

ARE OUR LIVES OF ETERNAL CONSEQUENCE?

By Austin Pryor

With the economic outlook always uncertain, it is not surprising how much we focus on investments and financial security. We can easily become preoccupied with this temporal life and feel complacent about things of eternal importance, but followers of Jesus Christ - even those of us engaged in the 21st century workplace – are called primarily to represent Him. Through the years it has been amazing to observe how much God delights in working through ordinary people, if they are willing to be available to Him.

An amazing chain of events began when Edward Kimball, one such ordinary individual, made himself available to God. Gripped by a sense of urgency upon learning he had little time left to live, Kimball reached out to young men in his church's Sunday school class. One of them was a young shoe clerk, D. L. Moody, who later became one of the great evangelists of the 19th century.

On a trip to the British Isles, Moody's ministry had an impact on the life of Frederick Meyer, who later traveled to America and preached in Moody's school in Massachusetts. His message changed the entire ministry of another young preacher, J. Wilbur Chapman, who became a noted evangelist of his time.

Chapman one day turned his ministry over to a YMCA clerk who had coordinated his evangelistic meetings. Billy Sunday had no formal training but learned to preach by watching Chapman. He in turn guided hundreds of thousands across the United States to faith in Christ in the early 20th century.

In 1924, Sunday conducted a series of meetings in Charlotte, North Carolina. Those led to another evangelistic outreach in 1932, led by Mordecai Ham. There a 16-year-old baseball player named Billy Graham decided to follow Christ. In the decades since, God has used Dr. Graham to lead millions into life-transforming faith in Christ. Think about it: This all began when one man, whose future seemed bleak, made himself available to God to serve others while there was still time.

My wife, Susie, makes herself available to God each day. Years ago, she sensed the Lord speak to her heart: "Since Jesus is coming so soon, wouldn't you want to give away the essence of the gospel every day if you had the chance?" She replied, "Yes Lord, I am available for You to do that through me."

Since then she has carried various little booklets with her wherever she goes. These booklets explain how people can have their sins forgiven and receive eternal life, and experience the joy of being guided by Jesus. These are booklets for adults and for children, in English, Spanish and other languages. She gives them to the people she meets every day: grocery store workers, restaurant servers and shop clerks, children in movie theater lobbies, the man who cut down our tree, women behind the counter at the dry cleaners, her; a plumber who fixed a broken faucet, an emergency room nurse, and many others.

They all receive a warm smile, an encouraging word, and a little booklet from an ordinary homemaker serving a great God who is *"not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9). Who knows what new chain of events she is starting by simply being available?

The Bible says *"the eyes of the Lord search back and forth across the whole earth, looking for people whose hearts are perfect toward Him, so that He can show His great power in helping them"* (2 Chronicles 16:9). When God's eye falls upon you – and me – will He find us available?

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Do you ever consider that your life has importance not only for the present, but also has eternal consequences? Explain your answer.

2. How do you think your life might be different if you were to give more emphasis on the eternal impact of your life – especially the influence you can have in the lives of people you encounter every day, whether at work, while in a retail store, or in your own neighborhood?

3. Why do you think many people, even those that have a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, seem to have so little concern about the eternal consequences they could have through their everyday encounters? Have you ever had a belief that only “special” people can truly have an impact in the lives of other people for eternity – and that you are not one of those “special” people? If so, why do think you have thought this way?

4. Mr. Pryor gives the example of his wife offering little booklets to people she meets over the course of each day. If you are not already doing something, what might you be able to start doing on a consistent, daily basis that could have a positive benefit in the lives of others, not only for today but also for eternity?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

John 3:16; Romans 1:16-17, 3:23, 5:8, 6:23, 10:14-15; 1 Corinthians 3:9; Ephesians 2:8-9