

Finding Spiritual Significance

Scripture:

Matthew 5:13-16 *“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”*¹⁴ *“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”*¹⁵ *“Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.”*¹⁶ *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

Introduction:

- A. We all need to be significant and to know that we have a purpose. Nobody can find true fulfillment as long as they feel that they are not making a contribution of some kind.
1. We all want to make a difference.
 2. Everyone wants their life to count for something.
 3. We all want our life to have meaning.
 4. We all want to make an impact.
 5. We all need to make a contribution.
 6. We all feel the need to conquer, achieve, excel and to prove ourselves.
 7. We all want to be somebody.

B. To find significance we either

1. Gratify our own ambitions and work toward the fulfillment of our own desires.

Ambition: a mental condition that compels one to work one's self to death in order to live.

However high we reach, we are never satisfied.
Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527)

2. Obey God and work toward fulfilling our purpose for being here in light of God's word.
3. Our pursuit either takes us close or far away from God.
John 15:5 *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”*

C. Finding significance in this world will only bring a few paragraphs in the Encyclopedia Britannica.

1. If you really succeed, you might even get a biography (possibly on the Biography Channel) or even a movie about you.
2. How about this big deal. You might possibly be remembered as part of history.

I. A man's ultimate desire is for immortality.

Ecclesiastes 3:11a *“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts,”*

- A. Immortality is not in a hospital wing named after us, or a university building with our name on it.
- B. The true test for any person is seen in how long he hangs around when he loses a position or gains a position.

A recently retired man said, "We came into this world as babies and that is the way we go out. I used to be able to pick up the telephone and talk to anybody I wanted to. Enjoy your power while you have it because once you retire, they don't return your calls anymore."

1. Can you name the 10 wealthiest people in America?
 2. Can you name the 10 most admired people in America?
 3. Can you name the top 10 corporate executives in America?
 4. Can you name the 10 last Nobel Prize winners?
 5. Can you at least name 10 members of the president's cabinet?
- C. All our accomplishments in the natural only have a temporary effect.
James 4:13-15 "Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";¹⁴ whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."

II. The true way to lasting significance.

- A. To have lasting significance we must make an eternal contribution.
- B. To have lasting significance we must deny self-gratification goals.
Matthew 6:24-26 "*No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*"²⁵ "*Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?*"²⁶ "*Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*"
- C. The difference between self-gratification and real significance is found in the motive and attitude, not in the task.

III. The significance test.

- A. Spiritual significance is defined by the answer to this question.
"Does what I am about to do contribute to the welfare of others in a demonstration of faith, love obedience and service to Christ?"
- B. Am I trying to win the rat race? If we win, we will just be the winning rat.
- C. Am I leading a life of faith, love, obedience and service?
- D. Am I willing to pay the price if the cost of being a Christian goes up?

IV. Get on the track to real spiritual significance.

- A. Acknowledge any sin and thank God for forgiveness.
- B. Ask Christ to take control of your life.
- C. Rededicate yourself to God and His purposes for your life.
- D. Stop playing games and get serious about your relationship to God.
- E. Total surrender is the key.