

## Are Shortcuts Shorter?

The light within the hood of our stove finally burned out. I think this is only the second time I have changed it since we have been in the house for these twenty-one years. My goal was to get the burned out florescent bulb out and back in within a timely fashion. So I thought to myself, I will put the plastic bulb covering and filters just barely back in place, because after all, I would soon be home with a new bulb, then I could fasten everything up more securely. Well, I didn't get it done yesterday when I had planned, so I woke up hungry and decided to make some Irish Steel Cut Oatmeal. I turned on the stove and as I was preparing the pan to be placed on the gas fire, the fixture in the stove hood fell on the fire. I rescued it from completely being burned up, and while cleaning up my mess, my oats burned. Wow! I sure didn't save time in my shortcut; frankly, it ended up costing more time. Even before I finished my brief narration, some of you were already identifying with me. You've been there, haven't you? We have all taken shortcuts in life that ended up not being shorter by any stretch of the imagination. In life, shortcuts often cost us many problems. Let's talk about a few:

### 1. Shortcuts are often birthed out of greed.

Get rich quick! Lose weight now! Get what you want when you want it. It almost sounds like some screaming infomercial, doesn't it? Take the shortcut to your desires. This is the attitude of a person with an adulterous, fornicating heart that tries to coax and seduce the object of their lust into physical involvement without the responsibility of marriage. Let me remind you again, if a person does this, they do not actually love. Love can wait; lust demands personal, selfish gratification. Love gives; lust gets. There is no shortcut to true love and happiness in marriage. It takes a lot of time.

How many people have lost enormous amounts of hard earned money in the attempt to get rich. I remember years ago, a man was telling me about gold that was lying on open ground in the tundra of Alaska. He was so excited as he told me, "You will not need any mining equipment!" I am not kidding, he actually told me you would only need a bulldozer to gather it. Now, I am no gold miner or expert, but I thought first of all, if there was gold open and available for gathering off the surface of the ground, wouldn't someone else already have done that? I will never forget him showing me ten thousand dollars another person had given him as a down payment for the commencement of this project. The next time I saw the benefactor who supplied some of this "down" money to begin the project, he was livid. Can you guess why? Without ramifying the obvious, the gold wasn't there; money was lost. Hard earned money from other hard working people was never returned with profit. It was nothing but loss. The greed that births the shortcut is trouble: "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house..." (Proverbs 15:27). The greedy shortcut can ruin your life: "So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof" (Proverbs 1:19).

### 2. We have a tendency of running over people in our shortcuts.

Imagine you are traveling a dark, but familiar road at night. You're tired, but thankfully, you know every bend and bump in every mile. You see a smaller darker road and you remember someone saying it was a shortcut to your destination. You decide to take it. You are not familiar with the terrain and suddenly you see something you did not premeditate would be there. You run over it in your haste. More than likely it could have been something that could cause you to come off the road or give you a flat that would make you later in the long run. In the road of life some of our shortcuts hurt other people. In our attempt to get ourselves ahead faster, it often means we run over a lot of loving and good people to achieve our premature goals. We run over people, not old logs. An old saying is very true, "Be careful who you step on as you ascend the ladder of success; you must meet them on the way down." May the Lord help us to know in life we should use things and love people, not love things and use people. The shortcuts often cost us life-long friendships, which are more valuable than money. "And be ye kind one

to another..." (Ephesians 4:32).

### 3. Shortcuts attempt to take the work out of our responsibilities.

God never rewards laziness. Isn't that often the heart-cry of the shortcut? I won't have to work hard. I will have more time for me. The outcome of a man who avoids living by the sweat of his face will not eventually end up in a leadership role. His shortcut will take him to the bottom rung of life's ladder. The Bible says, "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute" (Proverbs 12:24). As a rule, there is no shortcut that fulfills our responsibilities. Do not shun the arduous, laborious route, for the lazy shortcut. There is rich reward for the faithful, hard working individual! "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious" (Proverbs 12:27).

### 4. Shortcuts rob us from the process through which God has intended to perfect us.

Why would the shortcut be the enemy of your life and wreak havoc in your soul? Because the very purpose of the shortcut is to keep the plan of God from running its full course. Do you remember the words of Satan on the mount of temptation? "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4: 8,9). Compare this passage with Revelation 11:15, "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." We see very clearly that one day every knee shall bow to Jesus, declaring Him King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Romans 14:11 and Philippians 2:10). It is the way of Satan to get us to take his shortcut, which forfeits the blessing of the long-term glory. This is why the Bible teaches, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Therefore our response to this truth should be, I will not take the shortcut, I will let God perfect what He has started in me. I shall let the seasons run their course, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Let us allow God to finish His work in us. The shortcut may look good at first, but if you study it out, you will discover that God guides and provides for us a better way. "As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler (a personal shield) to all those that trust in him" (Psalms 18:30).

- Pastor Pope -

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