

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

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THE LIFE WE CHOOSE

Jim Stauffer

Sometimes perspective is clouded by the reality of the moment. Something akin to being unable to see the forest for the trees.

This may be true of the child of God as he *walks by faith and not by sight* in his endurance of mortality as he *waits for Jehovah*. (2 Cor. 5:7; Psa. 37:9)

The apostle Paul gives clarification to the perspective of the servant of God. 2 Cor. 5:1 *For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens*. Here he addresses the frailty of our mortal life while reassuring us of the promise of eternal life to follow. He describes it in terms of being present with the Lord in eternity compared to being absent from Him as we live on earth. *Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.....Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him*. (2 Cor. 5:6,9)

The comparison is stark. Life here is fraught with difficulties. We are mortal. Our bodies suffer from sickness and fear. We are tempted and tried and burdened in all the ways of mortal life. On the other hand, to be clothed upon with life provides not only relief from such burdens, it brings us into the presence of God. 2 Cor. 5:4 *For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life*.

This text does not contradict the many passages of scripture where the Lord has promised to be with us and sustain us as we labor and wait for the Lord. He promised to be with us when we are gathered in His name. (Mat. 18:20) He also promised to provide sustenance for the faithful. (Mat. 6:33) He has said He will be with us always even to the end of the world as we preach His gospel. (Mat. 28:19,20) Yet these are promises He makes to be with us while we are here. Paul speaks on the occasion under discussion of *our* ability to one day be with *Him there*. He speaks of this time as the goal of our life while on the earth.

To lead us in this quest, he says God has given us the earnest of the Spirit. That is to say, until we

complete life on earth we have the Holy Spirit to guide us. We know the work of the Spirit is to guide us by way of the revelation of the mind of God as recorded by the inspired writers of the New Testament. (1 Cor. 2:10-13)

This, Paul tells the Ephesians is the *earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory*. (Eph. 1:14)

The perspective we seek, then, is the clear understanding of the purpose of our lives. This truly answers all the philosophers who in deep thought ponder said purpose. To achieve that purpose we serve the One who first created us and then made us a new creature through the redemptive process made possible by the blood of His Son Jesus on Calvary. (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 1:18,19)

Paul is not shy when it comes to teaching us through his own life. he admits on other occasions, his struggle as he desires his heavenly home. He says, *to live is Christ, and to die is gain.....But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for it is very far better*. (Phil. 1:21,23)

He makes it clear near the end of his life that the goal of living is to prepare oneself for heaven. Furthermore, to receive heaven is to receive the reward of a life long struggle toward that end. 2 Tim. 4:6 *For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: 8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing*. Now many would claim to have loved the appearing of Jesus. That is His dying on the cross of Calvary to offer redemption from sin.

The question facing us is, do we recognize the purpose of our lives is to devote ourselves to His service? Are we using this life to prepare for that life when we will be with God in heaven for eternity? Or have we sacrificed our future inheritance in the interest of pleasure in this life. After all, we will give such an account to Him. 2 Cor. 5:10 *For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad*.

“Homophobia” And The Homosexual Agenda

By Allan Turner

Over the past one hundred years, homosexuality has traveled the road from criminality, immorality, illness, and, finally, to an “alternate life-style.” The real breakthrough for homosexuals in this century can be traced back thirty or so years to Great Britain's legalization of private consensual homosexuality. Although homosexuals would have to admit that this was certainly a triumph for tolerance, mere tolerance is not enough for them. Tolerance still implies deviance; therefore, the aim of homosexuals in recent years has been to go beyond tolerance to legitimacy. Our current situation, of course, testifies to just how successful they have been.

Political militancy on behalf of homosexuals in this country can be traced to three days of confrontation in June of 1969 between the police and homosexuals in New York's Greenwich Village. The confrontation started when the police raided a “gay bar” called the Stonewall Inn. Now the so-called Stonewall Riots are commemorated each year by what has come to be identified as “Gay Pride Week” or “Gay Pride Month,” raucously celebrated in most of our major cities with parades and demonstrations.

To the politically militant homosexuals, and their supporters in the liberal media, homosexual behavior is not a perversion; it is, instead, a constitutional issue, i.e., a matter of basic human and civil rights. They have been encouraged and supported in their brashness by America's Intelligentsia, who have said: *“In areas of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. While we do not approve of exploitative, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered ‘evil.’ Short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, individuals should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their life-styles as they desire” (Humanist Manifesto II).*

Furthermore, both the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association have championed the cause of homosexuality by passing resolutions favorable to homosexuals. Back in 1975, the American Psychological Association released a statement which said: *“The governing body of the American Psychological Association today voted to oppose discrimination against homosexuals and to support the recent action by the American Psychiatric Association, which moved homosexuality from the Association's official list of mental disorders.”* It went on to say: *“Homosexuality per se implies no impairment of judgment, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capabilities. Further, the American Psychological Association urges all mental health*

professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientations” (News release of the American Psychological Association, January 24, 1975). This, of course, is not a scientific statement; it is, instead, a political statement that is totally speculative and opinionated.

Politically militant homosexuals (they call themselves “gay rights activists” [GRA]) are highly mobilized in our society. According to the current GRA's propaganda machine, anyone with an aversion to homosexuality is “abnormal.” We ought not to be surprised that back in the 1970s, the first item on the research agenda of the Task Force on the Status of Lesbian and Gay Male Psychologists of the American Psychological Association was the “Nature and Meaning of Homophobia” (“Removing the Stigma,” Final Report of the Board of Social and Ethical Responsibility for Psychology's Task Force on the Status of Lesbian and Gay Male Psychologists, American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., 1979). This newly coined word, always used in a negative sense, constitutes the counterpart of “gay.” All that has been said positively about “gay” is repeated in a negative way about “homophobia.” If being “gay” is the condition of accepting and affirming joyfully the fact that one is a homosexual, “homophobia” means rejecting such a condition. To those who promote the value of homosexuality, “homophobia” is a most loathsome malady which must be cured. Incidentally, when they speak of “homophobia” in social terms as a form of discrimination, it is something to be eliminated from society; and when they speak of it in religious terms as a sin, it is something that must be repented of.

According to the GRA propaganda machine, a symptom of the illness, social disorder, or sin of “homophobia” is a strong revulsion to homosexual activities as they are being displayed in public areas and parks, where citizens complain of acts of sodomy being performed by naked men both at night and in broad-open daylight. You know you have this disorder when you go into a public rest room and are repelled to see homosexual acts being engaged in while others watch. You know you are a “homophobe” if you are afraid for your small boy to use the public rest rooms because the urinals and toilets are frequented by loitering homosexuals. That these kinds of activities actually occur is substantiated by the Dallas Police Department's Vice Control Division, which has reported fifteen to twenty arrests in just a one hour period on numerous occasions at the city's Northpark. In cities where the police still try to enforce the law against sodomy, the Dallas Police statistics are not unusual. Much to our dismay, a couple of years ago here in Louisville one of these homosexual toilet loiterers was discovered to be none other than a gospel preacher. If such disgusts you, then you can be sure that you are a “homophobe,” who, according to the defenders of homosexuality, needs to get cured, be socialized, or repent, as the case may be.

The GRA and those who support them are making an all-out bid to completely reverse the moral and

religious considerations that have made homosexuality the ugly sin it really is. According to the GRA propaganda machine, all moral and religious considerations in the gay rights issue must be “discredited,” and must be identified as “perpetrating social injustices against homosexuals” (Homosexuality and Social Justice,” *SIECUS Report*, Vol. XI, No. 3 [January 1983], pp. 1-4).

One of the most absurd efforts ever made to “discredit” the religious considerations concerning homosexuality was expounded by John Boswell in his much extolled *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*. In addressing himself to the obvious Biblical condemnation of homosexuality found in Romans, Chapter One, Boswell unashamedly wrote: “...*The persons whom Paul condemns are manifestly not homosexual: what he derogates are homosexual acts committed by apparently heterosexual persons. The whole point of Romans 1, in fact, is to stigmatize persons who have rejected their calling, and gotten off the true path they were once on. It would completely undermine the thrust of the argument if the persons in question were not “naturally” inclined to the opposite sex in the same way they were naturally inclined to monotheism... It is not clear that Paul distinguished in his thoughts or writings between gay persons (in the sense of permanent sexual preference) and heterosexuals who simply engaged in periodic homosexual behavior... Paul did not discuss gay persons but only homosexual acts committed by heterosexual persons*” (p. 109).

According to the homosexual agenda, Christianity, “by its moral teaching on the intrinsic evil of homosexuality,...is a conspirator in the violence perpetrated against gay men and lesbian women who are senselessly discriminated against within the public sector” (Report of the Task Force on Gay/Lesbian Issues, Commission of Social Justice, Archdiocese of San Francisco, October 24, 1979). Currently, every effort is being made by the GRA to destroy not just the morals we have traditionally believed in, but the very religion we practice.

This article was written several years ago by bro. Turner to inform and warn brethren about the agenda of the GRA. We have since seen the progress they have made in their appeal to the world. It behooves us as those who would contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3) to be renewed inwardly so outwardly we faint not. (2 Cor. 4:16) Lev. 18:22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Lev. 20:13 And if a man lie with mankind, as with womankind, both of them have committed abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. 1 Cor. 6:9 Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

THE REWARDS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Randy Harshbarger

Then Peter answered and said to Him, See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have? So Jesus said to them, Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life (Matthew 19:27-29).

Why do you serve the Lord? Does your faithfulness in the kingdom proceed from the ultimate desire for the great reward of heaven? Do you focus on what you are going to receive in eternity? Or, do you focus on the inherent goodness of Jesus Christ? Does your life of faith proceed, not from what you are going to receive, but from the genuine desire to honor the Lord with little thought for yourself? Is there a contradiction in these two ideas? Can they exist harmoniously? Do they both express Biblical truth?

It seems clear that the disciples of Jesus sought some kind of reward from having forsaken their fishing nets and tax booths. If the rich young ruler could somehow gain treasures in heaven, why couldn't the disciples be rewarded for their perceived sacrifices as they followed the Lord? Peter is not rebuked for asking his question. Jesus responded with the promise of blessings in the life to come. Mark's account says that the hundredfold blessings would be realized in *this life (Mark 10:29-31)*. While the final, ultimate blessings of Christ reach their pinnacle in heaven, there are blessings that we enjoy in this life.

Are believers always the wealthiest people in the world? Do believers always enjoy greater material benefits and opportunities of this life? Of course not! And even when we are able to enjoy what this life has to offer, it often comes with persecution. *Who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life (Mark 10:30)*. Yet, when we have a heavenly perspective on life, we can greatly enjoy what God gives, whether much or little. Even the cup of cold water received from the Lord is viewed as a great blessing, especially when our focus is on the one who gives that drink.

And remember, *But many who are first will be last, and the last first (Matthew 19:30)*. Things may be reversed in this life—you may never get your due or just rewards. Yet, in the life to come your reward will be great. And remember, you may have much in this life but have little in the life to come. Is it wrong to desire a blessing for serving the Lord? No! But do not lose sight of the heavenly in your quest for the earthly.

Rom. 8:18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.*

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: J.R. DANIEL, PAT AND GRANT CLOTHIER, MARY CZIRR, AND JAN PATRICK. LORETTA TAPP IS TO RESUME CANCER TREATMENTS THIS MONTH.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY MORNING AND WEDNESDAY EVENING: EVIDENCES

SERMON SUNDAY AM: "THOU ARE THE MAN"



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10