

Our Life's Investment: A Time for Reflection

(If my life ends today—will what I have invested my life in produce a positive eternal yield?)

This is indeed a thought provoking question and one that deserves serious consideration, reflection, future planning and perhaps a change in our priorities and activities. If what we leave behind when we die does not outlive us, not just for the short-term, but for eternity, what is the significance of it all? Are we really fulfilling God's plan for our lives or are we wasting our lives? This question must also be considered in light of the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:19-21: *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart is also."*

Have you ever noticed that Jesus' instructions were for our eternal benefit? We often read or interpret this verse as something God requires of us for His good, but in reality, Jesus gave this command for our benefit. The treasures we store up by loving, obeying, worshiping and serving Him are stored up for us, for our benefit, for all eternity. When we invest our lives in loving and serving God, doing His will His way, these are the only investments that will outlive us and the only treasures we can take with us beyond this life! If this is indeed the case, we best make sure that all our investments are for His purposes.

I often drive by old homesteads or barns that have long ago fallen down or that leave only a hint as to what they once must have been. Maybe it is the layout of the oak trees that leaves a picture of how a yard was laid out and where the house once stood. It may be just an old water well, an old fence row, part of an old foundation where a building once stood, or even an old bottle, rusty plow point, or an arrow head on the ground that makes me question who did that? Who put that there, when, and for what purpose? Does anyone remember who it belonged to and who did all the hard work? Did all the work, time and resources invested leave anything behind that outlasted them and that is still having a lasting impact on the lives of others and the Kingdom of God? Were the lives and works of the people an eternal investment, or just activity that filled the space between birth and death?

Every time I dig a hole for a fence post that I know will be there long after I am gone, I wonder if anyone who comes after me will ever know how hard I worked and what it cost me to put it in the ground. Will they ever know my motivation for building that fence and running the cows was so that we could introduce more people to Jesus and show them His love? Even if nobody else remembers, I want to make sure that when I stand before the Lord Jesus at my appointed time, He remembers the fence and thanks me for obeying His will and investing my life in accomplishing His purposes.

Most of the time, the Lord does not show us the whole picture of what He is doing in and through our lives, but only a brief outline with a whole lot of blank spaces. He does show us in His Word and through the work of the Holy Spirit our sinful tendencies and our need for Him. He calls us and gives us opportunities to serve Him. He even gives us glimpses and promises of what awaits us in this life and in eternity, depending on whether we love and serve Him in this life or if we do not. He chooses us, He guides us, He enables us, but He usually does not give us all the details that answer all our questions or eliminates our need for faith in Him. We have only limited time, resources, talents and gifts, but we have to decide how, when and where He would have us to invest them so that they will have the greatest eternal significance.

We make plans for tomorrow, but we do not even know if tomorrow will come or what that day will hold for us. The investments we make, we must make daily, moment by moment because passed time and opportunities do not come back to us. I wish I could take some years and opportunities back and use them

differently, but I cannot. What I can do is make a decision to invest in eternity the time, talents and resources that I have now and in the future.

If we sincerely want to invest our lives in what will outlive us and what will have eternal significance, there are some very serious questions that we need to ask ourselves: Am I in right relationship with God through my faith in what He did for me through His son Jesus? Do I know and am I fulfilling His divine plan for my life? Do I realize that everything I have (time, talents, gifts, skills and resources) are His and are a temporary gift to me to use to fulfill His plans for my life and the lives of others? Am I willing to trust Him with all that I have and to provide for all that I do not have? Am I willing to use whatever He has given me for His purposes, and if so, how can I use them to make the greatest investments in the Kingdom?

Often we are lured away and tend to be distracted by all the “good causes” that we are asked to give our time and money to. Many of them offer us recognition and praises from man that investments in eternal Christian causes may not offer, but the praises we receive for these investments are our reward in full and they die when we die or quit giving. But, what we invest in the Lord’s work with the proper motives, lasts forever, is stored up for us in eternal rewards, and always impacts the spiritual lives of others.

I am reminded of the words of Jim Elliott, (the grandson of a cattle rancher) who made the ultimate investment when he gave his very life to take the Gospel and the love of Christ to the Waodani people of Ecuador in 1956. When tempted to avoid risk and sacrifice, and to just stay home and do good things here, he wrote: *“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”* Jim realized that whatever he gave up to be in the center of God’s will (even his life), was only temporary and worth far less than the eternal life and reward that God had in store for him.

In what will you invest your life and your resources? Where your treasure is, so is your heart. Where you spend your time and finances—there you are investing your life. Choose to invest your life in what will last forever.