

# COMMENTARY

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## Good Soil

Greetings from the Leaf Pile capital of the world!

This past week I finally was able to finish up the arduous task of picking up what felt like 78 million leaves in my yard. Between my house and my neighbors, there are three huge trees that are on my plot of land. Often I find myself worrying about the effect it has on his yard and how much work it will cause them, so almost every day I'm blowing leaves from my trees out of their yard, in hopes they won't have to.

Now I have freedom from leaves, for another year....Sigh.

During this year's hauling my oldest son, Nixon, helped me bring most of them to the backyard where there are woods. We have come up with a system of dragging them on a large tarp and depositing them there. He said something that warmed my heart, "Dad, won't these leaves going into the woods just pile up and make it hard for our other neighbor to deal with?"

Thinking of a way to answer, I did some research on what happens to the leaves that are left. These dead leaves may seem a worthless nuisance, but in reality they protect and feed the forest! Litter is often thought as being worthless trash, but leaf litter is unexpectedly valuable! In fact, forest ecologists use leaf litter as a measure of productivity. Why the lesson on ecology? Where am I going with this?

Most of us want to put the past behind us, we don't want to think of our failures, we don't want to think about the things that didn't work out. Like the leaves

falling off the tree, they may be dead but the tree is very much alive.

Pondering this, I thought, why don't I look at the leaves falling off the trees as the issues and problems of life?

There will be new issues every season, just like there are new leaves every Spring. When the old issues of life eventually die off, there will be new ones that will bud. If we take this line of thinking and apply it to our own lives and the issues of our life, then the "leaves" that "litter" our life (our problems and issues) are actually valuable! We don't just sweep them away and go onto the next season, no, we use what we learned about ourselves and especially what we learned about God!



Hebrews 13:8 tells us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Do you hear that?!? He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow: that means if He was with me through all those previous tough times, then He will be with me in the future ones. This is our leaf litter, our "issues of life," becoming valuable to us! Most wisdom comes from previous experience!

We want to be wise, but do we still "want to be wise" when we fully understand how we get there?

Like a senior boxer that has twenty plus fights under his belt, his experience has given him the understanding of every circumstance in the ring, but how did he get there? By taking a lot of punches! The leaf litter or our previous experiences in our lives are not junk, it's not to be thrown away. It is to be used to enrich our own life's soil for our future decisions and attitudes.

I long to put the experience  
of fifty years  
at once into your young lives,  
to give you at once  
the key to that treasure chamber  
every gem of which has cost me  
tears and struggles and prayers,  
but you must work  
for these inward treasures  
yourselves.

Harriet Beecher Stowe

For the seed to achieve its  
greatest expression,  
it must come completely undone.  
The shell cracks,  
its insides come out,  
and everything changes.  
To someone who  
doesn't understand growth,  
it would look like  
a complete destruction.

Cynthia Occeili

In University, we are taught  
lessons and then take a test.  
In Life we are put through tests,  
from which we learn lessons.

Life has a way  
of broadsiding us  
with lessons that we need to learn  
but would rather avoid.

Craig Groeschel

Light tomorrow with today.  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Gray skies  
are just clouds passing over.  
Duke Ellington

Did you catch that: I said “attitudes.” Our attitudes towards people and our current situation is half of our battle. The right mindset/heartset can set us up for success each and every time!

We get to choose what type of Christian we are. Will we be a Christian that is grateful and content in every circumstance, or worried and always anxious about what’s next?

In Luke 17:11-19 we read that Jesus heals ten lepers. From a distance they shouted to Jesus, “Master, have mercy on us!” Jesus gave them instructions, “Go, show yourself to the priests.” As they were obedient, they were healed.

But only one out of the ten came back and worshiped at His feet, thanking Him over and over again. Jesus spoke out, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” And He said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

This is where this Commentary message comes together: our attitude of thanks can determine what our future develops into!

If we embrace the failures and learn from them (if we choose to intentionally learn from them), they become enriched soil, enriched life, wisdom filled life!

Those issues that we fought so hard over, where we were battered and bruised and beaten, where tears were shed, and dreams destroyed, let us learn from them so that we don’t have to repeat them again!

As followers of Christ we have more to

be thankful for than anyone else! We are thankful because our confidence in our future in the Heavenly realm is solidified. We are children of the most high God! We are thankful because He is good!

I encourage you to continue to move forward in this last bit of 2023 with confidence in Christ in you, with Holy Spirit leading you, and Father God providing for you. Your past is not to be thrown away but rather turned into good soil.

We had a very busy week in preparation for Thanksgiving at Harvest House - pray for us, that lives were touched and people will draw nearer to God!

Thank you for reading my heart today,

I love you, this ministry loves

you, I’ll speak with you again soon,

*Aaron*

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God  
[set aside self-righteous pride],  
so that He may exalt you  
[to a place of honor in His service]  
at the appropriate time,  
casting all your cares  
[all your anxieties,  
all your worries,  
and all your concerns,  
once and for all]  
on Him, for He cares  
about you  
[with deepest affection,  
and watches over you  
very carefully].

1 Peter 5:7 AMP

When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.

Henry Ford

You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith, and hope.

Thomas Merton

If you're going through hell, keep going.

Winston Churchill

Though there is nothing more dangerous, yet there is nothing more ordinary, than for weak saints to make their sense and feeling the judge of their condition. We must strive to walk by faith.

Thomas Brooks

Life doesn't get easier or more forgiving, we get stronger and more resilient.

Steve Maraboli

Do not fear the conflict, and do not flee from it; where there is no struggle, there is no virtue.

John of Kronstadt

The struggles along the way are only meant to shape you for your purpose.

Chadwick Boseman