Resourcefulness vs. Wastefulness

Explanation: Increasing assets by seeing value in what others overlook or discard.

Supporting Scripture: And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. 2 Corinthians 9:8 (NLT)

I can remember when I was a young child when products were built to last. If they broke, there were repair shops whose entire business model was simply repairing broken products like clocks, televisions, typewriters, and appliances.

Then in the 1960s and 70s it seemed as if disposability was favored and encouraged. It was era that introduced disposable diapers, soda cans, paper plates, plastic forks and spoons, ziploc bags, paper towels, plastic water bottles, disposable cameras, disposable cell phones and even disposable contact lenses. These products were advertised as being disposable after one use.

However, in recent years we have come around to recycling, re-using and re-purposing used and discarded items. Now, there are second hand children's stores, recycling centers, and sustainable programs. People are recycling everything from plastics, cardboard, paper, and metals to electronic products.

A great example of this is the use of recycled tires which would otherwise be an eyesore, a breeding ground for rodents and mosquitos, a potential fire hazard and an incredible waste of useful resources.

Recycled tire material is now used for productive purposes such as:

1. A gravel substitute using tire chips for sub-layers on roadways. They are nearly three times as light as gravel and because of that there is a substantial savings in labor and equipment cost when constructing roads.

2. Crumb rubber, which is finely ground rubber produced from waste tires, is being used in rubberized asphalt, playground flooring, welcome mats, anti-fatigue mats and vehicle mud guards.

3. Shredded or chipped tires are being used as both a liner and a cover for landfills.

4. Tire chips are being used as a filter media in lieu of gravel or sand in wastewater treatment plants and man-made wetlands.

5. Recycled tires also been used as a rubber mulch for a variety landscaping needs.
And a similar story also exists for recycled plastic.

“Plasphalt” is made up of grains of plastic produced from unsorted plastic waste, which replaces the sand and gravel which was traditionally used in asphalt production. In fact, plasphalt roads last longer than traditional asphalt roads and because the plastic is so light, it also saves on construction costs.

And of course numerous other products are made from recycled plastic such as plastic bottles, sheeting, packing materials, trash bags, carpeting and a host of other materials.

Did you know that Saccharin, the primary ingredient in Sweet N’ Low, actually comes from the coal tar which is a waste by-product produced when coal is carbonized to make high-carbon fuel or gasified to make coal gas.

The remnants from stalks from corn have been used as packing peanuts. A food product known as Marmite, similar to Vegemite, is made from the liquid leftovers from the manufacture of beer.

If you find any of the above items interesting let me tell you about the one who first invented recycling and composting---Yes, you guessed correctly--Our Father in Heaven.

Think about how the falling leaves, the decaying plants and the waste of animals are all recycled and end up nourishing the soil and producing healthy and abundant plant life. You see, our God doesn’t waste anything.

Have you ever thought about the important purpose that vultures serve in preserving the ecosystem? By promptly removing animal remains, these scavenger birds clean up the environment and help prevent diseases from spreading.

In fact, as disgusting as they may seem to you, vultures are one of nature's most important scavengers. A flock of vultures can strip a carcass clean in a matter of minutes

Because of their strong stomach acids vultures can eat dead and decayed animals and digest them. The bird's stomach acid is so powerful that it breaks down the meat quickly before any pathogens have a chance to infect it.

And after the vultures have picked over the dead animals, insects engage in a secondary cleaning of what is left over. After insects eat anything that remains, the bones of the dead animals become fertilizer and the fertilizer causes healthy plants to grow which are then eaten by animals and the cycle begins all over again.

Our God is resourceful and He does not waste anything, including broken, discarded, and rejected human beings. God does not wish to see any human life wasted.
It has been said that resourcefulness is taking what others view as “nothing” and making it into something. That includes taking broken people and repurposing them as new creations.

We read in 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

I really like this verse in the NLT translation of the Bible which says: This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Cor. 5:17)

We know that God repurposed the Apostle Paul who once hated and persecuted Christians and who later referred to himself as the chief of all sinners. But God used him to spread Christianity to the nations.

God also repurposed King David who was disobedient to God and was an adulterer, a murderer and a negligent father. But God did not give up on him and when David repented, God forgave him and David thereafter became a man after God’s own heart.

There are so many other examples in the Bible of broken people who were repurposed, recycled and transformed into a human life that lived for the glory of God the Father.

Abraham lied about his wife, Moses was a murderer, Rahab was a prostitute, Jonah ran away from God, Elijah was fearful and struggled with depression, and the disciples argued about who was the greatest and Peter denied Christ.

Nevertheless, God used these broken individuals to accomplish his eternal purposes and he is still doing the same thing today. You see, the waste by-products that the world discards—the broken, the infirm and the challenged—can, if they are willing, be repurposed to be used for God’s glory.

You all remember Chuck Colson, who was known as an “evil genius” and served as special counsel to President Richard M. Nixon. He was publically humiliated and sentenced to federal prison for his involvement in the 1970’s Watergate scandal on charges of obstruction of justice.

But while in prison, God repurposed him as a new creation and he became an evangelical Christian leader, founding a number of Christian ministries including Prison Fellowship Ministries bringing Bible study to prison inmates and their families and the Chuck Colson Center for Christian Worldview which is a research and networking study center teaching Christians to defend the Christian Worldview.

The Message Bible which is a contemporary language translation of the Bible makes the following statement in 1 Cor 1:7: “…God, who got you started in this spiritual
adventure, shares with us the life of his Son and our Master Jesus. He will never give up on you. Never forget that.

You see, our God doesn’t give up on individuals discarded by society because they are considered by the world to be deficient: physically, intellectually, economically, culturally or in any other way. Our Father in Heaven sees value in each human being, regardless of any anomalies that the world characterizes as a deficiency such as:

Physical Disabilities: Joni Eareckson Tada, a Christian author and radio host paralyzed from the shoulders down in swimming accident has a remarkable Christian ministry serving millions with a particular emphasis on serving the physically disabled.

Poverty: Abraham Lincoln was born in a one room cabin to a carpenter. Yet he went on to become 16th president of the United States and led the fight in the Civil War putting an end to the horror of slavery.

Lack of education: Did you know that Albert Einstein, the world renounce physicist who changed conventional scientific thinking in so many ways, was a high school dropout.

I could go on but I think you get the point. Truth be known, we are all like a glob of clay. But in the potter’s hand, that lump of clay can become something beautiful, useful and valuable.

You see, God uses broken people, discarded people, rejected people for His Glory and he does not waste anyone who is willing to repent and seek a new life in Christ Jesus.

If God believes that broken individuals are a valuable resource for his Kingdom, how can we think otherwise?

God doesn’t give up on us until we give up on Him. He will only let us go if we repeatedly turn our backs on him and stubbornly refuse His gracious offer of forgiveness.

In this world, broken things are treated as worthless and are thrown out. Damaged goods are rejected including people who are seen as not having value anymore such as the disabled, the economically deprived and convicted criminals who are incarcerated.

But our God can take the byproduct of brokenness in the life of each person and remake it into something better. He can mold that glob of clay into something valuable—a new creation-- that can be used for His Glory and His Kingdom.

And that my friends is resourcefulness and not wastefulness.