

MCD Just Checking In #58 Plow, plant or build? March 1, 2009 *Pilgrim's Process*
Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."

Prov 24:27 Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready; after that, build your house.+(NIV) Plow, plant or build?

This is one of my favorite proverbs. It bears some meditation and it helps if you are a farm boy.

This is a proverb about priorities competing priorities.

It is an adage that compares two very necessary duties but one that takes a higher priority right now.

It is not one of those obvious maxims about what is important and what isn't. They are both necessities but one has to be done first, or it won't be done at all. Let me paraphrase it

"Son, if it's time to plow and plant, you'd best do it now. Later, will be too late. I know the house needs building, but if you pass up planting time, you'll starve in that nice little bungalow. It may be a pain to sleep on the ground tonight, outside, after a long and grueling day of plowing. But it'll be even more painful to lay your head down all winter long with an empty stomach."

This is not a parable about ministry and family. It is about real field work and a real house that needs building. It is about the pressure to do two essential projects. You need a house and you need a harvest. One can't wait, the other must.

You and I face competing priorities almost every day. And it is not something simple like "Hmmm, my support is low, so shall I go rob a bank or pray??!! At least I hope that was simple!!

No, we face *real competition* for our time in the face of *real priorities* that are *all good and necessary*. Reaching the lost, raising a family, worshipping, edifying my team, making contacts, strengthening my marriage, growing in the Word, developing my skills they are all good and all necessary priorities. That is what makes this proverb so appropriate and so profound.

It is a parable about seasons of life. I've been talking to a lot of folks recently about recognizing the season you are in and living life accordingly. Back to our Proverb

If it is winter, don't plow. You'll only wear out your equipment.

If it is spring, you'd better plow. It is now or never.

If it is fall, you'd better harvest and get ready for winter.

If it is summer, and the plowing and planting are done, you've got a window of time, a season to build your house.

What season are you in? Is it a season of singleness? Are you married? Are your kids young? Is it a time of major adjustment for your family or team? Is it a season of mentoring younger families? There are certain priorities at this season of life that need to move to the top of your list. ***If you don't adjust to the season, you'll regret it later on.***

Early in our ministry I was running full steam ahead trying to reach my whole community with the gospel. I gave little thought to my wife and young kids. I was happy to be a husband and dad, but I they got little time or attention from me. I felt my obligations were fulfilled as long as I walked with God and kept them fed and clothed. I was failing my family and, therefore, failing Christ with all the right motives, certain I had my priorities straight. It was due to my godly and honest wife that I was awakened to the reality of my neglect. I had a Proverb 24:27 moment. It was time for me to *step back and embrace the season* of life I was in, and rearrange my competing priorities. We are so glad we did. It wasn't easy. It still isn't. But it is good!

I don't know what season of life you are in right now. But I know it will demand continual readjustment, reflection, and reanalysis to keep those competing priorities straight. There are some things *in this season of life* that, if you neglect them, will result in incredible, crippling losses later on. You don't have to do everything right now. You can't do everything right now. But you can and must do the necessary things that Christ calls you to do *in this season of life*. Seek His wisdom and make the adjustments, so you are in step with this season of life.

Self Check Questions:

1. At this season of life, what are the field work+priorities you must not put off?
2. What are some of your competing priorities that need to be readjusted this year?
3. How will the coming seasons allow for changes in your priorities?

For further study: Read Ecclesiastes, 1 Peter and Matthew 5-7 and consider your present pilgrim priorities.

Lord, help me to live altogether in this season of life, not wishing it was another season. Give me the grace to do Your will in all its fullness this year. Show me how to adjust the important so I don't lose the essential. Amen.+

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you continually. A Blessed 2009 be yours...

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.