

What Is Really Important?

By Ethan R. Longhenry

What is really important in life?

Most people would answer this question by talking about family and friends. Some would appreciate stability and creature comforts. Most people would recognize, at least mentally, that work and stuff and other such things would not qualify as "really important."

But how do we make clear what is important-- by what we say or what we do? We humans are good at saying one thing and doing quite another. We may say that family is important, but how much time do we spend with our families? We may recognize that "stuff" really is not that important, but how many work longer hours to make more money to get more stuff? How many people are really slaves to their job? These concerns are only made more acute when there is economic uncertainty. Stress and anxiety grow when there is concern about losing hours or a job, or when bills pile up.

But what would happen if a disaster took place? What if everything you owned burned up in a fire? What if a tornado, hurricane, or flood carried away your belongings? There would be sorrow for that which was lost for certain. Places full of memories are no more. But you would still be alive-- and you would recognize the importance of life.

God wants us to recognize that despite the high-stress pace of modern existence, life is the most important thing: our own lives, the lives of family members, friends, associates, acquaintances, and even enemies and people we do not know. It is best when we learn this lesson before it is too late!

We hope and pray that we will never experience a natural disaster. Nevertheless, Peter indicates that a day is coming when what really is important will be made evident in 2Peter 3:10-12 -- "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

A day of fire is coming, and all the works of man will be destroyed. Every monument, every building, every organization, every creature comfort-- every last thing will be no more. When all of this goes down, what will be really important? Nothing will be more important on that day than the soul and its condition. Have we been faithful to Jesus Christ and prepared the soul for eternal life, or have we spent our days in sinful living, storing up wrath for eternity (Rom. 2:5-10)? Have we been working to store treasure in Heaven, practicing righteousness, love, and mercy, or will all of our effort have been destroyed in that great fire (Matt. 6:19-21)?

Let none be deceived; everything you can see, hear, taste, and touch is not important. It will all perish by that final day. When we all stand before God, no one will worry about having not worked overtime, obtaining the next great piece of technology, or any such thing. We will all be concerned with how we have sustained our soul and

the souls of those whom we love. Do not allow that day to come upon you unaware--serve Jesus Christ today!

Campbellites?

"...And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." (Acts 11:26) "...But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." (1Peter 4:16)

Members of the church of Christ have often been labeled, "Campbellites." However, they cannot be "Campbellites" because the church of Christ did not originate with Alexander Campbell. There is a tombstone in the Cemetery near the old log church building in Cane Ridge, Kentucky with the following inscription: "William Rogers born in Campbell County Virginia July 7, 1784 removed with his father to Cane Ridge, Bourbon County, April 1798. United with the church of Christ at Cane Ridge in 1807. Died February 15, 1862 in the 78th year of his age. He was the friend of God."

Alexander Campbell did not come to this country as a Presbyterian until 1809. The ancient tombstone states that William Rogers was united with the church of Christ in 1807. Thus, Alexander Campbell did not begin the church of Christ. Members of the church of Christ are not "Campbellites," but "Christians."

Immaturity

By Robert F. Turner

Irresponsible, shortsighted, rash and selfish conduct is often proof of immaturity. But we do not refer to years. People sixty and above may be immature --- acting like little children when they do not get their way, or are forced to face the realities of this life. They are incapable of objectivity, their pride is easily hurt, and they throw a tantrum. That is bad enough in secular life, but it can be tragic in the church.

Bible knowledge maturity is found in those who dwell on something more than first principles (Heb. 5:12f). They have learned that justice, mercy, and faith are the grounds upon which their concern for tithes of mint, anise and cumin can have validity. Ignore the first, and one becomes an hypocritical nit-picker with all else (Matt. 23:23-24). He may strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

People-dealing maturity comes only after we learn that we are all sinners (Rom. 3:23), and are completely humbled before God. The "babe" seeks an "issue" and perhaps make a "name" for himself. But maturity seeks for souls, hoping to "give 'em Heaven," and save them from Hell. The babe sees himself as a General in the Lord's army; the mature saint is an expendable servant of the Lord.

Doctrinal maturity is not compromise with error. It is simply wisdom enough to know we do not know it all. The babe paddles wildly about on the surface of the water, loudly proclaiming his domination of the seas; but maturity is aware of the unexplored depths below. The fool has an answer, the wise, a reason.

Paul told Timothy to "flee youthful lusts" and "foolish and unlearned questions avoid" (2Tim. 2:22). There is no "instant maturity" for any of us. We must start with instructions to youth, and "by reason of use" we may "grow up" in Christ. All of us are in the process in many facets of the Christian life, not having attained (Phil. 3:12). We can

be patient and tolerant of blustering spiritual babes without appointing them as elders, preachers, and editors. In time, with enough milk and nurture, we may all learn to act like men.

A Moments Wisdom

A sharp tongue does not necessarily indicate keen thinking.

The most dangerous stumbling blocks are those under our hats.

Our heart is the mainspring for our tongue.

So you are just as good as half the folks in the church? Well, which half?

Loose conduct will get a person in a tight spot.

Courtesy is said to be contagious, and what we need is a good epidemic.

Many parents are not on "spanking" terms with their children.

People make enemies by complaining too much to their friends.

He who talks without thinking runs more risks than he who thinks without talking.

Every moment you are angry, you lose one minute of happiness.