

The Power of Finger Prints

Every student that graduates has finger prints all over them.
They have the finger prints of parents.
Those are the primary finger prints a child receives in this life.
Parents are the first to handle their children.
But there are other fingers prints on every graduating student.
They are the world's finger prints permitted by the parents.
Parents decide what their child will be involved in.
And what a child is involved in leaves finger prints.
By graduation it is pretty easy to know what a child has been exposed to.
During the ceremony the goals and dreams of the grad are read out loud.
Those aspirations are the result of finger prints.
Those finger prints are the result of moulding and shaping.
Those finger prints are left behind with every touch.
Everything done in a child's life leaves an imprint.
Everything done in a teen's life leaves an imprint.
When people walk into our lives and we are never quite the same.
Those finger prints cannot be detected with a magnifying glass.
They are not superficial fingerprints on the surface or skin of a grad's life.
They are finger prints on the brain, the soul, the emotions.
They are evidence of an interior influence that affect goals and values.
They become part of person's identity.
Those fingers prints make each person unique.
They are permanent identifiers of those who have influenced life.
Our grads here this morning are plastered with these finger prints.
Every grad is.
And those finger prints become visible on grad day.
During the ceremony each grad is introduced by name.
Following their name is a description of accomplishments and activities.
How they have done academically - finger prints of teachers.
How they have done athletically - finger prints of coaches.
How they have done assisting others - finger prints of community.
Then the grad's aspirations are announced.
This is where the finger prints really show up.
A dominant goal surfaces at every graduation I have attended.
The #1 goal is get rich, make lots of money, work for a rich lawyer.
These goals reveal the finger prints/values of those who have handled that life.
There is something I have never heard from a grad.
I have never heard a grad include "God's will" in their plan for the future.
His are the original finger prints on everyone's life.
But His finger print can be obscured by all the handlers of life.
So here we are (pour water into bowl)
This is us; our life past and present, covered with finger prints.
Those finger prints colour who we are (add drops of food colouring).
We are obviously changed by all those touches and influences of our environment.
We are impacted dramatically by our family, peers, education, media.
They work together to make us who we are (add more colouring).
Peter tells us about ourselves.
In verse 4 he says we are to be subject to our elders.
He tells us to be sober and watchful in verse 8 (add more colouring).
He tells us we have anxieties in verse 7 (add more colouring).
The fingerprints on our lives are like a garment or clothing.
It becomes how people know us and perceive us.
But there is more to us than the past influences.

We have a future (pour oil into the bowl)

The future is something we strive to get to.

It is our goals and our dreams.

Finger prints make us want to exalt ourselves (stir the water).

Finger prints make us want to get on top of the world.

Finger prints make us want to dominate our goals and control our future.

We want people to know who we are and see our accomplishments.

There is this air or arrogance.

And so we try and tackle our future with a flurry of activity (stir).

We select the best resources that will get us there (stir).

The best and most prestigious university to get us there (stir).

The best wardrobe or influential people to get us there (stir).

We start deciding what fingerprints will get us on top.

But no matter how we try to exalt ourselves we are still on the bottom.

The harder we try the messier and more fragmented life gets.

The more of our effort we apply the more mixed up we become.

And when the dust settles we are back where we started oil and water.

There is only one way for our lives to truly blend with the future.

1. Only God's fingerprint on our lives can elevate us (pour in some soap).

"When the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory." (vs. 4)

Are the fingerprints of God visible in your life?

Whenever we try to live life without God we can only try to exalt ourselves.

The only way we can get ahead is the human effort of using others.

God has placed His hand on you but Satan wants to push it away.

"Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour." (vs. 8)

He wants to leave his finger prints, or claw marks, all over you.

But God can transform a life relegated to the bottom of life.

That is where Satan wants to keep you.

He wants to isolate you from your Creator, the chief Shepherd.

He will coat you in a wardrobe of sin and deprive you the crown of glory.

As long as we arrogantly live life for ourselves he is our garment.

2. God wants to pour Himself into our lives through faith (pour in more soap).

"Resist [the devil] firm in your faith ..." (vs. 9)

We trust our chief Shepherd - Jesus.

We cast all our cares, including the future, on Him.

We remove our hands, and any other ungodly touches on our lives.

God cares about you, He doesn't want to hold you back.

He wants to see you soar and be more than you can make of yourself.

Do you trust Him?

Peter challenges us to be firm in our faith.

3. We must humble ourselves before God (pour in more soap).

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you." (vs. 6)

"Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility ..." (vs. 5)

We demonstrate our trust and faith in God by humbling ourselves.

If we want to rise in life it will happen when God exalts us.

He has the unfading crown of glory for you.

God opposes the proud who try to manufacture their own glory.

But God gives grace to the humble and is then able to exalt us.

4. God works in our lives by grace (pour in more soap)

"The God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, establish, and strengthen you."

We don't have to restore or establish ourselves.

We don't have to make a name for ourselves.

If we are under His mighty hand He will be able to lift us.

When God's fingerprints are evident in your life the more you experience His best.

That is our prayer for you, our grads this year.

May God blend your hopes and dreams with trust, humility, faith, and grace!

May your life be so immersed in His presence that He has dominion forever.

May you leave finger prints on other's lives that will not hide God's touch.

Father, I am in awe as I feel Your Fingerprints of Love upon my life. The thought that I am forever engraved upon Your heart and on Your mind touches me in amazement. I praise You and thank you for the blessings of life You have so gently placed within me through Your ever-living Word. As You touch me, mold me and impart blessings upon my life, it is my desire to touch the world in the same way. As you go with me today, bring to my attention ways that I can bless the world I live in. I pray today that I will be a mighty person of God as I walk into the lives of others and leave Your indelible Fingerprints ... "Fingerprints of God."
In Jesus Holy Name, Amen

Be Thou My Vision