Our theme for the class of 2010 is stepping into the future. Most of us associate the future with technology, the development of devices that make life easier and more productive. Think of our technology to pave roads. Years ago, we had men on the side of the road with pick axes, shovels and wheelbarrows. Recently, huge concrete laying machines were used to pave Interstate 210 freeway. Making that freeway was like making Ovaltine: in goes the powder mix (i.e. gravel, concrete, and sand) out comes instant freeway with rain grooves in it. Think of communication nowadays with our iphones, ipads, and the multitude of other network devices that globally link us to one another. These are conveniences that make us productive these days.

But my message to you … is that stepping **into** the future is really stepping **back** to the future. Most of us remember the 1985 movie starring Michael J. Fox and his Delorean sports car that operated with the flux capacitor. This movie is not what I mean.

The steps to develop technology are found in the first five books of the OT. God's grace is the main topic of these books. They were written a long time ago, but they are designed to give both history, and prophecy about a believers walk with Christ. The prophecy i.e. the foretelling of the future by history (1 Cor 10, Heb 3&4) is our step back to see the future. I realize that this may sound incredulous to some of you. Please allow me to explain further.

 What is grace? Some might say that God's grace is his unmerited favor, and others might say that it is something that we say before a consuming a meal. Both are true. The Bible defines grace as steps that empower us to do God's will (2Cor12:9). God's grace is the engine for development in physical, and in the spiritual world. I made this discovery while studying my Bible while I was taking an engineering design class in college.

What are the steps necessary to make technological advances? This answer is adapted from my engineering textbook of that design class. In general there are five steps:

> 1) Recognition of a need. You have heard that necessity is the mother of invention. This is that idea.
> 2) Make a plan to meet the need.
> 3) Execute the plan. Gather the materials and assemble product.
> 4) Test the product. Evaluate the product to make sure that it works as expected. If product does not pass test, go back to the plan and the need. Make adjustments.
> 5) Present the product to others so that they don't have to reinvent the wheel. Duplicate or manufacture the product to the plans.

As novice developers, we often visualize our goals, and then we attempt to do them. But this lacks two steps: planning and testing. I have seen the engineering design steps work for over thirty years…

How is this shown in the first five books of the Bible?

1) Our recognition of need (poverty) is pictured in Joseph's brothers who sold him into slavery in Genesis
2) The plan for meeting our need is the word of God as delivered by Moses in Exodus
3) Learning to assemble materials and apply the plans are found in Leviticus
4) We are tested to Gods plans in Numbers. If we fail the test, we start over again in the Wilderness. This is not God's judgment, but for our growth.
5) We have the desired product, the Promised Land, in Deuteronomy. Here, we summarize what we have learned. We teach and duplicate the plans to our sons and daughters so that they don't repeat our mistakes.

.

I will close by saying that our industrialization is not only by our grit or hard work. It is not by our wit, or intelligence. Our progress is by God's grace ". …"It is He that has made us, and not we ourselves"… (Ps 100:3). Don't confuse material riches with spiritual riches(Ps 62:10, John 6:27). My charge to you class of 2010 is to be wise, and look back to the OT for your future endeavors, and rest in God's grace as you enter the workplace (Heb 4:16).