

WD July 15, 2024

## “The Long View”

Are you one who keeps the long view? What I mean to say is are you one who keeps an eye on the eternal reality that is found only in Jesus. Is your life one that is framed by your faith?

Our Lord keeps the long view always out front. From Genesis 3 all the way through the Old Testament God laid out a plan with one goal in mind, the most important goal, the salvation of fallen humanity through Jesus.

We have many examples. Consider Joseph for starters. From Genesis 37-45 Joseph goes through a lot. He is sold into slavery by his brothers out of Jealousy. He was hired out to Potiphar who put everything in his charge. Potiphar's wife puts the moves on Joseph regularly and finally corners him and then she claims that he tried to rape her. He is thrown into prison because of it. In prison Joseph meets the pharaoh's cup bearer and his baker and interprets their dreams. Later pharaoh has a dream about seven years of plenty and seven years of famine and this dream is interpreted by Joseph. Pharaoh puts him in charge of the nation second only to Pharaoh. Eventually, the famine comes forcing his long-lost brothers to show up in Egypt hoping to buy grain. Joseph reveals himself to his brothers after a number of tests. In the end he forgives his brothers. Why? Because Joseph held on to the long view. He believed that God was working out something good in placing Joseph in such a position to save his family. And that is the point of Joseph's story. His purpose was to preserve the line of Abraham. Through his work the promise was secured. The Israelites multiplied and eventually Moses would come on the scene. It's not just about Joseph. It's about the plan that God maintains through the twists and turns of Joseph's life.

Consider Jonah. He had one job; preach to Nineveh. He didn't want to because he hated the Ninevites. So, he tries to sail another direction only to be thrown overboard and swallowed up by the whale. In the end it's not about Jonah, about how he feels, what he wants to do or not do, but it's about the long view. It's about the grace of God on display. It's about the Lord demonstrating forgiveness for the worst kind of people. Ultimately, it's about us standing with the Apostle Paul and reminding ourselves we are no better and deserve nothing but wrath. Yet instead we are forgiven in Jesus' cross and resurrection.

Everything that is worthwhile takes time to develop. There is a long view in finances such as saving for retirement or preparing for college. That requires deliberate and consistent regular contributions over many years of time. This takes great planning and care. If one is just blowing the whole paycheck each month carelessly then the long view is lost.

There is a long view in health and aging. Many go to the gym with this in mind or make it a point to have a physical at least once a year. However, if one smokes heavy, drinks heavy, and doesn't watch what they eat many problems may develop. The usual conclusion for many is regret when unhealthy things come.

The long view is essential for things like marriages which are meant to be life-long. The long-view is in raising our children in the Lord. The long view is a life of discipleship and example to those around us. The long view is a life shaped by faith.

The long view for salvation is greater than all and that's why we want a life shaped by our faith. After all what good is it to gain the whole world while forfeiting our soul in the process. Like Joseph our lives are part of a bigger picture that impacts our children, our spouse, our church family, and our community. Like Jonah, it's not just about how we feel or just what we want. Keeping the long view requires time with the Lord on a consistent and deliberate basis, keeping a time for the Lord keeps the Lord on our minds. It means that we are keeping the Lord as a priority. Sometimes it requires sacrificing what we want to do for what we need to be doing. Sometimes it means sticking with the Lord, as Joseph did—meaning that he never let his circumstances become his focus over his Lord no matter how much he was devastated by them. Joseph gave his best self under every condition. When he went to prison, he became such a model prisoner that the warden of the prison made him a number two man just like Potiphar had done with Joseph on his estate.

Keeping the long view is what Jesus continues to emphasize for the disciples who kept wanting to be the most important disciple. Jesus however, taught humility, washing the disciples' feet. Humility is perhaps one of the most major ingredients for keeping the long view because humility attaches itself to Jesus' humility on the cross (Philippians 2). Humility takes the focus off of ourselves and towards others first. Humility integrates

the Lord through regular prayer, worship, Bible time, and listening to the Lord. Humility keeps a lot of things under the care of the God's grace and in the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

Are we keeping the long view? It's not always easy to do because we all have so much going on. It's easy to get lost in the school schedule or in all the doctoring that many have to do. It's easy to get focused on ourselves when so much is going on; how tired we are, "how long is this going to take," how much we enjoy it or tolerate it only; so many things. In the end, however the long view focused on eternity is all that matters.

No one who faces their end in this world wishes for more overtime or more worldly treasures. At the moment of death, one is often hyper-focused on what comes next. What comes next lasts forever so we should be paying attention to it. That alone makes it a big deal. But even bigger, the long view remembers that we get to be with Jesus for eternity. You being with Jesus is the whole thing—the reason we shape our lives around faith. May the Lord help us all to frame a life around faith so that the long-view, our hope in Jesus Christ strengthens and propels us through all the nitty gritty stuff in between.

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John 3:30