

The Old Paths

Volume 12, Issue 50

February 12, 2006

“You Only Get One Chance!”

Jarrod Jacobs

“*One*” is a very interesting word. This word stands for unity, and wholeness. It tells us how many churches Christ established (Matt. 16:18). “One” is what Christ prayed that His disciples would be (Jn. 17:21). It also represents the number of times we get to live in this world! We have one chance to live and no guarantee as to how long that life will last, so we need to make the best of this opportunity.

The apostle Paul understood this fact and told the Corinthians, “...*behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*” (II Cor. 6:2). Jesus Himself understood that when He walked upon this earth, He only had one chance at it. So, we find Him being very busy and “about (His) Father’s business” from an early age (Lk. 2:49). In fact, while He was on earth, it was estimated that “*there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written*” (Jn. 21:25). Jesus accepted what many people today do not, and that is that our time is limited upon this earth (Jn. 9:4; Jas. 4:14). Many people act as if they are going to live forever upon this earth, and this is a mistake! Our time on earth is limited, so we need to make the best use of it we can.

It bothers me when I hear folks talking about “wasting time,” or “killing time.” I realize

these are expressions, and I don’t consider the wording as “sin,” but I wonder if we realize what we are saying. Our life on earth is limited; the longer we live, the closer we get to its end. Since this is the case, it seems to me like we would be trying to do as the Ephesian letter instructs and “redeem the time” (i.e., use our time wisely and properly) rather than trying to waste, or kill, or otherwise mutilate the time we have left on this earth! The passage of time is deceitful in a way, for as it moves by, there is no pain associated with it as it leaves. We can be anywhere on earth or in space and time continues to pass. No force on earth can stop time from passing, so we need to make the best of what we have left!

What do we have to do on earth that is so important? Actually, there are many important responsibilities we must accept. If we neglect or shirk our responsibilities, then we will answer to God for that on the day of Judgment (II Cor. 5:10).

You Only Have One Chance To Live Your Life.

Think about your age. Do you realize that you only get to be your age ONCE? You only get to live February 12, 2006 one time! If the Lord wills that we live tomorrow, then this day is gone forever and will never come back, just like every other day, month, and year previous to today. If He does not will that this world stands to see another sunrise, this day will still be gone! What have we given in exchange

for this day?

James noted, “*Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that*” (Jas. 4:13-15). Think about this passage! Just as the vapor of steam disappears off the lake, or the steam from a pot dissipates into the room, so also one’s life vanishes quickly after being born. Knowing this, what will we do to make sure our lives have meaning and purpose?

Let us think seriously and soberly about this day and every day and make sure the things we do are done to the glory of God (Col. 3:23; I Cor. 10:31).

You Only Have One Chance To Raise Your Children.

Just as parents’ lives pass quickly, so also our children are quickly passing through this life. Though we wish they would, they will not stay their current age all their lives. Some parents may “think” their children are still children, and yes some adults still act like children, but time continues to move along, and that little 5 year-old is now 25, 35, 45, then 55, etc.!

God has placed a great responsibility upon making sure that parents teach their children. This was so in Old Testament days (Deut. 6:6-9) and continues today (Eph. 6:4). Parents need to realize that there is a precious soul that has been given to them for a little while, and that this person is aging just as the parents are (Jas. 4:14). If parents shirk their responsibilities in teaching and training, then who, pray tell, will teach these precious ones?

If I shirk my responsibility, I need to know that Satan is more than willing to teach my children (I Pet. 5:8)! He would be happy to get a hold of them and keep them for his own. I only get one chance to bring my children up right, and to teach them, not only the facts concerning living on earth, but more importantly, the facts about how to get to Heaven! There is only one opportunity while they are in my home and under my roof to teach them about the Lord, about His sacrifice, about God's love, and about my being willing to sacrifice and live for Him in order to go to Heaven!

The question is not, "Who will teach my children?" The question is, "Will I be the one teaching my children?" The Bible tells parents to do this. Will we accept our God-given duties, or will we shirk our responsibilities? We can only answer this for ourselves, but rest assured that we will only get this chance once; and it will not come our way again!

You Only Have One Chance To Be Saved.

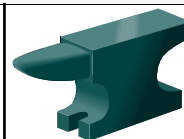
Some folks pour their lives into education, or into architecture. Some people will spend their life in service to others. Many are involved in noble pursuits on this earth. Yet, all of this is meaningless if our soul is not right with God. Remember, Jesus asked the question, "*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*" (Matt. 16:26).

Knowing that our time on earth is fleeting, today may very well be your last chance to make your life right with God! When we think about it, we really have a "narrow window" of opportunity to make our lives right with

God. This is because for the first few years of life, we are too young to believe and be baptized (Mk. 16:16). Babies cannot make conscious decisions about their faith; nor have they sinned (Ezek. 18:4, 20)! Therefore, they are not subject to the gospel message. Assuming that one lives to old age, we see that in one's old age, he/she may not be mentally capable of making the conscious decision to believe in Christ, and then to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Yet, if some tragedy occurs while in our youth and our opportunity to obey God is taken away, (through death or injury) then we have even less time than others to believe on Christ, repent of our sins, and be baptized. Therefore, our "window of opportunity" for salvation in Christ is narrow, and we must make the right decision before it is too late! Today may very well be our "last chance"!

Conclusion

Sometimes the games we play allow for "do-overs," but life does not! Let us not shirk our responsibilities, or waste our lives in vain efforts of this life. Let us submit our wills to God's will and let us be found living a faithful life to God, (I Cor. 15:58) and teaching our children this way so long as we live!



Anvil Sparks

R.L. Whiteside

- ♦ Truth is universal — that is the reason a person sometimes thinks the speaker is aiming every thing he says at him.
- ♦ There is no real intelligence where there is no real thinking.
- ♦ Sometimes you can know which way you are headed by looking at the crowd around you.
- ♦ Narrow-minded? Well, a person's mind should be narrow enough to shut out everything but truth, and broad enough to accept all truth.
- ♦ The person who shows spite and hatred will reap his share of it.
- ♦ Straight living cannot come out of crooked thinking.

From: *Doctrinal Discourses*

Thought:

A mule can't pull while kicking;
and cannot kick while pulling!
The same thing goes for people.
Are you a "puller" or a "kicker"?

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