

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A CHRISTIAN – THE CHRISTIAN’S WAY OF LIFE

Galatians 6:12-16

INTRODUCTION

- A. The Christian is a “new creation” for whom “all things have become new” – 2 CO 5:17.
- B. A part of what this newness means is that the Christian lives in “newness of life” – RO 6:4. (
- C. Let us look at the new and better “lifestyle” of the Christian as a positive benefit.

DISCUSSION

I. THE QUEST FOR QUALITY LIVING

- A. The search for the “good life” is a universal human concern - EC 1:3; 6:12.
- B. Humanism, the prevailing philosophy of our time, asserts that “the chief end of human life is to work for the happiness of man upon this earth and within the confines of the Nature that is his home” (The Philosophy of Humanism, Corliss Lamont, p. 3).
 - 1. Considering nothing more than “Nature,” however, man has always been driven to cry: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity” - EC 1:2.
 - 2. EC 2:11.
 - 3. Ironically, “humanism” de-humanizes man by denying him the fulfillment of his basic nature - GE 1:27; EC 12:13, 14.
 - a. Materialism, hedonism, etc. are constricting outlooks that diminish what life is really about - LK 12:23.
 - b. 2 PE 2:12; Cf. JU 10.
- C. Christianity, in contrast, emphasizes the need for God’s wisdom to illuminate the good life - PR 14:12; JE 10:23; 1 CO 1:25.
- D. God’s revealed intention for man involves not only his eternal happiness, but also his earthly happiness - NU 6:24-26; 1 TI 4:8.
 - 1. God wills for man to have the benefit of a quality life - PS 84:11; JN 10:10; 1 PT. 3:9-12. Cf. PR 3:7, 8; EC 11:9, 10; Gal. 5:22, 23; 2 PE 1:2-4.
 - 2. Even God’s law, i.e. His restraints upon man’s conduct, are for the preservation and enhancement of man’s life. Cf. GE 2:16, 17. LE 18:5; DT 4:5-8.
 - 3. Christ’s death enabled man to be “redeemed” from his “aimless conduct” (1 PE. 1:18 NKJV). Cf. “futile ways” (RSV), “worthless manner of life” (TEV), “empty folly” (NEB). Cf. Acts 14:15; RO 6:20-23; EP 4:22.
 - 4. The New Testament epistles were customarily begun: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” - RO 1:7; 1 TH 1:1; etc. “Grace” = charis = God’s favor, gracious care. “Peace” = eirene = “peace” in the Hebrew sense of welfare, health, well-being.
- E. The Christian has discovered a paradox: the ultimate in this life is enjoyed only when one ceases to make this life his ultimate concern! Life is “found” in the “losing” of it - MT 16:25, 26. Cf. MT 6:33; 10:39; 1 TI 6:18, 19.

II. THE CHRISTIAN WAY OF LIFE: QUALITY GAINED THROUGH CHARACTER

- A. Character, the key to Christian conduct.
 - 1. Character = one’s true qualities, values. “Character is what you are in the dark”.
 - 2. A quality life is impossible without a quality character - LK 6:43-45; GA 6:7, 8.
 - a. “You make a living by what you get and a life by what you give.”
 - b. “Our greatest need is to be, not simply to do or to have.”
 - c. “History is the record of an encounter between character and circumstance” - Cf. JN 16:33; 17:15; 2 CO 12:9, 10.
 - 3. The Christian’s way of life is a triumph of Christ-like character over circumstance - RO 12:1, 2. Cf. JN 3:8; 1 PT 1:15, 16; 2 PT 1:2-4.

- B. Christian conduct, a positive good.
1. The quality life is positively good, not merely the negative absence of sin - JA 1:27. The Christian's freedom is freedom for, as well as freedom from - 1 TH 1:9, 10.
 2. The Christian "gives up" lesser things in order to "gain" greater things - EP 4:17-24; PH 3:7-11. The requirements of the God-pleasing life are not "burdensome"- 1 JN 5:3.
 3. The Christian deliberately adopts sound values, principles, and priorities, and fits his life to the ideal, rather than finding an "ideal" to fit his life.
- C. Christian conduct, an "excellent" lifestyle - PH 3:8.
1. "Excellent attributes" describe the Christian's life:
 - a. Blessed - PS 1:1-6.
 - b. Satisfying - MT 5:6.
 - c. Tranquil - PH 4:7.
 - d. Stable - HE 6:19.
 - e. Dynamic - PH 2:13.
 - f. Realistic - LK 12:23.
 - g. Practical - 1 TI 4:8.
 2. "Excellent responsibilities" are involved in the Christian's life:
 - a. It is imperative that the Christian increase the excellence of his lifestyle - EP 4:15; 2 PE 1:5-7; 3:18.
 - 1) "Perfection" (i.e. maturity, completeness) in the scriptural sense is possible.
 - 2) Cf. 1 CO 2:6; PH 3:15.
 - b. The Christian must not only learn, he must live. Cf. CO 1:9, 10; 2 TI 3:7.
 - c. The Christian must recommend his lifestyle: MT 5:13-16; Acts 26:28, 29. In 1 PE 2:12, "honorable" = kalos = attractive, winsome, lovely, noble.
 - d. The Christian must credit the quality of his life to God - 1 CO 15:10; EP 2:10; 1 PE 4:10, 11.

CONCLUSION

- A. The thing that makes life good is "prosperity" of the soul — all other considerations are secondary - 3 JN 2-4. EC 12:13-14.
- B. MT5:8. "Pleasures of earth, so seemingly sweet, fail at the last my longings to meet; only in Thee my bliss is complete, only dear Lord in Thee" (T. O. Chisholm).
- C. MT 11:28-30.