

## Thanks for Your Time

Written by Delores A. Hampton  
Sunday, 18 November 2012 14:37

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A young man learns what's most important in life from the guy next door.

It had been some time since Jack had seen the old man. College, girls, career, and life itself got in the way. In fact, Jack moved clear across the country in pursuit of his dreams. There, in the rush of his busy life, Jack had little time to think about the past and often no time to spend with his wife and son. He was working on his future, and nothing could stop him.

Over the phone, his mother told him, "Mr. Belser died last night. The funeral is Wednesday." Memories flashed through his mind like an old newsreel as he sat quietly remembering his childhood days. "Jack, did you hear me?"

"Oh, sorry, Mom. Yes, I heard you. It's been so long since I thought of him. I'm sorry, but I honestly thought he died years ago," Jack said.

"Well, he didn't forget you. Every time I saw him he'd ask how you were doing. He'd reminisce about the many days you spent over 'his side of the fence' as he put it," Mom told him.

"I loved that old house he lived in," Jack said.

"You know, Jack, after your father died, Mr. Belser stepped in to make sure you had a man's influence in your life."

"He's the one who taught me carpentry," he said. "I wouldn't be in this business if it weren't for him. He spent a lot of time teaching me things he thought were important...Mom, I'll be there for the funeral," Jack said.

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As busy as he was, he kept his word. Jack caught the next flight to his hometown. Mr. Belser's funeral was small and uneventful. He had no children of his own, and most of his relatives had passed away.

The night before he had to return home, Jack stopped by to see the old house next door one more time. Standing in the doorway, he paused for a moment. The house was exactly as he remembered. Every step held memories. Every picture, every piece of furniture, then he stopped suddenly. "The box is gone! There was a small gold box that he kept locked on top of his desk. He must have asked him a thousand times what was inside. All he'd ever said 'the thing I value most,' now it was gone. Everything about the house was exactly how Jack remembered, except for the box. He figured someone from the Belser family had taken it. Now he'll never know what was so valuable to him," Jack thought and returned to his mom's house to get some sleep. He had an early flight home.

Weeks after Mr. Belser died. Returning home from work one day a package his wife signed for was on the table. The small box was old, but the return address caught his attention. It was from Mr. Harold Belser.

Jack ripped open the box. Inside was the gold box and an envelope. His hands shook as he read the note inside. "Upon my death, please forward this box and its contents to Jack Bennett. It's the thing I valued most in my life."

A small key was taped to the letter. His heart racing, as tears filling his eyes, Jack carefully unlocked the box. There inside he found a beautiful gold pocket watch. Running his fingers slowly over the finely etched casing, he unlatched the cover.

Inside he found these words engraved: "Jack, Thanks for your time! Harold Belser."

"The thing he valued most...was...my time." Jack thought. He held the watch for a few minutes, then called his office and cleared his appointments for the next two days.

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"Why?" Janet, his assistant asked.

"I need some time to spend with my wife and son," he said.

"Oh, by the way, Janet...thanks for your time!"

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away,"

Thank you for your time...