



Tough to fly with the eagles when you
have to live with a bunch of turkeys
~~Life~~ ~~Goal~~: "live long enough to get revenge on
your children..."
... a biweekly letter from the heart of a man to men

BOX 580
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Year End, 1982

Holiday Greetings!

An old Norwegian story tells it like it is! A little country boy in the woods north of Oslo found an egg in a nest ... took it home and placed it with the eggs under his pet goose.

Early one morning it hatched---a freakish creature! Its deformed feet made it stumble as it tried to follow the other little geese around the barnyard. His beak was pointed and twisted...his feathers an offbeat brown. To top it off...he made a terrible squawking sound!

A genetic freak---ugly, disfigured and out of step.

Then one day a giant eagle flew low across the farm. He kept circling till the awkward little "freak" looked up and began stretching his wings. He flapped harder and harder! Suddenly like a DC-10, he took off down the runway and began to soar.

He had discovered who he was. He was born an eagle! He had been trying to live like a goose.

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I wonder if they played Taps
in Heaven?

July 4
Friday

THE UNPAYABLE DEBT WE OWE

READ:
Galatians 5:1-14

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free.
—Galatians 5:1

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:
■ 2 Chronicles 22-24
■ Proverbs 2:1-11

Our gratitude is deepened when we remember the price others paid to help obtain freedom. In the United States, one such person was Richard Stockton.

Stockton was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He was a prominent lawyer and a wealthy landowner. Because he supported the war efforts, he and his family were driven from their home. That home was sacked and burned. Stockton was imprisoned for several years and subjected to harsh treatment that broke his health. He died a pauper at the age of 51. Yet few Americans remember this hero who paid such a high price for the cause of liberty. His sacrifice is largely forgotten.

Even more important, have we become so familiar with the gospel that we fail to appreciate what our salvation cost the Savior? We rejoice in the spiritual freedom we enjoy by faith in the sin-canceling death of Jesus, but do we realize at least to some small degree the price He paid?

Are we truly grateful to Jesus for all He sacrificed to set us free spiritually? If so, we are to “stand fast . . . in the liberty by which Christ has made us free” (Gal. 5:1). No matter what else may be demanding our attention, let’s take time to remember the unpayable debt we owe Him. —Vernon Grounds

*But drops of grief can ne’er repay
The debt of love I owe:
Here, Lord, I give myself away—
'Tis all that I can do! —Watts*

Salvation is infinitely costly, but absolutely free.

the former case, but in heaven; not in suffering, but on the ground of suffering, and as having finished the work which as Mediator He had undertaken.

Our blessed Lord appears before His Father, here, as His commissioned Mediator, to whom power over all flesh had been promised; and as having completely, effectually, and absolutely finished the work assigned to Him. His language is, "Now, O Father, glorify thou me . . . with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." He seems to say, "Father, Thou

) knowest the understanding existing between Us, in consideration of which I endure the cross, despising the shame; Thou knowest, Father, Thine own covenant engagement, that on condition of My making an offering for the sins of Our people acceptable to Thy justice, Thy holiness, and Thy truth, Thou wouldst raise Me up into the glory which I had with Thee before the world was, in order that I might rule heaven and earth on their behalf, and dispense as their Head eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Me. Father, the hour is come, and the work is finished, I am about to lay down My life a sin offering, and Myself a whole burnt offering, and peace offering, on the altar of My Godhead; and I claim as the recompense of My life-labor and the reward of My entire obedience unto death, even to be now glorified; and that My whole self, My whole Person, My whole manhood shall be taken up into the glory which I possessed with Thee before the world was." Oh, what a prayer!]

There are four great and essential principles of gospel truth brought out in so simply expressed that he that runs

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(Verse 3 - only)

I. That before our was associated with the Eternal God in the . . . ! In the opening of the Gospel of John, and in the opening of the Epistle to the



Patriotic Prayer

Keywords: Prayer; Teaching; Patriotism.

Filters: humor, 104.0, children, stories.

References: [LAWRENCE](#) (D); [EICHENBERGER](#) (D); [JAMES](#) (D)

Tone: Mixed/Neutral

For the opening exercises of our Vacation Bible School, we ask for volunteers to pray. One morning, a first grader enthusiastically waved his hand. Running to the front, he took a big breath as everyone bowed their heads and closed their eyes, quietly waiting before his voice boomed through the microphone: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America ..."

Citation: Karin C. Wooten, Ocala, Florida. *Christian Reader*, "Kids of the Kingdom."

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TOPIC	REF #	TEXT
Commitment	748-05	<p>HERO HUMOR <i>Won't Be Home for Christmas</i></p> <p>It was the 22nd of December, and I was just finishing up another embed in Iraq. We were on a rooftop doing a live interview with a Marine. At the end of it I said to him, "You're not going to be home for Christmas. Is there anyone you'd like to say hello to?" The Marine grinned as he sent well wishes to his family, asking them to keep him in their prayers.</p> <p>Fifteen seconds after the live shot ended, my satellite phone rang. It was my wife, Betsy. Apparently she'd turned on the television right at the end of the interview. "Did I just hear you say you won't be home for Christmas?"</p> <p>I've missed more than my share of Christmases and other holidays, and I'd promised her that I would be there this time, no matter what.</p> <p>"Of course not, honey," I replied, getting that sinking feeling that a man gets when his husband points are disappearing down a black hole. "I said I'd be there and I will," I assured her.</p> <p>"You'd better be," she growled. "If you leave me here alone with eight grandchildren, you might as well stay in Iraq. You'll be safer there than in this kitchen."</p> <p>I made it home for Christmas. p. 231</p>
Commitment	748-06	<p>"I lost my legs for the people of Iraq, so their children will be able to run around, just like mine. If time was turned back, I'd do it all over again."</p> <p>—Marine Sgt Gregory Edwards, father of two p. 237</p>

TOPIC	REF #	TEXT
Commitment	748-07	<p>“I am continuing to get stronger every day through therapy, and I have especially been encouraged by my improvements in learning to walk again. I have worked harder here than I ever did during my academy days or infantry training, yet I can credit these improvements only to the grace that God provides me each day. God is so good! “I would like to thank all of the individuals, families, and churches that have prayed specifically for me throughout this entire ordeal. I truly believe in the power of prayer, and I am so grateful for the prayers lifted up for my sake. I ask that when you pray for me, please also pray for those wounded veterans that do not know Christ. I don’t know where I’d be without my faith.”</p>
Commitment	748-08	<p>President Bush has never wavered in his support for the troops that he sent off to fight this war. Though he was admonished to “cut our losses” and “get out now,” though his party lost control of the Congress in 2006, he was steadfast in his resolve not to have this war end like Vietnam. And his field commanders were cut from the same tempered steel.</p> <p>Men like GEN David Petraeus, generals James Mattis, James Conway, and Ray Odierno were pilloried in the press, but they prevailed anyway. They motivated young soldiers and Marines to weather the IEDs, suicide bombers, and mind-numbing fatigue to press on despite criticism on the home front. These leaders ignored the bashing they got for being too aggressive and kept the pressure on the enemy. Leaders do make a difference.</p>

TOPIC	REF #	TEXT
Terrorism	748-03	<p>On 25 November, Mike Spann and his partner arrived at the prison and began to conduct interrogations. That's how they discovered that one of the detainees wasn't an Afghan at all. He was an American named John Walker Lindh. According to Lindh, he was a convert to Islam and had traveled first to Pakistan and then to Afghanistan with the intention of joining Al Qaeda.</p> <p>Shortly after being interrogated by Spann, Lindh and his fellow prisoners overpowered their guards and murdered Mike Spann with two gunshots to the head, making him the first American casualty of the War on Terror.</p> <p>Mike Spann was thirty-two years old when he died at the hands of a murderous countryman who had joined the Jihad. Mike left behind his widow, Shannon Spann, an infant son, and two young daughters.</p> <p>p. 40</p>
Terrorism	748-04	<p>"The Marines have done so much, with so little, for so long that we now can do anything, with nothing, forever."</p> <p>p.124</p>

TOPIC	REF #	TEXT
Cowboy Poetry	520-08	<h3>The Flag Up the Hill</h3> <p>There ain't much left at RimRock, just that flag up on the hill, saggin' boards of the old schoolhouse, and Peterson's feed mill.</p> <p>Some gravel roads and old concrete is what most people see. I tell you there was a town there once, just as purdy as it could be.</p> <p>Ain't many of us left old enough to remember the RimRock story. Write it down careful, boys and girls, it's a tale of friendship and glory.</p> <p>Seven boys graduated from RimRock High, in the class of '42. The war was on, so they all signed up, thought it the least that they could do.</p> <p>And things went fine for the seven, 'til they met with that Army doc. Young Peterson, he was rejected, for Jessie it was quite a shock.</p> <p>Before they left for camp, he gathered them on that hill behind the store. And pledged the flag on the pine he would fly, 'til they all were together once more.</p> <p>Chester Rutledge was killed at Normandy. Fred Buchanan, the very next day, Jim Nickels in a P.O.W. camp . . . How he died, they never would say.</p> <p>Ben Clarke was lost in the Coral Sea when his ship sank out of sight. Al Holt's transport was torpedoed before he got a chance to fight.</p>

TOPIC	REF #	TEXT
		Sniper fire from a high palm tree brought down Jimmy Ray Bates. He died in a bed on a hospital ship, just fourteen miles from the states.
		RimRock never recovered after that. Seems ever' family had lost a son. They all moved away with grief and pain, that is, all of them, except one.
		Jessie's climbed that hill for 57 years to fly that flag in the sky. And he says he'll keep on doin' it, til he meets 'em in the sweet bye-in-bye.
		There ain't much left at RimRock, jist that flag up on the hill, saggin' boards of the old schoolhouse, and Peterson's feed mill.

Intell. Grant
Alba Que Que

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES OF STUDIES

Jesus said in John 10:10, "I have come that you might have life, and that you might have life more abundantly." He also said in John 15:11, "I have told you these things that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be made full."

John Powell in his book Unconditional Love makes the following observations, "You and I must open ourselves to the question, What is life for? We should get right down into the fabric of our daily lives. What am I doing? Is my life a series of deadlines, meetings, clearing my desk, answering phones, moving from one crisis to the next? Do I look forward to the stretch of life that is ahead of me, to next week, to the coming year? Is mine a hand to mouth existence? Is it a matter of getting by? When I wake up in the morning is my first reaction, Good morning, God, or Good God, it is morning. Am I in a survival contest? Do I feel trapped? Am I just hanging on? Am I asking, How much longer can I take this?"

I would like to suggest that everyone has one dominate life principle. It may be difficult to lure it out of the dark subconscious regions to face examination, but it is there. There is in each of us a set of needs, goals or values with which we are psychologically preoccupied. There is something in all the zigs and zags of daily living which dominates all our other desires. This life principle runs through the fabric of our choices like the dominate theme in a piece of music. It keeps recurring and it is heard in different settings. Of course, only you can answer for yourself, just as only I can answer for myself, what is my life principle.

For example, some people are above and before all else seeking safety. They avoid all places where danger might lurk, even if opportunity could be waiting in the same place. They will take no risks, make no gambles. They stay home at night and reveal their deepest selves to no one. It is better to be safe than sorry, they say. The same kind of thumbnail sketch can be made of a person whose primary concern in life principle is duty, recognition, money, fame, need, success, fun, relationships, approval of others, or power. Having a life principle is a matter of psychological economy. It diminishes the wear and tear of having to make all decisions from the ground up. For example, if my life principle is fun, then whenever I come upon a choice or receive two invitations for the same evening, I simply have to apply my life principle. Where will I have the most fun? My fundamental option or choice is having fun. I have already consciously or unconsciously accepted that as a life principle.

*Matt. 5:20
Key Verse!!*
The Sermon on the Mount in the first 12 verses gives us a life principle of righteousness that results in happiness.

Flowing out of this life principle will be a godly lifestyle that is reflected in the rest of the sermon which He preaches.

The Message is A Contrast between the true & the false, the real & the Phony. Self Righteousness vs. Christ's Righteousness. The Flesh & the Spirit, Works vs. free Gift.

Arno C. Gaebelein in the Annotated Bible points out, "In chapters 5-7 we have the full report of the so-called Sermon on the Mount. Mark and Luke give fragments of this discourse but the complete discourse is found only in Matthew. The sermon on the mount is the proclamation of the King concerning His kingdom and may well be called the Magna Charta of the kingdom of heaven. This discourse does not expound the gospel of grace, the way of salvation, the privileges and blessings of true Christianity. The teachers who say that the sermon on the mount is the gospel are ignorant of what the gospel is. We mentioned three wrong applications which are being made of this discourse:

1. The application to the unsaved, as if in this discourse the way of righteousness is shown which man, by his own effort, is to attain.

2. The second wrong application is the one which makes this discourse exclusively Christian and applies it to the church. The sermon on the mount is not given as the standard of Christian experience and walk.

3. The third false application is the one which makes this discourse exclusively Jewish. Some Christians refuse to consider these chapters as having any message or instruction for them at all. This is the other extreme and equally wrong. The sermon on the mount is the proclamation of the King concerning His kingdom. That kingdom is not the church nor is it a state of righteousness of the earth, brought about through the agency of the church. It is the kingdom as it will be set up by the king with the coming age. We have here from the lips of the king the inner principles of that kingdom. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes again, the Old Testament predictions concerning the kingdom will be literally fulfilled and the kingdom itself will be a kingdom of righteousness, according to this proclamation.

J. Sidlow Baxter in Explore the Book says, "There is a ten-fold message to chapters 5-7. Here are the 10 component parts of the sermon on the mount:

1. The beatitudes (5:3-16) - or the subjects of the kingdom
2. Moral standards (5:17-48) - or Christ vs. "it was said"
3. Religious motives (6:1-18) - alms (v. 1)
prayer (v. 5)
fasting (v.16)
4. Mammon worship (6:19-24) - or earthliness v. godliness
5. Temporal cares (6:25-34) - anxiety vs. trust in God
6. Social discernment (7:1-6)
7. Encouragements (7:7-11) - prayer makes it all practicable
8. Summary in a sentence (7:12) - "Such a life fulfills Scriptures."
9. The alternatives (7:13,14) - Two ways: the broad vs. the narrow
10. Final warnings (7:15-27) - false prophets (v.15)
false profession (v.21)
false foundation (v.26)

Its first three sections contain virtues, morals and motives. The next three concern things material, temporal and social. The next three give encouragement, summary and exhortation. The discourse then closes with

three solemn warnings. In the final part note the succession of solemn alternatives: the two ways, broad and narrow; the two gates, wide and straight; the two destinations, life and destruction; two classes of travelers, many and few; two kinds of trees, good and corrupt; two sorts of fruit, good and bad; two builders, wise and foolish; two foundations, rock and sand; two houses; two storms; two results.

It is good for us to note the relationship of the three discourses in the gospel of Matthew:

Chaps. 5-7 Precepts of the kingdom
Chap. 13 The parables of the kingdom
Chaps. 24,25 The Prophecies of the kingdom

The Sermon on the Mount does have a present-day application but not interpretation. We don't tell a man to live by Leviticus today but we apply its teaching to him. General teachings of truth and righteousness are applicable in any age.

Roland Sasscer, Jr. in his master's thesis The Dispensational Problem of the Sermon on the Mount points out, "This message was delivered early in the earthly ministry of the Lord, while the other two, The Upper Room Discourse and the Olivet Discourse, were delivered during the last week of His life here on earth." Dispensationalism teaches that the sermon on the mount contains standards of life for the citizens of the kingdom of heaven. The theme for this system of interpretation is II Timothy 2:15 rightly dividing the word of truth. A worthy interpretation of the sermon on the mount must meet certain standards. First, it must be in harmony with the central doctrines of the Bible. A great fallacy of the liberal interpretation is that it does not take into consideration the doctrine of justification by faith and other doctrines closely related to it. Secondly, a worthy interpretation of the sermon on the mount must be in harmony with the theme of the gospel according to Matthew. Why did Matthew organize his book in the way that he did? If the sermon on the mount had been placed after chapter 16, would that affect the interpretation? A thorough understanding of the book of Matthew is essential to a correct interpretation of the sermon on the mount. Thirdly, a worthy interpretation of the sermon on the mount should be in harmony with one's system of theology.

Ryle in his work Expository Thoughts on the Gospels says, "Every word of the Lord Jesus ought to be most precious to professing Christians. It is the voice of the Chief Shepherd. It is the charge of the great bishop and head of the church. It is the master speaking. It is the word of him who spake as never a man spake, and by whom we shall all be judged at the last day. Would we know what kind of people Christians ought to be? Would we know the character at which Christians ought to aim? Would we know the outward walk and inward habit of mind which become a follower of Jesus? Then let us often study the sermon on the mount.

Ironside in his commentary on Matthew says, "But we discern here wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we dare not refuse to obey, lest we be proved to be such as are described in I Timothy 6:3,4, "If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and arguments that result in envy, quarreling, malicious talk, evil suspicions."

Warren Weirsbe in his book Meet Your King says, "The sermon on the mount is one of the most misunderstood messages that Jesus ever gave. One group says it is God's plan of salvation, that if we ever hope to go to heaven, we must obey these rules. Another group calls it a charter for world peace and begs the nations of the earth to accept it. Still a third group tells us that the sermon on the mount does not apply to today but that it will apply at some future time, perhaps during the tribulation or the millennial kingdom. I have always felt that Matt. 5:20 was the key to this important sermon, "For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." The main theme is true righteousness. The religious leaders had an artificial, external righteousness based on law. But the righteousness Jesus described is a true and vital righteousness that begins internally in the heart. The Pharisees were concerned about the minute details of conduct but they neglected the major matter of character. Conduct flows out of character."

Hal Sandoval in his thesis The Application of the Sermon on the Mount says, "When they came together, one question was paramount in their minds: How can we enter your kingdom? How righteous must we be to be saved? Will our righteousness be sufficient to admit us to your kingdom? They did not ask for proof that he was Messiah. His miracles demonstrated that. They were concerned about the righteousness demanded for entrance into his kingdom. In speaking of the problem of interpreting the sermon for today, Ryrie says the following, 'If the literal interpretation is abandoned, what will be the correct interpretation of the hidden meaning?' But if the laws of the sermon should be obeyed today, they could not be totally literal because, as Ladd indicates, all businessmen would declare bankruptcy, giving to others whatever they asked. This is the dilemma which every interpreter has to face. If it is literal, it cannot be for today. If it is for today, it cannot be literal. This is the dilemma which not only the dispensationalists face. Ryrie says, 'Dispensationalists believe that wrath, covetousness, divorce and murder are sin. They believe it based on the sermon on the mount. Dispensationalists believe that the Golden Rule and the Lord's Prayer are excellent guides. They do not disregard at any point the ethical principles of the sermon as not being applicable but mandatory for the believer today. Ryrie suggests that the sermon is a detailed revelation of the righteousness of God, and its principles are applicable to the children of God today. In the sermon on the mount the concept of righteousness provides a unity and progress of thought. The hearers are first commended, if they hunger and thirst for righteousness. Such a desire is honored by God. Righteousness is to be desired to the point of suffering for it, and those who do so desire

it, will gain the kingdom of heaven. However, the righteousness to be sought is of a different type than the masses envisioned. The people understood it in terms of Pharisaic righteousness. Jesus demolishes this understanding by the words, 'For I tell you, that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. The illustrations that follow make it clear that Pharisaic righteousness was limited to the external acts rather than a righteousness of the heart. Jesus clearly states that righteousness must begin in the heart and result in external actions. For that reason this writer proposes to consider the sermon on the mount as Jesus originally preached it to be an exposition of the righteousness of God aimed at producing repentance in the hearers."

The sermon on the mount was not delivered in a vacuum. It was rooted not only in the prophecies of the Old Testament but in the aspirations of an abused people who were suffering under foreign domination but had the distinction of being God's chosen nation. Many of the interpretations of the sermon that have been given have come far short of the scope of the sermon because they have majored on one tenant of the remarkable passage. Another reason for the failure to completely interpret the sermon is that the hermeneutic used often limits the potential interpretation.

J. Vernon McGee points out, "Those who reduce the Christian message to the sermon on the mount represent a very large segment of liberalism in our day. But please notice that the content of the Christian gospel is not found in the sermon on the mount. For instance, there is absolutely no mention of the death and resurrection of Christ yet Paul said to the Corinthians, 'I declare unto you the gospel.' What is the gospel? The sermon on the mount? No, Paul made it clear that the gospel is this: that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (I Cor. 15:3,4). The sermon on the mount does have meaning for us in our day. It is for us, although it is not to us."

Youngling in his thesis Principles of Personal Discipleship in the Sermon on the Mount points out, "Having finally established the context of the sermon, the primary audience, the disciples of Christ, and the basic message of the sermon, the character and conduct of a true disciple, the study is now ready to progress into the text in order to discover the principles of personal discipleship in the sermon on the mount."

J. Vernon McGee points out, "Again this whole difficulty has arisen largely because of a misunderstanding of that which is interpretation, as over against that which is application of Scripture, two vastly different things, between which we must draw a sharp distinction. The sermon on the mount may not have an interpretation for us but we can find great riches in its application. To make clear this point let us turn to the book of Joshua, in the first part of which we read, 'Arise, go over this Jordan.' Now, how many of you have ever been over the Jordan River. If you have not, you certainly have failed to keep that part of Scripture, for it

very clearly states that there is no misunderstanding so literal a statement, 'Arise, go over this Jordan.' But you know, when I read it, I understand that it was written for another people and another day. I understand that it has an interpretation which was for Joshua and the children of Israel relative to crossing the Jordan River into the Promised land. But, beloved, it has an application and a very wonderful one for us. We can take it today as a commandment for our own heart and soul. We are to understand that the River Jordan is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and He wants us to cross over onto resurrection ground and as believers to leave the wilderness and its manna for 'if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is at the right hand of God.' We are to cross over the Jordan into the Promised Land, the place of blessing, into the spiritual places and into the heavenlies today."

It will be our purpose in the study of the sermon on the mount to look at it in eight parts. We shall be studying together in our first study chapter 5:1-12, where we will be considering the beatitudes, or the godly lifestyle - the Christian conduct, or real righteousness; life principles, if you please.

In study #2 - chap. 5:13-16 - will be seeing the Christian witness. Here we are called salt and light.

In study #3 - We will be seeing the Christian's relationship to the law and the prophets - chap. 5:17-20.

In study #4 - We will be considering the law of Christ - chap. 5:21-48.

In study #5 we will be considering the spiritual disciplines of giving, fasting and praying in chap. 6:1-18.

In study #6 we will be looking at proper priorities - chap. 6:19-34.

In study #7 we will be dealing with a critical spirit - chap. 7:1-14

In study #8 we will be talking about the warning about the false prophets - chap. 7:15-29

Powell in his book Unconditional Love points out, "Like many people who do not want to assume responsibility for their lives, he talks only about what others are not doing for him. Apparently, he has not given much thought to how he might help himself. He is so absorbed in the limitations of his condition that he does not explore the creative possibilities of the situation. Many cannot accept the challenges of life so they retreat into some physically or emotionally disabling condition. Illness is passive; involvement is active. They chose passivity rather than activity in life. There are many rationalizations besides the excuse of sickness which are used to justify the avoidance-of-responsibility life principle. Sometimes we let our fears or our self-inflicted judgments of inferiority shield us from taking the risks and facing the challenges of a full life. We substitute I can't for I won't even try. It is easier not to have tried than to have tried and failed. If you don't try, you can always console yourself by saying, I probably could have done it. If you try and fail, you don't even have that dubious consolation. When one sets out to look for avenues of escape, the possibilities are infinite. This is the way I am. Some people blame their life condition on their genes. Others claim that their level of education is responsible for their life's outcome. Still others assign their fixed state to ethnic background or lack of connections."