

From The Rat Race To The Pearly Gates

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In Matt. 24:37-39, Jesus warned us about living our everyday lives without Him in it. *“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”*

We understand that God destroyed the world in the Flood because of man’s disobedience and violence. But in this particular passage, Jesus was warning us of a different aspect of disobedience, that of just going on in our everyday lives without God. There is nothing wrong with eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. We have to eat and drink to survive. We are told marriage is a gift from God. In addition, we need to go to work each day to provide for our families, or to school to learn. But if we just go through the motions of our lives every day, without living it for Jesus, we will find ourselves unprepared when He returns.

One thing that can help us each day is to do these everyday life activities in a way that pleases God. In doing so, we turn them from doing things out in the world without God into service for Him. These things are certainly not the only things we should do for the Lord every day. But they are often overlooked, and can be changed from worldly activities to godly activities with basically a change in attitude. It’s an exciting concept, one that can really bless our Christian lives.

So how can we change the daily activities of eating and drinking into service for Jesus? It’s all in our attitude. We find 3 parts to this change in attitude.

First of all, recognize that these blessings come from God. James 1:17, *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”* Phil. 4:19 says.

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Follow that first step up with trusting in Him to provide these blessings, so that we can focus on more spiritual matters. Matt. 6:31-33, *“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* Don’t worry about the necessities of this life. Trust in God to provide. Ps. 37:3, *“Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.”*

The next step is thankfulness for these blessings God provides. Develop an attitude of gratitude, as we read in 1 Tim. 4:3-5. This scripture applies this thankful attitude specifically to our food. And we need to not only be thankful to God, but also express our thanks-giving to Him in prayer. In this passage Paul was pointing out several false doctrines. One had to do with our food. *“Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanks-giving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”*

We could just eat and drink with our minds elsewhere, and never think about God or our food at all. Or we could focus only on the flavor and nutrition of our food, and cherish the experience itself for its own sake. Or we can remember that our food comes from God, trust in Him to provide it, be thankful for it and express that thanksgiving to God in prayer through the name of Jesus Christ. Doing so each time we eat and drink helps us to stay focused on Jesus throughout the day. Doing so takes eating and drinking from a mundane activity way past even a gourmet experience into the realm of service for Christ. Just by an attitude adjustment.

The second thing Jesus mentioned was marrying and giving in marriage. Marriage is a blessing God has given to all mankind. You don’t have to be a Christian to get married. Heb. 13:4 says, *“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”*

How then, can we turn our marriage from an everyday worldly activity into an activity for Christ?

First of all, just as with our food, recognize that our marriage is a blessing from God. Eccl. 9:9 reads, *“Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.”* And Prov. 18:22 says, *“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.”*

This leads us again to thankfulness. Eph. 5:20, *“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,”*. “All things” would certainly include our marriage and our spouse.

Follow through on this by living our marriage as a Christian should. Don't let the daily grind wear down our marriage as the world does. Put in the effort, commitment, giving, forgiving, and love that a Christian should, and do so every day. Eph. 5:24-25, *“Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it,”*. Don't love our wives like the world does. Love her like Christ loved the church! Col. 3:17 is a familiar passage, *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”* The next two verses apply this instruction to our marriage. Col. 3:18-19, *“Wives, submit your-selves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.”*

In this study, we also want to explore our work or school. We do so, because of the time it takes up in our day. A normal full-time job is 8 hours a day, or roughly a third of each day, 5 days a week or more. Many of our jobs require even more time than that. Again, the right attitude will change 8 hours of the rat race into 8 hours of laying up treasure in Heaven. Let's see how.

Again, it begins with recognizing that your work or school is a blessing from God and being thankful for it. 1 Thess. 5:18, *“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”*

Secondly, we want to be sure that we are working for the right reasons. We aren't in it to get rich or gain great possessions for ourselves. Jesus said in Luke 12:15, "*And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*"

Instead, our goals are to provide for ourselves, our families, and to be able to share with others in need. We read in 1 Thess. 4:11-12 that we need to provide for ourselves, "*And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.*" In 1 Tim. 5:8 we see that we need to provide for our families, "*But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*" And in Eph. 4:28 we read that we need to be generous to others, "*Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*"

Then we wrap up our change in attitude toward our job by working as though Jesus Christ is our boss, (or teacher). Col. 3:22-24, "*Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*"

So we change eating and drinking into service to Christ by recognizing that these blessings come from God, trusting in Him to provide these necessities of life, being thankful to Him and ex-pressing our thanks in prayer.

We change our marriage from mundane into Christian by again recognizing this blessing comes from God, being thankful for our marriage and our spouse, and living for them as a Christian should. For example, husbands love our wives as Jesus loved the church.

And we change our jobs (or school) into Christian service by once again recognizing God's blessing and being thankful for it, by working for the right reasons – not greed, but to provide for ourselves, our families and to be able to help

others, and by working as though Jesus Christ is our boss (or teacher).

As we make these changes in attitude, note that we are turning these normal daily activities into service to Christ. But we are also developing a strong work ethic, love, and a giving and thankful spirit. So these steps also bless other areas of our Christian lives. It will probably even make our marriages and jobs better. It definitely helps us steer our mental focus away from the rat race of daily living into a life lived for Jesus to be rewarded on Judgment Day.

Col. 3:1-2, *“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

Offered in Christian love,
Bro. Terry Warford

