Monotony of Life Without God

(by Dee Bowman)

***“The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. ‘Vanity of vanities,’ says the Preacher; ‘Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.’ What profit has a man from all his labor In which he toils under the sun? One generation passes away, and another generation comes; But the earth abides forever. The sun also rises, and the sun goes down, And hastens to the place where it arose. The wind goes toward the south, And turns around to the north; The wind whirls about continually, And comes again on its circuit. All the rivers run into the sea, Yet the sea is not full; To the place from which the rivers come, There they return again. All things are full of labor; Man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor the ear filled with hearing. That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which it may be said, ‘See, this is new’? It has already been in ancient times before us. There is no remembrance of former things, Nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come By those who will come after”*** (**Ecclesiastes 1:1-11**).

Life apart from God is just one big, monotonous bore. Listen to the wise man. One generation passes, another comes. So it has been from all time. This generation will pass away and another will take its place. The courses of life are inalterable. The sun goes up and down and a day is past. This same process occurs 7 times and becomes as week, a week becomes a month, a month a year, and on and on it goes.

The hydrological cycle has been in place almost since the beginning. Mountain snows melt and fill little streams, little streams empty into big ones, the big ones into little rivers, little rivers into big ones, and the big ones into the oceans. Oceans evaporate and the whole process starts all over.

Man is never satisfied. He has never seen, heard, felt, known all he wants to see, hear, feel, and know. There is no new thing; everything stays essentially the same. Life without God brings no true joy, but living for God does. It makes the life worth living, the joy worth giving. It makes family important, the job fulfilling, even discipline appealing. God’s life, lived in God’s way is refreshing and wonderful, always new, for it promises an everlasting one.

Accepting Our Assignments

(by Gary Henry)

***“If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body?”*** (**1 Corinthians 12:15-16**).

Despite our tendency to want someone else's role, we each need to accept the assignments in life that we ourselves have been given. We can't excuse ourselves from our obligations simply because we lack someone else's abilities. This is especially important to remember if we're members of the body of Christ. If we're a *"foot,"* for example, we must not say, *"Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body."* In Christ, it is God who has apportioned the various abilities: ***"God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased"*** (**1 Corinthians 12:18**). It is not good to question God's organization of the body.

The *"body"* is an apt metaphor for Christ's followers because a human body is an organism where each member is *needed*. Some parts of the body seem to get more publicity, but no part is without an important use. And it is when all of the parts work together healthily that the body functions as it was intended to function. Christ, of course, is the head, ***"from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love"*** (**Ephesians 4:16**).

Humility means that we try to see ourselves just as God sees us. When we do this, we will not think too highly of ourselves (**Romans 12:3**), but neither will we think too lowly of ourselves. It is just as wrong to deny our abilities and dodge our duties as it is to be poisoned with pride. God is not pleased when we complain about the assignments that He has given us. And it is not humility but *false* humility that causes us to *"badmouth"* ourselves and the tools that are in our toolbox. In truth, God has given to each of us the abilities that He has because those are the resources we need to do the work that belongs to us -- *right where we are!* It's tempting to think that we could do a better job if we occupied someone else's place, but that is probably not true. If we won't serve Christ where we are, then we wouldn't serve Him anywhere else.

*“True humility consists in being satisfied with what we are asked to do. Do your assigned task with good cheer.”* (Teresa of Avila)