

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

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Frustrated or Grateful?

I am surrounded by books I will never have a chance to read, people I will never get to know, and constantly hear about places I will never visit. This is the invariable law of every life. How shall we think of this richness so vastly greater than our time to experience it?

Some feel this as a constant source of frustration. Ruth Seymour, who ran the public radio station in Los Angeles for many years used to speak of the pile of books beside her bed as the 'shelf of constant reproach.' It was there to make you feel bad — 'why have you not gotten to me yet?' We each have a sense of the world's treasures as reproaching us for ignoring them.

But there is a wiser attitude, if we can bring ourselves to achieve it. Once I complained to essayist Joseph Epstein that there were too many books I was eager to get to and it frustrated me. "I prefer to think that there will

always be something good to read," he answered. The world can be celebrated without being a source of grievance. We thank God daily for the marvels of creation. Some of them we will never see; but there are always marvels to be seen. What a blessing.

Rabbi Wolpe's new book *David: The Divided Heart* is available now.