

The Meaning of Life



Am I just living to die?

What am I here for?

Is this really all there is?

Searching for Meaning

Growing up, I often pondered the meaning of life. What is it all about? What am I here for? Am I just living to die? It is because of this inquisitive nature that I could really relate to a character in one of my favorite movies. It was a coming of age movie and the character was a writer who could not seem to 'find himself' until the end of the movie when he triumphantly held up a newspaper with the heading of his premiere article, 'The Meaning of Life.' Now it's my turn to give it a try. Having grown older, I think I have found the answer and would like to share it with you. I will, at times, reference the Bible, but even if you do not believe in God, please keep an open mind. It will only take a few minutes of your life, and you may find some profound insight that can help you to find your own path in life; your own meaning in the midst of a sometimes chaotic world.

Evolution teaches that life is just a freak accident and that we are the unplanned children of nature. It diminishes our value and self-worth. As a result, many grow up thinking that their lives have no real meaning or purpose. Because evolution teaches that we are just blobs of mass, many grow up on a survival of the fittest diet, believing integrity and character are secondary to survival. Of course, if this

life is all there is, then survival *is* the ultimate goal. Right and wrong are secondary. You will lie, steal, or kill to survive. However, if there is something beyond this life, then we should not focus our attention on this life, but on something more eternal. If this life is actually a step to the next life, then the character you create now is even more important than life or death itself! If this life is all there is, then you have no morals or meaning. If there is more than this life, then the meaning of life must be the character you build in this life, which you carry into the next life.

While we work so hard, striving for good grades, so we can get a good job, so we can live the American dream, many of our dreams crash when we accomplish all that we are striving for and find that life is still missing something. Many of us have to learn the hard way that "one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15). It's about more than our stuff! It's about who we are. It's about what we become. It's about our character. But what is a good character, and how do we get it?

Flawed and Broken

Strangely, most who think they have a good character will quickly admit that they are flawed and far from perfect. Of course, the fact that all of us

admit we are highly imperfect means we all recognize that we are not really good. Not *really*. "There is none who does good," the Bible says, "for all have sinned" (Rom. 3:12, 23). The Bible tells us what most of us willingly admit. While many think they are good people, most are constrained to admit that they are far from perfect. Still, since we do not know how to overcome our imperfections, we are now being told to embrace our flaws and imperfections, leaving us with a defective character. This presents a problem. Let me illustrate.

Imagine you mold a beautiful clay bowl. When you finish it, you place it in the oven to bake it, and the clay hardens, but when you take it out, you notice that it has a small hole in it that you didn't see before putting it in the oven. Sadly, the time to fix the defect was before you put it in the oven. After the bowl is baked, it is too late to fix it. In the same way, this life is our chance to overcome our defects. Sadly, those who embrace their flaws instead of fixing them will find out too late that this lifetime was their only chance to overcome their character defects.

Of course, it is impossible to overcome all of our sins and character defects without Jesus. Jesus said, "without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). We must first come to Jesus and invite Him into our hearts. The good news is, once we do this, He then

gives us the power to overcome these sins and defects, just as He "overcame" (Rev. 3:21). You see, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). God makes the impossible, possible. When we seek God's help, He gives us the power to overcome our defects, but those who refuse to overcome their sins in this life will not make it to the next life. Speaking of heaven, the Bible says, "there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles" (Rev. 21:27). Because of its deadly nature, sin cannot be permitted into heaven. That means this life is our one opportunity to overcome these sins, with Jesus' help.

Window of Opportunity

Whether you believe in God or not, this lifetime is our chance to overcome sin while Jesus is offering us His strength. This life is our probation. It is our window of opportunity. For only a limited time, Jesus is offering the power to overcome sin! While we are too weak to overcome sin on our own, Jesus says, "My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). The weaker we are, the stronger Christ works in us. That means, the weakest person can overcome their sins and character defects, but if we do not take advantage of the power of Christ to help us overcome

sin right now, our opportunity will pass. Those who fail to take advantage of this golden opportunity in this life will one day cry out, "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jer. 8:20)! Like the clay bowl, they will be doomed to destruction.

Again, whether you believe in God or not will not change the facts. The time to build your character is now. Right now, Jesus is offering to come inside you to give you the power to perfect your character. That's why we are urged, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you" (Phil. 2:12, 13). Paul adds, "I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily" (Col. 1:29). The point is, as we work to overcome sin and build our character, praying for God's help and strength, God will work in us to enable us to do the impossible! This process is called sanctification.

Those who do not take advantage of God's generous offer to assist them in giving up their sins in this life will be sadly disappointed at the end of their lives. While many think God will magically change the character when we go to heaven, this is not so. This life is our time to overcome the willful sins in our lives (Jas. 4:17; Rev. 3:21). "Sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it" (Gen. 4:7). Those who refuse to overcome these sins by the

end of their lives will be like the defective clay bowl, good for nothing but to be cast away (Matt. 5:13).

God is now offering us the power to overcome sin. When life is over, all will receive the final sentence, "he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still" (Rev. 22:11). Our character will then be sealed, and there will be no more chance to fix it.

Golden Opportunity

Perhaps you have bought into the lie that this life is all there is, living by the code of survival of the fittest, striving to take as much pleasure as you can in this life before your time fizzles out (1 Cor. 15:32), while God is offering you "eternal life" (Mark 10:30). God loves you, and He is trying to rescue us from sin by offering His power to overcome your sins and defects and make in you a beautiful character that is fit for heaven. That is the meaning of life. This life is our probation, and those who ignore it will miss out on a golden opportunity that can only be gained right now, so please take a moment to invite Jesus into your heart, asking Him to help purify your character and prepare you for eternal life.

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