

Challenged by Life...Powered by God

(Case Studies in Christian Challenges)

Kevin Shrake

This monthly series of case studies illustrate the challenges presented to us as Christians. Facing these common challenges is inevitable. How we respond to those challenges is what defines us as human beings and whether others observe and mimic or take notice and mock. It should be our desire as Christians to serve as that coveted example worth mimicking 100% of the time. See if this case study has presented similar decision points and challenges in your life. I would love to hear your reactions, thoughts and alternative approaches in the comments section below.

The Case of Taking Care of Your Legacy

There are many ways to describe our individual legacies but one aspect that is the foundation for everyone is our parents. Everyone's situation is different, some parents are alive, some are deceased, some are no longer together, some are widowed, some are in good health and others have health challenges. Regardless, good, bad or neutral, an important segment of who we are comes from our parents. We should embrace the positive, respect the challenges and above all take care of our legacy.

Why am I blessed?

It is almost embarrassing to share how blessed I am in regards to my parental foundation. In the last 2 months I have experienced both of my parents 91st birthdays and celebrated their 73rd wedding anniversary. What an incredible base of stability; but more importantly they provided and continue to provide the greatest gift ... belief. They have a strong belief in God and always believe in me. No matter how crazy my goals are and what I am trying to accomplish, they always believe I can realize what I am seeking. What a gift! So what is the problem? What is the life challenge of this story?

The Inevitable Challenge

The inevitable challenge is that of age, health and the mortality of each and every one of us. At the age of 91 my parents have a different set of abilities and functions today. This creates a fair share of challenges. How often do you visit them? How do you support their medical needs and visits to the doctor or hospital? Where do they live? Do they continue to drive? How do you exercise patience when they can't move as fast as you might like or can't do activities that they used to do? How do you cope when their needs compete with your own work or family obligations? Do any of these challenges sound familiar to any of you or am I the only one?

So what is the Answer?

The answer to all of these challenges is simple but not easy. That sounds like a contradiction but it makes perfect sense. The simple answer is “take care of your legacy.” Your parents need you and someday you will have similar needs. “Honor thy Father and thy Mother” is one of our Ten Commandments. It should be simple to understand what we should do. However, doing what we should do is not always easy. Embrace their needs and considerate it an honor to serve. Put your emotions in perspective when you complain about having to take your Father to the doctor. Others will remind you that their Father passed away three years ago and they would give anything to take him to the doctor today! Be patient when you have to help your parents do something. Remember to not comment or dwell on what they can’t do anymore. Believe me; they are painfully aware of it. Simply focus on what they can do and a make sure they know how blessed you are to have the chance to be able to give back to them.

What are your thoughts?