

Title: “A Life That Really Counts”

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Text: Gal. 6:4-10

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Theme: A Life That Counts

Does anyone exist on this planet that prefers not to live a life that really counts for something of value? One does not have to be academically brilliant to live a life that counts and enjoy the blessings of the Lord.

- Not everyone is the sharpest knife in the drawer.
- One guy required two hours to watch “60 Minutes”.
- An irritated wife told her husband that if he truly spoke his mind he would be speechless.

Thank God that academic superiority is not required to live a life that really counts.

In our heart of hearts, all of us dream of a life that packs a real punch and that influences others in a significant way. We want to make a difference. We want to be a change agent.

The apostle Paul dreamed of a day when the people who had turned to Christ would truly activate grace and begin to live it out and give that grace to others. Paul expected them to share it with those who live around them and attempt to reach them with the gospel. Legalism had a death grip on the people of Paul’s day. Acceptability to God was dependent in their minds upon their daily practice in measuring up to certain behavioral practices such as circumcision and dietary requirements.

Paul attempted to lay down for their consideration the benefit and natural outcome of a life of grace. In chapter six of the letter to the Galatians Paul gives us the keys to life that counts. He provides for us at least three undeniable, indisputable, irrefutable laws of kingdom living. Let’s take a close look at these principles which are couched in agricultural terminology. First...

I. THE QUALITY OF OUR HARVEST IS A REFLECTION OF THE DILIGENCE OF OUR PLANTING.

Galatians 6:4-8

Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, [5] for each one should carry his own load.

[6] Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

[7] Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. [8] The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

* What do you want to plant? I have planted a few gardens in my time. I pick things like tomatoes, bell peppers, lettuce, onions and radishes. Items not found in my garden: broccoli, cauliflower, and green beans.

- A. The farmer begins with a vision.
 - a. He foresees what could be rather than what is.
 - b. He is very aware that the gap of time between conception, planting, and the ultimate harvest is significant and requires a great patience.
- B. Paul reminds his readers and us as well that the God we serve will not be “mocked”.
 - a. The word mocked is translated from the word mykterizetai – meaning snubbed or nose thumbed in a flippant manner.
 - b. Paul’s intention is for us to realize that God honors His promises and His word.
- C. The phrase, “whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

- D. The scripture is a direct reminder that what appears is a reflection of what is planted.
 - a. We grow what we plant.
 - b. We see what we envision.
 - c. We are provided with two options.

- i. Should we choose to “sow to the flesh” we will reap what is “corrupt” (reference to the rotting of food). In other words, there is no value to a life of mere pleasure and of living according to our most basic instincts. The result smells of corruption.
 - ii. The plan of God is that we “sow to the Spirit.” As our lives serve as distribution centers for the gospel of grace we will see eternal benefits which produce the pleasing aroma of life and hope.
- E. The Greek readers understood this line of thinking.
- a. Their culture taught them that a nemesis was forever on the trail of anyone who did evil.
 - b. The cause and effect relationship regarding behavior was a common theme in their belief system.
- F. Paul made sense.

* But that sounds impossible. How could Paul present a gospel that was so different to the thousands of years of teaching? We have prophets and teachers that didn’t understand the plan of God. Even today, we struggle with anything that falls outside of our traditions and weekly habits. Don’t we?
Can we change? Impossible!

II. IMPOSSIBLE IS WHAT NO ONE CAN DO UNTIL SOMEONE DOES.

Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

- A. Paul is not merely teaching a self-help philosophy dependent upon what the mind can conceive.
 - a. True productivity and fruitfulness in living is a work of the Spirit in and through us.
 - b. The promise is that we will “reap” if we “do not faint.”

- c. The Greek word “ekkakeo” (faint) means to buckle under or faint under pressure.

B. Essentially, Paul is laying down three keys to consider:

1. Be confident in the Spirit’s ability to work through us.
2. We have the ability to create value from nothing (“doing good” – poieo – to turn what is neutral into value). Here is Paul’s way of saying to us that our diligence in the Spirit results in the miraculous – in time.
3. Keep swinging! Here Paul reminds us that the harvest of our ministry efforts comes “in due time”. Harvesting time is a thing of the Spirit. It is a God thing! We plant. God causes the increase. Impossible then becomes possible.

* Are we successful when the impossible becomes possible? How can we make that happen?

III. THE PATHWAY TO SUCCESS IS THROUGH THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY.

Galatians 6:10

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

- A. Hindsight reminds us of what we should have done.
- B. Here we are told to seize the day.
 - a. Grab the moment of opportunity.
 - b. Capture that teachable moment.
 - c. It is a window of “opportunity”

* The Greek word “deiros” translated “opportunity” means a proper time to plant the ministry in others before it is too late.

Conclusion: Success in the Lord is by living with a nose for needs as we “do good”. Planting our lives in the lives of other believers is vital.

* According to the 2012 "American Time Use Study" conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average American full-time worker has exactly 2 hours, 52 minutes, and 48 seconds of leisure every day. Again, on average, here's how that leisure time gets broken down per *workday*:

- 1 hour, 34 minutes, 48 seconds—Watching TV
- 21 minutes—Socializing & Talking
- 11 minutes, 24 seconds—Playing Sports
- 10 minutes, 48 seconds—Relaxing & Thinking
- 8 minutes, 24 seconds—Being on the Computer
- 7 minutes, 48 seconds—Reading
- 7 minutes, 12 seconds—Travel Related to Leisure
- 6 minutes—Other
- 5 minutes, 24 seconds—Playing Games

The category for "Volunteering, Religious Activities," which was not placed under "Leisure," amounted to an average of 7 minutes, 48 seconds per day.

What kind of opportunity is opening up during your eight minutes of religious activity per day?