

Graduation Thoughts
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Things have changed since I graduated high school some 35 years ago. Yearly inflation in the USA was 5.75%. The Dow Jones industrial average was 1004. The average house cost \$43,400 and the average yearly income was \$16,000. The average monthly rent was \$220, and the cost of a gallon of gas was a whopping 59 cents. The \$2 bill was issued that year, you had to get up to change channels on the TV, and all of the TV shows had theme songs to introduce them.

1976 saw the first laser printer, although most computers still used punch cards and most phones had cords. Terrorists were only in movie theaters and gangs were a group of people who got together to have fun.

From generation to generation the scene changes; issues and crises shift, but the central questions of life remain remarkably constant.

Long ago Jesus met a well educated, capable, attractive young man who had everything going for him. Jesus appreciated his brightness and potential. They shared some straight talk about the big issues of life. Jesus gave him two guidelines to remember: keep the commandments; and give God the undisputed first-place in your life.

It was the same advice Moses gave God's people as they prepared to go into the promised land. They went out with no clear idea of where they were going, not sure about what it would mean and not clear about the implications; but they went with an expectation and anticipation of where it might lead.

Actually, that's still the recipe for the good life in 2011, whether we are graduating from high school, preparing to start a family, entering the workplace, or nearing retirement. If you want to stay strong in this world, make a commitment now to keep the commandments and keep God numero uno.

When the Eskimos traveled by foot across these great expanses of the northern tundra, they marked their way by erecting six-foot tall piles of stones. As they ventured forward they also looked backwards, making sure they could see where they came from. When the pile of stones was nearly out of sight, they erected another pile, thereby assuming that no matter how far they ventured forward, they could always find their way home.

Graduation from high school is a time for both venturing forward and looking back. Like those Eskimos, the wise graduate marks his or her way with piles of stones. Looking back to these stones, he or she can go into the future, knowing where they came from.

In the commandments we can find some stones we can place on our journey path to guide us into the future and show us the way back home. And if we, out of gratitude, place our lives at His disposal, we will discover what all people want more than anything else---the good life!