

Priorities

By Bill Rowley, CFS Administrator/Principal,
(Garret Grow, CFS 2009 Salutatorian)

Time has done it again. It has disappeared right before our eyes. Where does it go? One thing for sure, time waits for none of us. One of the signs that summer time is ending and a different time is approaching is the sight of school buses on the roads and school children making their way to class with a sense of excitement and anticipation.

As we enter this new school year, with new schedules and activities, let me encourage you to make sure you are keeping your priorities in order. The only way to experience the fullness of God's blessings in any area of life is to put Him first. Here are a few good reminders for all of us.

Make time in your daily schedule for God. One way to do that is to make church attendance a high priority. Make the decision that you and your family will be in church each Sunday. Set time aside for family devotions and establish a family meal together. Little things can be big things when it comes to keeping families connected and together. Finally, have faith! Trust God that this is going to be a "redeeming the time" season for you and your family.

Now I want to switch gears and give some space to one of our seniors from last year. What follows is the 2009 Salutatorian speech given by Garret Grow. I want you to read it and my prayer is as you do, you will get a sense of his priorities which have been nurtured by his family, his church and Christian Fellowship School.

"Today is a new beginning. It is the start of something new for both students and parents as we will soon be casting off into the wider world. And as we eleven graduates set sail into uncharted waters, we look forward with eager anticipation to the surprises that await us.

We realize that, as our voyage progresses, we are sure to face turbulent seas and blistering headwinds. Still, though, we retain our hope and believe with utmost confidence that we have been made as ready as we can be to face the trials. Much has been said about the academic prowess of the class of '09. Our achievements have been quoted and applauded by faculty and parents at every opportunity. For at least a moment, though, perhaps we should turn the praise back upon them, because, without their tireless devotion, we could not have reached those achievements in the first place. Through wise council, encouragement, and most importantly, their Christian examples, our mentors have given us the skills to plot our course through the treacherous waters ahead.

Even when we were less than willing pupils, our mentors have always been there to give us that extra push that they knew we needed. When our grades fell, our parents encouraged us to do better. When we lost sight of our goals, we were always reminded of just what we strove for. And when we slipped in our walk with God, our mentors inspired us, through example, to re-straighten our paths. In this way, every graduate sitting here today has been unusually blessed through the opportunity to attend a Christian school. Certainly, there are not many parents who are willing to pay the extra tuition costs of a Christian education, but when our parents see the Godly atmosphere present at Christian Fellowship School, they know that their money has been well-spent. They realize the priceless investment they have made in our future.

Thanks to the preparation we have received at home and at school, the class of 2009 is able, today, to look forward with optimism. Even as we look forward though, we cannot help but to also look back, not with wavering or regret, but with reminiscence. Over the years, the members of this class have come to know each other like family. Like any family, we have had both good and bad days, but, as we depart, only the good ones come to mind. We remember episodes like our camping trip to the Smokey Mountains, or the time we met Barry Bonds at Disney World. You can all be sure that that was a highlight of every guy's senior year. We also remember times of healthy competition, though. Who can forget events like Extreme Olympics Day, when the whole school teamed up to compete in comical contests like the water balloon toss or the chubby bunny challenge? At the end of the day, though, we always laid our competitive nature aside, congratulated the winning team, and continued being friends. My team won this year, by the way.

On a more serious note, I would like to offer some advice to my fellow graduates as I finish. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make straight your paths." This scripture is nothing less than a blueprint for a fruitful and God-centered life. If we have learned nothing else during our time here, we have certainly learned that the key to joy does not lie with serving ourselves, but with serving God and helping others. With that in mind, I hope we can all go through the rest of our lives with a servant's mindset and a giving heart."