

What God Says About Nothing

Introduction. We hear a lot about value today. If something has value, we desire it. Today we are going to talk about nothing, and it will upend your concept of value. I know that sounds a little strange, but the aspect which we will consider is what God says about nothing. There are several places in the scriptures, in regard to living a righteous life and obedience to the gospel, where God uses the idea of “nothingness” to get across a very important point.

I. ***Without Jesus We Can Do Nothing (John 15:5)***

- A. Jesus taught His disciples that they must have a very close and special relationship with Him in order to bear fruit. The more we mature, the more we grow to depend upon Him (Acts 17:29; 2 Corinthians 3:5). This relationship encourages us to look for that lasting city (Hebrews 13:14).
- B. We cannot bear fruit without Jesus Christ. Several places in the New Testament explain the kind of fruit we produce when we live a life dedicated to God (Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:8-9; Colossians 1:10).
- C. False religions teach that they can save the soul without Jesus Christ (cf. John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Jeremiah knew that man could not direct his own way (10:23; cf. Proverbs 14:12).

II. ***Being Religious Without Having Love Equals Nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-2)***

- A. Paul described love as the “bond of perfectness” in Colossians 3:14. Love is what holds us together. We certainly need people dedicated to truth and authority, but also to love.
- B. Because God loved us, we should love each other (John 13:35; Romans 13:8; 1 John 3:14). This is what makes the plan of the church work so well.
- C. How can we function appropriately if we cannot get along with each other? If we continue to foster hate, jealousy, envy, and all of those other negative feelings, the church cannot grow. How do you expect a seed to grow in soil which has had all the nutrients removed? How can you expect a church to grow in an atmosphere which has had all the love removed?

III. ***A Christian Without A Good Influence Is Worth Nothing (Matthew 5:13)***

- A. Everyone is well aware of the power of influence. If you have never used that power, you have probably had it used on you. Jesus felt so

strongly about this power that He said anyone without this power is essentially useless.

- B. The New Testament amply records the power and ability of a good influence:
 - 1. It can preserve (Matthew 5:13). Disciples are a preservative in the world when they conform to righteousness; we can discharge this function only by retaining our virtue.
 - 2. It can save (1 Corinthians 7:16). Paul discusses the spouse's ability to save their mate by a simple influence. No arm twisting or throat cramming is needed, only influence.
 - 3. It can inspire (2 Corinthians 9:2). Because of the wonderful influence of the Corinthian brethren, the Macedonians were prepared to help the Jerusalem brethren.
 - 4. It can teach (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8). The Thessalonians were commended because they used their influence to spread the gospel.
 - 5. It can live on (Hebrews 11:4). Abel's influence lives on, and your influence can live on to change someone's life.
- C. What kind of power will you have? An influence can work both ways -- it can leaven for good or bad (Galatians 5:9).

IV. ***We Brought Nothing Into The World And Will Leave With Nothing (1 Timothy 6:7)***

- A. If there were ever a verse to teach us the importance of turning away from worldliness, it would be this one. Worldliness chokes the desire for godliness (Mark 4:18-19).
- B. Worldly possessions are utter vanity because we cannot take anything with us in death. Solomon saw the same kind of vanity in his life when he pursued materialism (Ecclesiastes 2:8-11).
- C. Perhaps the most persistent problem of the church is the sensuality and lust of worldliness (James 4:4; 5:1-4). Jesus called His people to live above that principle (John 6:27). Do yourself a favor and worry about what really matters (Hebrews 13:5).

V. ***If We Lose Our Souls We Have Gained Nothing (Mark 8:36)***

- A. Here is the ultimate trade-off which every person in the world will eventually have to make. Either you go the way of God in faith and obedience, or you go your own way in condemnation and punishment.
- B. Paul exhorted Christians to set their minds on what was above, not on what was below (Colossians 3:2; Luke 21:34-35). If that means difficulty and sorrow, so be it. It is a natural part of taking up one's cross to follow Christ (Mark 8:32-38).
- C. This trade-off, to me, is so silly because even nonbelievers realize that you cannot take it all with you. But we still keep on chasing the

American Dream and forget about the everlasting values that really matter in life.

Conclusion. Ultimately, our goal is to get you to think about all of this. You may think absolutely nothing about them, but God says they are very important. Will you respond to the call of obedience? For the Christian, if you do not have love in your heart and an influence for good, you are worth nothing. For the non-Christian, if you do not resign your life to Jesus Christ, determine to live every step of the way for Christ, and obey the gospel, your life is worth nothing. Do not let time come upon you and stop you from the obedience you desperately need.