

Graduation Thoughts  
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Graduation exercises are called COMMENCEMENTS-- beginnings. To be sure, there is life after high school and new beginnings. The whole business of graduation is powerful and promising, but what is it you are graduating to? Some would say that you're graduating to the "real world," but I would suggest that such thinking is badly in need of correction. Allow me to explain.

If the "real world" is out there, does that mean we're living in a fantasy world? I say not. To graduate from high school means, among other things, that many of you have already: 1) coped with the divorce, or severe discord in the marriage of your parents. 2) Watched a police car pull up to your high school and haul off one of your friends. 3) Experienced the death of a friend or someone your age. 4) Found at least two jobs, quit at least one, and moaned about the wages you received at all of them. 5) Experienced failure or rejection. 6) Didn't get the grade you wanted, the part you wanted, the letter of acceptance you wanted, the date you wanted, or the position on the team you wanted. 7) Broken a law, gotten a ticket or crunched a fender. 8) Caused someone close to you to cry, curse, or wring their hands. 9) Been forced to make some rather personal decisions (under the influence of some very powerful pressures).

If those things don't constitute slices of the real world, I don't know what does. If someone tells you that you're not a part of the real world yet, what they probably mean is that you're not fully earning your own way; which is probably true. But it carries with it the dangerous assumption that the only thing separating you from the real world is money and the fact that you're not making very much of it.

Whether or not you're making any money, you are experiencing the real world and learning a great deal. And you must have gotten to be halfway decent at it, or you wouldn't have graduated. Of course, at this time, the expectation is that we should pass on some words of wisdom. We who have "Been there, Done that, Got the T-Shirt" are expected to offer advice or encouragement to get you going. What should we say?

A good start might be that passage from Proverbs 3:5-6; "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

Also Philippians 4:8. "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable; if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things." Good advice for us all!