

.....life is a box of chocolates.....

MATTER OF THE HEART :

I just sat down staring at the blank computer screen in order to prepare an update. A few seconds earlier I unwrapped a Dove "Promises" Chocolate (the American version of the Italian Baci Perugina chocolates...) and read the message: "live your dreams."

It made me ponder. How many of us can honestly say: "I am living my dream"....? Please do not diminish this question to a temporary adventure or a material possession. I am talking about living according to what we were created to be. Become what your inner essence was design to be. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go after it. Do you remember Eric Liddell's quote in Chariots of Fire? "God made me fast and when I run I can feel His pleasure!" Can you feel God's pleasure as you fulfill the very purpose you were created for or do you let peers, coworkers, and culture shape, or should I say, numb you into something you should not be? Remember any dead fish can float down stream, but to be spiritually fit you will need to swim against the current of modern times. Nowadays to become more like Christ appears to be counter-culture; but that is exactly what attracted the early believers to our Master: in Him there was light, hope, freedom... **LIFE**. Easier said than done, Peppo. Well for the past 6 months a dark cloud has been hovering above my head. Logic and rationality could not provide a plausible answer thus the feelings of frustration. This had to do with our return back to Italy now delayed by internal changes with the International Human Resources

Dept. Last month I woke up with Baalam's story (Numbers 22) at the forefront of my mind and it changed my whole prospective. I have been "kicking the donkey" to death thinking that the hurdles that came our way were slowing us down and thus needed to be eradicated. Once I reconciled with the idea that we are operating according to His time schedule, then even the road blocks remind me that His plan and timing may not coincide with the one we have pre-established. Like Paul we long to go to Rome, but we are still held on our island of MaltaPalm Beach (Acts 28) by the natives that do not want to see us go! As I shared in one e-mail, after organizing the 1st Executive Ministries men's retreat, I was blessed by some of the
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Righteous Pride?

On May 1st I was flying to Colorado for a 3 day conference and missed a wonderful event. My son, Marco... oops...our son, Marco was asked by the High School Chaplain to pray before



May 1- National Day of Prayer. Marco and a 2nd grader were picked to pray at the High School gathering featuring Martin Luther King's daughter

the High School student body and 3 visiting HS from the area (over 1,000 people in attendance). He was calm and collected as he made his petition unto the Lord. Our hearts rejoice in seeing glimpses of a godly legacy we are leaving with our kids...to God be the glory.

UPDATE:

Tomorrow morning (May 16) I will be

heading to Italy for my mother's 80th birthday. It is a surprise party at her favorite fish restaurant. She does not know that I am coming, and I will first see her when I bring out the antipasto serving her as a waiter....pray she will not have a heart attack since I have not seen her in 20 months! This opportunity will also give me a chance to see the rest of the CCC Italian team and check on all our belongings which supposedly were transferred to a different storage location while we have been here in the States.....

(continued) responses from our new "babies." One of them, when making the commitment told me: "Peppo, the retreat falls on the opening night of the opera *The Merry Widow*, and I have not missed an opening in 25 years (he is Italian and on the Opera Board); however, I will attend because I want to be closer to God!" And indeed he was...before we were done with our last session he wanted to know, along with others, if I could plan right away next year's retreat. I told them jokingly that it would be in Italy...and they loved the idea. God has been so good to us. We saw the process of multiplication take place as new believers experienced growth and started to spread and live the good news themselves. Last month I was on the phone with a non-believing friend in Italy. We engaged in a great conversation about true priorities in life. He asked me point blank: "Did you get a prompting from God to give me a call today? As you talk I get goose bumps all over me." He then confessed that the best thing that happened to him this year was a comment from his 4-year-old son on the day of his birthday. Silvano said: "I love you so much son" and his son replied, "I love you so much papa, and most of all I love sitting on your lap and hearing your voice." That was a wonderful lead-in for me... "Silvano, that is exactly what the Lord would like of you, to sit on His lap and hear His soothing voice..." There was silence and then tears on the other line... then a crackling voice replying..."Peppo, this is so needed here." All of this to say, assuming you are clean before the Father, then keep your spiritual eyes and ears open and the opportunities will be overwhelming; ministry or not we are all His ambassadors..... Keep praying for the Lord to establish His infrastructure in Italy so that we may move as quickly as possible.

We love you, and though you do not hear us live, you are very much alive and appreciated in our hearts.

Peppo and Jane



Marco praying in front of 1,100 High School students

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