

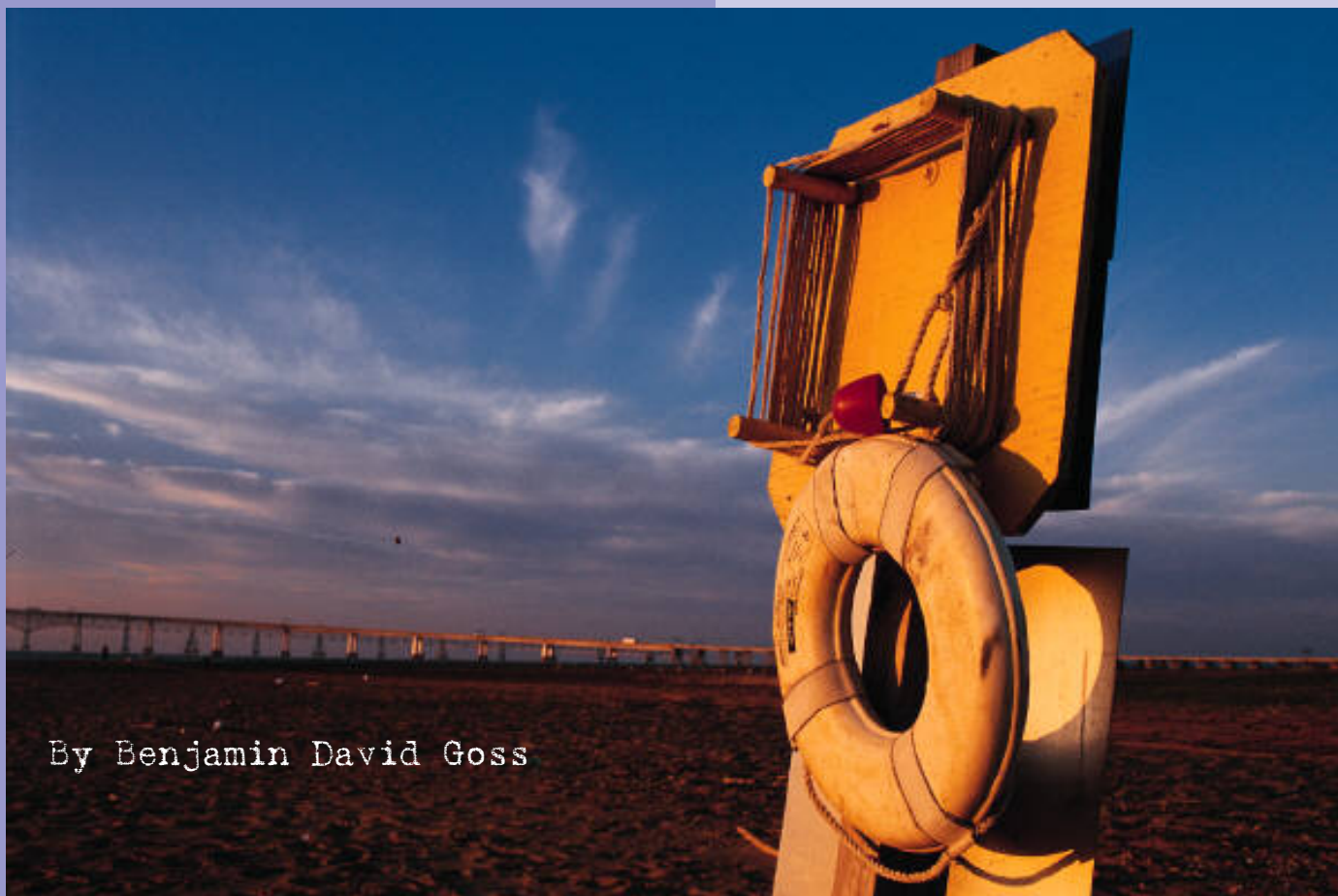


P . *ersonal*

F . *lotation*

D . *evice*

PFD: *Proverbs For the Day!*



By Benjamin David Goss

# PFD: Proverbs For the Day!

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A sampling of selected journals for consideration for a larger volume of writings

*Written by Benjamin D. Goss*

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## Ben Goss

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**From:** Ben Goss [bgoss@mt2.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 28, 2008 7:42 AM  
**Subject:** PFD: Plastic Christianity?

**Plastic Christianity...** this is something that I have spent time considering in the past, and here is a sample of those "ruminations..."

**"We should never look down on someone unless we are helping them up."  
-source unknown**

***If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other (v15) ... Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit (v25). Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other (v26).***

***Galatians 5:15, 25-26 [NIV]***

I don't know about you but I grow tired of shallow, surface Christianity. One of the themes of the book of Galatians relates to the fact that it is not what we are physically [on the outside] that makes us Christians. The Apostle Paul dealt forcefully and eloquently with the issue of whether or not the practice of the Old Testament Law, specifically whether circumcision, is required for one to become a believer in Christ.

Life, and life as a Christian, is difficult enough without fighting with fellow believers in Christ. I don't know if you've come from, or if you're part of, a Christian community that has kind of an "unwritten social code." In other words, social mores that are not necessarily tied explicitly to Scripture. They have a tendency to become a kind of "New Christian Law." If one transgresses these rules, it can result in anything from being socially ostracized to being publically embarrassed whether informal or formal.

This type of Christian community can become a place where the real work of Christ in our hearts is often hampered by a lack of transparency. Instead we are walking around with identical plastic masks that makes it appear that we are marching to the beat of the same little drummer boy. For some, it's a lifestyle that never penetrates further than the mask. Instead, the mask has become the apparent reality we live in or the seeming standard we appear to live by; but, it fails to have depth when it comes to the tough stuff of life?

Why & How?

I can ***become conceited*** - it is a source of pride, social status, community influence if I adhere to all of the social mores of a specific community.

I may end up spending time ***Provoking*** others - once pride steps in, it is a simple thing to begin pointing the finger and highlighting the failures of fellow Christians in meeting those social mores.

***Envyng each other*** - I then become incapable of allowing Christ to work in and through me because it is no longer possible for me to be transparent and real with my struggles to live a Spirit filled life. Thus I close off my heart and mind from others and attempt to compartmentalize what I am dealing with. Because of the plasticity of some Christian circles, we devolve to being envious of everyone else's apparent ability to live up to the standards. In other words, publicly we appear to be standing up to the plate, but privately we whisper about the cracks in someone else's mask, and secretly we feel inadequate in our life and we envy the apparent success of others.

Why? ... In order to avoid transgressing those social mores, which may or may not be tied to Scripture, I cannot bring attention to my failings and my struggles. For if I fail, if I stumble, then I run the risk of being ostracized at a minimum

and publicly embarrassed at the worst. Nobody wants to be an outcast, a kind of social leper, and yet that is what we create in some of our “communities” at times. How many times have you heard that Christian gossip, or Christianese, “we need to pray for so-and-so, did you hear what they did/what happened?”

I know that I want to be continually learning how to be open and transparent in appropriate Christ-centered relationships whether that be mentoring relationships, or accountability relationships, or whatever relationship God has brought into my life. *Personally, I've made the commitment to make every effort to leave my Mask of Plastic Christianity in the refuse heap where it belongs and refuse to ever pick it up again.* But it is a very real struggle which at times seems to overwhelm common sense, a willingness to live graciously...Isn't it so much easier to just not be real.

Why should I be transparent? If I am transparent, I run the risk of rejection. If I am rejected then I will feel less valued as a human being... And yet, I long for the chance to be so real because my heart feels as though it is groaning under this incredibly heavy weight of pain, rejection and struggle. Why? Look at the Garden of Eden – we have been designed for community.

It is so very difficult to walk with others when they are vulnerable and have needs. Perhaps it's because we fear that their weakness will reveal our own failures. Perhaps it's because we feel ill-equipped to even try to reach out because their struggle is outside our experience. Maybe we're simply tired of them being needy. It's hard to continue to give, of ourselves, of our time, of our resources when it seems like there is no end in sight... Perhaps it's because we've tried to live in our own strength, we've tried to build community on our own, and we've forgotten to connect to the source of Real and Sustaining Power – our Heavenly Abba God.

I pray that you do not feel like you are dancing the night away at the Masquerade Ball for Christ. If you are, then know that I am praying that you can drop your plastic mask. You know... the one that covers your real heart. I pray that you'll be able to really, truly, deeply connect – with both God and with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

***“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”*** (Hebrews 3:13)

***“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** (Ephesians 5:9-20)

***“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*** (Colossians 3:15-17)

***“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your entire spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless until the day of the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it!”***

**Blessings In Hymn,**  
Benjamin D. Goss  
Arvada, CO 80004

"No person was ever honored for what he **received**. Honor has been the reward for what he **gave**."  
- Calvin Coolidge, 30th US President

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## Ben Goss

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**From:** Ben Goss [bgoss@mt2.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 01, 2008 9:34 AM  
**Subject:** (1) PFD: Proverbs For the Day!

Proverbs 1:7

***“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline”***

This is a foundational or thematic verse for the entire book of Proverbs. In verses one through six, King Solomon explains his purpose behind writing the Proverbs, and then he follows his purpose with the theme. It seems to me that if we are to understand any book whether for instruction or pleasure, that we understand those two things, what is the purpose of the book and then what is the book’s theme. If we take the time to understand the purpose and theme of a book, then we can evaluate whether or not we should invest the time reading it.

For example, I would humbly submit to you that the purpose of the Bible is for God to be able to communicate to man, his most loved creation, what the purpose of man is and how much our Abba Father loves us. The theme of the whole of scripture, I would humbly submit to is one of Redemptive Love. Scripture begins with the tragedy of the fall of man and the brokenness of the intimate relationship that God and Man shared in the Garden of Eden. Scripture concludes with the ultimate triumph of God over the wholly twisted forces of evil most poignantly in the expression of his love for man. That love is evidenced in the sacrificial death of his Son Jesus Christ on the cross...

I find it interesting though, that King Solomon refers to the fear, or utter respectful & reverential awe for the Lord as being the “beginning.” It’s not the end and it’s not the main thing as regarding knowledge. Why is it the beginning – I would submit to you that it is the beginning because God is the source of all knowledge. As the Creator of the Universe, he’s the one who designed it all, set it into motion and he sustains it’s very existence. Therefore, it stands to reason that if we want to know anything, we should first seek to have a proper respect for & view of who God is.

Fear in this case is not fear of the unknown, but rather a respect for what can be known. Why say it that way? Because the very fact the Bible exists, tells me that God earnestly desires to have that deep and intimate relationship with me. The respect for God and the development of a personal relationship with him in Jesus Christ through the empowering guidance of the Holy Spirit, means that I now have a starting point for all of life.

So many people are anxiously running around trying to figure out how to make life “work” for them and they chase after the wisdom of man found in such books as “The Secret” or “The Four Agreements.” Proponents of these books would argue that they are not spiritual, but metaphysical and focused on enabling you to selectively drive your mind toward a desired goal. The danger however, is that these books have discovered a kernel of truth and either separated it from God, or simply realized it apart from God, and as a result they leave God out of the picture.

For example the Four Agreements are as follows:

- **Be impeccable with your word.** Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.
- **Don’t take anything personally.** Nothing others do is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own reality, their own dream. When you are immune to the opinion and actions of others, you won’t be the victim of needless suffering.
- **Don’t make assumptions.** Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness, and drama. With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.

- **Always do your best.** Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply do your best, and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse, and regret.

Don't these agreements make a lot of sense to you? I mean it follows that we live our lives according to the agreements we've made with ourselves, with others, and in relation to the spiritual realm. But this book, written by Miguel Ruiz, is seductive in that it weaves truth with lies. The lie is that the Creator of the Universe, is impersonal and out there. The lie is that this life is a dream and we all create our own "dreams" in the absence of a context that includes our Abba Father but rather we are all Light that reflects Love...

For Miguel Ruiz, Love is the over-riding principle and theme of life and it is the key to success in recreating our current reality. The truth is that this is simply a twisting and lifting from Scripture the understanding that we are to love the Lord our God with all of our spirit, soul and body and that we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. But isn't that what Mr. Ruiz is saying? No... within the introduction of his book he writes "Everything in existence is a manifestation of the one living being we call God. Everything is God."

This is a pantheistic theology, not to be confused with animism or universalism. Pantheism carries with it the belief that everything is comprised of an indistinct and all encompassing impersonal, immanent, abstract god. He is not an animist as that attributes the idea of a soul to all things living – trees, plants, animals and all things unloving – rivers, mountains, oceans... And Universalism is the idea that any path leads to God and that it really doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe something, and you'll get there (heaven).

What is the point? Should you care that he is a Pantheist? No...

However, I would encourage you, if you choose to read "wisdom" books that are not Scripture, be sure that you take the time to understand their purpose and their theme. Their theme may be true, but their expression of it may be sinfully flawed. Be careful what you allow to enter your mind. I think it best to close with an illustration that many of you are probably familiar with.

How do bank tellers and people who work with money all the time... how do they learn to spot counterfeit money? They spend time learning everything about the look and feel of the genuine article. Why? Because a counterfeit will look and feel different, even though on the face of it, it might look real. It's the same with wisdom and knowledge. You don't have to learn or know all there is about the lies that exist in the world today – you only need to know the real thing. Therefore...

If you want to know the truth, spend time in the word of God and learn what the genuine article looks and feels like. Then when you are faced with a counterfeit, you'll see the kernels of truth that are there, but you will instantly recognize the lie and understand how to relate. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 12:1-2 ***"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."***

May you come to know the "genuine article" of Scripture, your Abba Father, our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ, and our comforter the Holy Spirit...

***"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your entire spirit, soul and body be kept blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it!"***

**Blessings In Hymn,**  
Benjamin D. Goss  
Arvada, CO 80004

"No person was ever honored for what he **received**. Honor has been the reward for what he **gave**."

**Subject:** Reflections on Personal (moral) Failure

Recently I took some time to reflect on the life of King David and what some would probably term his worst failure as a man of God. And so I read through, several times, 2 Samuel chapter 12. I spent time reflecting on how we ought to

### *Deal with Personal Failure... observations from 2 Samuel 12*

But before we dive into this in detail, I'd like to draw a distinction here. I'm really not talking about a failure to succeed at some effort, whether in business or in our personal lives. I am specifically going to examine our moral failures. Our inability to live up to the standards that God has given us in his Word. While, it may be that our failures through sin are related to our failures to achieve whether financially, emotionally or in terms of status - it may also be true that we simply were attempting to feed some perceived need. And for some of us, we sinned simply because we wanted to...

#### *Verses 1 - 6*

I'd like to think that in most cases, we understand the difference between right and wrong. Certainly, within our society it has been generally understood that our societal mores and norms have been largely developed on the Judeo-Christian ethic. While there are some in our country who would say that this is somehow insufficient, or intolerable, it does comprise the basis for most of our laws.

As a result, from an early age, even if we did not have the best upbringing, I would submit to you that most of us understand that there is a price to be paid for wrong actions, wrong behaviors and wrong attitudes. In examining this story from the life of King David, isn't it interesting that he clearly had an understanding of right versus wrong. Not only that, but his sense of justice cried out for something to be done regarding the wrong doer in Nathan's parable.

#### **Application/Observation:**

- Most of us do have an understanding of right versus wrong.
- Most of us understand there is a price to be paid for wrong actions and wrong behaviors.

#### *Verses 7 - 9*

What is the motivation for sinful behavior? Or perhaps another way to put it is, what are the motivations behind our moral failures. I would submit to you that most people do not set out to make poor judgments. Rather, we find ourselves in a position where we mistakenly think that we have no choice. But, there are those of us who sin because we wanted to.

As I think through the story of King David and Bathsheba, I find it interesting that he looked and in looking he decided that he wanted. When he decided that he wanted, he moved to act upon his desires. And, because he had the position and the power, he was able to fulfill his own want.

We find the Prophet Nathan giving King David the words of God. In those words we find the love and disappointment of God for King David and his actions, when he says in effect, "look at all I have given

you! If you weren't happy with what you got, I would have given you more! Why did you not ask for more?"

**Application/Observation:**

- When we fail to acknowledge our sin, God may bring someone else into our life to confront us.
- God is willing and able to provide for ALL of our needs.
- God is willing to provide for our wants and desires.
- Why is it that sometimes, rather than being content with God's provision for us are we willing to do wrong to "get more?"

**Verses 10 - 14**

When we enter into sin, we do it because we mistakenly think that we are meeting a need or filling a void in our life. Unfortunately, none of us can truly see the future. Many times sin carries unintended consequences. We think we are going to cut corners on earning a commission or making sale – never thinking that it will cost us our job. Maybe we choose not to tell someone something that is relevant to an important decision they are making financially or relationally. As a result of the harm that comes to that person we find ourselves facing consequences we never dreamed possible.

Many times as we find ourselves walking through a sinful choice that we have made, we may find ourselves drowning in what we think is private guilt. But that is really a sham. We fool ourselves into thinking that no one else knows, or will know, what we've done. While that is a slim possibility, it is far more certain that the truth will be revealed. Then what happens when that truth is revealed?

Who will be hurt by our decision to choose a path we should never have found ourselves upon. I am painfully aware that some of the decisions I have made have hurt not just myself, but they have harmed my wife and my children, my extended family, my immediate church family, my extended church family, and even clients and colleagues that I've worked with on a professional basis.

When we contemplate sin, we almost never, if ever, consider the fact that sin is like dropping a stone in a very still pond. Consider the still pond to be the status quo of the relationships that you find yourself in. When a stone is dropped, there is the initial disturbance of the stone impacting the surface, but then if you stand and watch... You'll see the effects of that impact ripple out from that point. The smaller the "pond" the more violent the reaction. But whether it is small or large, you'll see the impact ripple back and forth for a period of time.

Unintended consequences... what are the unintended consequences of our decision, our choice, to sin... who will be impacted? Not only directly, but also indirectly... and even over time, how will that choice "ripple" through the relationships in our lives? Sin is pervasive. It's deadly. And, we lie to ourselves when we think we can deceive ourselves into thinking that it won't impact anyone else. If you're thinking about screwing up – don't do it!

**Application/Observation:**

- Most of us would agree that there are consequences to our sin, our personal failures.
- Sin carries unrealized and unforeseen consequences.
- 1 John 1:9 – if we confess our sins then God is faithful to forgive us for our sins.
- While confession may soften the consequences, God does not promise to remove the consequences for our sin (our personal failures).
- Our sin may become a reason for those who do not believe in God, to mock him.
- Our sin may have deadly consequences to those we love.

- We may think that our sin is conducted in private, but the consequences and the effects are often “public” and impact those around us.

### *Verses 15 – 23*

It is important to realize when we face the consequences for our sin that we not confuse those consequences with the freely offered forgiveness of God. Secondly, we should not allow ourselves to be so bound up in our own self-condemnation that we become incapable of moving forward.

What kind of a man was King David?! In spite of his failure, he still able to move on with his life. He demonstrated his grief and regret to God through his fasting and earnest prayer. He is an example of how the godly man or woman ought to address their sin-failure in life. Once he was confronted with the truth and the consequences of sin, he did not cease in his beseeching God for mercy. Then when it was clear that God had made his decision, he was able to move on.

When was the last time you laid it all on the table before God, and then left it there?

#### **Application/Observation:**

- If we want to demonstrate our sincerity of heart, we should consider fasting in addition to prayer.
- Those around us may not understand our response to the consequences or how we choose to deal with the results of our personal failures.
- Our response to the judgment and consequences of our sin that God brings into our life should be worship. Among the many reasons for worship, we should recognize and praise God for who he is, and who we are in relation to him.
- Once the consequences and results of our failures have become clear, we need to accept those realities and then move on.
- We should not dwell on our past sins and failures, anymore than we should focus on the negative aspects of the consequences for those failures.

### *Verses 24 – 31*

In these last verses we see King David return to the calling that God had placed on his life. He was called to be a Warrior King battling to subdue the heathen and foreign influences in the land of Israel. We find that while it was true that God promised his house would never know peace, we also see that it did not prevent King David from fulfilling his calling.

And, in the ultimate show of love and grace, we see God’s redeeming forgiveness in his descendents. How do we know that God forgave King David completely for the multiple and conjoined sins of murder and adultery? If we look at the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew chapter one, we find that King Solomon is an ancestor of Jesus. King Solomon was also name Jedidiah by God himself, which means “Loved by the Lord.” And of course, we all know that King Solomon was the second child of King David and Bathsheba.

And so we find that God is overwhelmingly capable of loving his faulted and sinful children, even after they have royally screwed up. What does this mean for you? One might suggest that King David broke four out of the five major commandments that relate to our relationships with each other as given by God to Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 5:

- He broke commandment six when he murdered Uzziah the Hittite through the strategy of war.
- He broke commandment seven when he committed adultery with Bathsheba.
- He broke commandment ten when he coveted Uzziah’s wife.

- One might argue that he broke commandment eight by bringing Uzziah back from the war campaign on false pretenses to try and cover his other sins.

### **Application/Observation:**

- God can use the pieces of what might seem to be our most horrible mess and still create something beautiful from it.
- Sin is not (was not) the end of the road, it's the beginning of the demonstration of the Redemptive Grace of God and his overwhelming love.
- Once the price has been paid, and the sin has been forgiven, as we move on, we need to be sure that we do not neglect the emotional/physical/etc... toll that our sin caused those around us, especially our loved ones.
- We see in these verses King David getting on with his life and the task of redeeming the land for the people of Israel and for God – God blessed the work of his hands.
- Matthew 1:6, we know that Solomon, who was also named Jedidiah (vs 25) is included in the lineage of Jesus Christ. If God is willing to allow the murderous and adulterous King David to father a son through the woman he committed those sins for in the lineage of Jesus Christ, who am I to say that God cannot use me because of my past mistakes or previous screw ups.
- Along the same lines, out of the five women (one who is Mary his mother) that are listed in Matthew's recorded genealogy of Jesus, we know that Rahab (Joshua 2:1) was a foreigner and a prostitute who helped the spies of the Israelites in conquering Jericho. Tamar was the daughter of a Canaanite (foreigner – not Jewish) and she seduced Judah, son of Jacob to give her children according to his word. Ruth, from the story of Ruth, was a Moabitess – a foreigner who chose to follow God.... What's the point...?
- God is The God of Redemption. He is about Reclamation. He is about reusing and rebuilding and restoring that which we might think is worthless, unclean or lost...
- God tells King David that he was so fond of Solomon, that he was to be called Jedidiah which means Loved By the Lord. God demonstrates in a very real way just how far he removed David's sin from him. God declares his love for what some might call the product of a sinful relationship. So, even when we as people might write off a person, a relationship, a situation – if we are willing to acknowledge our sin and plead with God for mercy – He is still willing to bless us.

If there is anyone in scripture to model one's life after, it would be King David who was described as being whole heartedly after God – even in spite of his failures and sin.

In observing how David handled his sin before the Lord, in my mind the following comes into view:

1. LISTEN when God sends a man/woman of God to confront a sinful attitude or act in your life.
2. ACKNOWLEDGE that you have sinned against God.
3. PLEAD with God for mercy and forgiveness.
4. ACCEPT the price that must be paid for that sinful attitude or act.
5. WORSHIP God. Give him the respect and awe he is due regardless of how he chooses to deal with you.
6. COMFORT those you have harmed with your sin as you are able, or as God provides.
7. MOVE ON with your life. Get back to doing what God has called you and gifted you to do.
8. REMEMBER that sin can have far reaching impact, even to the point of "coloring" the rest of your life. Sin NEVER happens in secret – even though you might think you can

David dealt with the aftershocks of this sin for the rest of his life. This sin marked and colored everything in his life from that moment on. While God promises to forgive, he does not promise to remove the consequences or the full impact of what we've done from our lives. May those who come after us, learn from our mistakes and our failures. And, I hopefully pray that they will not repeat them in our absence.

## Ben Goss

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**From:** Ben Goss [bgoss@mt2.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 04, 2008 8:33 AM  
**Subject:** PFD: Proverbs For the Day!

Proverbs 3:25-26

***“Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared.”***

There is something to be said for peace of mind. I can't really say why this verse spoke to me this morning. But, in the midst of the semi-ordered chaos that life can sometimes be, or become, it is a cause for pause to realize that everything really falls in with what God has planned.

God is bigger and more powerful than any challenge I face today, or in the future.

God cares more about my present and my future than I am able to care myself.

Take some time to reflect on the awesome omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresent (everywhere present at all times), and omniscient (all knowing) creator God who sustains your very breath.

The author of Hebrews writes that without faith it is impossible to please God... let's extend that thought... Without God, it's impossible to have faith. Faith then is the gift of worship I give to God who has already given to me what I need in terms of faith, and by extension everything else.

Move positively out in confidence that today is God's and you have the opportunity to put him on display. In return, God will bless you for giving back to him from what he's already given you.

### **Best Regards,**

Benjamin D. Goss

Business Development

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- Calvin Coolidge, 30th US President

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## Ben Goss

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**From:** Ben Goss [bgoss@mt2.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 22, 2008 4:02 PM  
**To:** 'Jenna Goss'  
**Subject:** PFD: Proverbs For the Day! and so on... 11:11/12:12

**This is something that I have been reflecting on for more than three week now... and it seems appropriate to share may it bless you! PFD, personal flotation device, may the word of God sustain you and lift you up throughout your day!**

I've been noticing the clock frequently at 11:11 and at 12:12 A LOT lately... so I thought I'd look up some verses and see what they said – and the ones below are verses that seemed to “speak” something to me. And when I say lately, I mean for the past 5 or 6 months... to the point that I find it highly, highly, unusual... someone suggested something along these lines in their own life (thank you Brady☺). Here is a small snap shot of a small view of the spiritual journey that I have been ruminating on these past few years...

2 Samuel 12:12

***“You did it in secret [David's sin], but I will do this thing [punishment/consequences of sin] in broad daylight before all Israel.”***

*Personal Reflection: When I was involved in working with a group that was less than “scrupulous” if you will, I did not run around talking about any of the doubts that I had about working with them. Maybe I should have. Instead, I was dragged into a very public hearing where a judge dictated consequences that appear to be impacting at least 3 years and 4 months of my life. What kind of craziness do we create for ourselves when we fail to hold to the truth? If you have not heard my story in full as yet, perhaps we'll find the time to sit and share – my life experiences have wholly changed me, and so I thank Him.*

1 Kings 11:11

***“So the Lord said to Solomon, ‘Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I have commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates’.”***

*Personal Reflection: My failure to act in accordance with best business practices and the highest of business ethics resulted in the loss not only my business but also time with my family as well as a lot of resources. If we choose to be faithless, then just as in the parable of the talents, God our Father will take our “talents” and “reassign” them if you will. The Kingdom of Israel was torn into two pieces, and then it was dispersed across the world – that disintegration started with King Solomon's faithlessness. His faithlessness was the direct result of being influenced by women he chased after 300 wives and 700 concubines, most of who were foreigners and idolaters. The world influenced him, rather than him influencing his world. If he, as the wisest man who ever lived, struggled with those issues – who am I to think that I would be any different?*

2 Chronicles 12:12

***“Because Rehoboam humbled himself, the Lord's anger turned from him, and he was not totally destroyed. Indeed there was some good in Judah.”***

*Personal Reflection: A willingness to repent in utter humility before the Lord means that I can change the extent of God's anger towards me and he will be willing to grant mercy. However, it does NOT mean that all of the consequences of poor decisions will be removed (or be immediately solved). The fact that God grants mercy means that he WANTS to grant us mercy from the depths of his great love. Tough Love says that we discipline even though it hurts us to do so in order to create a better more refined person after. The refining process can be painful and even excruciating at times, but perhaps we will be willing to learn a little bit faster if we consider how much it has cost God and that he is pained when we suffer because of our own poor choices. May we learn humility that is reflective of Jesus to the point that we can*

*soften the blows that come our way as a result of bad choices... This also reminds me of Nebuchadnezzur and his failure to acknowledge God, resulting in his humiliation followed by his restoration in recognition of God as the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe.*

Job 11:11

***“Surely he recognizes deceitful men; and when he sees evil, does he not take note?”***

*Personal Reflection: How does that verse go, “Don’t be foolish – God will not be mocked. Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” In other words, the wicked are successful even in their outrageously and unholy sin. We can rest assured that God is still on the throne and that when the time is right, the consequences will rain from our reigning King. We’re only stewards of creation and not the owners, therefore in light of the parable of the vineyard, we have to remember that God will call to account each one of us for our part in taking care of (or not) our part of His masterpiece. That masterpiece includes not only the environment, but all of humanity who lives and works in it, as well as how we choose to create in it (whether it be art or work or what have you).*

Job 12:12

***“Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?”***

*Personal Reflection: A singular great fault of American society is the failure to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments and experience of the previous generation. I strongly believe from both Job and 1 & 2 Timothy that we should make it a point to be mentored by those who have more experience than us – maybe specifically in an area such as spiritual or professional growth or more generically just in terms of how to live better in all areas of life. Not only should we seek to be mentored by the more experienced and/or skilled, but we should also seek to mentor by sharing from our own experience with those who are younger. Part of ingraining permanently a lesson, is learning it well enough to pass along to someone else.*

Proverbs 11:11

***“Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed.”***

*Personal Reflection: We choose the impact that we have on those who are around us. In ancient times a city would have been a far more closer knit community than they are today. Clearly King Solomon makes the very strong case that the decisions and style of life we choose to lead will impact the entire environment around us; relationally, physically, fiscally, and spiritually. Consider the Riots of 68, most of the major cities still have areas that have not recovered even partially from that time of violence – a time of violence that was precipitated, if my memory serves correctly, at the Democratic National Convention of 1968. That violence is not a reflection on the Democratic Party as an entity or movement, but rather upon the individuals who chose to speak out in that way... What do you think? Can you think of positive examples of impact – or negative? What does that tell us?*

Proverbs 12:12

***“The wicked desire the plunder of evil men, but the root of the righteous flourishes.”***

*Personal Reflection: More than anything else, this speaks to the lasting legacy of what we pursue in our lives. At some level, my association with individuals of ill-repute ☹ demonstrated a desire for plunder. Plunder is something that only happens one time, and what it leaves behind is destruction. The root of the righteous carries with it the concept of a plant meaning that there is productivity, life, and a continuing positive impact. Plundering someone one time for the most of what you can take is simply poor business practice and spiritually devastating. A righteous flourishing means that there is the multiplication of resources that benefits others and not just oneself...*

Isaiah 11:11a

***“In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people...”***

*Personal Reflection: What day is Isaiah referring to? The Day that God calls his people back to the land to reclaim them as his own before ALL of the earth, I think. Can I apply this to me now? In the sense that with reverent and humble repentance I can come back to God and thank him for being the Father of my soul and who values me imminently more than I can value myself. God knows who his children are, and he is not done until his children are home, accounted for, and well cared for.*

Jeremiah 11:11

***“Therefore this is what the Lord says: ‘I will bring on them a disaster they cannot escape. Although they cry out to me, I will not listen to them’.”***

*Personal Reflection: Sometimes we screw up so bad that no matter how loud we scream for mercy, the judgment will still be meted out. Thank God for mercy, may I not become so callous in my heart to his heart and his calling that irretrievable disaster comes upon me.*

Daniel 12:12

***“Blesses is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.”***

*Personal Reflection: If we persevere in faith through even the most difficult of times that are seemingly impossible to survive. Then God will bless us beyond measure as he claims us as his own. There are times of incredible turmoil and extreme difficulty, and yet God grants us the grace to have the internal fortitude to struggle through.*

Hosea 11:11

***“They will come trembling like birds from Egypt, like doves from Assyria. ‘I will settle them in their homes,’ declares the Lord.”***

*Personal Reflection: Restoration for God’s children is promised. Settling his children in their homes brings a sense of peace and tranquility as well as one of eternal provision for his people. As Christians, we are his children too. Therefore, we can look forward both personally and corporately to a time of peace and personal restoration. Why? Because God loves his children too much to allow anything else to happen.*

Matthew 12:12

***“How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”***

*Personal Reflection: Let’s not lose sight of what’s really important about Church and worshipping God on a Sunday morning. God is more concerned that we reflect true spiritual value by encouraging and helping our fellow man than meeting some formula for apparent spirituality. Ministry and true radical spiritual impact disappear when they are drowning in a sea formality and/or meaningless tradition. The ascendant Jesus Christ longs for us to transcend our banal experience of tasteless life to rapturously seek out personal and intimate communion with him through the channel of the almighty Holy Spirit – his seal upon us demonstrating that he owns us and that sin does not.*

Luke 12:12

***“for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.”***

*Personal Reflection: There are times when I am overwhelmed with emotion or circumstances or life and it reduces me to utter incomprehensible speechlessness. It is a great comfort to know that the Holy Spirit as part of his empowering presence in my life, enables me to understand and then articulate what I need to say. The more open I am to the leading and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, as I abide in Christ – and worship the Father, then I grow less overwhelmed by what’s around me and more confident of Him who is within me. Even when I fail to have any words to say, the Holy Spirit fills my mouth with words of wisdom and settles even the most destructively tempestuous soul.*

Romans 11:11

***“Again I ask: did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.”***

*Personal Reflection: God is a jealous God and is unhappy to see his children run after false gods, or anything that we would choose to replace him with. The Israelites failed in the commandments and purpose for which God has chosen them, but they are not past the point of redemption. Instead, God has chosen to extend himself to all the world for the express purpose of bringing Israel, his people, back to himself. We may not be chosen by God as a people group if we are not Israeli/Jewish, but we are individually called of God to be his children. While I may stumble, make mistakes, and fail to give God the prominent place in my life that he deserves – he doesn't love me any less. Rather, he strongly desires to redeem the worst of us to create his best in accomplishing his plan and purpose, not only in our lives, but in the world as well.*

Romans 12:12

***“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”***

*Personal Reflection: Words that I would do well to live by. It's not a desperate, wishy washy, hopeful mystical kind of hope, but a hopeful confidence that rests in the power and person of our God. As we suffer trials, temptations, and failures we experience or bring upon ourselves negative consequences and spiritual desolation. Even so God grants us the strength to persevere faithfully in an expression of faithful patience recognizing his sovereign control in our life. Last, prayer should be the first thought and not the last. We are to continue in the daily, even hourly practice, of communing with our God and doing our best to develop that two way street of communication between ourselves and our God.*

1 Corinthians 11:11

***“In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.”***

*Personal Reflection: Whether we are in a marital relationship or not, we cannot be separate from each other and trying to achieve things on our own. Rather God has gifted us with the appropriate partner whether in business or in life to be successful in demonstrating his glory and power to others. “No man (or woman) is an island.”*

1 Corinthians 12:12

***“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its part are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.”***

*Personal Reflection: Continuing in the same vein as the previous verse, we need to work our utmost to develop the partnerships with those around us to be as fully functioning a part of the body of Christ as we can possibly be. We need to seek out our divine purpose and role in work, life, and spiritually so as to contribute to the overall success of the Body of Christ. Unified in purpose but different in design, responsibility, and applied roles. Wow – isn't that amazing! God is so good.*

2 Corinthians 11:11

***“Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!”***

*Personal Reflection: Paul was providing loving correction to the church at Corinth, why? Because he loved them so much, he wanted them to live the best life possible in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father. Striving for the best in our Christian walk is not only a reflection of love toward our God, but also an encouragement and reflection of love toward those who love us.*

Hebrews 11:11

***“By faith Abraham, even though he was past age – and Sarah herself was barren – was enabled to become a father because he considered him [God] faithful who had made the promise.”***

*Personal Reflection: God carries through on the promises that he makes. Our faith in the promises of God has some connection to God's fulfillment of those promises. It's very clear in the text here that Abraham became a father, as God promised, partly because God told him that he would. If we believe that God is who he says he is, then if we cling to his promises and ask him to honor those promises, there appears some release of the abundant power of God in fulfilling those promises. I am not completely comfortable saying that our unbelief can thwart God's plan or purpose in us and through us, but perhaps there is more that could be accomplished if we would just “shut up and get out of the way.” God wants to “show off,” to demonstrate his overwhelming all sufficient love and grace to us. So, it's time to stop living in fear of things that are not of God and clinging to the promises that he stands ready to release upon us in response to our*

*acknowledgement of his love and supreme sovereign control. What is he ready to do for you? Only ask... the world is about to blow open with opportunity for you.*

Hebrews 12:12

***“Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.”***

*Personal Reflection: Perseverance in difficulty is tough, tough, tough. What is the therefore, there for? Contextually, it seems to refer all the way back to verse four where the author talks about the struggle against sin, saying “you’re not bleeding – toughen up!” It sounds almost like “suck it up buttercup – no need to whine.” The fact that we experience discipline and difficult times is due to the fact that God loves us so much – he wants us to improve. And so the encouragement...I need to get a stiff upper lip and deal as well as I can through the Grace of God, supported by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, awash in a sea of the love of Christ. Let’s get on with it!*

Revelation 12:12

***“Therefore rejoice you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury because he knows that his time is short.”***

*Personal Reflection: We are in the midst of a spiritual battle. Any of us that fail to realize this are blind to the true reality that underlies all that happens in this life. We are merely in dress rehearsal for the balance of eternity. Either we’re studying to worship the Creator, or we stubbornly grind on indifferent to the spiritual truth of being born dead in rebellion toward God. Satan will deceive as many as he can to make us think that he is really in control right now. But, the reality is that he wreaks havoc only because our Father God allows it. Why? Inscrutably, God allows Satan to continue in this millennia old temper tantrum because it somehow further demonstrates his love, grace, and ultimate power throughout the ages (Ephesians 2).*

*Just remember in the midst of your incredible trials, your horrible turmoil, your insurmountable mountains of anguishing pain that this life, these tragedies, are simply a wisp that instantly evaporates in the presence of our omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God – He knows and understands in excruciatingly intimate detail your pain and your suffering. Whether he releases us to join him in eternity, or whether he draws us through – we can rest assured that his Blood Sacrifice of his Forever Loved Son sanctifies even our worst mistakes and presents them as tragedy redeemed, reclaimed, and forever pushed to infinite glory for the Love of His Father. God.*

*Father God transcend my infinitesimally small concerns and allow me a glimpse of your glorious future for me and for those I love. Bring me peace that knows no boundaries as I reflect on your incredibly powerful humiliation in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for that intimate relationship I now desire to have with you. Comfort me with the comfort you have shown others that I may encourage them in their trying times of seemingly impossible difficulty.*

*I bless you Father God before all men and throughout the ages to come for you are Worthy of Awe, Admiration, and Adulation unending.*

*I beseech you Father God and ask that your mercy would reign down blessing after blessing upon those I know and love. I cry without restraint for relief from stress and fear and doubt in the face of intense adversity.*

*I wallow in you overwhelming grace that casts my issues aside like trees before the tornado.*

*I weep for the many children who are hurt, abandoned, or lost because of the adults who were once children who were hurt, abandoned or lost.*

*My God, My Abba, My Jesus – dearest Holy Spirit – Adonai – I tremblingly haltingly falter and dissolve in silence before your immense Throne of Grace. May we all stumble into silence before you and drink in your presence to the point that we overflow you into the lives of those around us – known and unknown.*

....

....

*Praise you Father, Thank you Jesus, Uplift and transcend Holy Spirit – my heart worships you in ceaseless praise for at the End of Time – You – Reign Triumphantly Supreme. The Enemy will be cast down and sin will be no more - Even so come Lord Jesus!*

**Blessings In Hymn,**

Benjamin D. Goss

Arvada, CO 80004

"No person was ever honored for what he **received**. Honor has been the reward for what he **gave**."

- Calvin Coolidge, 30th US President

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**Subject:** PFD: The Fingerprints of God

## **The Fingerprints of God**

***Isaiah 64:8***

***"But now, O Lord, You are our Father,  
We are the clay, and You our potter;  
And all of us are the work of your hand."***

Have you ever seen the mess in a potter's room? The wet and dried clay spattered across the floor, the walls, the potter - if not rent the movie "**Ghost**." It doesn't seem possible for a potter to place the clay on the wheel and form anything beautiful or useful, or beautifully useful without being wholly focused and into the project.

If the clay becomes unbalanced, too much clay in one area or another, the wheel begins to shake and inevitably the potter has to break it down and start over. On the other hand, when the clay is easy to work with and the potter is able to keep it balanced it becomes possible to create something that is both functional and a work of art.

The prophet Isaiah calls us clay - how easy are you to work with? Lately it seems that I've been trying to make myself into what I think I should be. The only problem with clay trying to be the potter is that the position, the perspective, and the source of directed power is all wrong.

***Isaiah 45:9***

***"Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker -  
An earthenware vessel among the vessels of the earth!  
Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?'  
Or the thing you are making say, 'He has no hands?'"***

In spite of my own pride and my own inadequacy, I find myself being broken down, reduced to that basic lump of clay. When the potter first begins to work the clay, depending on how it has been prepared it can be stiff and difficult to work with. But, after adding a little water, after beating the clay and massaging the clay, it becomes pliable and soft enough to work with - yet it retains enough "stuff" to hold the desired shape.

I find myself wanting to argue with God, saying to Him and to myself - God what on earth are you doing to me? Why did you let me do that to myself? Why did you let me make that bad decision. I scream silently to the heaven's "Why?" Yet, no answer thunder's forth - not even a whisper.

My mind seethes with anger to the point of rage desirous of answers, meaning, hope, and salvation from circumstance. I even find myself wanting to accuse God of not caring, of abandoning His greater purpose in me. Which is really no more than suggesting that He has "no hands" just like Isaiah warns in chapter 45 and verse 9. I know God has a design for me, I just wish that He would let me in on the secret. Don't you?

How do I as a poor, misshapen lump of clay stop trying to control the wheel that is not under my control in the first place?

How do I become soft and pliable, easy to work with, and not stiff and unyielding of heart?

How do I pause and recognize the fingerprints of God in the details of life, both large and small?

You're asking me? I'm just another piece of clay like you! They (those poetic and prosaic authors) suggest that life is a journey, life is a process, life is the culmination of your choices... Who are the ubiquitous "they?" More pieces of clay? We're all whirling away on a potter's wheel of our own. Where does that leave us - besides dizzy, dazed, and confused?

What about disaster, bloodshed, "pointless" death that happens in the thousands of daily tragedies the world over?

I know this - that if we're all "the work of His hand" and we are spinning away on our own potter's wheel - then I submit to you that it is impossible to have any perspective on the insane spinning of life without seeing each piece of clay through the eyes of the Potter.

When life raises up like a massive ocean wave and seemingly swallows you whole, you need to struggle against the rip tide of hopelessness and despair. You need to strive to break the surface and return to shore. When you find your feet and touch the stand, you will find the Potter holding you close. He's ready to make something amazing with you from the mess you've made.

You know what you'll find? You'll find that He never dropped you. He didn't throw you away. He just added some water to make you a little easier to work with. The cross shows us just how involved He is, He's covered with all of the bits and pieces of our lives that we couldn't handle.

Now look at yourself - see your past with new eyes. Can you see how He's touched you, guided you, shaped you, broken you down, made you whole, made you new, made you useful to His purpose and His end?

My prayer is that God will open your eyes and that in the midst of whatever you may find, you will find His fingerprints already there. After all, they've always been all over your life - we just don't normally slow down enough, get quiet enough, step softly enough to know it. Know it, not just intellectually, but know it spiritually, experientially, emotionally - to feel the awareness of that truth in the deepest most secret fiber of your being.

May our lives quiet enough, may they slow down enough, that we might be able to see revealed before the eyes of our hearts, the fingerprints of God evidenced in our lives...

***"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your entire spirit, soul and body be kept blameless until the day of the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Faithful is he who calls you and he will do it!"***

**Blessings In Hymn,**  
Benjamin D. Goss  
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720-335-7857 cell

"No person was ever honored for what he **received**. Honor has been the reward for what he **gave**."  
- Calvin Coolidge, 30th US President

## Ben Goss

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**From:** Ben Goss [bgoss@mt2.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2008 7:21 AM  
**Subject:** PFD: Proverbs For the Day!

Proverbs 18:2 & 12

***“A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.... He who answers before listening – that is his folly and his shame.”***

In Proverbs 6:17 the very first item that is listed of the things that the Lord detests is haughty eyes. King Solomon gave us a list of things that God hates, and if God abhors something we should probably stand up and pay attention right? The two verses quoted above really jumped out at me this morning because I have a problem with interrupting others. Ask my wife, not only would she probably roll her eyes, she would probably also shout “Amen.”

I find myself asking the question, why is the fool called a fool in these verses. This person that King Solomon writes about is clearly someone who thinks so highly of themselves that they find no value in the knowledge and/or opinions of others. The follow on verse goes hand-in-hand in that it may be critical or highly important for us to pay attention to someone else’s knowledge, opinion, or understanding. A failure to take what someone else has to say may cost us, and it may cost us dearly.

The flip side, or positive side of these proverbs of warning is that we are not foolish to seek out and discern the opinions, the knowledge, and the experiences of others. How strongly do you believe in the sovereign nature of God? If you do, then you cannot help but believe that the people God has brought into your life somehow fit into his overall purpose and plan for your life. Have you ever taken the time to sit down and think through the impact and purpose someone else has in your life? How would it impact your relationships if you viewed them through the prism of God’s purpose?

*IMHO, most people look at relationships for what they can gain for themselves, not what they can put into them or why they are there in the first place...*

How often are you able to sit and ask questions and truly LISTEN to the answers that someone gives you. There are times that I am guilty of listening to the other person only to wait for the best chance to interject what I want to say – ever done that? I once heard a seminar speaker say that if you scramble the word listen you can also spell SILENT. Silent means that you have turned off the voice in your head and you are focusing ALL your attention on tuning in to what the other person has to say. Truly that is a very difficult task.

It’s cliché but true, God gave us two ears and one mouth, so we should listen twice as much as we open our mouths to speak!

May you find the time to be quiet before the Lord

May you find the time to listen to those God has put into your life

May you enjoy the pleasure of learning from others and avoid the pain of failing to listen.

The Lord bless you and keep you, may his face shine upon you and give you peace!

**Best Regards,**

Benjamin D. Goss

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"No person was ever honored for what he **received**. Honor has been the reward for what he **gave**."

## Ben Goss

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**Subject:** PFD: The Gates of Hell

Matthew 16:18-19

***“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and **the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.**”***

"The Gates of Hell are locked from the inside..."

**-C.S. Lewis**

If the Gates of Hell are locked... then it's an interesting thought if we ponder the phrasing of that. Gates are for access. And walls are meant for defense, not offense. Hell is not a prison from which people cannot escape. Rather, it is a place that people choose to lock themselves into. Hell is really the place where people have barricaded themselves against the gracious mercies of God. In paraphrase of something that William Young writes in his novel, ***The Shack***, God loves his children so much that he's willing to grant us exactly what we want – even if it means eternal separation from him.

Perhaps another way to think about that statement is that conversation between the ghost of Jacob Marley and Ebenezer Scrooge... paraphrased... "You have labored on it [your chain] these past seven years. It is a ponderous chain..." Ebenezer couldn't "see" his chain because it was a spiritual reality not evident in the physical world... In the same way, those we come into contact with are "inmates of Hell." They're dead and they don't know it... unless someone makes them aware of it. The only one who can really do that is the Holy Spirit. However, we know that God through the Holy Spirit uses us to be a spiritual "fire alarm" to wake up his children...

The Gates of Hell may be locked from the inside, but as Jesus says he will give us the "keys of the kingdom." Not only that but those gates cannot prevent us from entering and claiming the victory. I humbly submit to you that the victory has already been won. Jesus has already provided access through those gates. All we need to do is to walk in and claim the plunder from the "city of Hell."

This is exactly what the Apostle Paul wrote about in his letter to the Ephesians chapter 4, and verses 7 to 10:

***“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says:***

***‘When he ascended on high,  
he led captives in his train***

***and gave gifts to men.’ (What does ‘he ascended’ mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)”***

As I contemplate the depth of meaning, and reread Psalms 68, quoted here by the Apostle Paul, written by David the Prophet-King, I am drawn to the fact that the reason the Gates of Hell are locked is because people think that they can keep God out. Also, perhaps part of the picture is the reality that the Enemy has simply blinded them as he continually seeks to steal the seed of the word of God from the souls of men.

Jesus said that the gates of Hades would not overcome his Church. When we go forth to claim territory for the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, we must realize that we are assaulting the bastion of Satan who is the temporary ruler of this dark age. While he is powerless to stop God's people from triumphing, from claiming the victory, from standing forth and declaring their sphere of influence to be God's; He is powerful enough, and God allows him, to lash out and create chaos, confusion and destruction even among the saints. Why?

Proverbs 16:4, King Solomon writes, ***“The LORD works out everything for his own ends— even the wicked for a day of disaster.”***

How much of a stretch do you think it is to suggest that Hades cannot overcome because it is only a defensive position? Some would argue that Satan is still capable of spiritual attack, and Ephesians 6:16 that our faith extinguishes the “flaming arrows of the evil one.” I wholly agree, but I submit to you that all that the Enemy can really do is to try and hold on to what he and his minions already have. The attacks of the Enemy are not offensive assaults, but the doomed defensive flailing of a conquered foe.

It reminds me of Hitler’s armies during the Battle of the Bulge in Normandy – the last gasp offensive when Hitler attempted to break the Allied advance, but was unable to do more than create a “bulge” in the lines. Hitler was really defeated the day that the Allies successfully landed in France on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944. It just took a little less than a year (May of 1945), for Hitler and his generals to finally realize and surrender to the reality of the overwhelming force that the Allies brought to bear. The Holy Spirit is the same overwhelming spiritual force within you that is more than enough to conquer an already vanquished, though powerful, Enemy.

Remember that the Enemy is trying to control something that he doesn’t own. The reality is that he is a squatter and has the rule of dominion here on earth simply because he’s here, and this in part due to Adam’s surrender in the Garden of Eden. Satan is not the legitimate ruler, he is usurper – he stole dominion of the earth from man. There are some commentators that believe that the symbolism of Revelation in the scroll, which the Apostle John sees, actually represents the deed of ownership for the earth. Jesus is the rightful, legal owner of the earth and the purchase price is ultimately his death upon the cross. The Enemy has lost, he’s got no right to be here, and as the children of God justified in Christ Jesus we are called to toss the Enemy out on his ear.

Now The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 1:18, ***“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness...”*** When we stand forth in spiritual battle against those who are “all godlessness” and who “suppress the truth” we need to remember “Ultimate Reality.” That is that the wicked are fighting a battle that’s already been won. Victory has been declared and the enemy simply has refused to recognize it. But, now the wrath of God is being revealed against them, and we are his people, his weapons in this fight.

The Prophet Jeremiah declares in chapter 51 and verses 20 to 23:

***20 "You are my war club (battle axe),  
my weapon for battle—  
with you I shatter nations,  
with you I destroy kingdoms,***

***21 with you I shatter horse and rider,  
with you I shatter chariot and driver,***

***22 with you I shatter man and woman,  
with you I shatter old man and youth,  
with you I shatter young man and maiden,***

***23 with you I shatter shepherd and flock,  
with you I shatter farmer and oxen,  
with you I shatter governors and officials.***

Taking a theological and emotional step backward. What does it mean when we are afraid to share the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ? What does it mean when we fail to give our testimony to others who need to hear this message of life? Is it possible that our lack of motivation to share the life-giving message of the gospel to the walking dead means that we are behaving as though we are powerless? I believe that we always have a choice... always. Jesus

died to give us that choice. What are we going to decide today? Tomorrow? Or, down the road of tomorrows that we have yet to travel?

At the end of the day, in our quiet moments, may we consider this, the choice we make about whether or not to enter the gates of Hell and plunder the “goods of the enemy” – the souls of our fellow man – has absolutely nothing to do with our ability, our empowerment, or the reality of the Enemy. The choice we are making is to choose to believe or to disbelieve that we have been granted the Victory in Christ Jesus. If we want to know what kind of choice we’re making, then we only need examine our hearts and look at what we’ve said and done. You already know whether you’re walking in victory or running in fear.

My prayer is the same as the Apostle Paul’s, I want to fight the good fight, I want to run the race to win the prize... Let me not be distracted by the powerless spasms of the defensive and vitriolic anger of the enemy.

***“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your entire spirit, soul and body be kept blameless until the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Faithful is the one who calls you and he will do it.”***

**Blessings In Hymn,**

Benjamin D. Goss  
Arvada, CO 80004  
720-335-7857 cell

"No person was ever honored for what he **received**. Honor has been the reward for what he **gave**."  
- Calvin Coolidge, 30th US President

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**Subject:** (24) PFD: Proverbs For the Day!

Proverbs 24:19-20

***“Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of the wicked, for the evil man has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out.”***

I think that we can all use a little dose of eternal perspective. Have you really considered what the end of man is, apart from the redemptive and saving grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? The end of man is desolate and without hope in the absence of our savior. Rightly says King Solomon that the ***“evil man has no future hope.”*** How tragic it is to think, that what happens now during this brief vapor of life is the best that they can hope for...

It is so easy to be overcome with envy and question why athletes, musicians, politicians or the wealthy live such lives of luxury while the vast majority of us struggle to make each day a positive one. When you find yourself 10 days from the end of the month and no cash to stretch that far... You sit and ponder, should I have a garage sale? Do I pawn my instrument/jewelry/tools/gold teeth? There are people that actually think through these options. We all find ourselves struggling in the midst of daily and monthly struggles where it seems that no end is in sight.

King Solomon tells us not to fret. Don't putter around stressing about how evil men seem to be getting over on you, on the system, on society... and why? I suppose that we could argue that it is a waste of energy and emotion. But, perhaps a better way to look at it is to consider whether or not you really have the position, ability and influence to impact what they are doing – or not doing. If the answer is “no,” then I humbly suggest that you consider taking a different course than “fretting.”

The Wiktionary suggest that “fret” carries the meaning of “to devour, consume, to gnaw, eat away, to chafe or irritate, to worry or be anxious.” I'd like to suggest that in my experience, I know I am fretting when my stomach turns sour, there is a light butterfly slightly nauseous feeling at the top of throat that is combined with an incredibly dry and sour tasting mouth. My mind is constantly turning back to a particular problem and I just cannot figure out a solution. As a result of all of that churning and negative emotion, one could argue that my efficiency, my motivation, and my perspective are all being devoured in a consuming and irritating gnawing at my heart and it seems to leave me quivering in anxious uncertainty.

What do I do? I am left with the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:4-9:

***“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***

***Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”***

If you're anything like me, there is a real and palpable struggle to understand why God allows his children to struggle and seems to allow evil to flourish and thrive. But, I ask you to consider the final phrase of this Proverb, “the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out.” Their light ceases to shine. Why? Well, I suppose being cast into an eternal abyss and being eternally separated from God, our Abba Father, would have a way of ending things permanently.

Whether it is the words of Jesus ***“And lo I am with you, even unto the end of the age”*** or the words of the Apostle Paul ***“the Lord is near.”*** We can rest assured that our Abba Father is willing to grant us peace and comfort through the Holy Spirit as we consider the truth of the reality of Christ becoming evident in our hearts and minds. Our destiny is so much more than that of those who choose to live without Him.

In conclusion, I would encourage you to hear the words of King Solomon, “the Teacher,” as he writes the conclusion to the book of Ecclesiastes 12:11-14.

***11 “The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one Shepherd. 12 Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them.***

***Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.***

***13 Now all has been heard;***

***here is the conclusion of the matter:***

***Fear God and keep his commandments,***

***for this is the whole duty of man.***

***14 For God will bring every deed into judgment,***

***including every hidden thing,***

***whether it is good or evil.”***

I can rest assured that whatever it may seem like in the here and now. The destiny of evil man is outside of time and space, a desperate place with no release. If I look at an eternity of peace and joy as I worship in the presence of an eternally awesome gracious and patient God, that destiny cannot compare to the temporary pain and frustration I find today.

***May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your entire spirit, soul and body be kept blameless until the day of the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Faithful is he who calls you and he will do it!”***

**Blessings In Hymn,**

Benjamin D. Goss

Arvada, CO 80004

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## Ben Goss

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**From:** Ben Goss [bgoss@mt2.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 25, 2008 10:24 AM  
**Subject:** PFD: Proverbs For the Day!

Proverbs 25:26

***“Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked.”***

This one is too close to home – just being honest. I really wanted a different verse to speak to me this morning, but I kept coming back to this one. A spring or a well are sources of water and water is life. People can go for several weeks without food if they have to, but we cannot last much beyond a week without water. As Christians, the adopted children of God, we have access to the Source of Life – Jesus Christ, through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit here and now.

The purpose of a well is to be a source of life giving water. As a person of faith, we ought to be sources of life to those around us. If, however, we are willing to “give way” or succumb to the temptations of sin, or if we get distracted from our greater purpose as a believer, then we become like a muddied spring or a polluted well – useless for the original intent or purpose.

The good news about a muddied spring, is that the mud eventually settles out and the spring can become useful again. However with a polluted well, it’s possible that it may not be reclaimed. During the times of King Solomon, a polluted well was more likely to be abandoned than for any attempt to be made at reclaiming it’s usefulness.

The thought that comes to the surface for me is this, if we dwell too long with sin, if we are distracted too much by the ways of the wicked, or if we give way before the wicked in our lives – then perhaps we run the danger of losing our usefulness altogether.

Theologians still argue over the meaning of Hebrews 6:1-8. Some would say that there is a sin unto death, others would say that the Grace of God reigns supreme – after all didn’t Jesus pay the price for ALL of sin? Paul makes the argument in Romans that even though grace is available to cover sin, we should not willingly continue in sin just to take advantage of grace. That idea runs counter to an understanding of progressive sanctification.

Perhaps it’s better to frame this picture through an understanding of the three tenses of salvation:

- **Past Tense** – Justification – I am saved from the **PUNISHMENT** of sin in my life. I can now go to heaven and no longer need endure eternal separation from God.
- **Present Tense** – Sanctification – I am being saved from the **POWER** of sin in my life. I can now choose NOT to sin.
- **Future Tense** – Glorification – I will be saved from the **PRESENCE** of sin in my life. Sin will be completely removed from me when I enter the presence of God finally for all eternity.

There is more in this verse about the present tense of salvation and sin than any other tense. My sin cannot undo the work of the Holy Spirit in reclaiming me from eternal death (Ephesians 1), and once I’ve entered eternity then sin is no longer present. As I work out my salvation, as Paul writes in Philippians 2:12-13 with the awesome respect and complete understanding of who God is and what he’s done for me, then I can begin to understand better what God’s purpose and plan for my life is.

How?

I've been created and saved for the purpose of doing what God has set before me, and rather than losing myself in the midst of sin I want to pursue those tasks that he has set before me. In so doing, God reveals himself to me each day *AND* I can avoid becoming either a muddied spring, or worse a polluted well.

May you find the time to examine your pursuits

May you discover the purpose to which God has called you

If the spring of your life has been muddied, may God grant you the grace to reclaim your purpose for him

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may his face shine upon you and give you peace.

In Hymn...

**Best Regards,**

Benjamin D. Goss

Arvada, CO 80004

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## Ben Goss

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**From:** Ben Goss [bgoss@mt2.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 29, 2008 7:55 AM  
**Subject:** PFD: Proverbs For the Day!

Proverbs 29:18

***“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.”***

Scripture is the Word of God, his revelation to man. There are other ways that revelation might take place whether through a prophetic word, a word of knowledge, or that special sense of the leading of the Holy Spirit in one’s life. But regardless of the manner of revelation, at the end of the day we have a choice to seek out the Word of God.

When we choose to understand, to meditate on, and work out the Word of God in our lives, then the result is very clear: blessing. If we want to be blessed, then there is a God ordained mission to seek out, understand, then implement the revelatory words of God in our daily lives.

As I take a moment now and then to be saddened by the various tragedies that take place in our country, most obviously the apparent rash of shootings that has come about since Columbine. Should we be surprised at the decline in values and the lack of value that life has to the next generation? I think not. Here is the Scriptural truth, when we remove revelation, the people cast off restraint.

The no-holds barred attack upon Judeo-Christian ethics began probably most notably in the 1960’s, though the effort has always been there at some level, in the removal of the 10 Commandments from most school rooms. We’ve attempted to legislate the removal of prayer in schools, amongst many other places. What have we done? We have removed the revelation of God from the primary training grounds for our children, and we’ve have established legal barriers to the recognition of God in them as well.

Many are crying out that they don’t understand why the senseless violence happens, but none of it has happened in a vacuum. We’ve degraded the sanctity of life and torn down those external principles and value systems that declare the value of a person and their life. We need to stop asking why it’s happening and start thinking about what we can do to rebuild the disillusioned, the hurting, and abandoned hearts of this generation and the next.

From a positive perspective, we have the opportunity to demonstrate to one heart at a time, to recapture the imagination and passion of the next generation, by allowing ourselves to be caught up in the passionate pursuit of the revelation of the Word of God in our own hearts; the result: Blessing!

***Matthew 7:7-8,11b “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks the door will be opened... how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”***

God of Heaven, Creator of the Universe – Sustainer of all things Jesus Christ, stand ready through the overwhelming comfort and assistance of the Holy Spirit to usher you into the presence of the Triune God, to enable your understanding, to fire your passion, and to reward your diligent efforts to seek him out!

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may his face shine upon you, and give you peace!

**Best Regards,**

Benjamin D. Goss

Business Development

***Metals Treatment Technologies***

**Subject:** Brokenhearted

## **Are you Brokenhearted...**

What compels you? What drives you?

I think that most of us, if we are brutally honest with ourselves, given the time and quiet to consider, can probably find the event(s) and/or person(s) that have shaped the core of who we are. We can identify those times in our lives when we were so greatly impacted that who we are was entirely, shaken, moved, stirred, or seemingly destroyed. While it is true that often enough, it is probably heartache, pain, loss, or failure that pierced us through our heart – I believe that it is also true that these events are the keystone(s) to who we have become.

We are, all of us, brokenhearted. On the one hand it is a direct product of the Fall. It is also true that our Abba has his hand upon us and he allows the events and decisions of our lives to produce something amazing. Certainly, Sin has placed such a burden on this world that, as Paul says:

**We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.**

**Romans 8:22-23 [NIV]**

**He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.**

**Isaiah 61:1(b) [NIV]**

*When Isaiah talks about the brokenhearted, God is not using metaphor. The Hebrew is leb shabar (leb for "heart," shabar for "broken"). Isaiah uses the word shabar to describe a bush whose "twigs are dry, they are broken off" (27:11); to describe the idols of Babylon lying "shattered on the ground" (21:9), as a statue shatters into a thousand pieces when you knock it off the table; or to describe a broken bone (38:13). God is speaking literally here, He says, "Your heart is now in many pieces. I want to heal it." (Eldredge, **Waking the Dead**,132)*

The wonderful promise from God is that we do not have to be driven by those turning points, or by that event or person that has colored our perception of who we are, who God is, and what I should be doing with my life. Rather that defining moment is what brings out a wholly and amazing vividness to our perception of reality and uses those moments to drive us deeper in character and understanding than we have previously been.

May our Abba reveal to us and in us those event(s) and people that have shaped us and enable us to refocus our understanding of them with his Truth. In so doing, perhaps, we can learn to be driven by our love for Christ instead of our fears, our failures, and our faults.

For some reason I seem to think that living in midst of my brokenness and my private pain is "safer" than the dangerous life of freedom in Christ. Rather than accepting his healing, I'm slowly painfully bleeding out for no

good reason. While it is true that he's already set me free from the prison of my old heart, my sin nature – I have not really accepted that truth.

Rather, it seems that my problem, and maybe yours as well, is that I keep walking back into that old cell and sitting down. Instead, I've imprisoned myself by choice. Instead of enjoying the freedom that he paid for so extravagantly, I'm stumbling around in a prison cell with an unlocked door.

May we learn to walk through our unlocked doors

May we allow Jesus Christ to enter our brokenness and provide healing

May we learn to accept that our faults and our failures are not the true picture our Abba has of us

May we choose life instead of living in death

Jesus Christ has paid the price and brought us forth from our spiritual graves. We need to stop climbing back into our coffins of habits, our coffins of unbelief, our coffins of failure... We need to stop sleeping in our seemingly comfortable beds of spiritual death. Wake up! It's time to walk away from the cemetery of life and leave the prison of death and enter into the healing freedom of Jesus Christ that's already been given to us.

***"May God himself, the God of Peace, sanctify you through and through. May your entire spirit, soul and body be kept blameless until the coming of the day of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Faithful is he who calls you and he will do it!"***

**Blessings In Hymn,**

Benjamin D. Goss

Arvada, CO 80004

"No person was ever honored for what he **received**. Honor has been the reward for what he **gave**."

- Calvin Coolidge, 30th US President

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**Subject:** When Heaven Smiles

## **When Heaven Smiles**

***"I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast, and when I run, I feel God's pleasure."  
-Eric Liddell***

Wow. What an earth shattering statement. If you've never seen the movie Chariots of Fire, or read the story of Eric Liddell you have truly missed out. It is an amazing story that stirs the soul and causes the heart to turn toward God. What kind of faith in God did he have? What kind of relationship did he have with God that he could sense God's joy in him?

As an amazing and unique person in all of humankind, you were created with specific skills, special talents, amazing gifts, and a purpose designed by your Abba in Heaven.

What is it that you enjoy doing? Let me re-phrase, what is it that you do, when you are in the midst of doing it, that you feel light, joyous, right, happy, excited, encouraged, thankful...? Perhaps, that is related to what your purpose in life is. Maybe it is what you were meant to do.

What is the highlight of your day and why? The supreme highlight of my days is coming home.

No matter how bad the day went, how badly I screwed up, whether I got "it" done or not, whether I was the best that I could be - I know that when I come through that door, there are young voices, and the voice of my wife, that will greet me with squeals of delight. The voices, faces, and arms of my little ones give me greater joy and hope than I think I sometimes deserve. I hope that you can identify with what I'm saying, even if you have no children of your own, perhaps you have observed a child greeting their mommy or daddy.

The sky could be cloudy, my heart could be down, my legs and back may be exhausted but when my dear ones throw their arms around my neck their happiness becomes mine. I never feel more alive than when my family greets me, holds me, and they tell me unconditionally that they love me. Oh the smiles that come unbidden to my face!

From the story of the prodigal son, Jesus gives us a picture of how God the Father views us...

**"...But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him(v20)...the father said to his servants...Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. So, they began to celebrate." Luke 15:20, 22-24**

Joy inexpressible sounds cliché doesn't it? I know what that overwhelming mingled sense of joy, happiness, pleasure, and connectedness feels like towards my children. How much more does God want that from me? How much more is our Abba towards us in that respect? It is simply breathtaking that as a father, I am still a child. Not just to my own father, but to my heavenly Abba who smiles toward me in unconditional joyous love.

All praise, glory, and honor to God who draws me to Himself, calls me son, and graciously allows me to remain

here for His pleasure. May I feel the Son-shine of His smile upon my life. There is no better place to be than in the warmth of the Risen Son, seeking to bring a smile upon the face of my heavenly Daddy!

***“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace!”***

**Blessings In Hymn,**

Benjamin D. Goss  
Arvada, CO 80004  
720-335-7857 cell

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