



Developing People with a Kingdom Purpose

What do you imagine your 'last words' might be? Someone was listening in to a few famous people as they breathed their last; here's what they said.

"I'm bored with it all." (Before slipping into a coma.) ~~ Winston Churchill, statesman, died January 24, 1965

"How were the circus receipts in Madison Square Gardens?" ~~ P. T. Barnum, Circus Promoter, died 1891

"All my possessions for a moment of time." ~~ Queen Elizabeth I, Queen of England, d. 1603

Business leader Malcolm Forbes's life emphasized the epicurean philosophy, "Eat, drink, and be merry – for tomorrow we may die." He was famous for denying himself nothing that money could buy. Malcolm threw himself a birthday party for his eightieth birthday that cost \$1,000,000. The party favors were amazing! He flew two or three hundred of his closest friends to Tangier in a chartered 747 jet. He knew, and was known by, every important person in the world of politics and finance. He built one of

the world's great fortunes as one of its foremost publishers. It seems that Mr. Forbes philosophy of life would be that we should strive to see, taste, hear, experience, or possess as much of the world's various valued faire as possible before the time to depart it comes. I wonder what his last words were!

Actually Solomon, the Bible king was richer than Malcolm Forbes. He pursued meaning in things, in work, in money and in entertainment. Listen in to his words,

"I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards. I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees. I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate my many flourishing groves. I bought slaves, both men and women, and others were born into my household. I also owned great herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who lived in Jerusalem before me. I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire! So I became greater than any of the kings who ruled in Jerusalem before me. And with it all, I remained clear-eyed so that I could evaluate all these things. Anything I wanted, I took. I did not restrain myself from any joy. I even found great pleasure in hard work, an additional reward for all my labors." Ecclesiastes 2:4-11

You may come to the end of your life's journey with a large amount of wealth or you may be honored by your peers for your accomplishments. But what do you suppose it might all mean to you as you face your last moments on earth? Do you suppose that you might hold a stock portfolio to your chest and gain comfort by looking at the number of shares on the certificate? The house that you own, the backyard renovation, the new carpet or the car...none of which you'll ever see again... how much will they mean then? Likely not much at all. As you slip across the threshold into

the arms of God, they'll mean even less...actually nothing at all unless they were used for lasting purposes.

The Apostle Paul who was mentored by Jesus Christ had it all, the social status, the recognition, the power. He could even throw his enemies into jail. He was respected by the existing religious authorities of his day, he was an 'up and comer', "of the stock of Israel, a member of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, a Pharisee." He said all of those status symbols, the power, prestige, position type things, became "rubbish" to him when he met Jesus Christ.

What in the world would make him change his mind about things like that? Why would he give up the power and access to affluence? Paul believed that there are things that are even more important than power, position and prestige. He believed in eternal things. He knew that, "You cannot serve both God and money."

How about you? What are you striving for? Who are you trying to be like? When Saul of Tarsus met Jesus Christ, he either gradually or immediately, stopped pursuing the status and values of this world. He, either slowly or immediately, began to pursue only those things that would promote and proclaim the great news of hope and meaning and purpose that is found in Jesus Christ. To him life became, *"forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ."*

We only have so many assets to invest. Our assets are the amount of time we have left, the money that we control, the relationships we have, and the package of gifts and talents that God has given us. Investing them to honor God and proclaim the kingdom of God is why we're on earth. How about you? Have you invested well on earth so that your dying words will reflect an eternal legacy?



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