

What is the Meaning of Life?

by Tony Warren

Inevitably the question of existence and its purpose arises in any life discussion. The query, "what is the meaning of life," has been puzzled over by man for ages. Why am I here for? Why did God make me? But most people look for the answer to this question in all the wrong places. It will never be found in consideration of what happens to people in this life, but in circumspect understanding of man's necessary regeneration unto new life, by the redemption in the person of Christ Jesus.

John 5:23-24

- "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.
- Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

The meaning of life is not (as many suppose) to find personal happiness, and the hope of the believer is not in envy of the seeming prosperity of the wicked, but in the righteous expectation of God's promises being fulfilled. The flesh of this life is temporal, but the Spirit of life within the believer is eternal. And in truth, the only time when man will find true meaning to his life, is when he spends it in service to God.

Proverbs 23:17-19

- "Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.
- For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.
- Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way."

The way man is to guide his heart in wisdom is through Christ. For the whole purpose of man is that, in whatever he does, he lives that he may bring glory to God. We are to let that be the great object of our desire, the honoring him in all that is in our power.

1st Corinthians 10:31

- "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or *whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*"

The Lord God is our first love, and thus bringing Him glory is our ultimate end. This injunction, that in all things, we should do them to the glory of God, pertains to all acts and thoughts of human life. What is the meaning of life? Ultimately, living for Christ is the only thing that is truly worth anything in this world. It is that labor that is infinitely substantive, and whose reward will last forever. By contrast, when man lives without Christ, he lives in veiled emptiness. Hidden from him is the fact that no matter what he does, or how he succeeds, or what earthly wealth He accumulates, it is ultimately all in vain and unfulfilling. The unbeliever can choose to deceive himself and deny these truths, but God is omniscient and knows the heart of man. He can discern between soul and spirit, and has stated it succinctly in the wisdom of the Preacher.

Ecclesiastes 2:11

- "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and behold, all was vanity and vexation of Spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

God had endowed King Solomon all the wealth that he could ever want, and all of this world's pleasures that he could hope for. Yet in the wisdom that God also gave him, he finally had to conclude that it all was "vanity and vexation of spirit." In other words, he answered the question of "what is the meaning of life." He came to understand that the temporal riches of this world are hollow, and in the end profit us nothing. This is because they are, in the big scheme of things, transitory and unsatisfying. We can spend our entire lives building, accumulating and doing for ourselves, in the final analysis, there is no lasting profit for our labors in this world. What meaning will all these temporal things have when we die? Our bones will be dried up, a few years will pass, we are forgotten and our labors will have turned to dust or given to others. Wisdom is in recognizing the foolishness of looking to life in this world to gain satisfaction and meaning to life. And that is the truth that Solomon, with the wisdom of God bestowed upon him, had to come to.

He that is without Christ is without true meaning in life, and in a real sense, he lives only for the moment in foolish vanity. He lives for today, and his service is primarily to his own lusts, both carnal and material. He works, he goes home, and he works and he goes home. The cycle is endless until he dies. His life is vain or empty and he doesn't really want to come to grips with why.

Ecclesiastes 2:17

- Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.
- Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.
- And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity."

One who works only for temporal things can never truly be happy because there is no real meaning or purpose to his life. But those who live for Christ have a joyous quiet fulfillment that is hard for the unbeliever to understand.

Philippians 4:6-7

- "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

- And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

In Christ we are not careful or anxious about the things of this world, because we have both faith and a blessed expectation of what God has promised them that love Him. To these blessed souls, their sojourn in this world within the body of flesh, is just the journey to their real home. So their death should not really be a cause for sorrow or completion, but one of joy and beginning.

Philippians 1:20-21

- "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.
- For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

To live is Christ and to die is gain because we labor to magnify and serve the Lord on this earth that others may know the hope that we have. And when the believer passes on to be with the Lord, they have gained an everlasting splendor that is far superior to anything this world can offer. Thus to live is Christ, our purpose in life. And to die is gain, the hope and fruit of our eternal inheritance (1st Peter 1:4).

The real meaning of life in Christ is in our joy in **obedience** laboring in the spiritual fields of this world, which are ripe to the harvest. It is not found in the literal fields gleaned by the work of men. It is the privilege we have in Christ of obedience in serving God. Obedience, the fruits of which are not temporal, but eternal. The labor, without which, life has no real meaning. For this is the whole duty of man.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

- "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep His commandments; For this is the whole *duty* of man"

This is the "whole of man!" The purpose of man is to glorify God, in reverential fear and obedience. In doing this, the fruits in good works in this life will follow "naturally." i.e., we will take care of our family, we will preach the gospel, we will love others as ourselves, and we bring Glory to God. The meaning of life is summed up in these conscientious truths. As the Preacher of Ecclesiastes declares, it is the whole (complete) purpose of man. In living for Christ is manifested the love of God wherein we will fear Him, Keep His commandments, and show the evidence of that in good works.

1st John 5:1-3

- "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.
- By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.
- For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

In obedience, our lives are given meaning. The Greatest Commandment is to love the Lord thy God. This is love that is made manifest by our serving Him in humble obedience. What is the meaning of life? This is the meaning of life. While this is probably not the answer that many are looking for, it is the only answer that God gives. The meaning of life is to serve God. And the love of God, and thus the love of God's Word, is paramount. Those who truly love God

demonstrate this by faithfully keeping His Commandments. Likewise, those who love the children of God, bear witness to the word that others may also know the joy that they have in Him. i.e., we show love of God to them by serving God in keeping His Commandments. This is the love of God and the meaning of life for His Children.

1st John 5:2-3

- "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.
- For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

In 1st John 5:2-3 we see God's definition of duty and true love of the brethren. It is not the world's definition of love of God, and it's not many of our Churches definition of love of God, but it is God's definition of love. Our faithfulness to His Word demonstrates our love of God. Those who claim to love God, and yet have no desire to do the will of God, nor any inclination to faithfulness, are those with a form of Godliness, but who deny the power thereof. For the Word of God is with power. It is not "just words," it is fire from the mouth, and rivers of living waters from the belly. The believer who comes with the Word of God, comes with power.

Acts 1:8

- "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

So often people misconstrue and think that life is in this world's meat and drink, or that it is in the temporal pleasures of this world. But these things are vanity, and in the end are empty and worthless. They are simply become fuel for the end time fire. The meaning of life is not defined by our feeling good, it's not defined by our amassing possessions, it's not defined by the number of friendships, in excelling in worldly politics, or power, or glory. It is defined in how we serve God that His Kingdom (*not our own*) might be advanced. This is our life's work that will last forever because the fruits of that labor are eternal. This is the love of God, and the first and great commandment.

Matthew 22:37-40

- "Jesus said unto him. Thou shalt Love the Lord God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
- this is the first and Great commandment,
- and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.
- On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

This is consistent, and what we would expect. For if we love God, we will keep His Words, and if we keep His Words, we love God and will love our neighbor as ourselves. The power of the Spirit whereby we witness faithfully will manifest itself in good works, which are the fruits of the Spirit. The greatest desire we have for ourselves is the Kingdom of Heaven, and so (*loving our neighbor as ourselves*) we desire the same for our fellow man. Religion that is pure is undefiled before God, the point being, true faith leads to action. For this cause we do feed the hungry, give the cup to them that do thirst, clothe the naked and heal the sick. It is all done by the gospel message that we bring. On these two commandments hang all the other commandments. In other words, if we love God, and love our neighbor as ourselves, we will keep all the other commandments. For they hang on these precepts. In the Westminster Confession the question is posed, "What is the Chief end of man?" And the conclusion is, "To

Glorify God!"

1st Corinthians 6:19-20

- "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"
- For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

The question, "what is the meaning of life," has been Biblically answered. This is the true purpose of life for man. It won't be found in serving ourselves, in self-pity, in cerebral existentialism, or in vain labor. Man wasn't created so that he could lay comfortably in a bed of roses. He was put here to serve God and live. Fear, love God, and keep His Commandments. This is the whole of man (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

The purpose of life is to glorify God, and to live centered in our redemption in Christ. When we recognize that we are not our own, and that we belong to Christ, that we might fully serve Him in whatever position we might find ourselves, then we will recognize and embrace the meaning of life. So with these most basic of truths as a standard concerning purpose and life, we pray that we might go forth in renewed vigor of duty.

May the Lord, who is Gracious above all, richly bless our righteous endeavors.

Peace,

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The Mountain Retreat / twarren10@aol.com

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