

Galatians 6:9

⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

What follows is a light-hearted true story designed to encourage parents still in the trenches dealing with their teens:

It was a summer evening in 1977. A light mist was falling. I pulled into my drive after my workday and noticed that my son's papers were still sitting on the porch. I'm not sure as I write this that Observer Newspapers are still being published, but in that year, most communities of any size had their own edition of that paper. It provided coverage of local news plus reporting of all of the cultural and commercial happenings in the community. My boy Jeff earned pocket money by delivering these papers twice a week to subscribers within our neighborhood. Usually, his work would have been done by this hour and he would have been in his room upstairs at least feigning homework.

I called out to him seeking some explanation for the undelivered papers. He came out to the little porch. We stood there both looking first at each other and then at the stack of fresh newspapers.

"Son, shouldn't your papers have been delivered by now?"

"Yes", he replied, "They should have been."

"Well?"

"I am not going to deliver them."

"Why not", I inquired?

"It's raining", he responded.

Now a father's reply in this situation might be as varied as the men themselves. There is no granular rulebook. Shooting him would have been against the laws and ignoring the fault would have invited repetition so, in a blaze of brilliance, I decided that a story from the old days might be just the thing.

"Son".

"Yes, Dad"?

"When I was your age, I also had a paper route. I delivered my papers every day and twice on Saturdays – not just twice a week as you do. It was required that I do this notwithstanding that it might be raining or that snow to the depth of my bike axles might be on the ground. A truck did not deliver them to my house, but I had to bicycle uphill both ways (a slight exaggeration) more than two miles to an area station to pick them up. Then it was necessary to fold every paper (more than 100), load them on my old 24-inch Roadmaster and haul them another two miles to my route. The route itself was a mile in length and when I was done it was two miles through rain and snow back home. I want you to know, son, that my customer's did not mail a check for their subscription to the publisher every month, but I had to personally knock on over 100 doors each week to get my money. And, lastly, my boy, I did all of this for about \$12 a week."

Jeff looked a bit overwhelmed at the revelation that I had just shared. "Dad, let me get this straight."

"OK."

“You had to cycle two miles just to pick up your papers?”

“Yes.”

“Then you had to fold them, peddle two miles to your actual route, deliver to over 100 customers before riding two more miles back to your house?”

“Yes!”

“You did this everyday and twice on Saturdays, collected all the money, no matter the weather, and you did all that for twelve bucks a week?”

“Yes!”

“Dad, the kids in your day were really stupid!”

On rapid reflection, I concluded the lad had a point. I drove. He popped the papers into the receptacles.

Postscript: Forty-six years have passed since those joyful days of Jeffrey’s rearing. I find myself still a bit tired. The full harvest has not been gathered. I will trust The Lord that it will be bountiful.

George Moore

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