

2007 Proclaimer

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, .. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord!" - Isa.61:1-2

A teaching and exhortation medium by members of the Carmichael Church of Christ, meeting at 6044 Sutter Ave.
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March 18th, 2007

What People Live For

by Kent Heaton

Humanity is a diversity of people finding their own way in a world filled with the day to day grind of survival. From birth to death people live with values that shape their lives with certain characteristics and personalities derived from a need to find fulfillment in their own mind. Happiness is found in what gives them pleasure. Contentment ranges from the extreme of wasteful living to a sedated life of complacency. Drugs offer an escape for some; alcohol soothes the minds of many; immorality heightens the need for pleasure; wisdom drives the motives of seekers of knowledge; futility fills the lives of those who are hopeless. Life is seen in the eyes of all those who pass by and leave a ripple of their lives upon our shores.

Death is the microscope that intrudes upon the lives of those who live to themselves. In times of mourning and grief, life is focused upon the reality of what is important yet fleeting in the forgotten memories of days passed by. Times of hardship bring to focus the microscopic truth of life's uncertainty and death's finality. Souls parade before God with no concern of an eternal destiny believing the lie of Satan that life is all there is and all there is in life is living for the moment. The Deceiver knows the Truth yet fails to acknowledge this to those he enslaves. The masses of humanity flow endlessly through the tunnel of lies as they live for pleasure without a single concern for the real meaning of life ending in an eternal destruction.

Peter quoted the Psalmist King when he wrote: "He that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: And let him turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication: But the face of the Lord is upon them that do

evil" (1 Pet 3:10-12; Psa 34:12-16). Peter illustrates that life is about choices and those decisions will bring true happiness in this life and the life that is to come or they will bring an eternity of regret. Humanity must see a moral code established by the Creator as the only measure of life worth living.

People live for themselves and their own desires. Jehovah can never have a part of their lives because there are restrictions and admonitions that must be followed. Man's free will creates a free spirit of dependence upon his own desires of fleshly pleasure, pride and wisdom of self. The commandments given by God are protective in nature for man's happiness here and in the world to come. "Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

Those who come to God must give up self and selfish motives. Serving the Lord requires the emptying of arrogant pride to seek the will of the Lord alone. The rich man of Matthew 19 wanted eternal life but not at the cost of his wealth. The rich man of Luke 12 believed that life consisted of the things he possessed and did not make certain his soul. "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (vv20-21).

What do you live for? What you live for is what you will die for. If you live for the world you will die with nothing. If you live for God you will die with everything. The promise of eternal life is all that matters. Death is certain. What are you certain of?

Trenton, Florida
www.trentonchurchofchrist.com

Class at 5:00 P.M. today
The Living Sacrifice ~ # 8
Frank Ayers, teacher

"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles" -- Isa 40:31

THE **DOUBLE-MINDED** **MAN**

by David King

"But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" ~ Jas 1:6-8.

The term "double-minded" in this text is a translation of a single Greek word that means "having two souls." Other translations render it "of divided loyalty" (Phillips), "half-hearted" (Beck), "irresolute" (**Goodspeed**). It describes a person who is not fully committed to a goal, uncertain of his direction or purpose. He *kinda sorta* wants to achieve something, but is too distracted by other things to ever reach it.

James identifies several characteristics of the double-minded man.

First, the double-minded man is full of doubt. He doubts his own abilities. He doubts God and His word. He doubts the future. This man is a pessimist, expecting failure rather than success. He has trouble finishing what he starts, because he has no confidence in the outcome. So he holds back, hesitant to take on challenges he encounters.

Second, the double-minded man is not in control of his destiny. Instead, he is "driven and tossed by the wind." That is, because he has no serious goal in life, he is unduly influenced by whatever fad he happens to bump into. Oh, he may be a busy man, alright. But not with the things that can really make a dif-

ference in his life. He wanders from one new interest to another, never finding anything that can really hold his passion for an extended period of time. And when "stuff happens" in his life (as it surely will), he has no stamina to stick it out and finish the course.

Third, the double-minded man is "unstable in all his ways." His indecision affects every aspect of his life, not just his religion. It is a deep-seated character flaw that hurts his personal relationships, his professional life, his financial security, even his recreational pursuits. This man is truly a lost soul, a jumble of conflicting interests and goals.

Finally, -and this is James' main point in this context ~ the prayers of the double-minded man are weak and ineffectual. The lack of focus in his life is reflected in the way he prays ~ if he prays at all. He has little or no confidence that his prayers will make any difference. So his prayers are bland, generic recitations of the same old stuff. No spirit, no passion, no heart. And no results.

Can the double-minded man change? Of course he can! James addresses that subject later in his epistle: "*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you doubleminded.*" (**Jas 4:8**). If the root problem is a heart that is divided, the solution is to fix the heart. The mind must be "purified" of the extraneous junk that prevents it from focusing on a single goal. Sort through all the mental clutter, and determine what is that one core conviction that must dominate everything else.

Once that decision is made, cling firmly to it, and let nothing else interfere. The result will be a life that is productive and successful.

**Pleasant Valley COC, Wichita, KS
October 29, 2006**

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ALWAYS, take time to pray before you begin any arduous or life-altering task!

THOSE NEEDING PRAYERS

Logan & Julie Agee
Jackson Agee
Allison Autrand
Frank & Tina Ayers
Edith Ayers
Jack & Dorothy Bailey
Margie Buchanan
Brenda Bryant
Larry Cain
Robert (Bob) Erickson
Helen Gray
Margaret Holcomb
Chuck House
Jean McCarty
Jeffrey & Kaye Pennant
Rueben Pennant
Jahsmeen Pennant
Wendell and Irma Rapier
Rosa Reagan
Glenn & LaurieAnn Reagan
Andy & Liz Roadman
Caleb & Jacob Robertson
Carl & Taylor Romine
Ray Rude
Bill & Rena Schultz
Brad & Shawna Shuck
Chantalle Shuck
Ola Thornburg
Nancy Valine
Shirley Watkins
Ellie Williams
Gordon & Glenda Wilson

TRAVELING IN THEIR WORK

Karen Daly
Rick Rittenhouse
Aaron Robertson
David Lovett

IN THE MILITARY

Jason Anderson
David Lovett
Aaron Robertson
Trent Walsh

EVEN THE STRONG ARE WEAK

2 Cor 5:9-11; 2 Cor 12:7-10

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In a Bible class discussing the passage found in 2 Cor 5:9-11.
 - 1. One member's conscience was pierced to the point of despair! 2 Cor 5:10
 - 2. He was consumed with accountability without any awareness of forgiveness.
- B. SOME OF US may have had similar religious excursions that have *threatened our faith!*
 - 1. When we feel we're STRONG IN FAITH, we're probably *"not as good as we think!"*
 - 2. Satan seems to be able to make us think that we're HOPELESSLY LOST!
- C. In 2 Cor 12:7-10. Paul, in context, is speaking of His "thorn in the flesh."

I. WE MUST ALLOW THE LORD'S WORD TO ESTABLISH OUR PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TRUE STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS.

- A. Of the strong Christians in the N.T. ~ who would you consider to be the strongest?
 - 1. I believe most of us would consider Paul or Peter to be truly strong, wouldn't we?
 - 2. Each of these men was an exceptionally strong Christian.
 - 3. Either one shows what I want you to see: *even strong men have weak moments.*
- B. As one of the twelve apostles, Peter's strengths were impressive.
 - 1. He literally walked off his job and his means of financial support to follow Jesus.
 - 2. After he became Jesus' disciple, Jesus gave him a new name, John 1:42.

II. WE MUST ALLOW BIBLE EXAMPLES TO EXCITE US ABOUT THE TRUE VALUES OF STRENGTH AND STABILITY

- A. Peter's devotion to Jesus could hardly be exaggerated.
 - 1. Only Peter stepped out of a boat and walked on water when Jesus said to do it!
 - 2. It was Peter who said, *"If everyone falls, I will not fall"* (Mk 14:29)
- B. On the night Jesus was betrayed and arrested, Peter was confronted by his weakness.
 - 1. He would have gladly died for Jesus, defending him with a sword.
 - 2. Putting down the sword, he then followed from a distance. (Lk 22:54).
 - 3. He quietly appeared at the trials of Jesus, but then denied Him three times!
- C. Then Peter recovered & became stronger, & wiser, and more mature.
 - 1. He assumed a leadership role in appointing an apostle. (Acts 1:15)
 - 2. On Pentecost, he became the speaker whose message is recorded in Acts 2.

III. MOST ALL OF US HAVE SOME FALSE PERCEPTIONS

- A. Those *false perceptions* may exist in one or more different forms.
 - 1. SETTING UNREAL STANDARDS
 - 2. FALSE BRAVADO
- B. False perceptions of strength betray us, and actually move us away from THE LORD!
 - 1. How? False perceptions deceive us of lots of errors!
 - 2. We also may have false perceptions of spiritual strength!
 - 3. Why do false perceptions of spiritual strength do that to us?
- C. Because of false perceptions, we can assure ourselves that we're strong when we aren't!

IN SUMMARY:

- A. The apostle Paul had a thorn in the flesh. It was a real handicap.
- B. Where do we get the ideas that "STRONG CHRISTIANS" cannot have weaknesses?
- C. The GRACE OF GOD effects our salvation *when we obey His gospel!*