

PRINCIPLES FOR LIVING A REAL LIFE

LIFE IS SHORT, FULL OF UNCERTAINTIES, PAIN AND SUFFERING. 2007 WILL BE A GOOD YEAR FOR SOME OF US AND NOT A GOOD YEAR FOR OTHERS. SINCE THIS IS OUR FIRST MEETING OF 2007, I WANTED TO SHARE A FEW OF MY INWARD THOUGHTS WITH YOU, THINGS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER THIS YEAR. I HAVE CHOSEN AS A TITLE “PRINCIPLES FOR LIVING A REAL LIFE.”

- 1. DEVELOP OR NURTURE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. IT IS BECAUSE OF GOD THAT YOU ARE ALIVE TODAY. RICK WARREN WROTE A BEST SELLING BOOK “THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE.” CHAPTER 1, FIRST PARAGRAPH, FIRST SENTENCE, HE MAKES THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT, “IT’S NOT ABOUT YOU.” GOD DOES NOT EXIST TO SERVE US, WE EXIST TO SERVE HIM. COL. 1:16 STATES THAT “ALL THINGS WERE CREATED BY HIM AND FOR HIM.” BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE FOR EACH OF US HE DESIRES TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US. I DON’T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE SPIRITUALLY AND UNTIMATELY ONLY GOD KNOWS THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES TO HIM. BUT ONE THING I DO KNOW IS THAT IF YOU ARE NOT ONE OF HIS, THERE WILL BE A DAY OF JUDGMENT. I AM PRESENTLY TEACHING IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION IN SUNDAY SCHOOL AT MY CHURCH, AND I CAN TELL YOU WITHOUT HESITATION THAT AN AWFUL JUDGMENT AWAITS THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO REJECT CHRIST. IN THE WORDS OF A POPULAR BOOK SERIES, DON’T BE LEFT BEHIND.**
- 2. ESTABLISH THE PROPER PRIORITIES. I BELIEVE THERE IS AN ORDER OF PRIORITY FOR LIFE. IT’S CALLED THE “JOY” PRINCIPLE; JESUS FIRST, OTHERS SECOND, AND YOURSELF THIRD. I TALKED ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD EARLIER. NEXT TO GOD, YOUR FAMILY SHOULD BE YOUR TOP PRIORITY. NOTICE I SAID YOUR “FAMILY” AND NOT YOUR “JOB, OR WORK.” I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THERE IS NOT ONE PERSON, WHO ON THEIR DEATH BED WISHED THEY HAD SPENT MORE TIME IN THE OFFICE. BROTHERS, SHOW YOUR FAMILY HOW MUCH YOU LOVE AND APPRECIATE THEM BY GIVING YOUR TIME, TALENT, AND RESOURCES. LIKewise, BE A BLESSING TO FRIENDS AND STRANGERS... ALWAYS REMEMBER THIS LIFE IS NOT ABOUT YOU. IT’S ABOUT LOVING GOD AND OTHERS.**

3. **BE A MAN OF INTEGRITY. SAY WHAT YOU MEAN AND MEAN WHAT YOU SAY. STAND UP FOR TRUTH IN ALL SITUATIONS. THE TRUTH IS FOUND IN GOD'S WORD. IT DOES NOT CHANGE, NOR IS IT POLITICALLY CORRECT.**
4. **UNDERSTAND THE REAL MEANING OF SUCCESS. SUCCESS IS NOT GETTING WHAT YOU WANT, BUT ENJOYING WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE. THERE IS A TENDENCY TO LOOK UP FOR SUCCESS, THINKING OF THINGS "WE" CAN DO TO GET TO THE NEXT LEVEL. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT "PROMOTION COMES FROM GOD." (PSALMS 75:6). IN OTHER WORDS GOD WILL MOVE US TO THE NEXT LEVEL IN HIS TIMING AND NOT OURS. OUR TASK IS TO BE FAITHFUL AT THE LEVEL WHERE WE ARE UNTIL HE IS READY TO MOVE US TO THE NEXT LEVEL.**
5. **SEEK TO KNOW MORE AND DO BETTER. LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN, APPLY IT TO BETTER YOUR LIFE AND SHARE IT WITH OTHERS. IF YOU ARE GIFTED IN A CERTAIN AREAS, SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE WITH OTHERS. IN THE LONG RUN BY HELPING THEM YOU WILL ULTIMATELY BE HELPING YOURSELF.**
6. **KEEP YOUR POSSESSIONS IN YOUR HANDS, NOT IN YOUR HEART. BY KEEPING YOUR POSSESSIONS IN YOUR HANDS, IT IS EASIER TO RELEASE THEM. LOVE PEOPLE MORE THAN THINGS. LUKE 12:15 STATES (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION), "LIFE IS NOT MEASURED BY WHAT YOU OWN." ALSO, 1 TIM. 6:7 STATES, "FOR WE BROUGHT NOTHING INTO THIS WORLD, AND IT CERTAIN WE CAN CARRY NOTHING OUT." IT'S A SAD COMMENTARY ON A PERSON'S LIFE TO BE KNOWN FOR WHAT THEY HAVE RATHER THAN THEIR CHARACTER.**
7. **DON'T REPAY EVIL WITH EVIL. IN OTHER WORDS DON'T TRY TO GET EVEN WITH THE PERSON WHO SAYS SOMETHING OR DOES SOMETHING TO YOU THAT YOU DIDN'T DESERVE. ROMANS 12:19, "AVENGE NOT YOURSELF, LEAVE THAT TO GOD." HE WILL REPAY THOSE WHO DESERVE IT.**
8. **REMEMBER THESE THREE SIMPLE PHRASES; I LOVE YOU, THANK YOU, AND I'M SORRY. SAY THEM AS OFTEN AS THE SITUATION DICTATES. I CALL THIS PROCESS "KEEPING YOUR SLATE CLEAN." SINCE WE DON'T KNOW WHEN OUR LIFE HERE ON EARTH WILL BE OVER, DON'T TRY TO STORE UP YOUR "I LOVE YOU's, OR THANK YOU's. GIVE THEM OUT FREQUENTLY.**

- 9. PREPARE FOR THE STORMS OF LIFE. AS LONG AS WE HERE ON EARTH, WE WILL HAVE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS AND WE WILL SUFFER HARDSHIPS. THE QUESTION IS HOW WILL YOU RESPOND WHEN THEY OCCUR? IF YOU HAVE DONE #1 ABOVE (ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD), YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK AND YOU CAN CLAIM HIS PROMISES, SUCH AS:**
- A. HEB. 13:5 – “... I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU OR FORSAKE YOU.”**
- B. 1 JOHN 4:4 – “GREATER IS HE THAT IS IN YOU THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD.”**
- C. ROMANS 8:28 – “ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE LORD AND ARE CALLED TO HIS PURPOSE.”**
- 10. LEAVE A GODLY LEGACY. IT WOULD BE A TRAGIC SITUATION TO HAVE LIVED FOR “X” NUMBER OF YEARS AND HAVE NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT. A FEW YEARS AGO I GAVE A TALK, ENTITLED “BORN-DIED, WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT THE DASH IN YOUR LIFE.” RECENTLY I DELIVERED ANOTHER TALK, ENTITLED “LIVING BEYOND YOUR DAYS.” BROTHERS, I WOULD ASK THAT YOU JUST THINK ABOUT THE TITLES I JUST MENTIONED, AND MAKE A COMMITMENT TO LEAVE A GODLY LEGACY TO YOUR FAMILY AND LOVE ONES. DON’T LET IT BE SAID OF YOU THAT “HE LIVED A GOOD LIFE UNTO HIMSELF.”**

BROTHERS, IT IS MY EARNEST DESIRE THAT 2007 WILL BE YOUR BEST YEAR EVER. MAY GOD’S RICHEST BLESSINGS BE WITH YOU, YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES IN THIS NEW YEAR.