

The Parable of the Janitor & the CEO



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There once lived a janitor...

...who worked for the same company for 40 years. He never rose above the position of janitor and never had anyone report to him. He never owned a home, never had an investment, and never bought a new car. But he was a fine janitor. With the highest standards, he maintained all of the areas for which he was responsible. The brass shone, the windows glistened, and the carpets were never dirty. He would occasionally be seen on his hands and knees, with a toothbrush, cleaning the corner where the floor

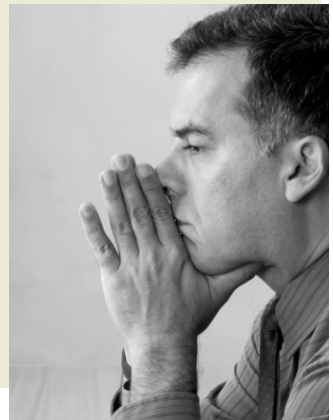


meets the tile wall. And through it all, he always had a smile and a cheerful good word for his co-workers. After he retired, several folks remarked that they had never once heard him complain.

Over the 40 years, from time to time, he would be asked, "How come you work so hard? You don't really have to put in all that extra effort." He would answer,

"You don't understand. I'm doing this work for Jesus and for Him it has got to be good. You see, He is my best friend. I love Him and owe Him my best because He gave His life for me." Some of these people laughed and just passed on. But some said, "Jesus? Your friend? I don't know about that. How can Jesus be a friend? I don't know Him in that way." The janitor would smile when this happened, and no one could miss the love in his eyes when he answered, "Well, let me tell you about me and Jesus." He was never too busy to share how the love of his Lord had touched his life.

In this same company there was another man who worked there for 40 years, starting his career at the same time as the janitor. He had attended a fine university and had done well, working hard and making good grades. He joined the company as a salesman right out of college and quickly became the top salesman in his department. In record time he was promoted, becoming the youngest sales manager, regional manager, vice president of sales, and ultimately, the youngest CEO the company ever had.




Under his leadership, the company grew and expanded, eventually becoming an international leader in its industry. The firm acquired other companies and under his shrewd and wise direction, these companies prospered as well. Because of his obvious skills, gifts, and success, he was often asked to speak to organizations and groups. Even peer CEOs would visit and inquire how he had done so well. He always gave the same answer, "This is the greatest land in the world and the opportunities are limitless. America is the land of freedom to excel and I've worked very hard. What I have done, you can too if you believe you can and if you give your all."

He was also active in many civic organizations and government advisory panels. He was elected to the board of regents of his university and was a respected member of a fine church. He and his family could regularly be seen Sunday morning seated in the fourth row on the left side for the 11 a.m. service. But Sunday had little to do with Monday. Sometime when he was young, his father had told him, "Son, two things you cannot mix with your business: politics and religion. They are like oil and water." It never occurred to him to question his father's advice, although deep in his heart he knew it just didn't seem right. So he never gave it much thought. In fact, he was so busy that God was crowded out of much of his life. With the business, the cottage at the beach, the club memberships for golf and tennis (when he could find time), and trying to fit in family ski trips between board meetings, his time—and his life—flew by. Widely revered by multitudes, he retired after a long and successful career.

It happened that both men died on the same day. And as the scripture promises (1 Cor. 3), each man in turn went to stand before Jesus to give an account of what he had done with his life. The CEO went first, as usual, and stepped before the Lord. Jesus put His hand on his shoulder and said to him, "My son, you have done well with your life. I gave you intelligence and opportunity. You worked hard and you took advantage of all that I set before you. You accomplished much. **But son, all that you built must remain behind.** Your homes and cars, your company and clubs were good, but they are not a part of my kingdom. The university that you loved and served refused to honor me and it will burn up and be destroyed. Your money is not needed here. **My son, you labored long and hard, but unwisely. You have gained the good, but missed the best.**"

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The janitor stood humbly nearby, fearful and in awe. If a CEO could receive no commendation from the Lord, what could a mere janitor expect? His eyes were cast down and tears covered his cheeks when Jesus put His hands on the janitor's shoulders. "Son, lift your eyes." The janitor looked into the face of the Lord he loved. The smile on Jesus' face caused a thrill to leap through the janitor's heart and in astonishment he heard Jesus say: "Turn around, son, and tell me what you see." With the Lord's strong arm around his shoulders, the janitor turned. To his amazement, he saw crowds of jubilant people coming toward him. Their expressions reflected a pure love and joy that he had never seen. He turned to Jesus and said, "Lord, I recognize only a few. Who are the others?" Jesus said, "Those you recognize are the ones you told of my love. The others are those they told. They are here now to thank you. Enter into the joy prepared for you from the foundations of the world." Nearby, angels sang "Glory to God and to the Lamb" as the janitor was reunited with his friends and stepped into paradise.

You see, both men had opportunities, just as you and I do. One built a fortune here, the other, there. One fortune was temporary, the other, eternal. Both were the result of choices. Which fortune are you pursuing?

C12 groups meet monthly across America and are impacting business owners, their employees, customers, suppliers, and competitors for Christ. Christian business Owners and CEOs are learning the significance of leading thriving companies as platforms for ministry and discovering eternal as well as temporal benefits, as they "*Build GREAT Businesses for a GREATER Purpose.*"

C12 is America's leading equipping resource for Christian chief executives since 1992, serving more than 1000 members leading businesses of all sizes and types with excellence and eternal impact in mind. To learn more about becoming a C12 member, or starting a group in your area, please visit our website or contact us directly.



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