



The Voice of Truth

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"What is Your Life?"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4: 13-17).

What are your dreams, plans and goals for the future? Too many people place emphasis in all the wrong places when they think about the future and what they will do with their lives. We are prone to be too earth-bound in our thinking and to leave God out of our plans. People need to take life inventory. James's question, "What is your life?", when properly viewed, will enable us to take a life inventory.

What is your life from the standpoint of duration? It is a vapor (**James 4: 14-15**); it is here only briefly and then is gone. James is saying stop and consider! Before making plans for the future, determine what sort of life you have. Is it permanent, abiding, enduring; will it be here tomorrow, next week, the following year? "For my days are but a breath" (**Job 7:16**). "Remember how short my time is" (**Psalms 89:47**). "There is but a step between me and death" (**1 Samuel 20:3**). Man's days on earth are pictured as a flower that is cut down, and therefore soon withers (**Job 14:1-2; James 1:10-11**). Man's days on earth are pictured as a fleeing shadow (**Job 14:2**). Life passes quickly as the "eagle hasteth to the prey" (**Job 9:26**). Man lives but one time on earth (Hebrews 9:27). With life as uncertain as this, how foolish are we to plan the future without regard to Him Who holds the future in His hands. Boasting of a definite future on earth is evil because it denies God's power and will (**James 4:15-16**).

It is imperative that we recognize that God has a plan and a will for life on this earth. "Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him I for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him" (**Isaiah 43:7**). What should be man's purpose in life? "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (**Proverbs 3:5-6**). We are to trust in God! If we will let Him direct us, then our lives will be immensely enriched. A study of Ecclesiastes reveals that Solomon tried basically the things that men try in their effort to find a purpose for being. The conclusion of **chapter 12, verses 13, 14**, is a studied conclusion. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil"

Your life is a gift from God and is to be used for His glory. All men need to be confronted with the question: "What is your life?" We are urged to "examine ourselves" (**2 Corinthians 13:5**). The following poem should focus attention on this article.

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Life's Clock Author Unknown

The clock of life is wound but once, And no man has the power To tell just when the hands will stop, At late or early hour.

To lose one's wealth is sad, indeed, To lose one's health is more; To lose one's soul is such a loss, And no man can restore.

The present only is our own, Live, love, toil with a will; Place no faith in "Tomorrow", For the clock may then be still.

May a Christian Engage in Social Drinking? by W. R. Jones

Drunkenness is strongly condemned in God's word. Paul wrote, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying..." (**Romans 13:13**). "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these...drunkenness, revellings." Paul further says, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (**Galatians 5:19-21**). Here we find but two of the many passages where God gives attention to drunkenness. Are these references not enough to make any Christian avoid even the slightest connection with the great mocker, alcohol? Indeed, in this matter, every Christian has a responsibility to keep, not only himself circumspect, but to refrain from influencing others toward evil and its potentials.

But what about "social drinking" for the Christian? Let us observe the statements of Peter: "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (**1 Peter 4:3**). Please observe that Peter uses two different expressions, "excess of wine" and "banquetings." I believe that Peter is showing that not only drunkenness is sinful, but also drinking parties. In fact, it is interesting to note in the NASV, the Greek word *patios* (which is translated, "banquetings" in the KJV) is translated "drinking parties." So what does Peter say about those who engage in these parties of "social drinking?" He says the Christian should "no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lust of men, but to the will of God" (**1 Peter 4:2**). Social drinking of alcohol is living in "the flesh to the lust of men."

Christians have no business engaging in "social drinking." Christians have no business endorsing and upholding a practice that will destroy others. Some years ago, I was invited to speak at an AA meeting. At the end of the program, I was allowed to ask questions of the hundred or more in the audience. This was my question to those alcoholics: "How did you get started with alcohol?"

I was astounded by the answer. The resounding answer was, "through social drinking!"

"Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: "They have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?" (**Proverbs 23:29-35**)

"I'm Too Busy For Church"

By Jonathan L. Perz

It is Sunday morning—time to assemble with the saints of our Lord. Believe it or not, for many, this is a moment of decision. There are so many things around the house calling your name—lawn mowing, repairing the thing-a-ma-jig, washing the car, etc. As all of these things flash through your mind, the Lord calls. You may actually find yourself asking, “Whose call do I heed?”

Do you decide on Sunday morning, or evening, or Wednesday evening, whether or not you are “going to church?” Do you find that chores around the house, fishing, hunting, watching sports, working, or other things, win out over the Lord? What a shameful predicament many place themselves in!

It is shameful because, some day, when the Lord returns again, you will have to explain to Him why you said, “I’m too busy for church.” It is written, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad”* (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Though it is true that attending church is not the ‘end all’ of Christianity, it is nevertheless commanded (Hebrews 10:24-25). Any Christian who must ask himself at the appointed time if he is going to assemble with the saints needs to realize the dilapidated condition of his soul. For the convicted, faithful, zealous Christian, such an appointment is automatic! There is never a doubt, only the faithful fact that he will be there when the saints meet!

When one is too busy to go to church, what they really say is: “I’m too busy for my brethren (Hebrews 10:24-25)” and “I’m too busy for the Lord (Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 23:40, 45).” If one is too busy for these, he is too busy for heaven! The next time you find yourself thinking, “I’m too busy for church;” remember what that translates into—“I’m too busy for heaven!” Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com

The Seed of the Kingdom

By David J. Riggs

In the parable of the sower, Jesus said, *“The seed is the word of God”* (Luke 8:11). Matthew’s account of our Lord’s words simply calls it *“the word of the kingdom”* (Matt. 13:19). Thus, the word of God is the seed of the kingdom. It is an incorruptible seed that lives and abides forever (1 Pet. 1:23).

All over the world people of all races and cultures are familiar with sowing and reaping. They know that if there is no seed planted, there will be no harvest. Even in fertile, well prepared soil with moisture, no seed means no harvest. Similarly, if the word of God is not planted, there can be no harvest of Christians. Prayers, good intentions, personal experiences, desires for miracles, etc., are no substitute for the seed. The word of God must be planted and sinners must hear, believe and obey it.

When an apple seed is planted, it always produces only an apple tree; an acorn grows only an oak. There are no exceptions to this because God ordained all plants to yield after their kind (Gen. 1:11). Likewise, when the seed of the kingdom is planted in the hearts of men, it always produces only Christians. It produces only after its kind - that which is identical to the primitive church. If a person is something religiously about which nothing is said in the New Testament, some doctrine has been planted besides the pure and simple word of God. Taking some of the New Testament, mixing it with human teaching, and planting it in the hearts of men produces a human religion, not the kingdom of Christ.

In our world of religious division and confusion, many ask, “How can I know which church

is right and which is wrong?" We ask, "How would you know whether a tree is an apple tree or an oak? If a tree has apples on it, you would know that it is an apple tree. Likewise, when a church is identical in name, faith, and practice, etc., to the early church, it is the church of Christ. It is not a matter of finding something similar to the New Testament church, but building and maintaining that same institution. To be the New Testament church, it must be identical in every detail to the church of the New Testament.

In New Testament times when people in any given community received and obeyed the word of God, they collectively constituted the church or kingdom in that place. They then submitted themselves to the law of Christ in all matters relative to the church. Even so, in modern times, if a religious body is governed by the same authority, has the same name, organization, worship, work, requirements for membership, etc., as did the original church, it is without question the same church.

There is no need to have a church succession back to the original church. We need only to plant the seed of the kingdom once again. Wheat seed found in the ancient pyramids of Egypt, though thousands of years old, when planted, germinated and bore the same wheat grown in that ancient time. So today, when the seed of the kingdom is planted, it will again produce after its kind. *Credit: www.oakridgechurch.com/riggs/*

Sheep Don't Wallow

The story is told of a lamb and its mother. It seems the lamb passed a pig pen each morning on the way to pasture with its mother. Watching the pigs wallow in the mud seemed like fun and on an especially hot day the lamb asked his mother if he could jump the fence and wallow in the cool mud. She replied, "No." Then the lamb asked the usual question, "Why?" The mother just said, "**SHEEP DON'T WALLOW.**"

This did not satisfy the lamb. He felt she had "put him down, exercised force she shouldn't have," etc. So, as soon as the mother was out of sight, the lamb ran to the pig pen and jumped the fence. He was soon feeling the cool mud on his feet, his legs, and soon his stomach. After a few moments he decided he had better go back to his mother, but he couldn't. He was stuck. Mud and wool don't mix. His pleasure had become his prison. He cried out and was rescued by the kindly farmer. When cleaned and returned to the fold, the mother said, "Remember, sheep don't wallow."

Sin is like that. It looks so nice, thinking we can escape when we wish, but it is not so... Pleasure becomes a prison. Moral of the story: **CHRISTIANS DON'T WALLOW!**

Points To Ponder...

No one becomes a Christian on his own terms

Never give an excuse you would not be willing to accept.

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17