

THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD (4)

2 Timothy 4:7-8, Hebrews 12:1-2

Is your life a life that is honoring God? When all is said and done with your earthly life, what will the Heavenly Father have to say about it? Since we are all in the process of walking through this life, and in reality on our way out, it is a wise person that stops and evaluates his or her life, asking the question, “Is my life honoring God?” Paul was at the end of his life in 2 Timothy, about ready to face execution, but at the end of his life, he speaks plainly and candidly to Timothy, letting him know that “he was ready”.

Paul was not ashamed of the gospel or afraid of death. He was not doing fighting death, for he knew that his death would be a welcome relief to many of the problems that he faced during life. Paul however did make it clear that “he had finished his course”. In short, Paul could say, “my life has honored the Father!” Though Paul was in a human body, and lived in a sea of wickedness, he made it abundantly clear that he was ready to go home, and that he had lived a life that was pleasing to the Father.

Three things he declares in v.7. He declares that

- 1) He has fought a good fight.
- 2) He has finished his course.
- 3) He has kept the faith.

He compares his life and his walk as a race, a course to the finish. In truth, if we are going to live lives that are honoring to the Father, we too must understand that this life is a race. It is the will of our Heavenly Father, but there are certain truths that must be a part of our Christian life.

1. THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD- STAYS FOCUSED. One of the characteristics of that life that is honoring and pleasing to the Father is “focus. Listen to Scripture! *Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Jude 1:21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

When you examine the life of Paul, you find a man that stayed focused on Christ. While there were a thousand things in his day to distract him, just like there are in ours, that life that honors God, stays focused on “Him”. In the course of the Olympics, one of the exciting things to watch is the 100 meters race. Runners get on their marks and they go. But during the course they must remain disciplined. They cannot drift over into another’s lane. They cannot allow the pain to distract them, neither can they let any taunts or distractions affect their racing. They must keep their eyes straight ahead, because the reality is, that race will be over in a matter of seconds. In truth, there is a similarity to our lives as well.

There are a million things that can hinder us. We can become sidetracked with: 1) the pains and the tragedies of life, 2) the taunts of the enemy and the world we live in. 3) a desire to look around during this one God given life, and become distracted by sin and the allurements of this world and become disqualified.

The sad reality is, there are countless numbers of lives that for one reason or the other become distracted and quit running their race. Paul talks about one such life in a man called Demas. Listen to what Paul says about this man. 2 Timothy 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus

unto Dalmatia. The reality of the life of Demas is that of a life that was distracted because his heart wanted the things of the world. He wanted a little bit of this or a little bit of that. Paul declared, “Demas has forsaken me...” Demas at one time has been a great help to Paul, but for some strange reason, he left Paul’s side, and quit. Paul could have let that bother him...but he retained his focus. Our focus is significant to the Father. The Hebrew writer declares in *Hebrew 12: 2*, “*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...*” Whatever you allow yourself to focus on, that is what is going to direct your life. For some it is money. For others it is pleasure. For still others it is another god of some type. Yet, Paul never let whatever happened in the world affect him in his walk with God. He retained his focus and was never disqualified. Paul didn’t let those that hated him distract him. He didn’t let those that “hated the gospel” distract him. The truth is, there are thousands that hate the gospel, because they are deceived by the wicked one. But Paul’s declaration was this, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)*

2. THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD -FOCUSES ON A RELATIONSHIP. If there has been one thing that has hurt Christianity, it is this...namely, many people focus on a religion, rather than a real, lasting relationship with a person. Jesus didn’t come to give you and me “a religion”. Jesus didn’t die on the cross in order that you could have “a religion”. Paul realized that Jesus Christ died on the cross for the express purpose that we could have a “real relationship with Him...Jesus Christ!

There is no pleasing God, honoring God, in any way, if there is no desire to have a relationship with the God that created you. Sadly, for all too many that never has been the case. In a relationship there is interacting, sharing, opening, honest exchange of the heart. In a relationship, there is also listening, and loving...learning and enjoying.

Why would Jesus die on the cross for our sins, and not want to give us a relationship with Himself? Yet, sadly many have never come to know that. It was the heart’s desire of Paul to “know Christ”. He declared, “*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.*” (*Philippians 3:10*) The life that honors God is “focused” on a relationship that is real, personal, and intimate.

Religion was not what enabled Paul to endure the difficult beatings, and the hostilities of life...but rather the wonderful fact that there was a Loving God watching over him, loving him, caring for him, and would at the proper time receive him unto Himself. It is not “religion” that brings honor to God, but a daily living love relationship in a person. God declared through the psalmist in *Psalms 50:15*, “*I want you to trust me in your times of trouble, so I can rescue you and you can give me glory.*” If you live your life focusing on a “religion”, you will live a life that is less than fulfilling, for the God that created you to enjoy relationships, desires that You enjoy an intimate, close, abiding relationship with him, both now and into all of eternity.

3. THE LIFE THAT HONORS GOD -IS ORIENTED TOWARD ETERNITY. In this same chapter, Paul makes it abundantly clear that there was “One that would “judge” his life. Paul was brought to realize by the Spirit of God, that his life mattered not only for time, but for eternity as well, and it was to this end that Paul lived.

Paul knew well that he didn’t run his race in vain, for Almighty God was watching carefully and closely everything that he was doing. The truth is, our loving Heavenly Father is

watching, and He is watching to reward. All the pain and all the turmoil that Paul experienced in this life for the glory of the Lord would be a reward in eternity.

When our lives are oriented toward God, and oriented toward pleasing our Heavenly Father, He wants us to know that someday we will be rewarded for this one life that we have lived. Paul declared, “...*there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give ME...*” (2 Tim. 4:8)

You can live without your life being oriented to God, His will, His ways and His purposes, but you will be the eternal loser. Paul knew that he would be richly rewarded for his life. And the same holds true for our lives. When you are rewarded, it will have eternal consequences. However, if you lose rewards, that too will have eternal consequences. Paul kept moving forward, kept his life in check, and kept in the love of God, not because everyone else was doing it...but because he knew that “The Righteous Judge” would evaluate him at some point in time. Do you live your life oriented to eternity?

Do you really believe with all your being that the Lord, the Righteous Judge will call your life into account. Paul was quick to say that the Lord was not only going to reward him, but **ALL THOSE THAT LOVED HIS APPEARING**. Is your life a life that would be pleasing to the Father...if Christ came today? Are your personal actions in keeping with an obedient Christian that is bringing honor to your heavenly Father, just as a child is to honor his earthly father. It is the mark of a wise saint of God that lives oriented toward that fact that some day his life on earth will end...and there will come a time when our lives will be completely evaluated by the Lord Jesus Christ...and He Word will be the final matter over our lives.