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What Defines YOU?



Dr. T. D. Worthington

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively (living) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”

I Peter 1:3

When Peter wrote this letter to the Christians living in Asia Minor, he called them “*strangers*.” He was not saying that because he had never personally met them, nor was he indicating that they had recently relocated. Actually, they were the same people they had always been, but now through their relationship with Jesus Christ, they had become strangers and aliens; living in one country, yet belonging to another.

Quite often, people from another culture stand out. It may be their clothing, their appearance, their

skin color, or their language. Actually, it could be a number of things, but usually they look different, not better, nor worse; but different. Aliens stand out.

As Christians we are strangers and aliens. However, we are not set off by a specific style of dress. Christians should dress modestly; but we don’t wear uniforms with a big cross on the front. We don’t have our own language or distinct way of talking. Hopefully, we have put away gossip and evil speaking, but Christians usually speak their native language. We don’t belong to a specific class, nationality, or race. We often associate people from certain parts of the world with a certain religion, but Christians live all over the world. We don’t all live in or hail from a specific geographical area. Likewise, we

don’t have specific dietary laws that distinguish us from others. Actually, we are not defined or distinguished by any of the things that normally mark off one people from another.

So, what is it that makes Christians to be peculiar and strange wherever we go? What makes us different? I suppose there are many traits that should make us different from others, but let’s discuss two.

The First Trait is Love.

We will cover this quickly because it is something we all know. What does the greatest command hinge upon? Love. What will be the defining characteristic of followers of Jesus? Love. What will never pass away, even after faith and hope are gone? Love.

Love is the mark of the disciple. Jesus said, ***“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”*** (John 13:35) It is not our Bible knowledge that makes us different nor our stance on public issues. Those things are certainly important, but according to our Lord, the defining mark of a Christian is love.

But, before we move on, there is one problem I would like to mention. The word love has been so diluted and overused it no longer has much meaning. Consider how many times you may use the word love in the average day. We “love” ice cream, apple pie, puppies, and our favorite shirt. We may love certain music, spring showers, and Christmas. We are a culture that is in love with being in love. As a result, to say that “love” is one of the indicators of the disciples of Jesus doesn’t mean very much.

Yet, our Lord shows us that what passes for love today, is not what He had in mind. Christian love, the kind of love that would mark His disciples, is a pure love that stands out in its uniqueness. Jesus teaches us that real love is sacrificial, it is demonstrated by action, and it always takes the initiative. Real love is unconditional and doesn’t wait for someone to show themselves to be lovable or worthy of our love. Christian love reaches out and pursues; just like Jesus did for us:

Of course, before you can really love others, you need to recognize that you are unconditionally, irrevocably, and ridiculously loved by God just as you are. Whoever you are, wherever you’ve been,

whatever you’ve done in the course of your life, God loves you and will accept you through His Son Jesus Christ.

The Second Trait is Hope.

Hope along with love defines us and distinguishes us as believers. In **I Peter 1:3**, Peter says God hath ***“begotten us again unto a lively (living) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”*** We have been born again to a living hope. We need to accept the fact that you and I have hope because we were born that way; we were born with it.

I was born a Worthington. That came with certain connotations. It gave me my genetic disposition. Peter’s readers were born into an identity too. Perhaps some were Jews, some were Greeks or Romans. Maybe others were born into specific tribes or people groups. Perhaps others were defined by their race, tongue, or occupation.

Whatever may have defined them before, because of God’s love and by the power of God’s Spirit, they now were born again. And what is one of the main identities that comes with this new birth? Hope. Hope is the family resemblance all should be able to see in us. Hope is our family culture and birthright.

In **I Peter 1:4**, Peter explains this hope as an inheritance so precious and unprecedented that he can describe it best by what what it is not.

It is Incorruptible: It won’t wither and die like everything else. Pure hope cannot be diluted by trash.

It is undefiled: It can’t be corrupted by our selfishness, our fear of losing it, our pride over it, or our unrealistic and disappointed expectations of it.

It is Unfading: It won’t bring joy that flares up and then burns out, leaving you wondering what’s next.





This inheritance, grounded on the work of Christ and guarded by God’s power, helps to define the life of the Christian. This same hope that grounds our lives as Christians also sets our lives apart from who we once were and from the lives of those whose hopes are different. In Peter’s first chapter, setting up a section on Christian holiness, he describes a before and after that hinges on hope. **“Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts” (I Peter 1:14).** That was then. Now, instead, **“be sober and hope to the end” (I Peter 1:13).**

It’s not that Christians are hopeful now when they weren’t hopeful at all before. It’s that we now live with a different hope than what we lived with before, and it fuels a different passion. In our ignorance, we set our hopes in the near-at-hand and kept our expectations low. We were carried along by our wants and desires, always aiming for all kinds of easy to gain pleasures and short-term possessions. We looked for a meaningful life in the realm of the perishable, the defiled, and the fading.

One mark of the new birth is that now we clearly see the temporary

nature of all those hopes on which we were tempted to build our lives. I think that’s why Peter, writing again of the new birth (**I Peter 1:23–24**), ends his discourse with a partial quote from Isaiah 40. When we look at the entire quote it reads like this:

“All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

Isaiah 40: 6-8

Peter reminds them that everything they formerly hoped in withers away, but now they are building upon the only hope that will stand the test of time. It’s with the image of withering grass in the background that Peter describes the Christian as a spiritual house built on a new and better cornerstone, **“a living stone, disallowed indeed by men, but chosen of God, and precious” (I Peter 2:4).** It’s an unmistakable contrast: the grass that withers, the flower that falls, and the cornerstone that rests in

its place forever. The storms may destroy everything else, but not that which is secured by the unwithering living stone.

Of course, many ways exist for Christians to show their alien identity. Much of what Peter writes from this point lays out these differences, one by one.

Because of hope we treat each other differently, we view worldly power with a different perspective, and we are empowered to respond differently to suffering. Any suffering, from man’s point of view, is always a negative. But, with Christ as our cornerstone, we understand suffering may come, but we also see that suffering can be productive and fully redeemed, just like it was for Christ.

So, for a bit of self-examination, may I ask, **“What defines you”?** Yes, you may be known by your occupation, political persuasions, or your personality. But as a Christian, you should be defined by your love and by your hope. Love is most important, but in today’s world we also need a heavy dose of hope. With all the darkness that surrounds us, we must have—and *we must display to the world*—that we are people of optimism. We can look far into the horizon and see what others cannot see; thus, we have hope.



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry for over forty five years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries and Christian Bible College.



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Autumn Gardens

“...clouds they are without water, carried about of the winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;”

Jude 12

In the Book of Jude, we read that false teachers are compared to autumn trees without fruit, implying that autumn should be a fruitful season. It should be the most abundant season of the year. Yet, every farmer knows they must put forth effort in order

to reap a great harvest. Likewise, in the spiritual realm, our Lord requires us to water our garden, pull the weeds out of our life, and fertilize it heavily with our prayers.

It is exciting to see your garden grow, but you can't be just a passive onlooker. Anyone who has ever had a garden knows it requires a constant effort to keep it going and growing healthy for a good harvest. Dealing with pests and weeds is just a part of everyday life with a garden.

In the same way, we need to carefully tend the spiritual “garden” we've planted. The enemy would like nothing better than to rob us of our harvest. His goal is to hurt God by hurting us. The Bible tells us, given the opportunity, he would devour us.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”

I Peter 5:8

Guard the precious seed you have planted. Then, as you faithfully watch and pray over the garden, you can look forward with great anticipation to receiving God's blessings as harvest season arrives.



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Do You Have Boundaries?

I remember seeing a picture of some elephants. These elephants, although massive in size with great physical strength, were kept constrained by a small fence. The elephants allowed a fence that was only a few inches high to restrict their movements.

Using their great strength, the elephants could have easily trampled the fence, but they behaved as if a fortified wall restricted their movements. Apparently, it takes but a small fence to restrain an elephant as long as he is unwilling to challenge its power.

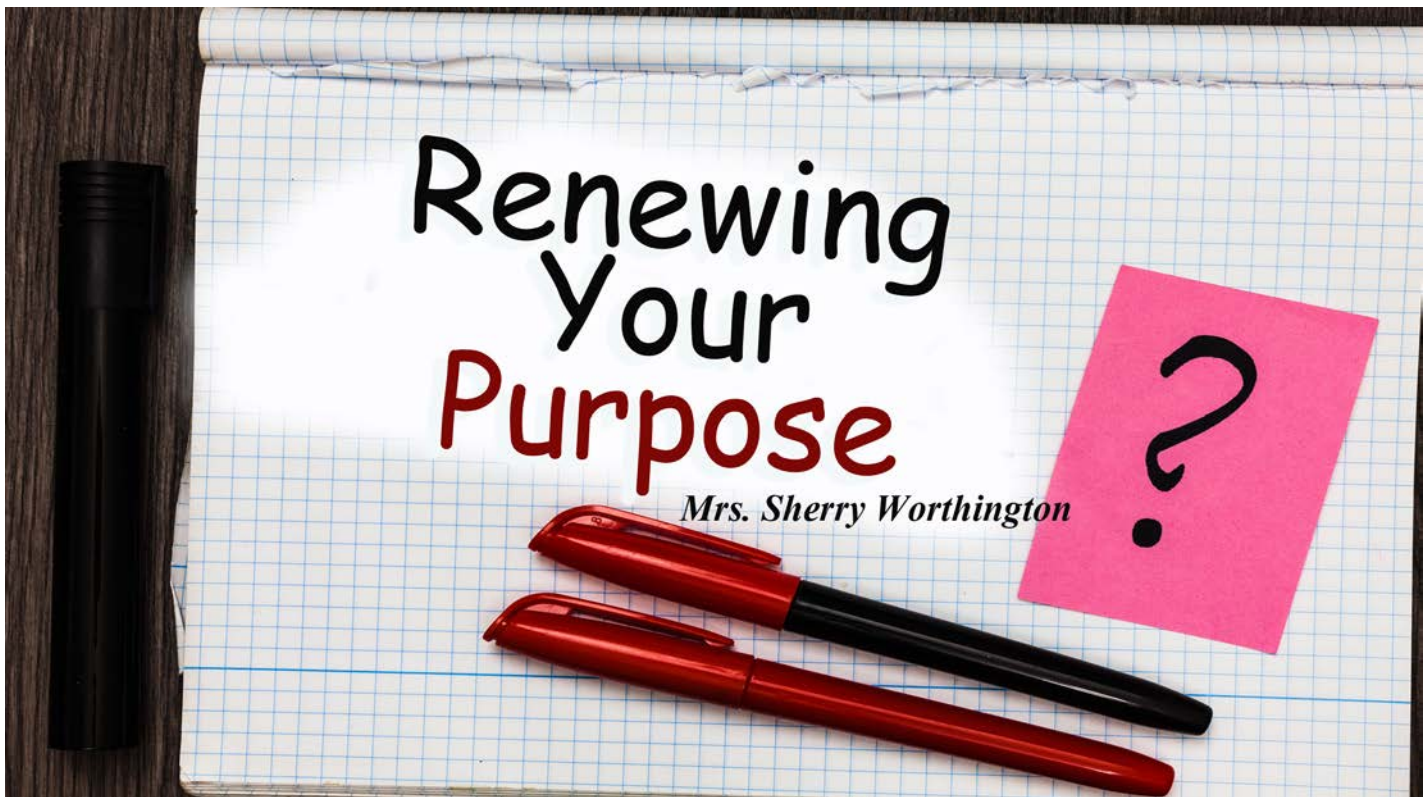
On the other hand, I have personally witnessed the great harm a few termites can do. Although individually weak, by working together with persistent determination they can destroy an entire house. Certainly, we have seen this played out in the lives of people. History records how, if unrestrained, a few weak and intellectually termite people can work together to accomplish great harm. But that's another story. Let's talk about Christians.

God's people are more like the powerful elephant who has restrained himself inside a weak, but unchallenged

fence. Thus, they have self-imposed a limitation on their thoughts, behaviors and faith. They have hindered their growth and liberty. Their fences have kept them from the resources of God's blessings which could so easily be in reach.

How big is your world? What self-imposed boundaries or parameters are restricting your walk with God? What worlds of blessing have your fences robbed from you and your family?

The *GoMix Fall Share-A-Thon* provides a wonderful opportunity to challenge the boundaries that may have restricted your growth and obedience. Remember, your life is made up of dynamic, powerful moments and small, quiet, and seemingly inconsequential opportunities. Both are important, and both are slipping through our fingers like the sands of the hourglass. We must seize each moment that comes, and it will come, as another moment to shine. In this new opportunity you can reinvent yourself into the Christian our Lord desires you to be.



I sometimes have a difficult time deciding what to share in my articles. First, I want to write what the Lord wants me to say, and secondly, I must not waste your time. Time is the most precious commodity any of us have.

I decided to share with you what the Lord taught me recently. If you are discouraged by what you see around you, perhaps you will find a renewed purpose as I did. I was watching a news show Monday night, and it gave some statistics. Tucker Carlson was speaking about what was going on in USA, Russia, and China. He shared a lot of political facts that I really found dumbfounding.

He spoke of how our current administration has weakened our military in several ways. Our Navy seals are probably the healthiest people in our country, and many of them were fired because they were not vaccinated. Sixty Thousand

National Guard soldiers were also fired because of not taking the vaccine. On one of our bases, they had a drag queen contest while the children were playing in a bouncy house. It was a family affair. We are admitting mentally unstable people and those with a low IQ that previously would not have been allowed to enlist in our military. We had this rule because it is not safe for an individual who cannot think clearly in a crisis, and it is unsafe for them to have a gun. The military only has half the quota of recruits for this fiscal year. Of course, I understand why many people would not want to serve under this administration.

He also spoke about how China makes 90 percent of the antibiotics, Tylenol, and Ibuprofen, 96 % of the shipping containers, and 80 % of the cranes as well as many other needed supplies. Taiwan makes 90 percent of the semiconductor chips which we use in our cars, airplanes,

electronics, etc. He spoke of how China would like to control Taiwan, and he believes that is in their plans for the future. He stated that China is just waiting.

Anyway, I began to think about all of these things. What is China waiting on? Are they making sure we are not a threat? Do they want to make sure they are stronger than we are? Their navy is already larger than ours, and they are building up their air power. How long will this take? I bet it is sooner than they expected. I am sure they are as surprised as we are at how fast the current administration has hurt America. My husband says that China was thinking they would be stronger by 2027. I wonder if that is their projection now.

What does all of this mean? It means that if the Lord tarries, and eventually if things don't change, we will be controlled by China without them firing a shot. China

will control our electronics among other things, and Russia will control our oil and possibly our food. Do you realize what that means? Is that scary to you? It is to me.

I look at America and see that many of our citizens are oblivious to what is going on in our world. I look at our leaders and weep. Our children are growing up in this America. What is our future? What is their future?

I really got down in the dumps. Why bother? I was driving to work Tuesday morning thinking of all of these things, and I reminded myself that the only hope for the future is our Lord. If we look around, we see many of our adults are weak. If they met Jesus, He could make them strong!

I also realized that our children need to be taught to stand and not be ashamed. We need to teach them to make wise decisions. If the world has its way, our children will be screen zombies and “yes” people. They will not know how to fight for what is right, and they will not have the common sense to know how to make wise decisions.

We have a school filled with children this year. Along with their parents and their church homes, we are their only hope. What are we teaching them? How do we teach them?

What do we do? We must disciple them and we must teach them by our lives and our examples. We must teach them to study their Bibles and depend on God. We must win souls to Jesus, and then disciple them.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Matthew 28:19-20

The first command in verse 19 is to win the lost. We must teach people about God’s Word and what it means to be saved. We must be fervent. How many children or people have you led to the Lord in your lifetime? If not, why not?

Once we have led them to the Lord, we must teach them to observe all things, which means we must teach them to obey the Word of God. We must teach them that God is with them, and they should go out and witness. Teaching is the work of the church, and we are a part of that church. If we don’t share Christ with a lost and dying world, there is no hope. This world is going to crash and burn one day because God said it would. But how many people accept the Lord before He comes back is up to the Christians and how fervently they share about His Word.

I am concerned about the future of America and the future of our children. But America’s only hope is that we teach the Word and show them the way. If we teach our children to be good Christians, they will be good citizens. They will fight against abortion, and they will stand for what is right in our country. They will cry when a policeman gets gunned down. They will vote for the man that wants to make

America strong and vote for values that stand on the Scripture.

So my attitude changed about halfway to work. As I was thinking of the horribleness that lay ahead and the thought of being beholden to Russia and China, I became encouraged. I realized that we have a tough time ahead, but I can be a part of the solution. I can make a difference by making a difference in the lives of these children and by investing in their parents.

It is not time to throw in the towel. Children need our love and attention. We need to teach them the way. We will not be defeated. We are going to stand tall and attack the wicked one. He will not take our children without a fight.

We are all here in this world for a purpose, and we must fight until the Lord tells us to lay down our mantle. My time is not now. We must not lose sight of our purpose here. As long as we have breath, we must fight to deliver the Lord’s message. I hope I will be able to say these words at the end of my life as Paul did when he was at the end of his life:

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

2 Timothy 4:7-8

Will you be able to say these words when your days are over? I hope we all will.



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



An Eternal Perspective

Dr. Glenn Mills

At some time, most of us have questioned our existence and life's purpose. In **Matthew 22:37-40**, Jesus summed up so much when He said to love God with our whole heart and love our neighbor as ourselves.

Both commandments deal with relationships. Sadly, many think a successful life has to do with worldly possessions and positions. This is such a deception. As the old saying goes, *"I have never seen a U-Haul behind a hearse."* True success is not what we take with us when we go to Heaven, but instead, it is what we send ahead of us.

Satan wants us to focus on the temporary things of life, whereas God desires that we focus on the eternal things. Regardless of our age, it is not too late to get our focus right. Let's look now at some things the Bible says about having an eternal perspective.

"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."

Colossians 3:1-2

At salvation, we become (*or at least we should*) a new person in Christ. The old things (*flesh nature, mind sets, attitudes*) pass away and ALL things become new (*as viewed now from the spiritual*). We are still in this world to carry out God's will, but we are no longer a part of this world's thinking, attitudes, or behavior. Our life is no longer about satisfying the desires and passions of the flesh, but it is now fully about satisfying the Spirit. We move from a temporary mindset to an eternal perspective. We are now to set our minds daily on the spiritual and keep it there.

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:"

Philippians 3:20

Paul says Heaven is now our home and earth is our Mission Field. We remain here to reach others for Christ and to show forth God's love and salvation. John warns us that the earth will pass away with all its physical desires, but they who do the Will of God will abide with Him forever. Jesus even warned us about earthly possessions 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."

Let's be totally honest for a moment. How many of us wish we would not have wasted so much on material things? When I was younger, I loved vehicles. In my forty-one years of driving, I have had seventeen vehicles and seven motorcycles. Although they were not all new, they still cost me something. I can only wonder what difference it would have made if I had sown more of what I spent on vehicles into ministry. How many could say the same about houses, properties, clothing, jewelry, sports, hobbies, electronics, and more? Please note that these things in themselves are not evil, but they do often reveal wasted time, money, and energy. While we can't change the past, we can now get more focused on things that are eternal.

In **Matthew 6:20-21**, Jesus links our hearts to our treasures when He says, ***"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."***

Each of us must take a good look at ourselves to see where our true treasures and commitments lay. Are our lives about us and what we can get or is it about God and what we can do and give to Him? Is it all about our plans or God's plans and His will for us? Are we still living for the temporary or are we focused on the eternal things?

Let's look at what a few different people had to say about life:

"I submit to you that if a man hasn't discovered something he will die for, he isn't fit to live." Martin Luther King Jr.

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." Winston Churchill

"In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." Abraham Lincoln

"A man is not old until regrets take the place of dreams." John Barrymore



"Nobody who ever gave his best regretted it." George Halas

"Regret for wasted time is just more wasted time." Mason Cooley

"What we have done for ourselves, alone dies with us. What we have done for others and the world, remains and is immortal." Albert Pike

"You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough." Mae West

"Physical death is but a doorway leading to eternal bliss for those who have already died to themselves to make Jesus, Lord." Anonymous

I pray that each of us has an eternal perspective and are placing great value on spiritual things and the things above. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to daily help us keep our minds focused on God's will and purpose. Remember, our lives are not our own. We have been bought with a price, the blood of Jesus. We are now God's children and Ambassadors of Heaven.



Dr. Glenn Mills is a long time supporter of GoMix Christian Radio and a full-time Evangelist with the Glenn Mills Ministries. www.glennmillsministries.com

And Finally...



Hobbies...

Although it's not very popular these days, I love stamp collecting. I have collected hundreds of stamps over the years. It is a pleasure to exchange stamps with other stamp-lovers as well. I have arranged them in six albums according to the continents. My father, who used to go abroad for work, got me started collecting stamps. At a young age, he helped me collect rare stamps from overseas. Each stamp has a story to tell of distant lands, strange peoples, and the history of nations. I have made many friends in India and other countries by exchanging some of my stamps. It might be a little weird now days, but I still enjoy it!

A. R.

My favorite hobby is gardening. It gives me immense pleasure. When I see seed I've sown growing into beautiful plants and blooming flowers, it gives me a great sense of fulfillment. I enjoy tending to my plants and watering my garden every day. It gives me such satisfaction and helps in keeping myself active and busy. I grow flowers and vegetables in my garden. The greenery of plants and sweet fragrance of flowers are the tonics for the eyes and mind. In a world full of tension and pollution, it is such a great stress-reliever to see all the beautiful flowers and plants.

W. I.

I have collected "Golden Age" (1930's and 1940's) and "Silver Age" (1950's and early 1960's) comics since I was younger and could afford it. I also grew up reading them as a kid. One reason why I enjoy collecting those is because the hero is always good, and always does the right thing in the end. Something to look forward to, if even only in fantasy. I collected them for the stories and artwork as well. I could read a story that was illustrated and wasn't 3 inches thick (like in a

book), knowing that in the end, "right" always prevailed. Today's comics aren't what they used to be, but I still enjoy the old ones!

V. H.

My hobby is sewing. Even as a teenager I used to sew my own clothes. I remember I got my first sewing machine from the older sister of my grandma, and she was also the one who gave me my first sewing lesson. With her help, I sewed my first pair of pants, which were made of black velvet. Those pants were my absolute favorite pair at the time because they fit so perfectly! From that time on, I wanted to wear more self-made clothing. For that reason, I decided to learn the profession, and I went on to study the high art of tailoring. There is nothing better than to have your own customized and personalized clothes!

K. O.

"My Favorite Holiday"

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

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