

COMMENTARY / CULTURE

The Lifelong Regret!



Terry Howard

This picture is a replica of the one from a remote spot in a parking lot across from a local Walmart. Until recently, that spot was occupied by a blue pickup truck with watermelons for sale on the back. I'll get to the story behind that photo momentarily.

But first, let's go to Merriam-Webster for a definition of the word "regret," the crux of this narrative and for my fair-minded readers, something to think long and hard about when reexamining your life.

"Regret is a feeling of sadness or disappointment about something said or wrong about a mistake you made and wish you could have done differently or better."

Aha, "done differently!"

Hold those two words top of mind as you think about your life experiences, particularly something you wish you could have done (or said) differently. For quick reference, think about the "toothpaste" analogy, in that once it's squeezed out of the tube, try as you will, you cannot push it back in.

We can say the same thing about choices in life that we may later regret. Think having one drink too many, bowing to peer pressure, a puff on that first cigarette, a loan you should not have taken out, an abusive spouse you wish you never met, etc. Like toothpaste out

of the tube, once a regret is out it's out and remorse about what you could have done differently but didn't.

Now with that as a stage setter, I'll now introduce you to an exchange between two "actors" – yours truly and a watermelon seller peddling his product for eight bucks off the back of his blue pickup truck in the above-mentioned parking lot. For yours truly, there are few things more enjoyable than a slice of cold watermelon during the summer. Here's the exchange:

ME: Good morning, sir. I stopped to ask about your watermelons. Are they sweet?

HIM: Oh man, they're the absolute best.

ME: Good to hear, but can I get a sample taste first?

HIM: Oh no, I don't offer samples. But you won't go wrong with my watermelons.

ME: Well, I normally won't buy one without tasting it first. Can you guarantee that yours is sweet?

HIM: Absolutely.

I handed him a ten-dollar bill and watched as he pulled out a leather pouch stacked with what was clearly a large wad of cash. As he waded through the \$20 bills for change, I had a discomfiting flashback of a "To catch a smuggler" television program I'd watched during which an actual drug bust happened in this parking lot. The dealers were followed by agents from the Drug Enforcement Agency onto the highway before being stopped and arrested two exits down. Even more unnerving was my recollection of hearing about robberies occurring in this parking lot. So I paused before suggesting the following:

ME: Excuse me sir, but may I share something with you that may be helpful?

HIM: Okay, sure.

ME: Are you aware that armed robberies have happened in this parking lot?

HIM: Really?

ME: You may want to keep a few



dollars out for change and lock your pouch inside your glove compartment.

He nodded, looked around the surroundings and thanked me. But I was not sure that he fully appreciated the implications of my advice which left me wondering if I should have been more forceful. So, I drove off with my watermelon and, with it, a nightmarish fear that he didn't heed my advice and had later been robbed ...or worse!

Since then, I thought about my interaction with the watermelon seller and drove by several times looking for his blue pickup truck. But to no avail. Now I ask that you take one more look at the photo and, like I've done several times, ask yourself whatever happened to that watermelon seller? Did he move to a safer location? Did he stop selling watermelons altogether or, I hope that I'm dead wrong, did something unthinkable happen to him?

So I'll end by first asking you if any of these regrets, or famous last words, sound familiar:

"I planned to pay him a visit before he died but never got around to it."

"The class was too hard, so I dropped it for an easier one."

"Although she has borrowed money from me before, I know she'll eventually pay me back."

Remember that the stakes of even mundane decisions we make or not

make can be high and can lead to a lifetime sentence in the prison of regret without the possibility of an early release. Understand the cause and conditions that led to your regret and learn from but don't dwell on it. Forgive yourself for being the imperfect person we all are. And above all, interrupt potential decisions by others you care about, ones they may come to regret. Easier said than done, huh? Oh yeah!

"We must suffer from one of two pains: the pain of discipline or the pain of regret. The difference is that discipline weighs ounces while a regret weighs tons." – Jim Rohn

One more thought. When yours truly, a country boy from Virginia, moved to Boston after high school and hooked up with the wrong crowd, I was too poor to buy the, eh, "chemicals" of the day. Thinking back, I have no regrets about being poor. Point being that a regret is not always a bad thing, is it?

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We're Really Arguing with GOD

By Robin Smith

Most who have been in any social setting of late are talking about various conflicts within our culture. Gender, identity, and the family have been reshaped in recent years.

All have opinions. All voice opinions, mostly on social media where the echo chamber of digital friends "like" and validate with little to no pushback.

Yet our opinions are shaping critical decisions, relationships, and institutions based on popularity and acceptance...and little else. Take the issue of gender identity and the response of some who assert that once one identifies as a gender other than their biological sex at birth, "gender-affirming care" should be made available to "transition" that individual.

So, let's look at science. Almost all cells in one's body have 23 pairs of chromosomes, except the reproductive cells which unite in concep-

tion and carry either an X or a Y chromosome--to determine the gender of a child. In all other cells, either an XX (female) or an XY (male) pair is among the chromosome total of 46. Cellular DNA possesses gender or sex.

The gender-affirming care that assists in the supposed transition does not alter DNA. Instead, it uses chemical and surgical modifiers, such as hormones and surgical changes for removal of sex organs. But genetically, that person is still either XX, a female, or XY, a male.

And, yes, for those who believe in God the Father, His Son and His Spirit, also know that God made humanity in His own Image. As recorded in Genesis 1:27, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

Sounds like science and sound doctrine are united. Yet culture needs to justify whims.

Relative to the family, the unit has been redefined, replaced by government institutions and nonprofits, and even criticized if founded on principles of authority and respect.

If one takes a view of God's Word, it's pretty clear the institution of marriage and the family served the purpose of creating our civilization.

In the Bible, we see, "In the beginning, God..." but overlook the next step, creating the family. Instead, most want to visit the Biblical Buffet to pick the verses of choosing that yield blessings while ignoring the others that come with the responsibilities that yield those blessings.

Finally, a "bow set in the clouds" back "in the days of Noah" was part of a covenant made between God and man that the earth would not be destroyed again. Yet that seven-colored bow in the covenant made more than 5,000 years ago has been altered to



show six colors and taken as the symbol of the lifestyles of the LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual, Asexual and all other sexual identifiers).

It's fascinating to see so much established for a godly and good civilization being altered for popularity and cultural acceptance, despite their intended purposes. Hence, we're really arguing with God. But "as in the days of Noah" sure seems like 2022.

This Week in African American History

HORACE W. BIVINS (1862-1937)

Horace Waymon Bivins, a Buffalo Soldier, was born on May 8, 1862, in Accomack County, Virginia. His father Severn S. Bivins and his mother Elizabeth Bivins were free black farmers on Virginia's Eastern Shore. His parents taught Bivins to farm, and at the age of fifteen, he was in charge of an eight-horse farm near Keller Station, Virginia.

Bivins, however, yearned for a life away from farming, and at seventeen, he entered Hampton Institute in Virginia, where he was first introduced to military training. In 1887, Bivins joined the U.S. Army as a private. He was ordered to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri and assigned to Troop E, 10th U.S. Cavalry. Bivins was eventually stationed with the regiment at Fort Grant in Arizona Territory. There he took part in the campaign against Geronimo during the final days of the Apache

Wars in the Southwest. An expert marksman, Bivins won eight medals and badges given by the War Department in shooting competitions between 1892 and 1894

During the Spanish-American War, Corporal Bivins served as a gunner with the 10th Cavalry in Cuba. During the Battle of Santiago on July 1, 1898, Bivins operated a three-man Hotchkiss mountain gun alone and suffered a head wound as his fellow soldiers were pinned down under fire. Commended for his bravery, Bivins became a hero of the war as his actions were described in both military and civilian newspapers. In 1899, he wrote of his Cuban experiences which appeared in the book Under the Fire with Tenth Cavalry, one of the earliest and most popular Spanish-American War accounts written by participating soldiers.

Bivins was promoted to ser-

geant and served six months in the Philippines in 1901, often leading patrols against the forces of Emilio Aguinaldo. He left the Philippines in July 1901 and was stationed at a series of military posts in Montana, California, Wyoming, New York, and Vermont. He retired from the U.S. Army on July 19, 1913 and settled in Billings, Montana.

In 1917, Bivins proposed organizing a unit of volunteers in Virginia for the U.S. Army as it prepared to embark for France to fight in World War I. The Army turned down his proposal, but it did make the 55-year-old former soldier a captain in the infantry. For six months he served on active duty at Camp Dix, New Jersey before retiring again and returning to Billings, Montana. Horace Bivins passed away in Billings in 1937 at the age of 75.



Horace W. Bivins

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