

What Do You Say About The Meaning Of Life?

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Introduction

What do you say about the meaning of life? Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? Does our existence on earth have any real meaning? Is happiness found in the pursuit of pleasure, possession, or preeminence? Or is transcendent meaning found in some more sublime pursuit?

Wrong Answers

Pursuing a Life of Pleasure

Solomon recognized that the pursuit of pleasure was empty (Eccles. 2:1-3, 10-11). He repeatedly warned his son of the dangers of a hedonistic lifestyle (Prov. 5:1-14; 6:24-26; 7:21-27). James reminds us of the consequences of leading a life of wanton pleasure (James 5:1-6). Like Moses who was looking to the reward, may we willingly choose to endure ill-treatment with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:24-26).

Pursuing a Life of Possessions

Solomon learned that the accumulation of wealth is futile (Eccles. 2:4-11, 17-23). Contrasting a self-serving lifestyle with sacrificial discipleship, Jesus reminds us that material gain is momentary, while divine repayment is eternal; forfeiting one's soul in pursuit of the former is complete folly (Matt. 16:24-27; Luke 12:13-21). The psalmist David said, "Better is the little of the righteous than the abundance of many wicked" (Psa. 37:16-22). The apostle Paul prayed that disciples of Christ might recognize "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18-21).

Pursuing a Life of Preeminence

Solomon enjoyed great wisdom and fame, but such was vain when divorced from divine favor (Eccles. 2:12-17; cf. 1 Kings 4:29-34; 10:1-10; 11:1-8). Jesus warned against those who seek glory from man and do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God (John 5:39-47). Paul asked, "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). James reminds us, "Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). Therefore, let us selflessly seek the highest good of our fellow man and the glory that is from God (1 Thess. 2:1-8).

Right Answers

Pursuing a Happy & Productive Life

Solomon said, "There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good" (Eccles. 2:24-26). Again, "I know that there is nothing better for them than to

rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime..." (Eccles. 3:9-13). It is good to eat and drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor (Eccles. 5:18-20). It is good to live cheerfully, work diligently, and enjoy life with one's loving spouse (Eccles. 9:4-10). At each stage of life, we should rejoice in God's blessings, keeping a pleasant disposition, seizing each opportunity, yet living in view of eternity (Eccles. 11:6-10).

Pursuing a Reverential & Obedient Life

Reverence toward God demands perspective: "Everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him" (Eccles. 3:14-17). Again, "Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly" (Eccles. 8:12-13).

Reverence towards God demands caution: "Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil. Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God... For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God" (Eccles. 5:1-7).

Reverence toward God demands obedience: "The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments..." The KJV adds, "this is the whole duty of man;" the NKJ says, "this is man's all;" The NASB states, "this applies to every person" (Eccles. 12:13-14).

Conclusion

What is the meaning of life? Men would make this complicated; in reality, it is very simple: Happiness is not found in the pursuit of pleasure, possession, or preeminence; rather, it comes from pursuing a happy and productive life; it is the outgrowth of a reverential and obedient life.

Consider this declaration from Deuteronomy: "Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the Lord's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?" (Deut. 10:12-13).

Consider this pearl from Proverbs: "Do not let your heart envy sinners, but live in the fear of the Lord always. Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off" (Prov. 23:17-18).

Consider the marvelous message of Micah: "With what shall I come to the Lord and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves? Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams, in ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Mic. 6:6-8).

Consider this summation from Jesus: "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).