

FUSION Devo: Monday, March 9th, 2009

Title: Richer or Poorer?

Text: Matthew 16:26 (NIV)

²⁶What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

When I was growing up there were many nights I would lay in the bed and dream about what I hoped my life would turn out like. I dreamt of things like going off and being the starting middle linebacker for the Notre Dame Fighting Irish. I thought of how I'd love to grow up and make lots of money, have a huge house with an enormous pool in the backyard. I would debate which luxury cars I would have. Yes, I said "cars". I would think about the super model that would be lucky enough to become my wife and what I my children would be like. Sometimes my dreams would be so vivid that I felt I could almost touch it, and the passion to reach those dreams would probably cause me to do just about anything to make them a reality. Money, fame, fortune and success were the factors that drove me and often consumed hours of my time.

Let's fast-forward about 20 years to today. As I approach my 39th birthday and I reflect on my life to this point and the things I have experienced, I can honestly say that the life I have lived and the life I dreamt of have been totally different. Did I go on to play football at Notre Dame? Have I worked a job that has made me filthy rich and put my face on the cover of "People" magazine? Have I hosted one of the top award shows, been in music videos on MTV or become a household name? Nope. I haven't done any of those things. And something else hasn't happened. I have not sold my soul to do the things I may have had to do to accomplish those fantasies. Why? Because that is not what God would have wanted from me.

Instead I married my high school best friend and Kim and I have been blessed with 4 wonderful children, one of which is waiting to greet us when we walk through the gates of heaven. I have been called by God and embraced that call to dedicate my vocational life to serving youth and their families. I don't live in a huge mansion, but I live in a great little house in an awesome town and I am surrounded by the greatest bunch of friends a person could ever find. The fact of the matter is that I am the richest man in the world, and I didn't have to lose my soul to become that person. I didn't have to step on people, treat them poorly, lie, cheat or steal to receive these things. I have simply tried to live the life in front of me and allow the love and light of Christ to shine brightly through me. I have tried to treat others the way I wish to be treated and even when they don't, I still strive to love them the way Jesus does. And all of the money in the world couldn't buy the happiness and the blessings I have received.

Sure, would it be nice to make a little more money and not have to live from paycheck to paycheck? Yes it would. Would I still like to play middle linebacker for the Fighting Irish? As much as I know it would kill me, YES I WOULD!!! But you know what? If none of those things were to ever take place, I am still blessed beyond my wildest dreams and I know where my soul resides. It wasn't pawned off to the world for the things that will not amount to a hill of beans in years to come. My soul belongs to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. And at the end of the day, that is simply priceless.

Something to Think About:

- What are the things you dream about?
- To make those dreams a reality, what type of person would you have to become?
- The wealth of money and possessions are one thing, but what are the other ways you would consider yourself "Rich"?
- Being successful and gaining wealth is not a bad thing. If you are, or where to be blessed in that regard, what things do you think you would have to hold on to so that your soul would stay healthy in its relationship with God?
- How can God use you to help others not to fall into the trap of gaining the world and losing the soul?

A Few Minutes with God:

God, I know that we live in a world where we are constantly bombarded with commercials displaying the biggest, brightest and best toys the world has to offer. We have shows following the lives of the rich and famous, and often it can become so enticing to desire to have those things and be like those people. Even those who tend to publically struggle to make the ethical and moral choices in their lives. God, I pray that you will move in my life and show me how I can live a full and amazing life that will make me the richest person in the world, and have none of it to do with money or possessions. A relationship with you is priceless. I pray that I will grow more and more passionate in my pursuit of improving that relationship and the richness of knowing that I am known and loved by the creator of the universe. Use me to reach others and impact this world in your holy name. Amen.