

TAKING INVENTORY OF YOUR LIFE

It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart (Ecclesiastes 7:2, NIV).

Ralph Winter's death has been the occasion for me to reflect more deeply on my life, to take inventory with a series of questions. You may wish to take a similar inventory of your life.

- **Am I prepared to die?** Am I afraid of death or of suffering before death? Am I eagerly anticipating heaven? Do I have any unfinished business on earth? Have I prepared my family to do well when they gather around my deathbed?
- **Am I ready to live?** Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and may have it in all its fullness" (John 10:10). Where is my life still lacking fullness? Where are my experiences and expectations feeble or attenuated? Where do I need to trust God more fully, to live life more deeply, to take more risks, to open my arms and my heart more widely?
- **What has captivated my heart?** Do my affections and ambitions need refreshment or realignment? Do I care about what God cares most about? Am I moving out into the broad, deep current of God's purposes, or am I splashing around in puddles of my own making?
- **Whose approval am I seeking?** Am I living primarily in the fear of God and before the Audience of One? Where and when do I care too much about the approval of others?
- **Am I a good steward of what God has given me?** Do I understand what I have and hold in trust? Am I walking confidently in my calling, recognizing more clearly that place where "your deep gladness meets the world's deep hunger" (Frederich Buechner)?
- **Am I aging well, and will I finish well?** Who am I becoming? Am I a joy to those who know me best? Where have my coping mechanisms become calcified or counter-productive? Am I becoming more mature in my character while remaining childlike in my spirit? 🌐



Darrell Dorr, a son-in-law of Ralph Winter, has served with the Frontier Mission Fellowship since 1980. The following is adapted from a letter he wrote to his ministry support team in the week following Dr. Winter's death.

HEART Obedience

From working closely with Ralph Winter as his assistant over 16 years, I recall him as a humble man whose deep love for God stirred him to multiply heart obedience among all nations. Of his many outstanding qualities, what I found most significant was Dr. Winter's example and insight regarding the nature of true heart obedience:

Heart Obedience, rather than worship . . .

- is the highest demonstration of love for the King.
- is the primary goal of Bible reading.
- is a group activity (not an individual pursuit).
- seeks God's kingdom (not comfort and security).
- resists the enemy's work (rather than embracing it as God's initiative).
- does the most important things (rather than the most convenient or enjoyable).
- does what God has led and empowered us to do (instead of asking God to do it for us).
- asks why we do what we do the way we do it (not whether everyone else does it this way).
- walks forward in faith (rather than waiting for full revelation).
- measures risk by kingdom value (not by the likelihood of success).
- enlists others in God's purpose (rather than being satisfied with personal obedience).
- equips others for obedience (instead of only looking to others for help).
- seeks God's glory in everything (rather than settling for mediocrity).
- pursues the impossible through God's power (instead of what we can accomplish in our own strength).

May we all draw inspiration from Ralph Winter's example of demonstrating his love for God by multiplying heart obedience among the nations. 🌐



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