

Spiritual Considerations...

Selected articles designed to assist in our Bible study and Christian walk.



Dave Phillips, editor

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The Meaning of Life

Dave Phillips, Germantown

Much ado about nothing? That may be the way it sounds to many people. But I was left with a sense of despair as I read in *The Commercial Appeal* of the Germantown High School biology teacher teaching her advanced students that “the meaning of life is to pass on more genes.” The article said that at the end of a lesson on the survival of the species and natural selection, the class laughed, nodded, and “got it.” I suppose I should have been in the class to hear the lecture in its entirety, because I didn’t “get it.” It sounds to me like the same old story that the survival of the fittest is nature’s way of continuing an evolutionary process that reduces humans to the level of animals.

I must view things from an entirely different perspective. The study of science is wonderful. The appreciation of nature is essential. But, the meaning of life is not wrapped up in “passing on the genes,” scoring the highest on national tests, accumulating the most money, houses, or land. I am reminded of the discussion in the Ecclesiastes of a man pondering the fundamental principles of life. I hear a wise, wealthy, and revered king say, “I’ve tried everything under the sun, and all of it is vanity.” He was not just one man philosophizing on the sidelines. He was a man who was fabulously wealthy, and wonderfully wise. This was his major concern – what do I do with everything that I have? After serious deliberation on all the possible consequences of earning, having and leaving wealth, he says, “The conclusion, when all has been heard, is fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.” (Ecc. 12:13)

I’m glad that we have Christians in all professional, academic, service and industrial fields. We need more than doctors, lawyers and industry leaders. We need men and women who have correctly prioritized their principles and have become *Christian* doctors, *Christian* lawyers, and *Christian* industry leaders. That, to me, is the real meaning of life.

Easy to Grab, Hard to Let Go

Tim Woodward, Smithville, TN

(From Lake Forest Church of Christ church bulletin, Feb. 2002)

“Don’t you just hate king cobras? I know I do – and I came by my feeling honestly. Our zoo had a thirteen-foot giant that seemed to me to be the embodiment of evil. He had a scar over his left eye that made him look mean and, more significantly, kept him from shedding his skin in a normal fashion. At least twice a year we would get the dreaded phone call from the reptile house: “The cobra shed his skin last week, but the eye cap didn’t come off. Looks infected. Suppose you and the doc come down and clean it?”

A snake’s skin includes a clear scale over its eye to protect it from sand and foreign objects. Snakes have no eyelids, so they have no way to blink for protection. The snake’s scar prevented a normal shed so the eye cap needed to be surgically removed. We made the appointment for the next day. Arrangements were more critical for this procedure because of its extreme danger. Only two people at the zoo could take responsibility for grabbing the more dangerous snakes, and this was the most deadly. This snake’s venom glands contain enough poison to kill one thousand adults – a fact that seemed to come up every time we did this procedure.

The capture of the cobra was as follows: The curator signaled for the cage door to be opened. Seconds later the king cobra appeared. As soon as he saw us, he stopped, spread his cape, and rose to full stature. The cage was two feet off the ground, so we were all looking at the snake at eye level.

The cobra was trembling with excitement as he, in turn stared at each of his five enemies. He seemed to be choosing who would be his prey. The curator was chosen, and with shocking swiftness, the snake lunged forward, hissing and growling with malevolent rage. With lightning speed, the skilled keepers placed the sheer nets over the snake's head. As he pushed to get through, the curator firmly grasped his neck just behind the venom sacs. The keepers grabbed the writhing body, and then the curator nodded and said, "Let's get this over with."

The pressure was incredible. The vet's hands were trembling and beads of sweat began to run down the curator's forehead. The curator turned to me and said, "Do you have any cuts or scratches on your hands?"

I look and said, "No."

"Get a wad of paper towels, quick," he followed in a strained voice. I did so. "Now put it in the cobra's mouth." The cobra watched the papers towels as they were carefully positioned to allow him to bite them. He bit down violently and began to chew. The towels became yellow with venom until they began to drip. The curator continued, "Did you know several elephants die each year from king cobra bites? A man could never survive a bite with a full load of venom. That's why I'm having you drain his venom sacs. My hands are sweaty and my fingers are cramping. When I let go, it may not be quick enough. More people are bitten trying to let go of snakes than when they try to grab them. You get weak quickly when you grab a big snake."

There are many, many situations in life that are parallels – easy to grab, hard to let go – so it pays to think twice before you grab them. Indebtedness, vengeance, lying, adultery, drugs, alcohol, pornography, promiscuity – these and many more are serpents that will drain your strength and bite you to death while you are trying to let go of them.

"There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." (Proverbs 14:12)

Adult Language

John Gipson, Little Rock, AR

The two words "adult language," as they are used today in describing movies and television programs, pretty well characterize how we attempt to gloss over, cover up, and whitewash the truth. If producers were honest they would say, "The program you are about to watch contains vulgar, profane, filthy speech." But no! That would be too crude, too stark, too accurate. It might even conjure up a blunt, old-fashioned word – sin. "Adult" sounds less offensive, and so much better, don't you think?

What games we have learned to play with words! We prefer polite terms designed to minimize rather than confess the truth. Expressions such as: mal-adjusted; anti-social; mixed-up, and immaturity tend to cover a multitude of sins in our eyes.

Shrewd and *canny* sound better than *dishonest*. *Practical* is better than *selfish*. *Romantic* has a better ring to it than *impurity*. *Sensible* is a preferred word over *prejudice*, and on and on the list goes.

Many years ago I saw a cartoon (Dennis the Menace, I think). The little boy, swinging a hammer against the shattered remains of an expensive mirror, was explaining calmly to his aghast mother: "I'm not naughty; I'm neurotic." I don't know about your mother, but mine wouldn't have bought into such semantics in a million years.

But back to "adult language." Someone is trying to tell us, that while we might not want children hearing such filthy, raunchy words, they are "suitable for adults." Oh really? Suitable?

"Put away... foul talk from your mouth" my Bible says. And again, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt." And yet again, "for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

There is an awesome admonition (warning?) given in Revelation 22:11-12, "Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right and the holy still be holy." (12) "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done."