) to have known her.

Now if I make this a testimony to her, I am doing just what she didn’t do. Her life was a testimony to God, His goodness, the admonition in Romans 5:3-4: “Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

Still, she modeled a noble goal for me—to be remembered as embodying the fruit of the spirit. I am not sure today that is what would be front of mind at my memorial service, but I am eternally grateful that God is at work on it in me.