

The Barnabas Letter

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Where your treasure is...
there your heart will be also

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Moth, Rust & Thieves

m e s s e n g e r s o f m y n e e d *By Roger Edwards*

My financial advisor is very smart. He says things like, "The current indexing of the dollar makes a volatile climate for portfolio capitalization."

I am sitting by his desk for our annual review, blinking profusely. "Well, that's good," I say.

"No," he says patiently, "it's bad."

"Oh... right," I say, "Current indexing, yes of course. For a minute

there... yes, bad... Hmmm..."

I should be paying attention, but I'm too busy trying to stop blinking. I don't know what he wants me to do. I nod, as if weighing options. And I would too, if I understood what they were.

"Of course, anything could happen," he says, trying to help me out, "it could go up or down."

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By Joel Campanella

Joel is married to Anne and the father of Sidney (7). They live in Davidson, NC., where he is an avid golfer and a long-time supporter of Davidson Wildcats basketball.

Fool's Gold

On an evening in September of 1998, I stood at mid-field of Camp Nou in Barcelona, Spain with 200 or so of the senior managers of the British-based company where I was employed. It was surreal. This was the site of the 1992 Summer Olympic Games – the venue for soccer, the largest stadium in all of Europe. We were there because our company of more than 50,000 employees in over 100 countries had a new CEO, the American who had previously run the U.S. operation. This was his first major meeting to unveil our new direction. Just being invited to this week of meetings in Barcelona was an honor and exhilarating.

Rumors had started as to what this all meant. During cocktails at Camp Nou, I overheard one of my colleagues say that I would be reporting to a gentleman who was a peer of mine, someone I knew and liked. But my stomach sank. I thought he should report to *me*. Months earlier, my division had been named the #1 division in the U.S. within our company – not his!

As is typical throughout Europe, we enjoyed yet another late, lengthy and extravagant dinner. About 11 p.m., our new CEO went up to the microphone and said he had four special awards to give out. When he got to the third one, I

could tell he was describing my division. I quickly fixed my tie and put my jacket back on. It had been a lively evening of dining with many colleagues from around the world that I had only met in the last few days. Sure enough, the next thing I knew I was up on stage, being handed a heavy plaque and shaking hands with the Chief with a huge grin on my face. I still have a picture of this golden moment somewhere.

The new strategy was eventually unveiled. I had a different boss than the rumor mill predicted – a brilliant and well-liked Brit who seemed to like me, but with the cultural barrier I was never certain. I was appointed the Managing Director of my division on a worldwide basis. I reported back to the CEO and his direct reports quarterly. To be working closely and socializing with the top officials of such a large, multi-national corporation felt like a rocket ship ride. We were doing business in many countries. I traveled the world - always business or first class. Financially, it was lucrative, and it was fun, too.

As we grew the business, however, there were more and more days that were less than satisfying. A few years back, I had been recruited away from an industry-leading company (after a decade

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and a half of constant promotions) to be part of the turnaround effort at this venerable old firm. The Godly man that recruited me was sincere in his support and hope for me and my project. He was a great role model and guardian angel. But my routine began to wear on me. Most mornings I was up at 5:15 a.m. heading to the airport or being one of the first in the office. On those rare weeks I was in Charlotte, more often than not I either went out to dinner with customers, suppliers or visiting staff or would call my wife, Ann, on the way home to explain why I was running an hour or two late *again*. While a team of long-time employees and new recruits that I brought in built the business, a subtle professional jealousy began to permeate the office. Employees from other divisions resented the fact that my boss reported directly to the CEO positioning me closer to him than most people. I thought others would support me because I was simply implementing a strategy endorsed by the CEO. Oh, how wrong I was. I had achieved so much yet I felt attacked and underappreciated. And I attacked back. The rewards of success were being corroded by the resistance I was bumping into as my division grew.

Things at home were no better, although they might have looked good from a distance. Sure, Ann would join me at the end of some of my business trips. We stayed in expensive hotels in Denver, New York and San Francisco. Ann made more than one trip to London, where we enjoyed the theater and sightseeing. For my 40th birthday, we took the Chunnel from England to France, climbed the Eiffel Tower and spent a long weekend in Paris. The glitter of all these destinations wore off when we got home. There, Ann was doing her thing and I was certainly doing my thing and the two didn't intersect very often. The house felt cold and gray for good reason, and that led to plenty of friction. We were expecting different

things from each other and we weren't getting them. She wanted me to be present or at least focused on her when I was there. I wanted some rest and understanding that what I was doing was important and good.

My wife and I had suffered through three miscarriages over the years. In 2001, Ann was pregnant again. Two months before the due date, I planned an around-the-world trip so that I wouldn't feel the need to leave the country until after our child was born. My itinerary would take me first to London, then to Tokyo, down to Hong Kong and Singapore, then to Auckland, jump over to Sydney for a couple of days, then back to Los Angeles and finally back to Charlotte. After my first day in London, I dialed my wife's cell phone at 10:30 p.m. which was 5:30 p.m. in Charlotte. Ann had been scheduled for a routine checkup. But the doctor said she was 1 cm dilated and in labor. She had been sent to the hospital for tests, then told she would have to go on bed rest. "Do I need to shorten my trip?" I asked. She replied, "Only if you want to be here if the baby comes early." Oh! I told her I'd see what I could do. After all, it was late, I had this unbelievable itinerary and many people to see.

I took a ride down the elevator to think about what to do. I walked to the entrance of the hotel bar. The scene in front of me looked like my business career and life – chaos, loud, self-serving, never resting, nothing gentle or kind going on there. By grace, I didn't go in. I went back up the elevator and spent the next two hours calling those in Australasia whose day had already started, emailing my colleagues in London and the U.S. and changing my flight. I was going home tomorrow. It hadn't hit me yet, but that's where my treasure was.

Less than a year later, I walked away from my job. It wasn't easy. I

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Moth, Rust & Thieves

(Continued from page 1)

By Roger Edwards:

a counselor and teacher at The Barnabas Center. He is married to Jean and they have seven children.

“But as it turns out, money can’t cover the soul any better than fig leaves. It too, can deteriorate or be eaten away. And it is even more prone to theft. Every earthly covering (no exceptions), is vulnerable to moth, rust and thieves.”

I want to scream, “That’s supposed to help?” But that would look like panic. And I’ve heard that’s the worst thing you can do. Times like these call for decisive action. So I blink more boldly.

I am scared. These uncertain times rattle me. I am more vulnerable than I thought. What if my 401K isn’t big enough to cover me? What if I lose my job? What if the whole economic system has more hidden problems? So many moving parts - I might not see them coming.

Earth is Risky

Jesus warned about this, “*Don’t store up for yourselves treasures on earth..*” Earth is risky, he tells us, “*where moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal.*”

Just last summer, I was feeling secure and smart. Every few days, I would click onto my investment website (then listed under ‘My Favorites’). I would watch it mathematically graph how smart I was. My plan was working. Things were looking up. I had it covered.

But where did all these moths come from? In no time at all they’ve eaten away 30 - 40% of my covering. I feel practically naked. And so I sit in my financial advisor’s office with my legs crossed desperately pretending I know what I’m doing.

The Desperation to Hide

To be honest, my desperation to hide didn’t start with this recession. I have always been like this. Whenever I feel out-of-control, a scared/angry part of me takes over. It will do almost anything to avoid that naked feeling.

I am like Adam and Eve. Something comes along that opens my eyes. I realize how vulnerable I really am. It could be as large as a global crisis or as small as criticism. Then I scramble to stitch together a ‘fig-leaf’ suit to hide in.

But then God comes looking for me. ‘Where are you?’ He calls.

From the bushes I reply, “Yes, of course, I heard you. I’m over here comforting the wife - you know how she is.” But I am blinking again.

Naked - Afraid - Hiding

When Adam realized that he was naked, he hid too. When God called for him, Adam answered, “*I was afraid because I was naked, and so I hid.*” With three words, Adam exposes the sequence of all human behavior: ‘Naked’ - ‘Afraid’ - ‘Hiding’.

Nakedness (our vulnerability) terrifies us. We grab for some kind of ‘fig leaf’ to cover us. In our culture, the most available versatile ‘fig leaf’ is the dollar bill. It happens to be green, appealing to our primitive instinct for camouflage. If we can sew up enough dollars, we believe, it will salve our primeval anxiety. Then we will feel OK.

But as it turns out, money can’t cover the heart any better than fig leaves. It too, can deteriorate or be eaten away. And it is even more prone to theft. Every earthly covering (no exceptions), is vulnerable to moth, rust and thieves. This recession is showing us. It is eating holes in our cover. In many cases, the very roof over our head.

Our first instinct is to think: “I need more leaves!” But this too is a reenactment of Adam and Eve running into the forest for even more cover. But God still found them and they were still afraid. Apparently, there aren’t enough leaves anywhere to cover the human soul.

Jesus asks, “*What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?*” (Mk. 8) Even if you had enough green money to buy the entire world, it wouldn’t be enough. “Don’t trust your heart to the earth,” Jesus is saying, “It isn’t sufficient. Not even the whole of it.”

Experiencing Need

So here I sit in my financial advisor’s chilly office. His honesty is

more than I want to hear. And I feel this strangely familiar sensation. It feels like dread. I have fought off this sensation my whole life. I deny it, I pretend it ain't so, I shove it aside. But here I am again, experiencing the very thing I fear most.

I am experiencing need.

Oh, how I fight it. I cross and re-cross my legs. I rearrange my port-foliage from one sector to another and then stuff some under the mattress. I blink, hoping to wake up in Kansas. But every time I open my eyes, I realize that I am naked. The more open my eyes are, the more complete and more profound my nakedness. Nothing on earth can cover me. Nothing.

I need... God.

Sometimes, when I am this close to my true nakedness, I glimpse who I truly am. I wonder if this is the only time that I know myself. Sometimes, from this blessed place, I can hear the voice of God. 'Where are you?', He calls. When I feel need, my spiritual hunger is awakened. I am reunited to my long-repressed desire for God.

This core desire is older than that angry/scared part of me. I feel the urge to give up my game of hide and seek. I want cry out, "Here! Over here. I need you! I see it now."

But then that other part - that terrified/desperate part of me rises up. I don't want God to see me like this. I want to stroll out in a tailored three-piece suit of woven leaves. I want to say, all shiny and green, "Hello there God. What can I do for you?"

You see, I want God - but I don't want to need God. Such raw neediness feels unbearably shameful. Nakedness makes me feel like I am less than God. The angry/scared part of me is intolerant of being 'less than' or 'in need of'. There must be something to cover me.

Messengers of My Need

But moth, rust and recession teach me that no such cover exists. All life drives me to the same con-

clusion: I am naked. Every loss proves that fig leaves won't last. Every gain proves their insufficiency. The raw fact of our passing life presses us to admit: "Naked I came, naked I shall return". Moths eat away every false covering and reveal our true need.

I've had it backwards. I have hidden from my nakedness (need) when that is how God intended me to be. Nakedness isn't my problem. It never was. My need corresponds to God's care. If I admit it, it will lead me back to real glory. My nakedness (need) is exactly the shape and size for the garment of Grace.

You can dress yourself in whatever material you like, but it will never fit or be fitting for who you truly are. Earthly materials are too flimsy to adorn the image of God. The only true human adornment is the immaterial, flowing robe of Divine love.

This is the message of moth, rust and thieves. All these lowly messengers bring a high message. All rust is therefore ironic. All moths holy. Every thief can make you rich. Even death brings life. These painful messengers bring unbearably wonderful news.

It is, however, easy to miss the point of moth, rust and theft. It isn't that leaves are too small - they are the size God intended. The message, hidden in the recession, is that your heart is too big for a fig leaf, too grand for even the whole world. But it is just right for God.

Ironic. This recession, which frightens us, could be the opportunity of the century to embrace our true need. Perhaps, while this close to our true nakedness, we will be able to hear God's voice calling, "Where are you?"

This is our chance to admit who we really are, to embrace our nakedness. Perhaps, as we learn to rest in God's love, we might accept who we are. Perhaps we will learn to delight in our dependency.

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Interested in hearing more?
Delight in Your Dependency
 dinner seminar June 19th

The evening will consist of:

- A simple 3/ Course Meal
- Served w/3 Profound Ideas
- Topped w/3 Provocative Questions

We'll laugh, we'll cry, as we remember who we are in God.

Great for couples or small groups. A \$50/person donation suggested, but not required.

*Facilitated by Roger Edwards
Call for more details*

Mary Penfield Chapman is a long time friend of Barnabas, lives in Charlotte, loves the Boston Red Sox, tennis, American History, and the seven who call her "Aunt Mary"...

The Heart of the matter

What do we do now? (or, wow, are we in debt over our heads...)

Barrons has confirmed that we are in the deepest bear market recession since The Great Depression of the 1930s. Unemployment is rising, housing prices are falling,

Many folks owe more on their mortgages than their homes are worth. Credit, which has been so available to just about anyone for thirty years, is tightening up, and small businesses are having trouble at times securing loans.

Many large institutions have failed, and many others, being "too big to fail" as ascertained by the government, have received hundreds of billions of dollars from the government to remain solvent. When will it end? How will it end? Where will this take us?

You and Your Family

So, how are you and your family weathering the storm? If you are like many, you have a mortgage, a car payment or two, and you have bills to pay and items to buy for the home, for the yard, for work, etc. It is not too hard to imagine that many of us owe on more than one credit card as well. In short, we are in debt, and some of us, are in deep debt, way over our heads. Stimulus, TARP, TALF, and Stimulus II are not going to bail us out individually. So, what can we do now?

It's Not About Numbers

First of all, the problem is not about numbers. Our issues with spending too much are not "just" that we seem to spend a little more than we make each month, and we are having a tough time paying debt down. It is not as benign as that. Our problem lies in what we "get" from our habit of spending more than we make. What does it "do" for us? How do we feel when we get new porch furniture like the Jones's over there? How about that red Solara convertible? Or that brand new Mercedes? Or more utilitarian, what about those clothes I bought that I really needed? (and love how they look and make me feel?).

Our problem, and it hits us all somewhere, is that we find some area where we can make decisions and go out and buy something that makes us feel good (at the core level), and we are depending on something in that moment other than God.

A family I know recently completed an addition onto their home. The total cost of the addition doubled the value of their home. But then the husband's is at risk. Their world went into a tailspin. They had refinanced the house in order to do the addition, and now they might lose their main income. They feel an unbelievable squeeze, and now the idea of "getting the house up

"Following rules, even 'good rules' to get out of debt, can never change our hearts toward the One who made us and longs that we come to Him in our failures' midst, and cry out to Him, to show us the way out..."

to par with neighbors” suddenly does not seem like a wise choice.

It's Not About Mere Discipline

Second of all, just sitting down, and figuring out a budget, and going over the numbers every week, is not the best way out of our joint trial of indebtedness. But wait, you might say, doesn't the dieter need to just sit down and consume fewer calories than they burn in a day? Over time, won't they lose weight? So won't making up a budget and “sticking to it” solve indebtedness?

Well, yes and no. Yes, we may be better off for many months or years. We may climb out of debt and determine never to go there again. But if the heart of the issue is not addressed, then the issue, which is trusting in something other than God for my self worth, my self esteem will surely “pop up” elsewhere someday.

Following rules, even “good rules” to get out of debt, for example will

never can change our hearts toward the One who made us and longs that we come to Him in our failures' and cry out to Him to show us the way out.....

But what if you do not struggle in the area of debt and finances? Well, ask yourself, is there any other area of life that is a constant struggle?' What comes up in your mind as you ask yourself that? That may be your area!

It does not matter if it is eating, or spending and debt, or owning finer things, or being super successful, whatever you have in life that you are depending on to bring you “life”, that is the area where you depend on something other than God for your “raison d'être”. That is where God would most like to have you cry out to him from the depths of your heart. Then He can come in and change your heart toward Him, others and yourself.

“...just sitting down, and figuring out a budget, and going over the numbers every week, is not the best way out of our joint trial of indebtedness.”

(Continued from page 3)

had to leave a business that I had birthed and a group of employees that had been my family, let alone the title, perks and salary. Perhaps the hardest part, though, was learning to live without the adrenaline rush of the challenge. I received more than a dozen inquiries from competitors hoping I would do for them what I had just done for the company I had left. I didn't bite, but part of me wanted to. I worked on creating my own business with a few others on a smaller scale. Fortunately, I think, it didn't quite come together since at the time I really didn't know what smaller scale meant. More than enough consulting opportunities with old clients fell in my lap to keep me feeling useful.

Once I was at home more, Ann and I began to learn that it was more than just time that we needed. It was quality time – a connection. But, we first had to learn that we weren't each other's saviors. If we were counting on another human

being for that, we were guaranteed to be disappointed. And we were. This is a work in progress for us but the beautiful thing now is that it is in progress!

I have come to know with a high level of confidence – and the bruises to prove it – that life is not about success and achievement but about faith and humility. I so desire now to simply rest in Christ. What that looks like for me so far is not finding my self-esteem in what my job is, what my golf score is, any material possessions or even in my wife, but instead through faith, staying open and attentive to opportunities to use my gifts in a way that might glorify God. I'm privileged to be the volunteer treasurer of our church and am finding some ways to use my experience in a variety of new directions beyond the corporate world. And most of all, to be an involved husband and an engaged partner in the raising of our daughter. This is where my treasure is.

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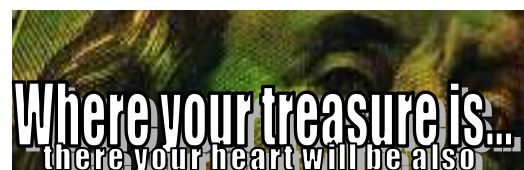
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Upcoming Opportunities

Date	Event	Facilitator
April 17-18, 2009	Heart to Heart Express —This seminar teaches Biblical principles of marriage along with practical ways to apply them into your relationship. Includes a series of guided confidential personal conversations. <i>Location: Church at Charlotte</i>	Palmer and Roger
April 22nd - June 24th Wednesday Evening 7 -9PM	Barnabas Training Level One —Built on the Biblical Model taught in Barnabas Training Basic, this small group training will focus on application with others as participants learn to listen, ask questions, and observe with a keener, more discerning mind and heart. Call to register. Limited to 8.	Roger Edwards
June 19th	Delight in Your Dependency - A first-ever dinner seminar to benefit The Barnabas Center. The evening will be organized around a simple 3-Course Dinner, served with 3 Profound Ideas and Topped with 3 Provocative Questions regarding our identity in God. Come with a friend or bring your small group. A \$50/person donation is suggested, but not required. Call for details.	Roger Edwards
Check website for 2009 dates	The Quest —A men's adventure outing including backpacking, conversation, study and reflection. Please contact us if you are interested!	Pete Bondy
Group begins Thursday Evenings May 10 - July 30	Real Beauty: Uncovering Your Struggle with Food, Body Image, & Beauty—An 10-week small group of women that offers you the opportunity to better understand your story as you hear from and are encouraged by others whose journeys are similar to your own.	Lauren Petters
Tuesday evenings	Honor's Program for Men —A small group program where men who struggle with sexually addictive behavior can come together to lay a solid foundation for relational recovery. Call if interested.	John Pierce
Thursday evenings	Honors Program for Women & Healing Hearts Advanced Group —Honors and HH are joining efforts to offer a series of workshops and intensive groups designed to help recovering participants.	Annie and Lauren