Less Can Be More

(by Gary Henry)

***“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it”*** (**Matthew 16:25**).

WHEN WE SEEK OUR ULTIMATE MEANING AND FULFILLMENT IN GOD, THE RESULT IS NOT LESS ENJOYMENT OF THIS LIFE BUT MORE. It is ironic but true: we get the most this life has to offer when we pay primary attention to something else. Temporal things are best enjoyed serendipitously: they surprise us with the greatest delight at those times when we’re busy looking for something else — or more properly Someone else. So by demanding LESS of this life, we get MORE than if we made it our all in all.

The good things of God’s creation are meant for our enjoyment. Solomon said, ***“Here is what I have seen: it is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage”*** (**Ecclesiastes 5:18**). Within the limits of their rightful use, …

temporal things are deeply gratifying. A serious problem arises, however, when we enshrine earthly enjoyments as our god. Not only will we lose our souls for having worshiped the creation rather than the Creator, we will have lost the true joy that comes from the creation itself.

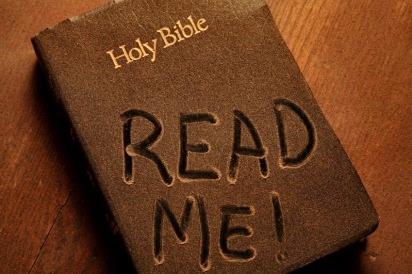
A similar principle governs our interaction with other people. Our need for personal relationship is very deep, but we were never meant to find the ultimate fulfillment of that need in our fellow human beings. Only God can perfectly fill our hearts with love. And if we look to those around us to do what God alone can do, not only will we corrupt our relationship with God, we will damage our human relationships with unfair expectations.

AP1129.TIFThere is a sense in which we are too conservative about earthly pleasures and human relationships. Like the tight-fisted investor obsessed with protecting his principal, we lose much in the long run by our refusal to put the lesser at risk in order to gain the greater. Not only that, but like Scrooge, we also miss out on the enjoyment of the very wealth that we’ve attached so much importance to. There is nothing in this world that we’ll not enjoy more if we learn to let go of it. Less idolatry means more joy.

*“Aim at heaven and you get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither”* (C. S. Lewis).

An Unanswerable Question

(by C. H. Spurgeon)

**Many years ago a Welsh minister, a man of God, while beginning his sermon, leaned over the pulpit and said with a solemn air: *"Friends, I have a question to ask. I cannot answer it. You cannot answer it. If an angel from heaven were here, he could not answer it. If a devil from hell were here, he could not answer it."* Death-like silence reigned. Every eye was fixed on the speaker. He proceeded: *"The question is this, How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"*

A Day in the Life of the Master

(by Jason Moore)

***“While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live.’ So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples. And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. For she said to herself, ‘If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.’ But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, ‘Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.’ And the woman was made well from that hour. When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, He said to them, ‘Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.’ And they ridiculed Him. But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. And the report of this went out into all that land”*** (**Matthew 9:18-26**).

Wouldn’t it have been fine to have followed Jesus around for just one day to witness the lives and events He affected? There is so much to be learned from even one day in the life of Jesus.

Jesus had time. Jesus was constantly interrupted by people in distress like the synagogue official mourning his daughter or the lady afflicted with a hemorrhage for twelve years. Jesus made the most of such interruptions. You’ll have interruptions today. Plan for them. Make the most of them. Have time for who matters – people.

Jesus knows. The woman with the flow of blood said, ***“If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.”*** She said this to herself but Jesus heard her thoughts. He turned answering her, ***“Your faith has made you well.”*** Jesus knows your faith. We who have not spoken face-to-face with Him are assured by this account that He knows even when no one seems to know how hard we’re trying.

******Jesus will be vindicated. Jesus saw the mass of mourners. He said, ***“The girl is only sleeping.”*** He knew what was coming next. The people mocked. They were forthrightly dismissed from the house. Shortly afterwards a healthy girl emerged. Folks will mock and ridicule your faith but one day the Lord will vindicate His cause and His people.

Follow Jesus today. He has given you this day. He’ll help you make the most of it.