



and that's...
The Gospel Truth!!
with Pat Corn

a brief message of encouragement to make your day just a little bit brighter

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, he wordlessly picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous "Yes!"

The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

"Now," said the professor as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things--GOD, your family, your children, your health, your friends, and your favorite passions---and if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house and your car.

The sand is everything else---the small stuff. "If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff you will never have room for the things that are important to you.

"Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Praying and asking God to help, Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your spouse out to dinner. Play another 18. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the disposal. Take care of the golf balls first---the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand."

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented. The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend."

How often we fill our lives with sand and neglect the golf balls. You've heard the adages, "Don't sweat the small stuff" or "Don't major in the minors". All too often we allow our vision to be obscured by a sand storm causing us to fail at keeping our priorities in line.

Just as the professor in the above story points out, there will be no room in our lives for the important items; God our families, our children, our health, our friends, and our passions. Those items alone cause us to have a very "full" life. A major source of fulfillment in our lives is our friends.

While appearing last season at The Old Smoky Hoedown here in Pigeon Forge, each night I always gave a hearty nod of agreement when Elwood Smooch would tell Neechie Hurst emphatically that, "Friends is the most importantest things of all!"

It has been said that a man can count the number of true friends that he has on one hand. I pray that statement is not true in every case, because I am so blessed with a vast number of folks that I consider "best friends". They are the "best", by golly, bar none. They are the best friends a person could ask for. When I survey the numbers, I immediately am conscious of God's grace. Grace is defined as "undeserved favor". I am sure that my friends have demonstrated to me a hands-on example of God's grace when I least deserved it. Mercy has extended through them all to me, and I am so thankful for the wonderful folks that God has put into my life.

But my very best friend is Jesus. His grace and mercy, through his shed blood on the cross at Calvary has allowed me to be restored to fellowship with my Heavenly Father and I am so thankful for that gift.

As the old gospel song relates, "What A Friend We Have In Jesus....all our sins and grief to bear....What a privilege to carry every thing to God in prayer..." Pray for your friends and if there is a friend that has fallen by the wayside through a broken relationship with you, please try to fix it.

Colossians 3:13...."Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

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Your comments or questions are always welcome. Email them to: patcorn@maizeone.com

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