

How Much More: The Gift of Perspective

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I thought it might be fun to turn the clock back a couple years

To see how things have changed

Let's talk about music a second

I know some parents are more 80s

Some are more 90s

So let's see if you can guess – what are the top 5 music artists or groups from the 1980's

Any guesses?

Top 5 music artists of the 80's:

5. Bruce Springsteen
4. U2
3. Madonna
2. Prince
1. Michael Jackson

So what about the 90's – what are the top 5 music artists or groups from the 1990's

Any guesses?

Top 5 music artists of the 90's:

5. Red Hot Chili Peppers
4. 2Pac
3. Radiohead
2. Pearl Jam
1. Nirvana

Let me introduce you to Lily Trotter

She, like you, graduates

Was a young lady trying to decide

What to do with her life

She was a phenomenal painter

An artist

In fact, famed art critic John Ruskin told her

That if she would devote herself to her art

"She would be the greatest living painter and do things that would be immortal." – John Ruskin

No pressure

She decided that God wanted something different for her

Than fame and notoriety

Something more real

And ironically enough

Something more eternal

She committed to becoming a missionary

To an unreached people group in Algeria in Northern Africa

She applied to the Mission's sending organization

But they denied her

Because of perpetual health concerns

Her family was independently wealthy

So they funded her mission work

And in March of 1888, she and two other women arrived in Algeria... alone

"Three of us stood there, looking at our battle-field, none of us fit to pass a doctor for any society, not knowing a soul in the place, or a sentence of Arabic or a clue for beginning work on untouched ground; we only knew we had to come. Truly if God needed weakness, He had it!" – Lilius Trotter

For the next 40 years

Until her death in 1928

Lilius devoted her life to these Islamic people

She loved them

She led many of them to faith in Christ

In fact, her ministry

At the time of her death

Had gone from 3 scared ladies

To 30 full time missionaries

In 15 separate locations

Trotter was a fantastic writer

You know, she was an artist

She had amazing perception

And could craft beautiful prose

One such example occurred when she was on one of her convalescent trips to Europe

Her weak body needing to recover

From the brutal climate of Algeria

She awoke early that morning

And made her way to spend a quiet moment with God

As was her custom

In a nearby meadow

She noticed as the sun began to creep up over the horizon
A wilted dandelion plant
Head stooped
Body weak
And then, as the sun's rays made their way to this weary plant
Something remarkable happened
It opened up to the sun
The warm rays brought life to the weary stem
And the head of the flower seemed
To stand up straight

She wrote in her journal that day:

“For if the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon our hearts there is an ocean of grace and love and power lying all around us, an ocean to which all earthly light is but a drop, and it is ready to transform us, as the sunshine transfigured the dandelion, and on the same condition – that we stand full face to the sun.” – Liliias Trotter

God wants to give us strength for every challenging season
Grace to cover every mistake
Power to overcome what lies ahead
But we've got to open our eyes
And have God's perspective on the things happening to us

That's very similar to what Paul writes in Ephesians 5:

Be very careful, then, how you live... - Ephesians 5:15-17

“Be very careful”

That word – blepo

Literally means “To look”

Or to “Turn your eyes toward”

In New York, they’d say, “look it”

Be very careful how you live

Not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity

Parents, listen to me a second

That phrase, “Make the most of every opportunity”

That phrase is going to get really important for you over these next months and years

Make the most of this opportunity

Don’t get so lost in the logistics of graduation

That you miss the graduate

Make the most of this opportunity

Make the most of this summer

Make the most of their transition to this next season

Whether it be college or the workforce or the military

Make the most of this opportunity

And for the non-graduating-senior parents who think this doesn’t apply to you

Just know that in about 15 minutes

Your kids will be the ones going to #stupidcollege

And you’ll be the one cryin’ about time going by

Make the most of *your* opportunity

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.

Be very careful – turn your eyes to this moment

Make the most of every opportunity

Come to understand what the Lord’s will is

He didn't design your kids to stay with you indefinitely

 This is a good thing

 But it's tough

I have etched in my mind giving this message 3 & 4 years ago

 When it was my turn to send a HS senior off to #StupidCollege

This is tough

 But it's the Lord's will

He designed your student

 And He loves them

 Even more than you do

Melissa – students

Helen Lemmel got the worst news

 The doctors said that her condition

Which had already taken much of her eyesight

 Would only grow worse

Soon, they said

 She wouldn't be able to see at all

The news was more than her husband could take

 He divorced her and left her, nearly blind, to fend for herself

At her lowest point

 Helen Lemmel read a devotional

By an artist who had also lost everything

 She had chosen to be a missionary in northern Africa

This artist had seen a dandelion

Transform from a weak, dying plant

To a radiant picture of God's presence

The devotional included these powerful words:

"So then, turn your eyes upon Him, look full into His face and you will find that the things of earth will acquire a strange new dimness." – Liliias Trotter

Lemmel – herself a musician – took inspiration from those powerful words

And wrote a hymn for the ages:

**O soul are you weary and troubled
No light in the darkness you see
There's light for a look at the Savior
And life more abundant and free**

**His word shall not fail you, He promised
Believe Him and all will be well
Then go to a world that is dying
His perfect salvation to tell**

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace**

When life throws you a curveball

When times are hard

Or scary

Or uncertain

Turn your eyes upon Jesus

Look full in His wonderful face

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim

In the light of His glory and grace