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PathPoint Magazine

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I hate to tell you, but evil days are on the way for most of us. I am not talking about the ever-increasing evil days predicted before our Lord's return. I am referring to "days" (*plural*) of great evil which are right around the corner.

Imagine waking up one morning and suddenly you don't feel well. As a matter of fact, you can hardly crawl out of bed. You don't seem to be able to shake it off, so you decide to go to the doctor. After an examination, your doctor gives you his bleak report. His prognosis is that you are going to gradually get weaker and weaker. Your eyesight and hearing will likely begin to fail. You ask, "Doctor, isn't there something you can do?" Sadly, he informs you there is no cure. What was his diagnosis? Was it cancer or heart disease? No, his diagnosis is you are growing older. You've had too many birthdays. Perhaps we shouldn't even celebrate birthdays since each

one brings us closer to this depressing visit with our physician and our own personal encounter with Ecclesiastes chapter twelve.

Benjamin Franklin once said, "***Life's tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late.***" Ben was right. Perhaps first we might define what old age really is. For many years, your final days began just after puberty. In the Middle Ages, reaching age 21 was somewhat of a real accomplishment. Then around the turn of the last century, life spans started steadily rising, from around 46 years to over 80 years now. The modern generation will likely have a longer and healthier life than their parents. Since they will be young "*longer*" it is important for us to help them not waste their youth, because they will have so much more youth to waste. Furthermore, we need to warn them that no matter how long they may live, old age will always come quicker than they could ever imagine.

It is very easy to waste your youth, to use up your time without doing anything important. Young people see their advantages increase from year to year as they move out of childhood towards becoming an adult. Every year they get smarter, and maybe even a little wiser. With each passing year, they will get physically stronger and will likely earn more money and become less dependent on others. Then they make the mistake of thinking the future will only get better. Not so fast, here is the newsflash they will not want to hear; it's all going to end, and it is going to end sooner than they think. One day it will stop getting better and then it will start to get worse, and worse. The Bible explains it this way:

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

Ecclesiastes 12:1

The Word of God says our future will contain not just one, but a lot of "***evil days***" as we grow older. What does this mean? It means that soon, time which has been our friend for many years, will suddenly turn against us like a vengeful enemy seeking payback for all the good times we have had. As we grow older the evil days will come, and we will see many of the pleasures, opportunities, and freedoms we now enjoy begin to slip away.

The human body will begin to run down physically. Perhaps today your body is in good shape. But very soon, you won't be able to do all the things you can do now. You'll have more aches and pains, and you'll be weaker, until you become sick, and one day you will die. Thanks for the encouraging words, right?

We all know that even the best athletes usually must stop playing professional baseball, football, or basketball by the age of 40. Their bodies just can't handle the stress. Just like them, you will not get stronger and stronger every year until you die, no matter how much you pay for a professional trainer. The "evil days" will soon come for you, and they will come more quickly than you can imagine!

We should warn our young people that the rest of their life will not be like the life they are living now. Their life will change from a life of freedom to a life of obligations. Now they are thinking about how to enjoy life and what to do with their free time and extra money. But one day they will come into a life of limits, demands, and obligations. We must teach our young people to wisely start training themselves so they can stand up and bravely face those evil days.

People get set in their ways as they get older. People form many habits of life when they are young, and when they are older it is very hard for them to change their ways. People who learn how to manage their time when they are young will do the same when they are grown up. People who learn how to take care of their money when they are young will likely do the same when they are older. On the other hand, people who are sloppy and lazy when they are young will usually be the same, or worse, as they get older. People who make a mess of their life when they are young will keep on making a mess of their life when they get older, and the messes will just get bigger.

Most importantly, you will lose the freedom to change your relationship with God. Humanly speaking, it

will become harder and harder for you to get on fire for the Lord, or to be converted as you get older. But there's another reason why it will be harder. The time may come when you are so hardened by sin that you will find it extremely difficult (*or even impossible*) to get right with God.

"My spirit shall not always strive with man."

Genesis 6:3

"God gave them over to a reprobate mind."

Romans 1:28

Old age comes so quickly. One day you are working, having children, cleaning house, and then you wake up one morning and poof – you are old, have Alzheimer's and need someone to change your diaper.

During the final days of Alexander the Great, he gave specific details regarding his funeral. First, he wanted the very best doctors to carry his coffin. This would demonstrate to others that

though we may be able to pay for and obtain the finest of medical care, we cannot buy health nor life when death comes calling.

His second request was to have the road covered with his coins, precious stones, and gold so that others could see that what we acquire on earth will stay on earth.

His third request was for his hands be left free to swing outside of his coffin. He wanted to demonstrate that the most precious treasure is time. Older folks understand that! Time is the most valuable commodity we have, and it is running out!

Now, *if* time *is* our most precious treasure, then it is also the most treasured gift we can give to one another. **Time** is the gift we can give and never take back. Time is treasured because although we cannot buy it, we can choose to use it wisely or wastefully. Sadly, most old people, who have so much to offer, would rather spend their time and money on





pets than on people. If we directed the same effort toward others, and expected no more in return than we receive from an animal, we might actually make an eternal difference in someone's life, but I digress.

Young People Need Our Time... and Wisdom!

The point is young people need our time. Why? It gives me great joy to say this; ***because we are smarter than they are, that's why!*** The one advantage that being old has is that we usually get wiser. Two studies recently showed us that older people were far better at making choices that led to long-term gain than young people. While younger participants were good at making choices, which led to an immediate reward, older folks aged 60 to 80 were much more adept at making strategic decisions which looked long range and took future stages into account. Perhaps that is why many young people still don't understand that college loans must be paid back. So, if you need someone to prioritize your project, your day, or your life; find an old geezer!

Previous studies had indicated that our ability to make decisions declines as we get older, but these had focused on

weigh each decision while considering how it would affect future choices, much like we must do in the real world.

The results indicated older people's wisdom helped them outperform younger participants at taking the bigger picture into account. Older folks were better at evaluating the immediate and delayed benefits and liabilities of each option they had to choose from. Young people need to understand that when an old person dies it is like a library filled with books burning to the ground.

Now, since younger people were better when only the immediate rewards needed to be considered or when only one isolated, stand-alone decision was required, older folks need to understand what this says about the limitations of our mental abilities. It says we don't do well with spontaneous decisions. Much like our reflex time diminishes as we age, apparently, we are also more prone to make more hasty, foolish, and emotional decisions. Telemarketers know this. Sometimes family members can also prey upon this weakness.

Sherry and I have decided that perhaps the smartest thing we might do for ourselves in our old age is to pray

people's capacity to make single dimensional choices one at a time. Life usually isn't that way. Most of the time dozens of factors must be considered when making a decision. So, this test required

for wise kids, pray that we will know which child is the wisest regarding a specific issue and then pray that we will have enough sense to listen to their wise counsel. Sadly, many older folks don't have any wise kids they can go to; and perhaps even sadder is a parent with a wise child who will not listen to them.

Marching Time and Lengthening Shadows

One day, when this life ends and we stand on the border of eternity, perhaps we will look back and properly evaluate all of our pettiness and wasted time. At that moment, only the worthwhile things, the constructive things, the things we have done for the good of mankind and the glory of God will matter. As our day comes to an end the shadows we cast grow longer. Our influence, positive or negative, can touch more people. I know I will live eternally with my Lord; however, it is only through my lasting positive influence upon others that my life will continue on earth.

We have all heard the adage that, "*time flies when you are having fun.*" But as we age, we know that time flies whether we are having fun or not. So, my advice to the young is; "***don't waste your youth, because old age comes quickly.***" My advice to the elderly is; "***don't waste your old age, because wisdom comes slowly and young people desperately need what you have to offer.***"



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry over forty years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries.



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Love Letters

It's late in the evening, and you've just arrived home from work. You throw your keys on the table and your coat across the chair and begin thumbing through the mail you pulled out of the mailbox on your way inside the house. You see a magazine, a few pieces of junk mail, a bill or two, and a hand written letter from a loved one. Now think for just a moment... which piece of mail would you open first?

There is no doubt most of us would open the letter from our loved one



first. Why? Because we love them and it makes us happy to hear from them. We have a desire to know what things they are writing to us about. We want to know updates about their lives. It makes us feel closer to them.

Did you know we have access to a personal letter written just for us from the Creator of the universe? We have access to God's Word in which He tells us of His great love for us. Just as we are excited about hearing from family and close friends, we should be excited about hearing from God. He wants to give us updates, too. He wants to teach us new things every day and reassure us of His unconditional love toward us. He wants us to feel closer to Him.

As 2017 is already well underway, take time the rest of this year to spend

time in God's Word. Read His words of love and encouragement and learn the things He wants to teach you. Set aside the "junk mail" of your life for just a few moments each day and be excited about hearing from Him. His love letter to you might be sitting on the shelf just across the room from where you are right now. What are you waiting for? He could have things He wants to tell you this very moment. There's only one way to find out...

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The Valley Of The Now

There is a huge mountain over there. Do you see it? You can't see all of it clearly. It is shrouded in fog and some of it is a great distance away, but you still know it's there. That mountain represents tomorrow.

Back there is another mountain. Do you see it? Although it is a bit clearer than the other mountain, there is still much of it you cannot see. That mountain represents yesterday. Today, we are living in the valley between what God has done and what God is going to do.

The knowledge of what God has done in the past helps give us faith for the future. But, the trouble is we know so little about what He accomplished yesterday. Of course, we all had a "personal" yesterday. That's the stuff that happened to us, or we were made aware of. However, we must also realize that 99.999% of the things that happened yesterday, you and I are not even aware of. Those things are in the realm of the universal yesterday.

Perhaps a meteor crashed into the dark side of the moon, or several hydrogen atoms fused to create a helium atom in the core of our sun releasing a photon which emerges to the surface and escapes. Did that happen yesterday? Who would know that? Or, was it totally unobserved and unrecorded.

As Christians, you and I know the answer to that. God knows everything that happens, and He is the only One who truly knows what, why,

and how everything happened in everybody's and everything's "yesterday." So, although we might use our knowledge of yesterday to help grow our faith, we must also realize our record is grossly incomplete. Even if you would take all of man's knowledge of yesterday and add it into one great total, you would still have only a small part of what actually occurred.

God keeps perfect records. If you are a Christian, He knows every work you did for Christ. Every cup of water you gave in His name. Things you have long forgotten, He knows. He knows your hurts and pains. He knows every seed you planted, and He sees the harvest that will come tomorrow. He sent yesterday's manna, and He will send tomorrow's fresh supply.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."
Proverbs 3:5-6

No matter what is on tomorrow's mountain, the very God that has perfect knowledge and control of yesterday will be there to guide our tomorrow. In reality you and I don't know much about what happened yesterday - we know even less about tomorrow, but know this, our God is able to see us through. In spite of keeping up with the photons on the sun and the meteors crashing into the dark side of the moon; in spite of keeping up with everything that happens in the unseen world of the microbe, He still has time to watch over you and I as we dwell in the valley of the now.



The Power Of A Ponder

Mrs. Sherry Worthington

What does it mean to ponder? The dictionary says it means “to think about (*something*) carefully, especially before making a decision or reaching a conclusion.” I don’t think we ponder enough in our world today. We are an impulsive society which wants everything now. We need to learn to ponder.

What are some things we should ponder over? I think we should ponder over who we should marry. We would have much less heartache in our world if we were more careful before saying the words, “*I do.*” I have noticed young people don’t discuss the important issues before they get married. Many don’t even know if their special sweetheart wants

to have children. They don’t know their political persuasion, and worst of all, they don’t even know if the one they have chosen to spend their life with is a Christian or not. Oh, they may have **asked**, but they don’t seek for real evidence. They never asked when, where, how, and why about their salvation experience and walk with God. This leads to a road filled with trouble.

We should also ponder over financial decisions. We need to think carefully about going into debt. I really like that house, but the payments are over half my monthly income. I really want a new car, but I am still paying for my old one. Unfortunately, many people I know who are in financial trouble

seem to nickel and dime themselves to death. If they would think before they bought the new shoes, they might decide the money would be better spent elsewhere.

Americans had a great opportunity to ponder last year. We had a nasty election year. Candidates were throwing jabs at each other in any way they could. As citizens, we need to be careful not to get caught up in the drama. We must not forget to ask the question, where does each candidate stand on the issues? We have a responsibility to find out where they stand and vote accordingly-not because of a party affiliation. It is America’s only hope. Citizens need to learn to ponder.

Parents have an awesome responsibility when it comes to their children. Should they not ponder over every decision they make where their children are concerned? It is so important to keep them in a church, school, and home where God is at the center. Every act of discipline and love needs to be thought through carefully.

We all need to ponder and be so careful where we go to church. Our church family needs to believe the Word of God and practice it, too. Our church is the place we go to worship our Savior. Should it not be a place that is sacred to us--a place that honors God in music and His Word?

The Bible speaks of Mary pondering in her heart on several occasions. On one occasion she thought about things the shepherds said. (*Luke 2:19*) Another time was when Jesus was a boy at the temple. (*Luke 2:51*) I am sure there were countless occasions when Mary thought about the things Jesus did or said. I can only imagine how carefully she thought of these things. She was the mother of the Son of God. That would be pretty heavy. I think it would be the greatest honor but also the greatest intimidation a woman could experience.

It is great to ponder over life's challenges. If we are impulsive, life will be much more difficult. I do believe a Christian has an even greater source to draw from. As a Christian, I have my Heavenly Father and His Holy Spirit. I have the privilege of prayer. As Christians we do not have to rely on our own instincts, intuitions, and thought processes. We have the Lord to guide us through the miry clay on this earth. Our greatest problem is we don't want to wait on the Lord. We don't want to ponder



or pray. Isaiah 40:31 tells us to wait upon the Lord. That doesn't mean to sit and do nothing. He wants us to wait upon Him and serve Him. As we are serving, He will give us instructions.

We need to be still and listen for God's instruction. (*Psalms 46:10*) Our Christian community today is so busy running about doing good, we don't take time to listen to God. How can we listen if we don't take time to read His Word and pray? Prayer isn't always talking, it is listening, too!

Before we make a decision, shouldn't we talk with the One who knows? Our Heavenly Father loves us and wants what is best for us. He knows if it will be good to buy the car or the candy bar. He knows how to handle our children. He knows our future. Why don't we ponder over our Lord

and talk with Him about our problems? Should we not worship Him? Should we not praise His name? Should we not get to know Him? That is all He wants from us. He wants our love, obedience, and praise.

Ponder over the things the Lord has done for you. Make Him a priority in your life. Slow down. Be still and know that He is God.

“Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.”

Proverbs 4:26



Mrs. Worthington has five children and ten grandchildren. She serves as Principal of Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.



“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

Isaiah 40:31

Marriage to God’s perfect one for you is not an easy or rushed task. How many marriages do you see that seem to be honoring God and fulfilling His perfect plan as He intended marriage? Very few, sadly. May I share some invaluable lessons I learned from my parents, from life, and from other women who wish they had known these before they

got married? It is tested and proven advice, and I hope you find it helpful!

Don’t Rush!

If you rush to marry, you can end up marrying the wrong person. We make the mistake of marrying the wrong person because we think anyone will do. Just someone! You can actually end up with more misery than if you had stayed single.

Don’t Date Because You Are Lonely.

Did you know you could be stuck dating a distraction when Mr. Right does come along? Dating is not an entertainment, hobby, or

means of passing the time. Nor is it a playground or “practice” for marriage as some claim in order to obtain intimacy. Dating should only be done with the intention of finding out if a person is marriage material. Dating should not be taken lightly.

Set Standards Before Meeting Mr. Right.

The way to make sure you do not waste your time with someone other than Mr. Right is by setting up standards ahead of time. Standards you want your husband and father of your children to have: character, values, personality, work ethic, etc. Have three lists:



Absolutes: Things that are absolute traits your future spouse must have. This list simplifies dating enormously. If the person you are considering does not meet these standards, then the decision is made. You cannot date him. *Examples:* Places God before all others, Has a hunger to grow in his Christian walk, Faithful to Church, Kind, Considerate, Wants children (a lot or a few or one?), Views on child-rearing, Hardworking, Self-Disciplined, etc.

Likes: Things that are not absolutes, but things you would like in him. *Examples:* Likes outdoor activities, Sings love songs to me, likes basketball, doesn't like basketball, doesn't mind if I shop with the girls every now and then, loves to laugh, likes to cuddle, etc.

Absolutely Not: Things that are a "no trespassing." Never begin a relationship with these, and if you find it later in the relationship, it is grounds for ending it. *Examples:* Does not yell at me, hit me, curse, disrespectful to his parents, drink, lie, etc.

You see, if you do not have pre-set standards, it is easy to slowly become involved with someone you never meant to. We get emotionally attached and then it is hard to break it off. That is also how affairs happen. Standards and boundaries are not set to protect your marriage and family. Likewise, if the person you are dating is not faithful to you while dating, a day before the pastor is not going to change him. He will cheat on you while you are married, too. Dating is testing grounds for marriage.



Date For A While.

A guy can fake it if he only has to do it for a little while. I once heard a true story about a girl who only dated for a short time, and she assumed he was what he appeared to be. As they rode away from the wedding, he said, "Whew! At least the pretending is over now." He was referring to acting like a good Christian guy in front of her parents. Oh, the dread and regret that must have washed over her!

Don't Just Date.

Dating is fun. Dating is interesting. Dating is not real-life. You may date to begin to know someone, but you need more than that to determine if he is a good candidate for becoming a life-partner with. Since you are created to be his help-meet, is he someone you can see yourself following and supporting? Create real-life situations to see what makes him tick. Try visiting the sick, working together, and being around kids. These can give you insights

into whether he is compassionate, hard working, patient and firm. Or is he the opposite? These habits carry over into other aspects of his life, and will into yours after marriage. Get him in situations that reveal how he handles stress or being uncomfortable. A week of marriage is 168 hours. You probably spend 3-6 hours date time in a week. Dating is the fairy-tale of what you think marriage will be. See if he is willing to do real life things with you, or is he only interested in the fun part of life?

Listen to Godly Counsel.

Listen to the godly advice or cautions you receive. A young couple was in college and making eager plans for marriage. Their parents wanted them to date longer and wait until they finished college to marry. The couple followed this advice, God matured them in a lot of ways as they finished school, and their marriage started out a lot smoother. The parents could see there were areas





to be worked on which these young people could not. Listen to godly counsel. They often have a higher view point of your situation than you do.

Remember God is Busy.

No, not too busy for you. He is actually busy preparing you and Mr. Right! You see, there are many reasons why you may not have met Mr. Right yet. It could be he is not ready for you. It could be you are not ready for him. It could be the wrong time or the wrong place.

Prepare Yourself.

Once you make a list on the type of husband you want, you need to start dwelling on the type of wife he needs. If you want a husband who is hungry to grow in his relationship with God and is not content to be stale, then you need to be that type of lady. An on-fire Christian man does not need a stale wife. She will hold him back. You will either grow together or hold someone back. If you want a sensitive husband, make sure you are not an insensitive girl. That would be abusive to him in a relationship. If you want a husband who takes time daily with the Lord... do you do that now? Analyze your list

of desired characteristics in a future spouse. I'll bet his future spouse needs some work, too (Yes, that's you!). So work on it, and be prepared for the day you will meet Mr. Right. Wouldn't it be sad if you met him but knew you couldn't pursue a relationship with him?

God Has To Be Your Everything.

This is the MOST important thing. If you are looking to a guy to solve your problems, you are going to be sadly disappointed. Do you want him looking to you for that? If you both bring baggage to the wedding ceremony, you start it off horribly and are then loaded down with bigger burdens than you ever carried before. If God is not your everything, then you are looking to this guy to be your everything. That means you are looking to him to be something that only God is meant to be in your life. Don't do that to yourself or to him.

If you are dating because you are lonely, you may just continue to be lonely the rest of your life. Getting married does not solve that. God often wants us to get to a point that we don't "have" to have someone. He wants us to only need Him. Once you

(both) get to that point of surrender and dedication, then God can put the two of you together and really make an awesome relationship and marriage! Marriage is a triangle with you and your husband at the bottom, and if God is not at the top, neither of you have a common goal worth working towards.

Pray For Him.

Pray for your future spouse. You have no idea the battles he is currently facing. He may not even be saved yet. He needs your prayers, even though you do not know one another yet. Pray for him. Prepare yourself for him as best as you can. Ask God to show you what you need to be.

Remember, there is only ONE Mr. Right, and there is only ONE you. Don't expect to find him when you have millions to sort through. God is arranging the details. All you have to do is be sure you are following Him. He will take care of the rest. Wait on God, trust Him and follow His path. He will lead you two together when you are both ready, when it is the right time and the right place. If a godly marriage is not your goal...you are going to be disappointed in any other relationship. Make God your goal. He will not disappoint you.

“And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.”

Isaiah 30:18



Mrs. Amber Sherman is a homemaker and mother of three boys. She and her husband reside in Snow Hill, NC.

And Finally...



What Kids Think About Valentine's Day...

Valentine's Day is when you give cards with heart stickers all over them.

D. E. (10 yrs.)

So there was this man, I forget his first name, but his last name was Valentine, and he was a very kind man. And actually, I think his first name was "Kind," and he made up Valentine's Day. It's for people to get together and have fun.

R. B. (8 yrs.)

I think you're supposed to find someone cute and hold their hand.

O. R. (6 yrs.)

Valentine's is that day when my parents make me and my brother stay home with a babysitter so they can go and watch a movie or something.

J. P. (10 yrs.)

Valentine's Day is a day you get together with people you love and celebrate caring for each other.

B. M. (14 yrs.)

It's like where it's basically you give people cards, and it's "be nice to everybody" day. Like if you see a stranger on the street, you can say, "Hi".

J. A. (7 yrs.)

Valentine's Day is a day when you celebrate love and get a teddy bear and chocolate from your mom and dad.

S. C. (8 yrs.)

"Plan Your Epitaph"

We'd like your help for an upcoming edition of "And Finally..."

April 6, 2017, is Plan Your Own Epitaph Day!

Write to us in 150 words or less and tell us what you would like your epitaph to say. The

deadline for submission is

February 15th, 2017.

You can send an email to: Attn: PathPointe

wago@gomixradio.org

Or write to: Pathway Ministries

PO Box 1895

Goldsboro, NC 27533



The Correct Answer Is YES, You Can Still Afford To Give Your Child A Christian Education.

Even In These Troubled Economic Times, A Christian Education Is Still One Of The Best Investments You Can Make For Your Child. Pathway Christian Academy Has Developed Several Budget Minded Tuition Options You Might Wish To Consider. Call The Academy Office To Arrange An Appointment To Obtain Further Details. Together, We Can Still Make It Happen.

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