

**Deacon Jodi Moscona's**  
**Monthly Memo On:**  
***Ethics, Spirituality and Success***

**Issue # 2 August 2007**

**LAGNIAPPE**

In the parts of Louisiana known as Cajun Country, primarily the southwest part of the state, the word for a gratuitous gift is lagniappe. We call it "lagniappe," when you get a little extra for free like a baker's dozen (13 donuts instead of 12). Sometimes it's when a chef puts a little extra in the order "for the baby". Now let me share with you what I got as a little lagniappe this week.

I was preparing to preach on Sunday, August 12, and spent time looking at that day's reading from Paul's letter to the Hebrews, Chapter 11: 1-2, 8-19. The lesson is on faith. As I always do when part of a reading is omitted (Verses 3-7), I went directly to that part of the gospel. Voila! My lagniappe appeared. In those verses it says, "*By faith we understand that the universe was ordered by the word of God, so that what is visible came into being through the invisible.*" Man! Was I pumped! I have been having conversations with everyone that would listen to me about the power of the subconscious mind. I have been thinking about how it all relates to God and to faith in particular. Then, I find the answer in a letter written by St. Paul to the Hebrews, during the first century. I mean that is before the year 100 AD. You talk about inspiration, well, I got it. So, as you read this newsletter, look for the connection between faith, the visible and the invisible, because if that is how God ordered the world, then it certainly impacts those of us who live in that world.

**THE NEWS**

The collapse of the I-35 Bridge in Minnesota was the major news story of the day last week. The reporting of the incident deserves some review. How many of you hearing the story thought on that first night that dozens, maybe even hundreds had been killed? I know I did. Even the next morning with the death toll listed at six, the media kept indicating more were expected. Then we found out almost 24 hours later that the death toll was actually 4. A full day later they added only one additional person bringing the total to five. Please, don't get me wrong. When one person dies it is terrible. However it seems that the media is truly disappointed that the death toll is not higher. And that is what I wish to write about this month.

**ATTITUDE**

We have all been asked whether our glass is half empty or half full. It is a reference to the degree of our positive mental attitude. However, our positive mental attitude is in some ways directly related to the amount of time we spend using our mental energy to provide positive focus in our lives. The media seems determined to focus on negative news and sometimes even false information. They don't seem to realize that focusing on the truth

would bring them success. But, if you have an agenda that is in no way positive or related to a positive message, you are destined to limit yourself to the extent of your negative thoughts. In my mind, the missing element in this situation is HOPE!

### **THE SPIRITUAL**

As I was reading in preparation for the sermon I was writing on Faith, the word “Hope” kept coming up. The definition of Faith given to us by St. Paul in his famous letter to the Hebrews is, *“The realization of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* If faith is the realization of things hoped for, then it stands to reason that to have faith you must have hope. But the second part of that passage is where things get interesting because it deals with the unseen. When we have hope, we put our blood, sweat and tears into the work we do as evidence of our faith. Then what we hoped for, what we did not see originally, will manifest itself in our lives. We hope for a good job and we work hard to get one. We hope for good health and we eat right and exercise to get it. We want success, so we invest in our education and grow our experience so the success we hope for is realized. All of these are examples of faith that has nothing to do with religion or God. But they are all spiritual.

Reporters tend to dwell on the negative. They seem to focus on it so much that their reporting often does not match the hope and expectation of society. Virtually everyone wanted there to be no additional bodies found in the Mississippi River. When the number of missing was eight, everyone had hope that the eight people would be found somewhere other than the waters of the Mississippi. As I write this, I don’t know the answer to the number of people missing. But, that is not the point. The point is that my hopes for the people of Minnesota are in no way dictated by what the media reports. And, neither should yours.

This month, my message is to maintain your own hope by keeping your focus on the good things in life. Often, we can’t control what happens to us, but we can always control our reaction to it. If our reaction to something that happens to us is positive, we will feel better and, in all likelihood, the experience will ultimately be positive. Napoleon Hill said that, *“Every adversity, every failure, every heartache carries with it the seed of an equal or greater benefit.”* If we react negatively, we compound the problem and make it more severe only escalating the effects of whatever has happened.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS**

I have found that we can choose to look at most things from the positive side or the negative side. If we are grateful and thankful for all that we have, then in most cases we tend to lean toward the positive. The opposite is also true. If we are always complaining about things, always dissatisfied, then we will always be focused on the negative and remain dissatisfied. Happiness is an inside job. If we find it inside ourselves to maintain an attitude of joy and happiness always expressing gratitude for everything, then good things will follow. It is not the things that make us happy, but it is our attitude that makes us happy.

Around our house, when we pray, we always start with a prayer of thanksgiving. We give thanks for everything, even the difficult things, the challenges and the so called problems. We understand that facing challenges makes us grow and makes us stronger. I do believe that Napoleon Hill was correct when he said, "*Every adversity, every failure, every heartache carries with it the seed of an equal or greater benefit.*"

I hope all of you have a wonderful month and look for our book coming out soon.

Jodi