

Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places

Country music star, Johnny Lee, is known to many for his hit song, “Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places.” The women visiting the tomb of Jesus were confronted with the question, “*Why do you seek the living One among the dead?*” (Luke 24:5). The song title and the question have a common application in today’s Templates of Truth.

Jesus is identified in Scripture as the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind, and by many other respected roles, such as Prophet, Teacher and King. While these are significant acknowledgments, in a more practical sense, Jesus represents love & acceptance, joy & happiness, success & fulfillment, knowledge & truth, and wholeness & healing. These are qualities we all seek and desire. The question then becomes, to what or to whom do we turn in order to find these essentials for life. Like the song and the angelic question poses, people often look for these qualities in all the wrong places.

In our search for love & acceptance, we focus on people and relationships. To feel wanted, needed and accepted, we tend to gravitate toward anyone who will give us a smile, a wink, a touch or the special attention we crave. When it feels so good, character and morality can become non-issues that are easily compromised. Sex can be substituted for love, abuse & control is confused with attention, and possession is regarded as acceptance. These distorted perspectives lead to dysfunctional patterns that harm people and destroy relationships. They are dead-end streets! God has a design for our life where our needs for love & acceptance are found in Him and through those in whom He can love and nurture through to bring satisfaction to the relational needs of our life. God is love and true love can only be found in and through Him.

We all want joy and fulfillment in life. Success helps promote fulfillment, and when we are fulfilled in life, we tend to experience more joy and happiness. So in that quest, we focus on job performance, education, moving up the corporate ladder, and building a name for ourselves to establish business credibility and value. When success defines our passion, we can become entangled in corruption, money becomes our god, and self-serving strategy becomes our priority over everything and everyone. Long-invested careers can be suddenly terminated with corporate down-sizing. Thousands of dollars secured through retirement & stock funds can disappear over-night with economic downturns. Death to success can come at the blink of bankruptcy and foreclosure. God has a will, plan and purpose for our lives that promises success and fulfillment if we submit to and remain obedient to His path for our career and professional role. Only in that design will we discover success and true joy & happiness.

Our world offers many views for what it insists is the embodiment of knowledge and truth. The disciplines of science, philosophy, religion and literature all stake their claims. Our thirst to finding meaning and purpose in life, and to understand the complexities of fact and fiction drive us to books, authorities, & experts, and motivate us to educational pursuits in famous institutions of learning. Our tendency is to accept doctrines, tenants and conclusions that conform to our

personal opinions and standards of behavior. If they call into question the authenticity of inspired Scripture, denigrate the divine deity of God, or challenge the moral & ethical code by which God's Word measures our life, it is of no consequence as long as what we believe gives us permission to act and behave as we want. Therein lies intellectual death. God alone is truth.

When we turn to cigarettes, a bottle of pills or alcohol, indulge in gluttonous eating, illicit sex, or pornography to anesthetize our emotional pain & internal stress, we are looking for relief among the tombs. When we turn to compromise, corruption, deception, and dishonor in order to offset deficits in our life, we are digging in graves. God created you with an inward desire to find true meaning and purpose in life. He wants you to discover that meaning & purpose in Him through a personal relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ; and through a daily ingestion of His life-changing truth – the Bible. If you are looking for love, acceptance, peace, joy, happiness, fulfillment, and personal healing & wholeness in anyone or anything other than Him, you are looking in all the wrong places. Why do you look for life among the dead?

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide in Christ. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in the Lord Jesus.

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