
Personal Lessons From The Christmas Story

1. End Well

Luke 1:6-7 - Zacharias and Elisabeth were old and they were still living for God!

- What is more important than how we start is how we end. We can have a bad start, or even have to restart several times, but the most important is how we end.
 - i. The focus of a race isn't at the starting line but at the finish line. There is where the results are recorded in the record books.
 - ii. If the troops have a setback, or many setbacks, but eventually go on to victory, that is what matters. If they surrender to the enemy at the first or second setback, they have failed in their mission.
- When we fail along the way, and get up and try again it does several things:
 - i. It makes us humble
 - 1. "Lord I don't deserve what you have done for me, after I have failed you. You have blessed me so much! You've been so good to me!"
 - ii. It causes us to love Him more.
 - 1. "Lord thank you for loving me. I don't see how or why you could love me, knowing who and what I am, but I'm glad you do! Thank you for loving me! Lord, I love you!"
- No one is perfect. All of the great men of God of old made mistakes, but they didn't quit.
 - i. Abraham gave his wife away to other men twice. But his is the only person in the Bible that is call the Friend of God [2 Chr 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; Jas 2:23]
 - ii. Moses is one of the greatest men of all time, but he made one mistake in misrepresenting the Lord and God would not let him go into the promised land.
 - iii. David committed adultery and murder and he made some major mistakes as a father, but God called him "a man after my own heart" [1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22]
- **Determine to end well!** Live for God to the very end!

John 17:4 "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." - Jesus

II Tim. 4:7 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:" - Paul

Eph. 6:13 "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

2. God Can, God Will

Luke 1:18 "And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years."

Zacharias had a problem. He knew the story of how God gave Abraham and Sarah a son when they were old. Sarah was 90 and Abraham was 100. Zacharias was well aware of this. The Jews all knew they were Abraham's seed [**John 8:39** "...Abraham is our father..."]. He knew God worked a miracle for Abraham. What he had difficulty with was that **God would work a miracle for him**. Zacharias and Elisabeth were no doubt not as old as Abraham and Sarah, God had done it for them, but he didn't believe God would do it for him.

Do you believe that God can work a miracle for **you**? Do you believe that He will?

This is God's personal involvement in our life. Not a life with God "outside" or "over there", but personally involved; day by day, moment by moment. Christianity is a *relationship*.

Eph 5:32 "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." In this instruction about husbands and wives [vs 21-33] he shows Christianity is a **relationship**, pictured here by the relationship of husband and wife.

Do you believe that **God can** and **God will** work miracles for **you** if you are in His will?

Phil 4:19 "But my God shall supply all you need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

3. Surrender Your Life To The Lord

Luke 1:38 "And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word..."

Do you believe that God has a special plan for **you**, for **your life**?

If you say "no", you are saying that your life is to have no meaning or purpose; that it is to amount to nothing.

The big unanswered question in academia is "What is the meaning of life?"

Christ, with salvation, brings **meaning** to life, **purpose** to life, and a **plan** for our life!

John 10:10 "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Have you done like Mary and said "Lord, here I am; I give myself to you. All I have is yours. I give all of myself to you."

Gal 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Phil 1:20-21 "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. ²¹For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

4. Special People

John the Baptist was a special person for God.

But so were Zacharias and Elizabeth and Mary and Joseph and Simeon and Anna. They **all** were.

Each person is special to God.

If you are a parent, do you believe that son or daughter is a special person for God?

Are you teaching that child to know God, to know God's Word, to love God, to live for God?

Are you teaching that child by your example:

- What a godly father is / what a godly mother is
- What a godly husband is / what a godly wife is
- What a real Christian is
- Are you in the Word of God every day?

Children learn by what they see in the home. Unchecked, they will be the same kind of person and parent their parents are. We found ourselves reacting the same way our parents did, because it had been burned into our subconscious mind for 18-20 years. But what we were taught was wrong. We had to force ourselves not to respond the wrong way, and make a conscious decision to respond the correct way. Sad to say, we weren't always successful.

Are you living a godly example for your children?

Can you say like the Apostle Paul:

I Cor. 11:1 "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

Are you training that child to be the person that God wants him/her to be?

We train and teach and train and teach, then there must come a day that the child bows before God and says "Here I am Lord, I give myself to you. I give it all to you. I'll go anywhere you say go, I'll do anything you say do."