

Answers to the Big Questions of life. Pt 3 Eph. 5:15-17

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Jan 19th

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, (Carefully) not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

"Understanding what the will of the Lord is" is what the journey of Faith is all about!

Reflection: Webster's defines circumspectly as "*cautiously, considering all of the circumstances.*"

Satan seeks to blind or distract us from the eternal aspects and implications of our choices so that we don't "consider all of the circumstances" or all of the consequences of our choices. He seeks to sabotage our faith journey by keeping us "in the dark" (2 Cor 4:4) about the implications of eternal, critical questions. If we miss the mark on these critical questions, we can easily drift off course, and end up spiritually shipwrecked (1 Tim. 1:19); wasting our lives. (See Mt 7:7)

Existence: Why am I here? You were created to: Have a Consummate relationship with God (*Jer 31:3; 1 Jn 4:7-10*); Cooperate (partner) with Him and His plans (*Mt 11:29; 2 Cor 3:9; Eph 2:8-10*) so we can Conquer Satan's attempts to seduce, sidetrack, and sabotage you (*Ro. 8:35-39; 1 Jn 4:4; 5:4*).

Significance: Do I matter? You weren't created for just survival, Or even temporary success; but for eternal Significance! (**Jn 10:10; Ro. 8:37; Eph. 1-2:10; 1 Tim. 4:8**)

Intention: What's the Point (Purpose) of my life! Rev. 4:11 *"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure (thelēma: Purpose, desire) they are and were created."* (*Mt 11:29; 1 Cor 3:9; 4:1; 2 Cor 5:20*)

Since God created us, we must look to Him for meaning and direction. Because we didn't create ourselves, we can't find our meaning isolated from God. (Rev. 4:11) This leads to the "vanity" that Solomon wrote of when we seek to understand life "under the sun." (28x in Ecclesiastes.)

Direction: Answering these questions about our Existence, Significance, and God's Intention inevitably lead to another significant question; that of Expectation!

What does God want (Expect) from me? Your Heart

Pr 23:26 *"My son, give me thine heart, (lēb: mind, will, emotions; The Center!) and let thine eyes observe (nāṣar: guard, preserve) my ways."* (derek: path or course of life)

1. We tend to separate our lives like pie slices.

A. Reactive living allows others to cut the slices.

- 1) We reactively adapt to the demands & expectations of others to make room in our lives for their agendas/priorities.
- 2) To some degree this is inevitable and even necessary. (1 Cor 7:32-34; Gal. 5:13; Phil. 2:2,3)
- 3) Without clear priorities (to direct us) and boundaries (to protect us) reactive living usually leads to getting trapped in the "tyranny of the urgent", where everyone else's crisis becomes our priority. *This eventually leads to Frustration, Exhaustion, and Indignation.*

B. Proactive (purposeful) living enables us to determine (influence) the shape/sizes of each slice.

1) Some problems with this include our limited:

- a) Time/ energy/ experience / understanding
- b) Control / Ability (Much of life is beyond control)
- c) Our selfish natures. Jer. 17:9

- 2) Some benefits include being able to prioritize (*aka: redeem*) your "discretionary" resources. (Time, Money, energy, etc) Eph 5:16

C. Spiritual living enables Christ to be the center of our lives, directing us through his Spirit and Word. (Jn 15:4;)

- 1) The Bible describes this as: *“walking in the Spirit”* (Ro 8; Gal. 5:16-26); *“Living or Walking by Faith”* (Ro 1:17; Heb 10:38); or simply as *“acknowledging him so he can direct our paths”* (Pr 3:6)
- 2) Spiritual living transforms us. (Ro. 12:1,2; 2 Cor 3:18; Gal. 2:2; 2 Peter 1:4-6)

2. God doesn't just want a “slice of you”, He wants the very Center!

Pr 23:26 *“My son, give me thine heart, (lēb: mind, will, emotions; The Center!)”*

God doesn't want to be “a part” of your life; He wants to be “pre-eminent”! (Col. 1:17,18)

“He is before all things, and by him all things consist, And he is the head . . . : who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.” (Prōteuō: first in rank, order, influence)

A. Jesus made this clear. Mt. 22:37,38 *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.”* (Entole': authoritative prescription!)

- 1) You can't have multiple masters. Mt. 6:24 *“No man can serve two masters.. Ye can't serve God and mammon.”*

B. God isn't vague about this! Ro 12:1,2 *“present your bodies a living sacrifice.. your reasonable service.”*

- 1 Cor 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 (doxaz'ō: to magnify, Honor!) in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's”*

C. What does giving God preeminence look like?

- 1) It (He) affects/influences every area of our lives. Remember Eph. 5:17 *“be not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is. 18 And be not drunk with wine...; but be filled (plēroō: influenced, permeated, furnished) with the Spirit!”*

Our Love (Jn 14:15; 1 Jn 5:3); Our Loyalty (Mk 8:38); Our Labor (Ro. 6:13; 2 Cor 5:14,15)

D. If God really has 1st place, everything else will fall into place! Ps. 37:3-5

Mt 6:33 *“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added..”*

Conclusion:

“If Christianity is False, then it is of no importance. If it is true, then it is of infinite importance! The only thing Christianity cannot be is moderately important!” CS Lewis:

Application: In Luke 9:18-24 Jesus asked his disciples: *“Whom say the people that I am? They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets . . . 20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God..”* **Who do you say He is?**
22 The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.”

In light of what Jesus did for us, notice what he expected from his followers:

- 23 *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall save it. . . .*
- 57 *And it came to pass, that . . . a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. 58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*
- 59 *“And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. 61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell. . . at my house, 62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”*

Jesus still calls us to follow him. (Luke 9:23; Jn 10:27)

Are you a “but Lord, let me first...” Christian?