

No, the above title does not refer to mannequins in the mall but to a book I had to buy in order to learn about our new computer. “Windows” refers to the software which runs the computer; “Dummies” refers to me. Since I had never owned a computer, all the technical jargon was Greek to me, and I have had to learn about the operation of a computer from scratch.

This has been a challenging ordeal, and I have been reminded of some valuable principles in the process.

First, new and unfamiliar things can be intimidating. Working with the computer reminded me of my first experiences in driving a car. All that powerful and complex machinery was frightening at first, and I thought I would never get the hang of it. But patience and practice breed competence, and over time what was once alien and awkward becomes effortless.

Secondly, I found it a bit harder to learn something completely new at 36 than I would have at 16 or 26. It can be more difficult to motivate ourselves to learn as we get older. There are more distractions, more “mileage,” less enthusiasm for new endeavors. If we do not resist this tendency, we run the risk of becoming stale and losing our zest for life.

Thirdly, we sometimes have to go backward before we can go forward. The first stages of learning how to use the computer were very time-consuming. There were times where I would literally spend hours and have nothing concrete to show for it. But in the long run, the time I invested has proven valuable as the computer helps accomplish much more in a shorter span of time. Thus what appears to be a setback or a failure at the time just might open the door to greater opportunity in the future.

Maybe some of these thoughts will help us as we begin our study of the book of Revelation. Many of us may find Revelation intimidating because of its difficulty, and some might be reluctant to strike out into unexplored territory. But it is vitally important to our spiritual well-being that we retain a thirst for knowledge of God and a keen interest in every word He has given to us. May we apply ourselves wholeheartedly to this study.