

What is Truly Important in Life?

“A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is the Maker of them all. A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it. Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life. In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares, but he who guards his soul stays far from them. Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” Proverbs 22:1-6

Think about your life and what is truly important to you. Is it how much money you have made or are making currently? Is it the amount of power or influence you have upon other people? Is it notoriety that you receive through great things that you accomplished or are now accomplishing?

Read again what the writer of Proverbs says. “A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. . . . Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life.” These are the qualities that God sees as being important. Honesty and integrity are pleasing to God.

Virtually every day we get bombarded by the opposite. How many “scam” phone calls come to your cell phone? How many times have you been warned that your car’s warranty is about to expire? Computer scammers attempt to trick us every day with fake notices and warnings. These unscrupulous people are intent on taking other people’s money in any way that they can get their hands on it. I’ve thought about asking scammers, “Would your mother be proud of the way you are making a living? Do you think that she would be pleased with you trying to bilk people out of their life savings?” With my luck though, I’d be speaking to a scammer who is working with his mother to steal from people!

Our faith in Jesus should not be just one of many interests in our life. Jesus should be the **central focus** of our life, and **our baptismal covenant with God should guide our thoughts, words, and actions each day.**

A friend of mine just died of stage 4 cancer. I heard that while he was in the hospital, he was an excellent example to the hospital staff of “humility and the fear of the Lord.” One of my favorite Bible passages is Acts 17:28 which says, “For in Him we live and move and have our being.” A passage that is in my daily prayers is Philippians 1:21 which says, “to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

Years ago ABC aired Barbara Walters interviews with famous people. Near the end of each interview, Barbara would ask the person, “How do you want people to remember you?” That is a good question for each of us—how do you want people to remember you? Do you want people to be impressed by how rich you got, how famous you got, or how influential you got? Or do you want people to remember you as somebody with strong Christian convictions who sometimes made a difficult decision because to go with the conventional or popular response would be to go against God’s will?

Those of us who have worked in Christian schools have seen and heard Proverbs 22:6 many times. “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” When we meet with a person who is about to depart from this life, it is comforting when that person can still say the Lord’s Prayer, the Apostles Creed, or Psalm 23 with us. May God grant to each of us humility and an unshakable faith in Jesus as our Savior!

~ Jim Essig | Assistant to the Pastors

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