



Dear Friends,

Kathryn and I enjoyed our break at Katoomba last week. It was a chance to practice Sabbath rest after a busy start to the year. We went bushwalking, visited Blue Mountain villages and trawled through eclectic shops, saw friends who recently moved to the mountains and gazed at Mt Solitary from our accommodation. Our stay was enhanced by superb weather.

Holidays like this also offer the opportunity to read for fun. I read Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling. It's about the painting of the Sistine Chapel ceiling by the great Renaissance artist between 1509-12.

Kathryn and I have visited the Sistine chapel. The Vatican officials only allow visitors to remain in the chapel for 15 minutes. The ceilings and walls are covered with magnificent works of art that one could spend hours looking at and pondering over. If only I had read this book before visiting the chapel. I would have had a greater appreciation of these amazing artistic creations. Then again, you only get 15 minutes crammed into a space 40.9m long x 13.4m wide with hundreds of others while slowly being shifted from one side of the room to the other!

Going back to the book, the first sentence in ch.8 immediately grabbed my attention as I read it:

Michelangelo inherited little from his father except hypochondria, self-pity, and a snobbish conviction that the Buonarroti were descended from a noble and ancient family.

These were not flattering words about Lodovico, Michelangelo's father. It made me think of my own father. What had he passed on to me? How would I have written that sentence?

Mark inherited much from his father – devotion to family, commitment to justice, passion for food and love of a good special!

I also inherited a few negatives from my father. I won't mention them because I need to take responsibility of my own character and actions. However, it helps to acknowledge how we are shaped by our parents.

I then thought to myself, how would each of my children write their sentence about me? Not just the good, but the bad?

If you are a parent or grandparent, or an aunt, uncle or older sibling, how would your loved ones speak of what you have passed on to them?

The Apostle Paul, in his second letter to his protégé, Timothy, speaks of what his young charge has received from his mother and grandmother in chapter 1, verse 5:

I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

It's not only blood relatives who can pass on something to the next generation. In a church family, spiritual parents and grandparents, uncles, aunts and older siblings can also pass on spiritual treasure to the next generation. Paul says to Timothy in chapter 1:13-14:

What you have heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Jesus Christ. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you – guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Who are your spiritual children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and younger siblings at RPC? And what are spiritual treasure are they inheriting from you?

God Bless,
Mark Adams