A Personal Update (2024) [1]

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While it hasn't been a full year since the last article which I wrote, it certainly feels like it to me. It also has been the longest period of time which has elapsed since I've written an article for this website in the more than ten years of its existence.

2023 was a challenging year for my family and I. We dealt with difficult decisions, terminal illness, death, disappointments, and personal illness and injuries. We watched friends go through struggles, and there was little that we could do to help. Despite what we went through, we were aware of God's provision throughout. For example, my wife had a pretty bad fall, and despite the fact of it happening, any number of things could have happened to have made it exponentially worse: the kids could have been injured in the process (neither were), her injury could have been far worse and she could have required surgery, our neighbour could have been away and she could have been stranded without a means to get to the hospital. Even the specific doctor who saw her was providential. It would be myopic to focus only on the fact of the incident itself and not see the provision and protection around it. Still, by the end of the year it became difficult for me to see the "bright side" and remain positive through seemingly relentless challenges.

Our church was a consistent ray of hope and encouragement. They comforted us, listened to us, gave advice, and reminded us of God's character and His promises. Friends there offered—and provided—tangible help on multiple occasions. We were immensely blessed by them, and we yearn to be the same for others.

Our second daughter was born in the middle of the year. She is healthy, growing up nicely, friendly and cheerful, and a delight for us. However, it came as a shock that what is needed to take care of two small children is more than double the effort of taking care of only one. I think this is because they are both still highly dependant, but have different needs. For example, one only requires milk or formula, but an adult really should give full attention when feeding her; while the other one can theoretically feed herself, but the type of food, or whether it will be eaten at all, can be an exhausting exercise. Both of these happen multiple times a day, and are only one of many dimensions of childcare and dealing with newly forming personalities.

Just as marriage teaches one how selfish they are, having children does the same to a new level. The unexpected scarcity of free time to follow other pursuits reminds us that our children are our calling and require our attention. However long this season of life lasts, it should be cherished and receive its due devotion, rather than be begrudged.

My intention is to publish a handful of articles over the coming weeks. After that I suspect that it may be some time again before I can write again. But this blog is still something which is important to me. That is the reason why I am writing this article as a kind of “proof of life”. Of the many abandoned projects that I have, this is not one of them!

May you experience God’s providence, mercy and grace this year. May you always be reminded of His love, and live with the joy of the gospel.

I’ll end by sharing two texts we studied at our church recently:

> Always rejoice. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you.
>
> 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

> Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your worries on him, because he cares for you. Be sober and self-controlled. Be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Withstand him steadfast in your faith, knowing that your brothers who are in the world are undergoing the same sufferings. But may the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.
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> 1 Peter 5:6–11

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