

# Chalkboard

By

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The last *Chalkboard* each year is usually my address to the graduating seniors. I do that not because of any great wisdom I ever have to pass along but rather because it marks the end of a cycle- an ending which marks another yet another beginning.

**(To Seniors)** When I received my school yearbook this year I had to smile. The title of this year's edition is *Turning Your World Upside Down*. On the front cover is a guy carrying a huge book. In the background is a row of student lockers. I believe that artwork belongs to your valedictorian, Maureen and to Ethan Allen.

Flip another couple of pages and you are able to read some of the things that "turned your world upside down". Let me read some of the things [read from Page 3+ 4- lockers, backpacks, staff changes, lunch schedule, shorter time between periods, powder puff football, foreign exchange students,].

I understand exactly how you felt. If Star City High School had not had lockers 37 years ago, there would have been no place I could have sneaked a kiss from Ms. Regenia between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> periods.

Some of these things mentioned in the yearbook had me feeling like I was hanging upside too. But if you stop for a moment and think about it, if these are the things that can turn both your world upside down, and my world upside down, then the world we are living must be pretty small.

I want you to know that I was a little disappointed that my decision to not recommend adding a Bible curriculum class did not make the "upside down" list. For several weeks trying to make the right decision about that issue turned my world upside down. At that time I made a decision as your school's superintendent, now I speak to you as a citizen of the adult world that you will enter when you walk off the stage tonight.

I say to you that in many ways the world in which you are entering is already turned upside down. Without judging it's rightness or wrongness I say to you we live in a world where men and women, maybe one year older than you, die in roadside bombings on foreign. We live in a world where gasoline is \$3.29 a gallon and many children of the world go to bed hungry. I could go on with the bad news but that is not my message nor is it my intent to depress you.

Rather, I want to spend just a few minutes talking to you about how you can turn an upside down world, right side up. Since I'm your invited guest, I've picked a few words of wisdom from my favorite book of books for all times. Maybe you

will be able to identify some of the sayings.

Believe it or not, if you will listen and practice what you are about to hear, you can flip your world.

**Proverbs 1:5 & Proverbs 15:14 Let the wise listen and add to their learning, The discerning heart seeks knowledge....** You really didn't think you would hear a graduation speech that didn't stress the need for you to continue your education. If you do not continue to learn the someday when you are my age you can star in a FOX Network T.V. show called "**Are you smarter than a high school graduate?**"

**Romans 12:10 Honor one another above yourselves.** Can you imagine a world where everyone places the needs of someone else above his or her own? Can't imagine that? Try this. Think about what it has cost your parents or whoever raised you to get you here tonight. Think about some of the sacrifices they made for you. If they did it for you, your job as a world-turner is to pass that type behavior on.

**Proverbs 17:17 A friend loveth at all times....** Does something as simple as being a friend sound like something that could change the world? No? Think about your very best friend? Think about how they treat you and how you treat them. What would the world be like if we were all friends with each other?

**Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another....** I think the world you live in may be forgetting how to be kind and gentle. We have a tendency to want to believe that being meek is the same thing as being weak. They are not the same. World-turners are meek, not weak. The same book that said be kind, also said "**Be strong and courageous....**" **Joshua 1:6**

**Proverbs 22:1 A good name is more desirable than great riches....** Over the years my job has allowed me to be involved with hiring people to work at the school where I worked. I have learned this about what makes a good hire. Listen carefully. A person with a good character can be trained to perform most any task; but you cannot train a person to have good character. Good character comes from practicing good habits. Good character is doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

**Leviticus 19:11 Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.** I went to one of your houses one day and sat on the front porch and talked to a student who was in trouble. That student told me the truth when a lie would have saved a suspension from school. I say to you that that student turned my world right side up and I went back to my office having hope for the future. That student didn't know it but that same book had already told me "**Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.**" **Proverbs 20:11**

**Here's the last one. Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.** I think that most of you would agree that for all of your life someone has been telling you what to do. Parents seem to want to do that. So do teachers and principals. For that matter, I guess that is what I am doing right now.

But when I say last one, I mean that more than just the last point in a speech. You have reached a time when guarding you heart, deciding what type of person you will be in life, becomes your decision not someone else. Being what you want to be has become your choice- not somebody else's choice. **Go with God- and turn an upside down world right side up.**

Bible Quotes taken from <http://www.biblegateway.com/>