



Volume 6, No. 6, June, 2018



**A Beautiful Life**

*Each day I'll do a golden deed,  
By helping those who are in need;  
My life on earth is but a span,  
And so I'll do the best I can.*

*To be a child of God each day,  
My life must shine along the way;  
I'll sing His praise while ages roll,  
And strive to help some troubled soul.*

*The only life that will endure,  
Is one that's kind and good and pure;  
And so for God I'll take my stand,  
Each day I'll lend a helping hand.*

*While going down life's weary road,  
I'll try to lift some trav'ler's load;  
I'll try to turn the night to day,  
Make flowers bloom along the way.*

**Chorus:**

*Life's evening sun is sinking low,  
A few more days and I must go,  
To meet the deeds that I have done  
Where there will be no setting sun.*

Words: William M. Golden (1918)  
Music: William M. Golden (1918)



**Quiet Ambition**

*"...and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody." -1 Thess. 4:11-12 (NIV)*

In my life as a Christian, I've found that God often brings certain things to my attention and invites me to dwell on them for a time. During college, He taught me about the nature of love. Next, He prompted me to learn about forgiveness. Over the past year, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 has been what He has given me, along with resources, classes, and conversations that relate to the ideas in it. As He has guided me to dwell on these words, I've begun to cherish them as one of my favorite Bible passages.

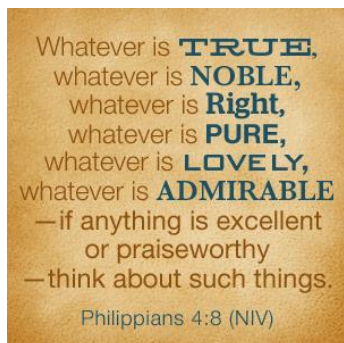
The idea in these verses that most stands out to me is the one small phrase: "...make it your ambition to live a quiet life." Ambition is a cherished trait, almost a virtue in our world today. If someone says you don't have any ambition, that's not exactly a compliment (I've had that charge leveled at me a few times for my decision to be a stay-at-home mom). So what is it, exactly? Ambition is defined as "a strong desire to do or achieve something, typically requiring determination and hard work".

To the world, that means working to rise to the top of your career, or be rich and famous, or any number of things linked to material success. We've been told our whole lives to be ambitious in this way. This is true whether we have careers, stay home, or are retired; whether we're married or single—young or old—or mothers or child-free. And the temptation to exceed everyone around you is there, no matter what your life circumstances are. Maybe you feel the need to surpass your colleagues at work. Maybe you stay home, where ambition can manifest as trying to be a better wife/mom/homemaker than everyone else. Maybe

you're retired but feel you should always be doing new, exciting things. We're all conditioned to be ambitious for worldly success.

But as most of us have learned at some point in our Christian walk, our faith is countercultural. We are instructed to hold to different standards, usually standards that are the absolute opposite of the world's standards, which is certainly the case here. Instead of trying to be brilliant, successful and exciting, we are to make it our ambition to live quietly. We are to work hard at it, to be determined to achieve it, and (perhaps the hardest aspect for us) to desire a quiet life. A life where we are unconcerned with being noticed by others or with having our efforts recognized. A life where we stop trying to be better than everyone else, and live contentedly just as we are—a life that might not be very exciting by our previous standards. We are supposed to desire this and to put all our efforts into making it happen.

That is a huge change in priorities from what we've been told throughout our lives. It requires a mind set on *"things that are above"* (Col. 3:2). It requires a life that pursues things that are *true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and commendable* (Phil. 4:8). It requires humility and



giving up our human need for honor and accolades and being on top. It requires a life that shines forth with the peace of our Father, instead of the chaos and hurry and fighting for success that the world cherishes. This

quiet life is what we are all called to as Christians, as difficult as it is to achieve; and we are blessed to have our Father for support in our struggles. He can give us the ambition to live quietly beautiful lives in service to Him if we ask for it.

As I have considered this passage, I've been blessed with an ambition for a quiet life on some days. But there are others where I still feel the pull to do everything, to be everything, and to be recognized for all my efforts. I pray that God continues to help me on my journey and makes those days, where I'm tempted to go backward, fewer and farther between. May we all be given the ambition to please our Father with quiet lives devoted to His service.

By Victoria Shank, Rolla, MO



## THINK ON THESE THINGS

Every day that each of us wakes up, she wakes up with herself and the thoughts in her mind. Whether she spends all day all by herself or never has a moment to herself, those thoughts are her constant companions. We get up with them, and they put us to bed at night.

And there are so many thoughts to occupy our days, aren't there? Some we cannot avoid. They include the minutiae of life that must be addressed – remembering to change oil in the car, learning a new software program for work, keeping track of the kids' activities, and appointments. They are the numerous, necessary, and virtually automatic thoughts that accompany a myriad of choices. We choose to get out of bed, eat a certain cereal, have one or two cups of coffee, brush our teeth (maybe floss?), put on certain clothes, and embark on the day's schedule.

But there are many other thoughts of a much more consequential nature that can also become just as automatic. They are thoughts – choices – that can become second nature. They are thoughts like dwelling on other people's slights and mistakes, worrying constantly about the state of the world, comparing oneself to others, feeling sorry for self, obsessing about the worst in others, obsessing about the worst in self (or even obsessing about the best in self!).

Thoughts like these can become our second nature, our "go-to" as we go through life and encounter anything scary, maddening, discouraging, or even irritating. Gradually, we become totally unaware of the choices we are making as we slide so easily into the negative thoughts. Although they come in many different forms, these types of thoughts come down like a dirty screen and obscure all that is bright and beautiful and blessed.

So, how do we get rid of that dirty screen? First, we have to become aware that it really exists. When anything is automatic, it's hard to realize it exists; but with just a little honest self-examination, it becomes pretty evident that it does exist.

Second, we need to look through a different, cleaner screen. Get a new worldview. Think new thoughts. In at least two passages, the apostle Paul addressed this need to get some new thoughts and offered examples of those new, better thoughts:

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any*

*excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Philippians 4:8*

*Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. Colossians 3:2*

Does this mean that we never let a thought about anything that is dishonorable, unjust, or ugly cross our minds? Does it mean we ignore anything going on in the world around us? Avoid the poor side of town? Walk away when someone needs to share problems and struggles? Skirt the hospital? Well, if we are going to care about people and be involved in building relationships, we know it can't mean that. Loving people often means dealing with dishonorable, unjust, and ugly matters.

The question is – what kind of thoughts do we let our minds dwell upon? When we encounter that which is not worthy of praise, what mindset and attitudes do we bring to it? When someone treats us harshly, what is that “go-to” response in our minds? Are we the conduit to bring what is commendable and excellent to life's negative situations?

Think on these things – and see life with fresh eyes.

Ina McKune, Rolla, MO

✠✠✠✠

### **A DAY OF MANY FLAVORS February 15, 2016**

This has been an interesting day. My husband and I put out American flags today in observance of Presidents' Day. My job was to drive while he put the flags in the appropriate brackets at businesses that pay a fee to have flags displayed in front of their businesses on certain holidays.



We got the job done with no mishaps, then went to our favorite breakfast restaurant. We go there fairly frequently and have become familiar with one of the waitresses. She is dealing with some heartbreak regarding one of her children and finds herself raising grandchildren, at least temporarily. One child is five years old, so my husband told her about Day Camp and said a scholarship can be provided for the child to go to camp. She was very happy to hear that. Before we left, I offered to correspond with her daughter while she is away from her family. Again, she was very happy that someone cared about her daughter, and she promised to bring the mailing address.

Later in the day, I was wading my way through some family history information that my cousin sent me recently. Each time I try reading it, I get totally lost and confused as to whom I am reading about. That is why I decided to load all the information into my computer so that I can gain an understanding of who is who and who did what. As a result, I'm beginning to get a handle on a few of my ancestors and have found some real surprises!

1. Some of them were apparently pretty wealthy and had positions of respect and power.
2. So far, many of them were Catholics—something I never anticipated!
  - a. Some became priests, even bishops.
  - b. One became a nun.
  - c. Several “went to” the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Crusades.
  - d. Two of them died in France after having been captured, then ransomed. After that, they died in the Siege of Limoges, France in 1199.
3. Henry II appointed Nigel de Peyton as Bishop (unbeknownst to the Pope) over all the north Dioceses.
  - a. Nigel de Peyton became very corrupt and advanced the decree of King Henry I (reigned 1100-1135) in permitting the Clergy to retain wives.
  - b. He collected many payments of money for a license, allowing the Clergy to free themselves of forced celibacy.
  - c. He actually “stole” the secular wife of his younger brother, not to mention the details on one who was listed as “the black sheep son” of a later ancestor!

In the evening, we went to one of the local nursing homes where we sing for residents in the Alzheimer Unit and observed some very touching things and some very sad things. One lady is a member of our congregation and was always in attendance until her condition worsened to the point she needed professional care. As we sang “When the Roll is Called up Yonder,” she sang every single word of the second verse and the chorus—but when it came to the third verse, she was “gone” and didn't remember any more of it.



A beautiful older lady was sitting facing our group, and her daughter sitting beside her was so tender and attentive to her mom. Occasionally, she wiped tears from her mom's cheeks. At other times, she caressed her mom's shoulder or her hair. Her mom responded very little to her tenderness, but occasionally she would whisper a few words.

An attendant was attempting to feed another lady her dinner. The lady was becoming very upset and refusing to accept the food that was repeatedly offered to her. A friend of mine explained later that the patient can no longer swallow. Apparently, the attendant didn't know that and thought she was being kind to the patient. The patient can no longer talk, but she did manage to convey that she could not/would not eat. She knew she couldn't swallow it.

So it has been a day of many flavors. A sense of pride and American patriotism to start the day; reaching out to a waitress who was experiencing distress and heartbreak in her family; learning some interesting facts (and some



unsavory ones) about some of my ancestors; witnessing glimpses into the aging process, particularly the loss of memory; and seeing compassion and tenderness on display. Some flavors are "tasty" and pleasant; some are "tart" and unexpected; some are a little scary as old age draws nearer.

Aging is not for the faint hearted. It is sometimes relentless and cruel, and it sometimes destroys the mind and memories before it destroys the body. The good news is that for Christians, this life is just a temporary state. We are literally just passing through on our way to an unimaginable eternity of joy and peace.

Evelyn Waite, Rolla, MO



### THINK ON THESE THINGS

Have you tried to watch television these days? It's really hard to find anything worth watching. It seems the producers of all the primetime shows are trying to shove modern-day morals in our faces. Our grandparents would be horrified to see what is allowed to be put into a sitcom or drama these days.

Have you tried to keep up with your family on Facebook? I have trouble getting to pictures of my friends and families for all the political rantings that keep popping up. I've tried to unfollow and hide as many as possible,

but it's there, nonetheless. I don't even have a desire to look into SnapChat, InstaGram, or any of the myriad of new Facebook—like programs the teenagers of today have access to.

We live in a world and society that no longer upholds the ideas we read about in the Bible. It is such a sad commentary. I keep thinking to myself, we are now a country in need of missionaries – where would we start?

We can start with ourselves. We need to immerse ourselves in the Word of God and strive to follow the principles that Jesus laid out for us. His inspired writers addressed the problems in their world with letters that help us today. We need to hold ourselves to higher standards and think on things that are pure, noble, good, etc. We need to spend time in prayer asking for wisdom and guidance.

We need to limit our exposure to the negative things like news commentators, television programs, political fanatics, and rude comments on social media. We can do positive things like writing notes of encouragement (that can be e-mails or messages sent privately through social media, as well as note cards sent through the mail.)

We can be the positive influence around our friends with kind words and deeds. We need to share smiles and hugs and refrain from passing along gossip or rumors. Any change in this present day world is going to have to begin one person at a time. Are you "in it to win it?"

Lorna Smith, Lubbock, Texas



*Sunrise* is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserve.org>. Click on the Resources tab, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

