

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADING A CONSECRATED LIFE

- We are now living in those times that one preacher referred to as being both the worst and best of times
- With so much strife and unrest in this world more than ever before as believers we can be shining lights in our world as we share the wonderful hope that we have in Christ
- We are now living in a world which is full of ungodly influences that can so easily pull people away from a whole hearted devotion to God
- In many ways we can see how we are now living in the last of the last days. The Apostle Paul wrote, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Timothy 3:1-5)
- Materialism, the love of pleasure, the flood of ungodly influences in the films and music that people listen to, the *access to ungodly things on the internet* and the increased practice of other religions and philosophies have all been used by the enemy to stop people from coming to Christ and from living wholeheartedly for the cause of Christ

- **Today I will be looking at the importance of living a consecrated life as Christians, which is really what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ**
- **I will begin by looking at three Scriptures**

Jesus Himself said,

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of what falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; **but if it dies, it produces much grain**. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour.” **(John 12:24-26)**

Jesus also said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost.”

“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels.” **(Luke 9:23-26)**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” **(Galatians 2:20)**

In the above passages of Scripture we see that true discipleship involves: i) Renouncing self centred ambitions, ii) Putting the interests of the kingdom first and foremost in our lives and iii) having a willingness to give one’s life for the sake of the gospel, to help see God’s Kingdom established here on earth

In many ways to live a consecrated life is so contrary to the spirit of this world *which encourages us to live for and to please ourselves* – To look after number one

So practically what does it mean to live a consecrated life as a Christian?

- i. We are committed to living for the Kingdom cause and to following God’s plan for our life**

Jesus Himself said,

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)

Joshua, that great leader who led the Children of Israel into the Promised Land said, “... But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15)

- ii. We have chosen to renounce selfish ambition in our life and have decided to live our life to be a blessing for others**

That our primary focus in life is now no longer on what I can get out of this life, but what I can do to help and encourage others in life. **Ministry is really all about serving others**

As our fleshly nature will continually try and rise up, even as believers, IT NEEDS TO BE A CONTINUAL ONGOING DAILY CHOICE TO LIVE OUR LIFE FOR OTHERS. The longer we do this the easier it becomes

(Learning to walk in the Spirit is a great key to helping us to walk in victory as a believer)

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”
(Philippians 2:3)

iii. We have a desire to walk in obedience to God's will for our life and to glorify Him with our life

(That we have a desire to just do what Jesus tells us to do),

Jesus Himself said,

“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.” **(John 4:34) and**

iv. That our relationship with the Lord is our greatest priority in life.

King David wrote,

“O GOD, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for you; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.”
(Psalm 63:1-3)

In short that we live to know and to love the Lord and to serve the one who gave His life for us, that we may have eternal life and a wonderful hope and future in Him

There are many reasons why it is so important that we live a consecrated life as believers

- I. It is a great key to remaining strong in our faith in the perilous times that we are now living in.**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,” **(2 Timothy 3:1-2)**

Jesus Himself said in His explanation of the Parable of the Sower,

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.” **(Luke 8:11-13)**

Jesus also said, “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold, But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” **(Matthew 24:12-13)**

We have a constant and very real enemy, the Devil, who will continually try and undermine and destroy our faith if he can.

The Apostle Peter wrote,

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” **(1 Peter 5:8-9)**

- II. Leading a consecrated life helps us to make good choices in life so that we experience the fullness of what God has planned for our life.**

HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT WE CONTINUALLY ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE AND DIRECT OUR STEPS IN LIFE AND THAT WE HEED THE CAUTIONING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES - Some wrong choices have the potential to impact us for a lifetime

Jesus Himself said, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” **(John 14:26)**

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” **(John 16:13)**

- III. It is key to experiencing true joy and purpose in life**

Jesus Himself said, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” **(John 10:10)**

King David wrote, “You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” **(Psalm 16:11)**

We will only ever as a BELIEVER, be truly satisfied in life when we live wholeheartedly for the Lord and follow His blueprint for our lives

IV. It is a great key to enjoying permanent peace in our heart no matter what we may be going through in life.

Being in the centre of God's will and allowing Him to direct our steps in life, is a great key to *continually maintaining peace in our heart.*

It is this peace that is our greatest indicator that we are flowing in God's will for our life.

When we lose our peace we need to look back to when we last had it and make any necessary adjustments to get back into the will of God for our life

In the book of Isaiah we read,

“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.” **(Isaiah 26:3-4)**

V. The eternal destinies of others will be influenced by our lives and decisions, especially our family members.

I look at the life of Jentzen Franklin, how his father, who was his only pastor and his mother had such a great impact on his life as he grew up in church. As a result of this godly influence, Jentzen Franklin was encouraged to live for the Lord right from an early age and then to enter into ministry himself.

Jentzen Franklin has now also with his wife Cherise, raised up 5 children who are now also all actively serving the Lord

Jentzen Franklin now has a multi campus church in Gainesville that ministers to several thousand people every week, as a result of his obedience to respond to God's call on his life to become a pastor. His dream was to be a great saxophonist

We have one life here on earth to leave a godly legacy through encouraging others to live for the Lord, as we ourselves live wholeheartedly for the Lord and follow His blueprint for our life

If we are passionate about our faith and committed to following God's plan for our life, we will help influence many others to come to faith in Christ and to also live for Him

Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. **(Matthew 5:16)**

VI. We must let go of our old life (trying to get meaning and purpose from the things of this world) to FULLY experience the resurrection life that can only be found in Christ

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, **all things** have become new.”
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

The closer we get to the LORD the less the things of this world (Not the physical creation, but the sphere of evil operating in our world under the dominion of Satan – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life) appeal to us

The Apostle John wrote,

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” **(1 John 2:15-17)**

Only JESUS can truly satisfy us in life. We were all made to be in fellowship with and in communion with God. There is a God shaped vacuum in life that only God can fill. Only the Lord can truly meet our deepest needs in life.

Jesus said to the woman from Samaria, who had experienced five failed marriages as she looked to having her needs met in human relationships,

“But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (*John 4:14*)

The Apostle Paul knew that only a pursuit of knowing Christ in a real way could truly satisfy him

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” (*Philippians 3:7-8*)

“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (*Ephesians 3:17-19*)

VII. When Jesus is truly our first love we have a right perspective in life.

King David wrote,

“**Delight yourself also in the Lord,** And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (*Psalms 37:4*)

When our relationship with the Lord is our first priority in life, we find that we then begin to enjoy all the other aspects of life as well and we have a greater sense of what really matters in life.

WHEN WE HAVE AN INTIMATE WALK WITH THE LORD:

- **Healthy loving relationships become a greater priority**
- **Work takes on more meaning and is no longer seen as just being a chore**

(Our workplace is seen as being our mission field and we see the potential to help others in need as we have opportunity to sow spiritually and financially into the lives of others because of our work), and

- **We enjoy contentment in the everyday things of life. The Apostle Paul wrote,**
“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out... But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

**For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”
(1 Timothy 6:6, 7, 9-10)**

VIII. It is only in living a life that is consecrated to the Lord, that our life makes a great difference in this world for ETERNITY. When we love the Lord we live for the Kingdom Cause and are more focused on storing up treasures in Heaven as we realize the need for living our lives with eternity in mind.

Jesus Himself said,

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” **(Matthew 6:19-21)**

The closer we are in our walk with the Lord the more we realize the importance of sharing our faith with others and winning people to Christ

In the book of Proverbs we read,

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise.” **(Proverbs 11:30)**

“Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, “Surely we did not know this,” does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?” **(Proverbs 24:11-12)**

IX. When we live a consecrated life our lives bear much fruit. This is the heart of God that our lives would bear much eternal fruit

Jesus Himself said,

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”
(John 15:16)

It is only in having an abiding relationship with Christ that we grow in Christlike character and see all that God has planned for our life coming to pass

Jesus Himself said,

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 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.” (John 15:4-5)

God has so much in store for each of our lives.

As we flow in what God has called us to do, we will do great things for His glory, not by might, nor by power, but by His Spirit.

WE ARE MOST ANOINTED AND MOST EMPOWERED AND MOST BLESSED WHEN WE DO THINGS GOD’S WAY AND IN HIS TIMING

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,”
(**Ephesians 3:20**)

- X. When we put the Lord first in our life, we can be assured that ALL the other things that we have need of in life shall be ADDED to us. JESUS HIMSELF MADE THIS VERY CLEAR**

Jesus said,

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ Or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”
(**Matthew 6:31-33**)

- XI. ONE DAY THE LORD WILL REWARD US FOR LIVING A CONSECRATED LIFE**

Jesus Himself said,

“For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.” (**Matthew 16:27**)

AND

XII. We will be ready for the imminent return of the Lord and the Rapture when all true believers will be caught up to be with the Lord just prior to the Great Tribulation. JESUS HIMSELF EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF ALWAYS BEING PREPARED FOR HIS RETURN. That we are always watching for His return.

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)

Jesus Himself said,

“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” (Matthew 24:44)

So in conclusion

We must simply continually pursue intimacy in our walk with the Lord and not allow the things of this world and ungodly associations to draw us away from a wholehearted devotion to Christ.

In His presence is fullness of joy

When we spend time in His presence we get God's heart for people

When we have His heart for people we will lay down our lives for others AND MAKE A GREAT DIFFERENCE IN THIS WORLD FOR ETERNITY

In closing, just four quick keys that can help us to live a consecrated life are:

1) **To make knowing the Lord and our love for Him continually our greatest priority in life. THIS IS A GREAT KEY TO HAVING STABILITY IN OUR LIVES.** We need to purposely make time to spend in His presence. Meditating on the Word of God is a great key to growing in our knowledge of the Lord and to living an overcoming life

The Psalmist wrote, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” **(Psalm 46:10)**

King David wrote, “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!” **(Psalm 34:8)**

“Wait on the LORD, and keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit land; When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.” **(Psalm 37:34)**

2) **We need to seek to know and follow God’s will for your life. God has a unique plan for our life that is full of purpose and meaning.**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” **(Ephesians 2:10)**

3) That we have a repentant heart. This is a great key to maintaining a soft heart towards God. We need to be quick to confess and turn away from wrong attitudes and things that are not right in our life,

The Apostle John wrote,

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” **(1 John 1:9)**

AND

4) Continually being committed to giving our best for the Lord. Our labour for the Lord is never in vain.

God honours those who serve Him. There is great joy and fruitfulness in our life when we use our gifts to see God’s Kingdom established here on earth

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” **(1 Corinthians 15:58)**

JUST BELIEVE THAT YOUR LIFE CAN MAKE A GREAT DIFFERENCE IN THIS WORLD FOR ETERNITY IN THE TIMES THAT WE ARE NOW LIVING IN, IF YOU ARE SIMPLY PREPARED TO LIVE WHOLEHEARTEDLY FOR THE LORD.

God has much in store for your life