

What Is Really Important In Our Lives?

What should we focus on in our lives?

All human life has its central core of truths on which we should base our lives.

These truths are constant.

They do not change from age to age and are the same among all races throughout the world.

Human life also has its marginal zones, where we find things that are relatively unimportant.

These change from generation to generation and vary from people to people.

When human beings agree on what is central to life we find unity.

It is the marginal things that divide people by differing from each other's concept of life.

This is where divisions, confusion and enmities arise, resulting in persecutions, murders and bloody wars.

This is true in spite of these marginal things being relatively unimportant to life.

If all humanity would give serious attention to the few really important things in life, the walls that divide humanity would be thrown down and a world of endless suffering would be ended.

What then are these great facts that are good and the basis of a peaceful life, everywhere among all humanity?

What are these self-evident truths upon which all human life can rest with confidence?

Only God is great

Humanity has always sought to place greatness elsewhere, in things, in events, in leaders.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 [NIV] *“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.”*

The greatness that humans have can be likened to moonlight, which is but the reflection of the sun.

All of human greatness is borrowed, for but a short time.

Every human only reflects God's greatness and has none of their own.

Only God is wise

Psalms 104:24 [NIV] *“How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.”*

God's wisdom created all things, that includes human minds and the human spirit that gives all humanity intellect.

Job 32:8-9 [NIV] *“But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding. It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged who understand what is right.”*

True human wisdom is **not** the product of age or experience, but the working of the “*human spirit*” that God has placed in humans, [**Proverbs 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11**].

Proverbs 3:19-20 [NIV] *“By wisdom the LORD laid the earth’s foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew.”*

All creation are the product of God’s wisdom and understanding.

Human wisdom fails humans constantly.

Through human wisdom we cannot find the answer to the old questions about ourselves, our existence.

Whence? What? Why? Where?

By human wisdom we **cannot** secure the blessings we want most, to escape pain, to stay young and to stay alive.

God waits patiently until time, space, matter, motion, life and death all join to tell us that only God is wise.

Apart from God nothing matters

We as humans think health matters, that freedom matters, or knowledge or art or civilisation all matter.

If it was **not** for one insistent word these things would matter.

That word is eternity.

Give a human being the chance of perpetual life, and all the preciousness of earthly things fade into obscurity.

Ecclesiastes 3:10-11 [NIV] *“I have seen the burden God has laid on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”*

Every human being cannot imagine not existing, yet we all know we are going to die.

Only God can give us eternal life.

John 10:25-28 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no-one can snatch them out of my hand.”*

It is only through Jesus Christ that we can receive eternal life.

Romans 6:23 [NIV] *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

All we can earn is eternal death, eternal life comes as a gift from an eternal God.

God is to our eternal being, what our heart is to our body.

When the heart stops the rest of our organs collapse.

Apart from God, what is money, fame, education?

Exactly nothing.

1 Timothy 6:7-10 [NIV] *“For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”*

The only thing we can take beyond death is character, Godly character.

We receive this if we now, in this life, allow God to mould us into His “likeness.”

Isaiah 64:8 [NIV] *“Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.”*

God does this through the active presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Galatians 5:22-23 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

Listed here as “fruits” of the Holy Spirit working in us are the very characteristics of God.

Human sin is real and deadly

Romans 6:23 [NIV] *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Sin equals eternal death.

Romans 3:23 [NIV] *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”*

All humans sin.

Hebrews 3:13 [NIV] *“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”*

Our minds, prompted by Satan [see Genesis 3:2-4] are deceived into believing that a God who is love would never destroy us because of our rebellious sin.

Scripture shows this to be untrue.

Revelation 21:7-8 [NIV] *“He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars, their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.”*

All who do **not** repent of these sins and accept salvation through Jesus Christ.

Revelation 22:14-15 [NIV] *“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practise*

magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practises falsehood.”

What was physically outside the city of Jerusalem, [symbolic of the heavenly Jerusalem mentioned in this scripture]? **Gehenna** [the valley of Hinnom]?

It was in this valley that children had been in the past sacrificed to the pagan god Molech.

It was also a place where the city waste was burnt in a fire that never went out.

Jesus Christ often spoke of the final punishment in terms of fire.

Matthew 13:40-42, 49-50 [NIV] *“As the weeds are pulled up and **burned in the fire**, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. **They will throw them into the fiery furnace**, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* ... *“This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and **throw them into the fiery furnace**, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

Matthew 25:41 [NIV] *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the **eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.**”*

These teachings of Jesus Christ are parallel to what is taught in Revelation.

Only with God is there forgiveness

Exodus 34:5-7 [NIV] *“Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the **compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.**”*

Forgiveness was proclaimed under the Old Covenant alongside punishment.

Matthew 9:6 [NIV] *“But so that you may know that **the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...**”* Then he said to the paralytic, *“Get up, take your mat and go home.”*

New Covenant mercy and forgiveness is through Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was also the Son of Man, a human being through the mystery of the incarnation.

Jesus can and does forgive our sins, upon our confession and faith in His sacrifice as a substitute for our own deserved death.

No priest or any other human being can solve our problem of sin through forgiveness.

Psalms 51:1-4 [NIV] *“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. **Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight**, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.”*

All sin is against God, even if it is other human beings who suffer as a result of our sin.

All sin is a form of rebellion against love, and God is the source of real love.

1 John 4:7-11 [NIV] *“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because **God is love**. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. **This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.** Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”*

God showed this real love through Jesus Christ and His sacrifice to atone for all human sin.

Only through accepting this substitute sacrifice can we be forgiven our sins and the penalty being taken off our head.

Only what God protects is safe

Everything else perishes with the using or the hoarding.

2 Timothy 1:11-12 [NIV] *“And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because **I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.**”*

Paul who was fulfilling the work that God had given him to do, had confidence that his life was in safe hands, those of Jesus Christ.

John 10:27-29 [NIV] *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; **no-one can snatch them out of my hand.** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no-one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”*

If we follow Jesus Christ, and become His disciples, no-one can take us out of His protection.

Just as a shepherd protects his sheep, Jesus protects His people from eternal harm.

While believers can expect to suffer, even to die as a result of Satan’s persecution, not even Satan can take away our eternal life with God.

1 Peter 5:8-11 [NIV] *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.”*

There are many reasons to be afraid here on earth because this is Satan’s domain at this time. But if we choose to follow Jesus Christ, He will give us eternal everlasting safety.

If all humanity gave serious attention to these basic truths and lived by them as central to their lives; enmities, persecutions, murders and bloody wars would be a thing of the past, and peace between all human beings would reign.

Isn’t that the kind of world we all would like to live in?