THE IMPORTANCE OF RESOURCEFULNESS

INTRODUCTION

I bet you think Thomas Edison created the light bulb. He didn't. By the time he came upon the idea of using thin threads of carbonized Japanese bamboo to create his filament in 1880, more than 20 people had already invented various kinds of incandescent lightbulbs dating back to 1802. What no one had created up until that point was a cost-effective and long lasting bulb that could be mass produced and used by the general population to light homes and cities. That involved not only finding the right filament for a single lightbulb, but developing the entire electric power generation and distribution system that we now take for granted every time we flip a switch.

However, what Thomas Edison should be most admired for was his resourcefulness. He failed nearly 2000 times before he finally came upon the carbonized thread filament, which made his invention of the affordable lightbulb possible.

COMMENTARY: THE IMPORTANCE OF RESOURCEFULNESS

Edison is the ultimate example of the definition of resourcefulness. **RESOURCEFULNESS IS... Using what's available to achieve goals and solve problems.**

Resourcefulness is... not giving up when Plan A doesn't work, but looking for a Plan B. And when Plan B doesn't work, looking for a Plan C... and so on. In that sense perseverance and resourcefulness go hand in hand.

But that very fact shows you how important resourcefulness is. Perseverance has no choice but to give up unless resourcefulness can keep finding another option to try. And that's why resourcefulness is a key ingredient of love. Have you heard the expression: *Love will find a way?* ...that's because so many times the things that we want to do, the things that we promise to do, the things that we need to do don't work the first time around.

Road blocks and obstacles come in so many different forms. But usually when you come up short, it all comes down to not having enough of something that you need in order to accomplish it. Maybe it's that you don't have the right kind of resources, or you don't have the money or the time or the supplies or the energy or the knowledge or the help that you need. You're just lacking something that would enable you to complete it. But when you can come up with Plan B after Plan A doesn't work, or if you can come up with Plan C if Plan B doesn't work, and so on—if you're that kind of person who can look at what you have available and try that—that's what love does. It doesn't take *no* for an answer.

That's what people need. Not just people who won't give up, but people who invest the mental energy not just to keep trying the same thing over and over but new things, new possibilities.

I'm thinking of the time a paralyzed man's only hope was to get to Jesus for a miraculous healing. But his friends, who were trying to help him, couldn't get him through the crowd into the house where Jesus was ministering. And you know what happened: His friends lowered him through the roof, down into the room where Jesus was, so Jesus could heal him. But we tend not to think why and how it happened.

It happened because they loved their friend. They were desperate for him. And it happened only because they put their heads together and considered their options.Maybe they could start yelling at the top of their lungs for Jesus to come outside. Or yell "Fire!" and cause the multitude to start scrambling out of the house. But one of them must have come up with the crazy idea to have one of them go for a rope while the rest of them climbed up on the roof to cut a hole in it to lower him down into Jesus' presence.

That's what love does. Love finds a way. Resourcefulness is required for love to do its thing!

As I already said, resourcefulness and perseverance go hand in hand. These two traits are fraternal twins. But often we only think of the importance of perseverance. Persevering is the all-important "keep trying" part, the "don't give up" part. However, without resourcefulness, perseverance can wind up also becoming the "beating a dead horse" part. Resourcefulness is the "what and how" part. How are you going to keep trying? What are you going to try next?

REFLECTION:

So let me ask you a couple questions.

> Most Christians pray most fervently about people and situations that stubbornly refuse to change. Most Christians, however, keep praying the same basic prayer over and over. Rather than searching for different ways to pray, different requests to make, coming to the Lord and asking, "Can you give me an new insight that will help me approach this problem differently in prayer?" Effective prayer necessarily depends on resourceful thinking: *There must be another way to pray, or something else I could ask.* **Is there some way you have gotten stuck on just one way of praying about a sticky situation?**
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> Here's another very practical way resourcefulness is required. There are probably people you know who have been dealing with very common but chronic problems: always a little short of money at the end of the month; a single mom who can't seem to work out how to hold down the two minimum wage jobs she needs to make ends meet and care for her seven-year-old in the evenings; an elderly person who is now in a wheelchair but still lives in a 2nd floor apartment and doesn't know what to do... You get the idea. Someone needs to love that person enough to work with them until they're predicament is solved. **Is there someone you've known about for a while who needs a resourceful servant to help them? Would that be a good place for you to start practicing resourcefulness?**
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> **Who is the most resourceful person you know? Tell them. Thank them. Learn from them.**

It's time to pray.

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, I can tell you right off the bat that this trait of resourcefulness seems beyond me. I'm not sure I'm that creative to come up with all sorts of different options to keep trying when previous ones don't work. But I'll admit, now that I see how resourcefulness is part of love, I could probably try harder most of the time and not quit looking for a Plan B and C so easily. That story of the paralyzed man's friends impresses me, but it also convicts me. Would I have gone to those lengths to come up with a solution for one of my friends? I'd like to think so, but only You know. Whatever the case may be, I now see the issue more clearly, and so... okay... I'm going to say it. I want to be like those friends. I'm willing. Help me to put in the work it takes to practice resourcefulness for the sake of loving and serving others. In Your name I pray. Amen.