

## Trivial Pursuit

Since 40 is "over the hill", more than a few people fight their 40th birthday. There are all sorts of jokes about someone being 39 for the 2nd time, or the 5<sup>th</sup> time, or the 8th. 50 is traumatic for some. "Friends" may remind the birthday person with a party in black - black balloons, black napkins, and black icing on the cake. I didn't have any problems with either one of those milestones, but when my 60th birthday came along, I had some strange feelings.

I've understood my own mortality for years. Maybe I didn't when I was a teenager, but I can't remember thinking that I was going to be the first to live on this planet forever and never die. So, the problem I had on my 60th birthday was not a sudden realization that I wasn't immortal. It was the realization that time was running out. Not only was I not going to live forever - time was growing short. The obituaries list many people dying in their 60's. And 60 is only ten years away from the 70's. An even higher mortality rate occurs during that decade. Only ten years until I was 70 and, by comparison, I've lived in my present home for 25 years.

With that awareness of the sands of time falling into the bottom of the hourglass came an impatience with the insignificant. When cleaning out a bird cage, I suddenly found myself thinking, "Is this how I want to spend precious minutes of the time I have left?" I had the same thought a number of times about several things that were relatively unimportant. They were trivial and there were more important things that needed to be done while I still had time.

But isn't that how we always ought to order our lives, no matter how old we are? We aren't allotted threescore and ten for certain. A 78.7 average lifetime means some fall below that. Thus, time is precious; life is precious and we ought to fill it with jewels, not junk.

As we look around at the world, however, don't we see that most lives are squandered in trivial pursuit? Trivial Pursuit - it's the game where all the questions are trivia. They're interesting enough and the game is engaging, but the questions aren't life-shaking and the answers are short, a test of how much trivia you learned and remembered. Some people are in a pursuit every day, all day long, of things that are trivial.

A look at magazines displayed for sale tells us quite a bit about how we spend our lives. Sports, fishing, motorcycles, and fitness magazines are in abundance for men. Gardening, home, sewing, and crafts are just some of the topics for women. I'm not advocating that all must drop every single thing that has only earthly significance. But certainly all would agree that we cannot major in minors. Yet, the world does just that, sometimes dragging us into becoming just like it.

Paul wrote, "bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things..." (I Tim.4:8 NKJV). If our goal is physical fitness, then that profits little. But if our goal

is to serve God for more productive years, physical fitness as part of that has great value. Three hours of exercise just to look good profits little. Three hours of exercise to serve God for twenty minutes later that day doesn't make sense either. Twenty minutes of exercise in order to serve God capably for three hours is more appropriate. The matter is one of priority and many in the world only have the goal of being physically fit.

Paul urged Christians in Colossae to "Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time" (Col.4:5). The NAS reads, "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity." Redeeming the time thus means to make the most of the opportunity we have with others. The exhortation is to use the opportunity, the time, in a wise way in this matter.

Dr. Benjamin Mays wrote this poem:

I only have a minute - sixty seconds in it.  
Forced upon me I did not choose it,  
But I know that I must use it...,  
Suffer if I lose it...,  
Give account if I abuse it.  
Only a tiny little minute...  
but eternity is in it....

And, *the clock is ticking, o' man!*

As soldiers of Christ marching to take the gospel to the whole world, we must travel light. We earn a living that we might live to serve Christ. It should never be that we earn a living in order to live it up. It matters not if I see the world when I will one day see the One who made the world, and thus is greater than all the sights I might see here. Paul said to Timothy, "No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier" (II Tim.2:4). Travel light and remember whose army you are in.

Examine your life. Are you filling it with precious things of eternal significance? Or, are you filling it with trinkets? When you see death drawing near, you'll be glad of one, but rue the other. Let us all practice treasure pursuit, not trivial pursuit.

*by Dennis Lange*