

OUR RESPONSIBILITY
FAIRVIEW, TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
August 22, 2009

How do we become something of use to God?

The normal starting place is Matthew 28.19-20

Matthew 28:

- 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
- 20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Most of my early life, this was all I was taught about being of use to God. The Bible has a lot more to say about it.

William Shakespeare

“To be, or not to be”

(From Hamlet 3/1)

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them?

...

(If you follow Hamlet's speech carefully, you'll notice that his notions of "being" and "not being" are rather complex.

He doesn't simply ask whether life or death is preferable; it's hard to clearly distinguish the two—"being" comes to look a lot like "not being," and vice versa.

To be, in Hamlet's eyes, is a passive state, to "suffer" outrageous fortune's blows, while not being is the action of opposing those blows.

Living is, in effect, a kind of slow death, a submission to fortune's power.

On the other hand, death is initiated by a life of action, rushing armed against a sea of troubles—a pretty hopeless project, if you think about it.)

...

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect

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That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,

...

But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?

...

Be all my sins remember'd.

TO BE, OR NOT TO BE, THAT IS THE QUESTION

What does the New Testament say that God wants us to be?

In order to understand what God wants us to be, we must also understand what He wants us NOT to be, so I did a word search to see what the Bible has to say in the New Testament.

Mark 13:

- 1 Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!"
- 2 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."
- 3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately,
- 4 "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"
- 5 And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you.
- 6 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and will deceive many.
- 7 "But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet.
 - As Jesus is describing the signs of the end of this age, as difficult as things will be, as He continues in the next verses, He tells us that we should NOT be troubled.
- 8 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows.

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- 9 "But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.
- 10 "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.
- 11 "But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.
- 12 "Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.
- 13 "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.
 - We must overcome and endure to the end

Luke 12:

- 22 Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on.
 - DON'T WORRY – BE HAPPY!
- 23 "Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.
- 24 "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?
- 25 "And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?
- 26 "If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest?
 - Most of the things we worry about, we can't do anything about anyway
- 27 "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
- 28 "If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith?
- 29 "And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind.
- 30 "For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things.
- 31 "But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.
- 32 "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.
 - He does NOT want us to be afraid

1 Corinthians 10:

- 1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,
- 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,
- 3 all ate the same spiritual food,

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- 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.
- 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.
- 6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.
- 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."
 - He does NOT want us to become idolaters
- 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;
- 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents;
- 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.
 - Nor should we be complainers

2 Corinthians 6:

- 12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.
 - We are free; we have freedom of our own decisions; but we may be enslaved by our own loves or idols
 - Chocolate?
 - Ice Cream?
 - Sports heroes?
 - Money?
 - Material things?
- 13 Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.
- 14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?
 - We should NOT be "unequally yoked" with those who are unbelievers
 - This is often misunderstood
 - Who are the unbelievers?
 - What does it mean to be "unequally yoked"
 - **Romans 12:**
 - 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.
 - **Matthew 25:**
 - 31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.
 - 32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

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- 33 "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.
- 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
 - The goats and the sheep, the followers and the sons of Satan are to live side by side until the end of the age
 - Our challenge is to avoid being dominated by those who are obviously evil
- 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?
- 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."

Ephesians 5:

- 1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.
- 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.
- 3 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;
- 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.
- 5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.
- 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
- 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them.
- 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light
- 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),
- 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.
- 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.
- 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.
- 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.
- 14 Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."
- 15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,
- 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
- 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
 - God does NOT want us to be UNWISE

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- Therefore, it makes perfect sense that HE would give us the ability to know what He wants us to be

What does the New Testament tell us God want us NOT to be?

If that is so, what does the Bible say that God wants us to be?

Matthew 10:

- 16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

Matthew 24:

- 44 Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Luke 6:

- 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

Luke 12:

- 40 You also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an unexpected hour."

Romans 12:

- 2 Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

1 Corinthians 4:

- 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

1 Corinthians 11:

- 1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Ephesians 5:

- 1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

1 Corinthians 14:

- 20 Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

1 Corinthians 15:

- 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:

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- 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 6.

- 13 Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.
- 13 In return--I speak as to children--widen your hearts also.
 - enlarged (open) (4115) (have your hearts enlarged) - a plea for generous affection - affection can only be given, not taken (Expositor's)

2 Corinthians 6:

- 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

Ephesians 4:

- 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Colossians 3:

- 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

James 1:

- 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

James 5:

- 8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

1 Peter 1:

- 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,

1 Peter 3:

- 8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

1 Peter 4:

- 7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.
 - (serious, sane, self-controlled, restrained, disciplined, able to reason)

Matthew 5:

- 48 You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (RSV)

That is one impressive list, and it can be quite intimidating – until we look at each one verse by verse to understand what they mean and what we can do to achieve what God wants us to be.