

A giant ship engine failed. The ship's owners tried one expert after another, but none of them could figure out how to fix the engine. Then they brought in an old man who had been fixing ships since he was a young man. The old man carried a large bag of tools with him, and when he arrived, he immediately went to work. He inspected the engine very carefully, top to bottom. Two of the ship's owners were there, watching this man work.

After looking things over, the old man reached into his bag and pulled out a small hammer. He gently tapped something. Instantly, the engine lurched into life. He carefully put his hammer away. The engine was fixed!

A week later, the owners received a bill from the old man for ten thousand dollars. "What?!" the owners exclaimed. "He hardly did anything!" So they wrote the old man a note saying, "Please send us an itemized bill." The man sent an itemized bill that read:

- Tapping with a hammer — \$2.00
- Knowing where to tap — \$9,998.00

Effort is important, but knowing where to make an effort makes all the difference! Keep studying hard. Be open to learning unfamiliar skills and willing to entertain fresh ideas. Make a priority of keeping your brain muscle agile and adaptable.

God tells us in Ecclesiastes 10:10, "If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen its edge, then one must exert more strength; however, the advantage of wisdom is that it brings success." The same verse in The Message reads this way: "Remember: the duller the ax the harder the work; use your head; the more brains, the less muscle." In the words of Anthony Douglas Williams, "Knowledge comes from learning; wisdom comes from living."

Evaluate the what/why/how of your life. Adapt...Learn... Adjust...while always staying anchored in the priority of your relationship with Christ. There is a Chinese proverb that states, "When the winds of change blow, some people build walls, others build windmills." E.E. Cummings once wrote, "It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are"; I think the truer statement would have been, "It takes courage to grow up and become who God purposed you to be." So many Christians seem to gain a wee bit of Bible knowledge, a wee bit of spiritual wisdom and then opt to become settlers rather than pilgrims even though the spiritual journey is a life long quest.

I really like Brian Herbert's take on growing, learning and refusing to become stagnant. He says, "The capacity to learn is a gift; the ability to learn is a skill; the willingness to learn is a choice." The psalmist declares in 119:32 "I pursue the way of Your commands, for You broaden my understanding" and goes on to say in verses 97-99 "How I love Your teaching...Your command makes me wiser...I have more insight than all my teachers because Your decrees are my meditation."

A closing thought from David Mathis: "The Christian faith is not a finite course of study for the front-end of adulthood. Our mindset shouldn't be to first do our learning and then spend the rest of our lives drawing from the original deposit of knowledge. Rather, ongoing vitality in the Christian life is inextricably linked to ongoing learning." Grace & peace, love you. PK