



MONDAY'S MEAL

SUSTAINABLE NOURISHMENT FOR THE LONG DISTANCE RUN

Planting Flags

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Monday's Meal is a service of The Oaks Classical and Christian Academy.

Each meal is selected specifically to feed and nourish parents for the long distance run. If you found it helpful, consider passing it along.

"...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds..." Hebrews 10:24

There is one great story in the whole history of the world. A story that starts with the darkness on the face of the deep, and proceeds through thousands of years as the story of our God and His chosen people. It is a story of courage and faithfulness, idolatry and destruction, amazing glory and unspeakable shame.

The most important thing about this story, a thing which many Christians today have forgotten, is that the story is not finished. This is our story. This is the beginning of you and who you are and who you will be eternally. Your story begins with the words, "In the beginning, God." And while the canon of Scripture is closed, the story of God and His people is most certainly not. Your life today is part of this great and glorious story. Your trouble at work, your need to clean the bathroom and make dinner, your difficult conversation with a friend—this is all part of the greatest story. How you handle losing your basketball game or finding out you are pregnant is all part of the great story God is writing.

Does that seem a little overly precious to you? It isn't. It is overtly biblical. Consider these words from Scripture and what they say about us: "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5).

We are the living temple because we are connected to and held together by the Living Cornerstone, Jesus Christ. God is building this temple in His Son, and you are part of that.

When people who do not know Christ seek to craft their own stories to make themselves something of value, they will always run into this impossible crisis: you are little. Your life is short. What if you get cut down in your prime by something you never wanted, like cancer? You will be cut down, eventually, by something. Life is difficult, and things happen that are out of your control. If your whole value is tied up in your story only, then your whole value can be taken away in an instant by a single disaster or difficult times.

When Christians who know their value in Christ and their place in this one great narrative face such things, they can still see the glory in it. The humbling in your little story connects directly to the humbling of Christ for your salvation. Your small victories declare His great ones—your victory over fussiness at your children connects to His victory over death. Your death, when it comes, will only be the beginning of eternal life. Your death could come in your prime, or before your prime, and you would be no less you in Christ. Your story would be no smaller, your value unaffected. You could die in infancy and be no less important. You will still live eternally in Christ and need have no fear of the grave.

I've said that as Christians we may not craft our story as the world does—climbing the hierarchy of needs, using others as stepping-stones to become our best, most fulfilled selves. But Christians can and in fact should seek to work on their own story, but we should do so in the way that God tells us to. That way is called obedience. We make ourselves stepping stones for God's purposes. We lay ourselves low, in submission to Him, and in that way He shapes us into something greater. We do this through acts of faithfulness, and spiritual

sacrifices that are acceptable to God (1 Peter 2:5). How exactly is that done?

One way that is done is through what I would call planting flags. It is moments of overt recognition that what you are doing, you are doing for the glory of God. Think of Joshua and his glorious words, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15). That was a flag planted. That was faithfulness and intention declared. A spiritual offering to God.

A normal Christian has many opportunities for similar declarations in all sizes of territories. Maybe you are struggling with getting your finances in order. Offer it to God. Plant a flag. "Lord, we intend to glorify you in the way we spend our money. Equip us to do so more and more." Or maybe you have a difficult morning with small children ahead of you. "Lord, accept my work here as part of your great work in the Kingdom. Make this small offering matter by making it great in Your hands. Glorify my work that Your name may be praised." Maybe the territory you really need to plant a flag on is your past. Maybe grievous sins hang over you, and what you need most is to look at them and say, "All this belongs to my King Jesus and is forgiven for His glory and my good. May He use it in His kingdom, may His name be praised, and may I grow ever more like Him."

Recently I had a major hospitality moment coming on me faster than seemed reasonable. You know that terrible combination of feeling exhausted and frantic? That was me—very urgent, but at the same time much too tired to effectively get all the laundry off the dining room table and the floors clean. Very predictably, this kind moment leads to frustrations and pettiness and an overall lack of lighthearted joy. As the clock was winding down, my heart was not at all at peace. It took me far too long to plant a flag, but finally I said out aloud, "Lord, be my guest." There it was! Submission, joy, relief. That was what I was doing right then. Not fussing or being tested on housekeeping or serving food for critics. I was showing hospitality to the Lord and for the Lord.

Planting flags has a wonderful ability to clear the air and get yourself back on track. I am here for you, Lord; use me. While this is certainly simple and something that many Christians already do instinctively, it is important to think on it and intentionally practice planting flags that claim your life for Jesus. It is fundamental to how we see our lives, what we think we are here for, and how we will go on living.

[selected from *You Who: Why You Matter and How To Deal With It*]

