

What do you want out of Life? - Lesson III

(www.mensgroup.org –“Original Study”)

DESCRIPTION

The third Study Guide covers the topic of, “What we want out of our life on earth”. We live in a very self-centered world where we are constantly being bombarded with messages that center on self or me. What will make “me” happy? What do “I” want to achieve in life? How can “I” be successful and have financial security?

There are thousands of “self-help” books that promise to help us in our personal quest. Book such as Dress for Success and The Power of Positive Thinking are ready to help us reach our goals in life.

As the Study asks, “Why is it so hard? Why do we miss the boat in discovering how to live a meaningful and purposeful life? It is difficult because all of these self-help books are focused on a culture that places “self” at the center of the universe and "not God".

The world’s culture creates an “illusion” of what is success and what is important. As defined in the Dictionary, “illusion” is a false idea or belief. The only true truth for us on earth comes from God’s words. From God’s words we get clarity and the hard truth of how we are to live our lives.

We hope you enjoy Study Guide III. We welcome your feedback and encourage you to send us your thoughts via the website’s “contact us” option.

Thank you again for your interest in mensgroup.org

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Men’s Group Foundation, Inc.

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"WHAT DO YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE?"



What do you want out of Life? - Lesson 3

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WHAT DO YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE?

Who do you know that doesn't want to get as much out of life as is humanly possible? Financial security, good health, a position of power and authority, great friendships, amazing sex... the list is endless... and has been from the beginning of time. And there's no shortage of "self-help" literature available to assist us in our quest: *Dress for Success*, *Think & Grow Rich*, *The Power of Positive Thinking*... that list is endless as well.

But in our more thoughtful moments, when we're all alone and completely honest with ourselves, what we **really** want out of life are not the trappings of success... not the temporary buzz that comes from this or that achievement... not the passing thrill-of-the-moment that results from this or that accomplishment. When we're completely honest with ourselves, what we truly want out of life is to find meaningful purpose, and to experience the enduring well-being that derives from finding and fulfilling such purpose.

Why is that so hard? How do we manage to so easily miss the boat? Our lives are a tapestry of hopes, and fears, and experiences...all of which go into shaping how we view the world. And much of the messaging that shapes our world view emanates from a culture that places "self" at the center of the universe. ME – ME – ME! How easy it is to believe that life is all about... ME... to embrace the notion that everything really does revolve around ME! That, however, is not reality.

Life doesn't revolve around ME. To believe that, is to embrace an **illusion**. Webster defines **illusion** as, **a false idea or belief**. In this Bible Study we will examine how easy it is to fall prey to illusions. For example, we're constantly bombarded with advertising that tells us lasting fulfillment can be found in the possessing of things...that well-being can be found in the applause of others... or that attaining a position of power and authority is the solution to our insecurities.

These are all illusions! God's Word provides hard truth regarding these illusions. More importantly, the Bible provides clarity and assistance regarding what truly constitutes meaningful and enduring purpose in life.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Spend a minute considering some of the key themes that drive much of today’s advertising and product messaging. How much importance is placed on “self”, and satisfying or meeting the needs of self?

2. How much joy or fulfillment do modern day commercials promise will come simply by “possessing” some specific product or service? From your experience, how well does the payoff match the promise?

3. Have you ever deceived yourself into believing something was true because you so deeply wanted it to be true; only to realize afterwards that it wasn’t?

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-11, 2:18-19, 5:10-11 & Matthew 6:19-21, 6:24-26, and 6:33-34

Ecclesiastes 1 ¹ *The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem:* ² *“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”* ³ *What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun?* ⁴ *Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.* ⁵ *The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises.* ⁶ *The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.* ⁷ *All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again.* ⁸ *All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.* ⁹ *What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.* ¹⁰ *Is there anything of which one can say,*

“Look! This is something new”? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time. ¹¹ No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow them.

Ecclesiastes 2 ¹⁸ *I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. ¹⁹ And who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish? Yet they will have control over all the fruit of my toil into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless.*

Ecclesiastes 5 ¹⁰ *Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless. ¹¹ As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owners except to feast their eyes on them?*

Matthew 6 ¹⁹ *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

²⁴ *No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. ²⁵ Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?*

³³ *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.* Holy Bible - New International Version

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The phrase “under the sun” appears more than twenty times in the Book of Ecclesiastes. This as a Hebrew idiom meaning, figuratively, “life apart from God.” How does the Teacher sum up the end result of a life lived “under the sun.”?

2. For many individuals, accumulating wealth (or material possessions) is the underlying purpose in life. How does the Teacher describe the fulfillment that derives from wealth and possessions? Does this ring true (or not) with your own experience and with your own observation of the experience of others?

3. Why is it so easy to believe an illusion when it comes to the issue of where you seek fulfillment and purpose in life?

4. Christ said in Matthew 6:21 that a person’s heart will reveal what they truly treasure. Besides determining how you spend your money, what are some other areas of life that reveal what you truly treasure?

5. The “Kingdom of God” is every space and place where God has complete rule and authority. According to God’s Word, the “Kingdom of God” includes EVERY space and place. However, God never imposes his rule and authority on anyone’s life... mankind is always free to choose whom or what he

will serve. What then does it mean to “seek first the kingdom of God”? What impact does doing so have on how a person lives their life?

6. What are “all these things” in Mathew 6:33 (examine verses 25 and 26 closely for help answering this question)?

7. Believing that “all these things will be given to us” involves trusting that God will keep His word. Numbers 23:19 is just one example from Scripture that reinforces His promise to do just that. Can you identify other Scripture verses that confirm God’s promise to provide for His children?

APPLICATION

If we’re completely honest, we’ll acknowledge we’re all “sold out” to something or someone. Romans 6:16 puts it bluntly: “*you are slaves to the one whom you obey.*” Read Chapter 6 of Romans, determine what wages you are collecting from the master of your life. Are your wages delivering fulfilment & purpose (life), or are the wages ultimately producing an illusion (death)?

Note: If you’re not experiencing true fulfilment in life, visit the following website for more information on how to make certain you are getting the most out of this life:

<http://www.cru.org/how-to-know-god/would-you-like-to-know-god-personally.html>

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