

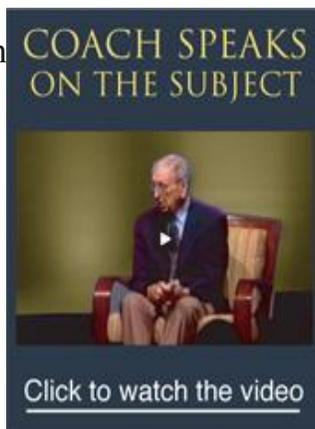
Wooden's Wisdom - Volume 1

Issue 8

BE THANKFUL

The seventh item of Coach Wooden's seven point creed is "Give thanks for your blessings and pray for guidance every day."

When Coach spoke on this point, he would frequently recite one of his favorite Abraham Lincoln quotes: "If we magnified our blessings the way we magnify our disappointments, we'd all be a lot happier." Indeed, accepting disappointment without complaint is one of



COACH'S FAVORITE POETRY AND PROSE

NEED ONE KNOW WHY

*Man in space,
A sea of clouds,
Huge jet engines,*

the key points that Coach taught on the subject of being thankful.

Coach learned at an early age to accept disappointments with good grace from the example set by his parents. Even though Joshua Wooden lost his farm due to the mistake of another, he never complained or assigned blame. Joshua's ability to always make the best out of an adverse situation was one of the traits that Coach came to most admire in his father.

Coach also found this same quality in his mother Roxie, after she suffered the death of both of her daughters within a year of each other. Daughter Cordelia died from diphtheria at the age of two, and a second baby girl died at birth. Despite these tragedies Coach never heard his mother complain, nor witness her feeling sorry for herself as she raised four spirited boys.

At times, Coach emphasized the importance of being thankful by quoting Lao-Tse: "Freedom from desire leads to inner peace." He also added his own words of wisdom: "The great secret of life is to cultivate the ability to appreciate the things we have, not compare them." Coach often encouraged us not take for granted the many things we have that we did nothing to earn, such as life itself, the beauty of nature, the great country we live in, or the love of our family and friends.

The second part of that advice, to pray for guidance, were also words Coach took to heart. His own faith was very dear to him and he respected the religions of all people,

Who can understand?

*A baby's cry,
A hungry man,
A woman's tear,
Who can understand
Or tell me why?*

*The East at dawn,
The West at dusk,
The stars at night,
The mountains tall,
The valleys green,
Need one know why?*

*Must we know why we are here on
Earth,
Does wealth or station prove one's
worth,
Is appearance made in three score
plus,
A way to measure one of us?*

*I truly want to find the way.
And know for this that I must pray,
And it won't matter what I say,
For He to Whom I'll speak will know,
What is true and what is show;
To Him all things are very clear,
He knows exactly what we are,
And His judgment will be fair,
When we are called together There.
Need one know why?*

~John Wooden

THINKING HAPPINESS

*Think of the things that make you
happy,
Not of the things that make you sad;*

because he knew that faith was an important part of living a worthwhile life. He encouraged his players to have a faith and to be able to defend their beliefs, but he never encouraged them to pray to win. That would be far too selfish, he felt.

I am reminded of a humorous anecdote in which Coach was to receive a faithful attendance pen in 1942 from Frank E. Davidson, who operated an interfaith men's club called The Forum. Men would attend during the Sunday school hour to study and pray together, and then leave to worship at their own churches. The night prior to receiving the award, Coach's team won the finals in the sectional tournament against a Catholic team whose coach, Johnny Howe, also attended The Forum. The next morning, Frank Davidson joked, "There I was at the game last night and here was Johnny Wooden, who I knew was going to receive his medal for not having missed in the last year – and there was Johnny Howe with his team all blessing themselves. Now wasn't our Lord in a heck of a spot?"

As he liked to do, Coach shared with us some great wisdom to remind us to give thanks for our blessings and pray for guidance every day:

Content makes poor men rich, discontent makes rich men poor.

Take time to live, it is the secret of success.

Take time to think, it is the source of power.

Take time to play, it is the secret of youth.

*Think of the fine and true in mankind,
Not its sordid side and bad;
Think of the blessings that surround
you,
Not the ones that are denied;
Think of the virtues of your
friendships,
Not the weak and faulty side;*

*Think of the gains you've made in
business,
Not the losses you've incurred;
Think of the good of you that's
spoken,
Not some cruel, hostile word;
Think of the days of health and
pleasure,
Not the days of woe and pain;
Think of the days alive with sunshine,
Not the dismal days of rain;*

*Think of the hopes that lie before you,
Not the waste that lies behind;
Think of the treasures you have
gathered,
Not the ones you've failed to find;
Think of the service you may render,
Not of serving self alone;
Think of the happiness of others,
And in this you'll find your own!*

~Robert E. Farley

Take time to read, it is the foundation of knowledge.

Take time for friendship, it is the source of happiness.

Take time to laugh, it helps lift life's load.

Take time to dream, it hitches the soul to the stars.

Take time for God, it is life's only lasting investment.

When Coach was asked whether he was able to live up to his father's seven point creed, he would often say, "I am not what I want to be, not what I ought to be, and not what I am going to be, but I am thankful that I am not what I used to be." Hence, what I have learned from Coach Wooden is that no matter how daunting the task of living up to your creed, pursuing your dreams, or reaching your goals may seem, the key is that you must never stop trying. For each new day brings progress, and in doing your best you achieve success.

Yours in coaching,

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