

It Is Written

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On A Daily Basis

By Bill Hall

A man, asked recently to describe memories of his college days twenty-five years ago, replied, "A few big moments; many goofs, but, overall, pleasant memories."

Would these words not describe our memories of life generally? As we recall our years, there are always the "big" moments, the emotional "highs," that we love to relish. Then there are the "goofs," the embarrassing occasions that just keep coming back to haunt us. But, through it all, the pleasant memories sufficiently prevail to enable us to feel generally good about life.

But, in reality, success or failure in life is not determined by the "big moments" or "the goofs." We will not be eternally saved on the basis of a few great spiritual achievements or eternally lost on the basis of a few gross mistakes (assuming they have been repented of). Life consists of everyday actions and decisions, and it is these that bring ultimate success or failure, eternal happiness or eternal damnation. "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

It is one thing to express concern for our children as we talk of their future spirituality and faithfulness. It is quite another to provide on a daily basis a spiritual atmosphere in the home, a good example of godliness and faithfulness, consistent and loving discipline and a love for God and respect for fellowman that are so essential to the training of our children. It's the little impressions that are made day by day that prove to be so decisive.

It is one thing to dream of some day being appointed an elder in the church. It is quite another thing to put forth the effort on a daily basis to learn the scriptures, to develop leadership ability, to grow spiritually, and to live as to gain the confidence of a discerning congregation. One does not qualify for the eldership in one big leap. It comes through daily development.

It is one thing to talk a "good line" on priorities. It is quite another thing to put God first on a daily basis. The devil knows so many ways to test our resolve in these realms. Our intentions are good, but, through his subtlety, he has us selling our souls for a mess of pottage or thirty pieces of silver.

It is one thing to think that we would die for the Lord if our faith were so tested. It is quite another thing truly to live for Him on a daily basis. Egos may be fed on the "big moments," but true spirituality develops through daily prayer, study and meditation.

Our lesson is this: Set your goals for the future, and set them high. But recognize that it's the little, day-by-day moments, the often forgotten moments, accumulated through the years, that truly shape our destiny. Tomorrow's success depends upon the choices and decisions that are made today. Make them with care.

Considering The Outcome

By Bill Hall

We have no sympathy for those who at every funeral "preach the dead right on into heaven," who ignore the obvious failure on the part of the deceased to serve the Lord, who try to think that all will somehow get to heaven in spite of their disobedience. There is a hell, and the many of this earth

(in contrast to the few) are going there (Matthew 7:13-14).

But we must not allow one extreme to beget another. While the majority will be lost, there are those in this world whose single purpose in life is to serve the Lord and go to heaven when they die; who devote themselves daily to studying God's word and living by its precepts. When such people die, it is right to speak of their good life and faithfulness to the Lord; it is right to commend their example of faithfulness and perseverance to those who may be discouraged; it is right to speak of their eternal reward.

The Hebrew writer stated it this way: "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith" (Hebrews 13:7 - NASV). Three things are implied in this verse: (1) There had been men in their midst who had served the Lord faithfully unto death; (2) The Hebrew Christians were to be confident that the outcome of the lives of those men was a happy one; (3) Considering this, they were to imitate their faith.

We, like the Hebrews, have had the good fortune of knowing many who have lived godly lives and have now passed on to their reward. Some were elders; some were preachers; some were Bible class teachers; others were just good, faithful, dependable disciples of the Lord who placed His kingdom first in their lives. We are **not** speaking of the lukewarm and indifferent. We are **not** speaking of those who claim to be Christians, but were lacking in the fruits of Christianity. We are speaking of the truly dedicated ones who constantly reflected the character of their Father and their Lord Jesus Christ. Their influence on our lives was tremendous. They were men and women of whom this world was not worthy. And the list grows with each passing year.

Every one of these had to overcome serious obstacles to be faithful to the Lord. The Devil challenged each one of them, but he failed. They gained the victory through Christ. Now they are eternally happy because they persevered. Could we ask any one of them, "Was it worth it," his reply immediately would be, "It was a thousand times worth it!" Not one of them regrets a single moment he spent in the Lord's service.

We thank God for such people. We rejoice in their salvation. We look on their passing not as those "who have no hope." And "considering the result of their conduct," we dedicate ourselves to imitating their faith.

But, What About Him?

By Greg Gwin

When Jesus, after His resurrection, was challenging Peter about his devotion and foretelling the events that would befall him in the future (John 21:15ff), Peter turned to John and said "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Many have speculated that Peter was attempting to deflect the harsh light of scrutiny from himself and get the attention directed toward someone else. Jesus answered: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

If we were to put this into our own words, Jesus basically told Peter that it was none of his business what would happen to John, and that he needed to take care of his own matters. Peter's effort to shift the attention from himself was petty and immature. It was a like a child being scolded for misconduct. The typical reaction of the child is to point a finger at another child and say "but, what about him?" Parents can 'see right through' this tactic – and so can the Lord!

Unfortunately, many Christians display this same immature reaction when they have sinned and others are trying to restore them. They are quick to point at someone else in the church that has sinned in the past, or one who is currently dealing with a spiritual issue. They complain that others have not been dealt with consistently, or that they are being unfairly singled out.

Should we be consistent in dealing with all brethren who need to repent? Yes, of course! Can we do better? Without a doubt! But that is not the immediate concern of the one who is, himself, in need of restoration. Until he has corrected his own problems he needs to understand that other situations are 'none of his business'. Jesus would say, "What is that to thee?" Think!

