

We're starting today with a quote by the most prolific inventor of the last couple hundred years, Thomas Edison. He was an American who's credited with creating a thousand inventions and getting patents on most all of them. So, here's his pithy quote: "*Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.*" Let me repeat that again: "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." Hey, that's very astute...so let's unpack what Edison said.

Of course, historically overalls are an outfit that workers in a dirty or greasy or messy environment often wore when they went to work. But that's not all: traditionally, overalls had large pockets and handy straps that could easily carry hammers and flashlights and tape measures and what-have-you—truly a bit like a portable toolbox, useful all the way to the top of a ladder!

That's right, a person wearing overalls could go right to the business at hand, wherever the problem was—yes, digging around, discovering, and fixing the need at hand. But mostly, for Thomas Edison, overalls embodied *work*, real work, by somebody who gets serious when it comes to fixing leaky faucets and broken machines and the like—all with can-do, no-nonsense, work-saturated, responsible opportunity! And in our era of our vocations mostly being carried out in rather pristine offices with Purell disinfectant in dispensers on the wall, Edison's point of being "dressed in overalls" may lose a bit of power and impact. And that's unfortunate, because the need to apply Edison's principle is greater than ever!

In Edison's personal case, it was the hard work of inventing things. And his mindset spelled tremendous opportunity, you know, like his own inventing the light bulb and a motion picture camera. So, the need for *overalls* can work in redeeming a situation that, in Edison's case, literally lacks light and, second, creating or conceiving new ways and new things for the betterment of all. Both require real savviness.

And that relates to today's core principle, one that's critically important to the great stewardship believers are appointed to: *pursuing and sustaining fruitful savviness*. More specifically, we're ultimately going to talk about *how* to pursue and sustain fruitful savviness. And guess what? To be fruitfully savvy, you've got to put on your overalls, even if just figuratively so nowadays!

But here's the thing: all my adult life I have been in close quarters with people who are very smart and also with people who are very savvy. And the truth is—all too often—there's a very big difference between the two. You see, some really smart people default to what their brain likes to pridefully construct: that's *a supposedly fresh new "right answer"* that they've conceived to address the issue. Then they stop there with their supposedly perfect solution...but it's an answer that only fits the issue they've narrowly defined.

Yes, the truth is, our brains *are* amazing—an extraordinary organ that scientists are still struggling to really understand fully. But here's the problem: some really smart people sitting in their pristine, climate-controlled cubicles often like to build what we can call "constructs." Yeah, a "construct" in this sense is an answer that the person has artificially built or contrived in a very tidy but limited way to supposedly solve a particular issue. But a very key problem constantly arises to all that: there are one or more very key facts that the smart person discounts or even ignores—yeah, something that they decide is too inconvenient or too unimportant to consider in their supposedly faultless solution.

So, up front here, can we talk about higher education? You see, it's quite common to find these types of false constructs happening in much of modern academia. To be certain, not all professors fall into this, by any means, thank the Lord for that! Still, many academic disciplines and many professors tend to see age-old problems, swell up in pride, and proclaim world-changing solutions—however faulty, contrived, or ludicrous! Or sometimes, these smart professors just simply create *new problems* and then find folks to agree to being victims in their new construct. But in their processes, these vain intellectuals often tend to completely ignore some crucial dimension or summarily dismiss some legitimate moral principle.

Sadly, there are countless examples of this happening morphing into real life—so here's a famous one to consider. The political belief in socialism is a vain intellectual construct—it's a rigid set of core beliefs about societies and economics. And Great Britain pretty much went all-in for socialism in 1945, booting

the war-winning Prime Minister Winston Churchill out of office and bringing in socialist Clement Attlee. England then proceeded to install harmful socialist policies until 1978, when Maggie Thatcher took office.

Thatcher detested what socialism had done to Great Britain—and voters agreed. She proceeded to cut taxes...to reduce regulation...and to privatize industries where the British government was the expensive and inefficient monopoly: steel, railway, airline, airport, and aerospace...and she privatized utilities, too: gas, electricity, telecom and water! And alongside President Ronald Reagan-led policies by the U.S., all those actions helped ignite a truly worldwide boom in prosperity. In short, Thatcher was very savvy—she saw realities, not rosy constructs. Thatcher’s famous quote about socialism is pithy: “The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people’s money.” Very savvy. Just ask Venezuelans today!

But some very smart people like to think and even stubbornly teach that what Thatcher said won’t happen! In fact, the theory that’s popular and held dear by some key economists and politicians today is that of MMT, Modern Monetary Theory. And the core MMT construct is simple: *the ever-increasing national debt currently at \$35 trillion and counting simply doesn’t matter!* And *that* debt level doesn’t include unfunded liabilities of many trillions for Social Security and Medicare. But that’s still what the “smart people” think—borrowing many trillions will never have a later consequence...never have a sober reckoning. *That’s their “truth.”* Along those lines, famous progressive philosopher Dr. Richard Rorty said this gem of a quote: *“truth is what your contemporaries let you get away with saying.”* Yep, Dr. Rorty was a Yale-educated academic and author who taught at both Princeton and Stanford. *Very smart guy, right?!*

Look, Modern Monetary Theory, MMT, is just a strain of socialism, supposedly creating “wealth” for the current generation without anyone *ever* having to pay for it! Hey, all the various versions of socialist policy have already failed or will fail—so much so that socialist Bernie Sanders defends socialism despite all its failures...doing so by disingenuously claiming socialism’s supposedly pure version has never been tried!

So, we’re currently in a sobering phase of modern life: highly influential, very smart people (who don’t wear overalls unless it’s fashionable this season) spend their lives dreaming up flawed theories...teaching them in universities...creating flawed laws in Washington DC offices! Yes, these smart people ignore all the inconvenient facts and long-term moral consequences of their forcing of redistribution of resources.

All the while, reality-based people with a penchant for savvy service and betterment of others address issues needing boots-on-the-ground problem solvers and inventors. They take ownership of situations and work to adjust and collaborate and innovate for mutual betterment. They see the world as it is—not something to fix with sly, self-righteous theories that hold essential factors as irrelevant or unimportant.

Yeah, savvy people are real-world folks—they seek opportunity for cooperation and true collaboration, not coercion. Then they address issues by figuratively putting on their overalls and freely getting to work on what’s broken...to work to invent new products...to collaboratively create fresh supply chains...to hire people to create value for consumers who value what they do...yes, to make people’s lives better by the sweat of their own personal brow—*their brows wiped free of that sweat right onto their own overalls!*

You know, that happens most in what’s rightly called *free markets*. And everywhere that’s tried in the long run, it results in the amazing individual betterment of the vast majority of citizens. Yes, all that done by savvy people *who, figuratively speaking, dress in overalls* even if they’re wearing a suit and tie that day.

All this startling background works to set up the focus of this mini-series: believers *pursuing and sustaining fruitful savviness*. The truth is, *truly* smart people desire to impact others for amazing, mutual betterment. So, those truly smart folks seek to be savvy—yes, to avoid artificial, false constructs arising from bad theory, bad philosophy, and bad theology. And that brings us to the promise of the upcoming unfolding of this series about *pursuing and sustaining fruitful savviness*.

Suffice it to say this for now: there’s a clear path nowadays to impacting for the Lord Jesus in the savviest ways possible—and that will extend well beyond Edison’s pithy saying about overalls. So...stay tuned!

A&A: Application & Action

1. Can you name an influencer in your nation today who's a very smart and highly popular influencer building his or her influence on a core false construct? And can you name someone in your nation today who is a very savvy person modeling or imparting a "right" truth...but to a smaller audience? Which is more influential...and why?

2. Can you name an influencer in your personal circles today (e.g., your workplace, your church) who is a very smart influencer built on a core false construct? And can you name someone in your personal circles today who is a very savvy person modeling or imparting a "right" truth? Discuss.

3. How about you...do others secretly see you as a smart influencer who constructs your answers on false values or mainly for personal advantage? Or would others testify that you consistently work to be savvy in the service of mutual, true betterment? Ponder...and discuss, if appropriate.