

“The Lord is Going to Bless You in Your Work!”

by Bob Rapalje

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Did I ever tell you about the time we were sitting in the Eustis Assembly of God in about 1990, and an evangelist and his wife, the Peadens, were visiting. I wish I could recall the year this happened. Sister Peaden said she had a “word,” and she pointed at me and said, “The Lord is going to bless you in your work!” I looked surprised, so she continued, “Yes! You in the red tie, the Lord is going to bless you in your work!” I brushed it off, thinking that the Lord had ALREADY blessed me in my work. After all, I had my doctorate in 1987, I had written the Basic Algebra book in 1988, and I had a pretty good reputation as a teacher in the community college. I began teaching with colored chalk in about 1993, which was about the time I moved my office and my teaching schedule to the Hunt Club Center. I kidded that I was just waiting for a publisher to come along and make me “rich and famous.” As it turned out, the publisher made my colleague rich and famous!

Actually, the Lord DID bless me in my work, didn't he! As I already mentioned, it was in 1993 that my teaching career was revolutionized when I began to teach with colored chalk. It was probably about that same year that I had my heart broken when I was not appointed Chairman of the Mathematics Department. Indeed, this is why I went to the Hunt Club Center to write my Intermediate and College Algebra books and to teach using them in my classes. Now, about 30 years later, I am just beginning to understand that I had a higher calling in my life than “Department Chairman.” In my 14 years at Hunt Club, I was able to write and teach from my own algebra curriculum: ***Basic, Intermediate, and College Algebra: One Step at a Time***. In 2007, I was able to retire on the Florida Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP), spend about 10 years in retirement able to travel with my Martha before health issues reduced our ability to travel. Most importantly, for the last decade or so, I have been able to take care of my Martha FULL time, which was a HUGE promotion above anything I could have done as a department chairman. If I had been appointed department chairman, the focus of my life and career would have been quite different. It's true, I would have prospered financially, but my time would have been wasted in senseless meetings, and my work efforts would have been consumed trying to resolve problems of poor teaching techniques within the department. When my retirement became possible in 2007, I probably would have thought of myself as “too important” to leave the department, and the needs of my Martha would likely have gone unnoticed by me until it was too late to help her. What a tragedy my life would have been if I said to myself, “My department and my students need me,” as the true love of my life and her health slipped away from me! Yes indeed! What a curse it would have been if I had my wish to become “rich and famous,” yet be so consumed with my work that I was too busy to have time to spend with my Martha.

Sometimes we need to stop and thank the Lord for NOT giving us what we ask for and what we THOUGHT we wanted to do. He knows us better than we know ourselves. We need to TRUST the Lord when we don't understand!! **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3: 4-5).**