

The sun, once again, begins its journey toward the sky, leaving the horizon behind. After a long night of rest, plants, animals and people alike welcome it, and the new day it brings, into their lives. The past is simply that, the past. A new day is beginning, and with it comes the hope of more than was had before, and the thrill of the unknown.

It is the same with many beginnings. Young business hopefuls, fresh out of college, start their first jobs. It is a time of great hope, yet a time of unavoidable anxiety. Their first successes are close at hand, but not guaranteed. They cannot imagine what lies in store for them in the future. And yet, in spite of the potential for loss, they seek this beginning with fervor. They wait for their first day on the job with eagerness.

A young couple smiles happily at their newborn son, their first child. They understand what may lie ahead. The “terrible twos,” temper tantrums, battles over friends or activities, and the teenage years ahead fail to daunt them. They are not ignorant of the challenges they may face, nor do they underestimate them. However, they show only joy as they talk together, anticipating the future with joy in their hearts.

What is it about a beginning, venturing into the unknown, which appeals to us so greatly? Why do we risk hurt, betrayal and failure? Perhaps we understand the simple truth that without risk, there is no gain. Or perhaps the sight of the finish line is so enticing that the obstacles ahead become less important than achieving our goal. Whatever the cause, beginnings have always been the foundations of our lives. From the

everyday beginnings, such as waking up or going to work, to the monumental beginnings, such as marriage or moving to another state, beginnings affect us in major ways.

One example of beginnings is the seed. When planted it is very small, but it contains the basic essence of what will eventually come from it. Over time, if a person cares for it and wants it to grow, it may thrive. It may grow and change into something beautiful. However, if someone neglects the seed, or if events beyond human control occur, such as a drought, the seed will remain a seed, or grow little, then die. Only by the care of the person who planted it, and by the will of God, can a seed or a beginning flourish into something more.

Everything on earth has a beginning and an end, and always will. Ecclesiastes says that there is a time to be born and a time to die. We all had a beginning, and we have all experienced other beginnings within our lives. This concept transcends centuries and continents. We must all know about our personal beginnings, or we will have little control over our endings. This idea applies to small beginnings and large beginnings alike, for they all require our care and attention to succeed. And how can we care for what we do not understand?

Beginnings can take all forms, and come in various ways. Some lead only to sadness, while some can lead to either joy or despair. We can only discern between the two by careful examination of the past, and by looking to God. He alone knows what will happen, and no matter how carefully we look at our options, without Him we will fail.

Maybe we will seem to succeed for a time, and we may even believe that we are truly succeeding. However, eventually the truth will come out, and we will see that any earthly success is worthless in light of where God's will could have taken us.

Beginnings are a major test for us on this earth. They are like a blank canvas given to an artist. The canvas we are given is blank; we may paint upon it with any colors we choose. It is what we do with these blank canvases that shows both what kind of person we are, and what kind of person we hope to be.

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