

Wrong Goals in Life Can Shorten Your Life!

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Mat. 6:33)

Continuing with the life and times of former NFL lineman Lyle Alzado, during his brief battle with brain cancer, which he lost, the former Raider was asked as to why used this highly effective but ultimately very toxic substance (i.e., steroids)? Apparently, the trouble began when he set his goal in life, for he said, “It’s all I cared about, winning, winning. . . . I’m sorry success meant so much to me.” But once Alzado got sick, he began to see life from a different perspective, saying: “My dreams are different now than they once were. You know, before I wanted to go to the Super Bowl. It’s not those things anymore. It’s different. It’s just a working man’s dream: to work, to have a nice car, a nice house. You know, to live decently and to treat people decently.” While his goal to win the Super Bowl was certainly accomplished (in 1984 when his Los Angeles Raiders trounced the Washington Redskins), the joy from that victory was short-lived, like all the other felicitous events in life! Alzado went after the glitz and glamour that went with his football career at all cost, but in the end all he wanted were simple things.

So what is your Super Bowl? Too often while the goal itself may be harmless, the means to reach it is not. That is, although there is nothing inherently wrong with wanting to be the best in our careers, studies or ministries, what we are willing to trade-in to get to the top (to live very comfortably) may have grave consequences. If and when the desired success has been attained, what are we willing to do to make sure that it is not lost? Too often the *first things* we let go are the values and beliefs which we were taught to uphold in our youths, such as honesty, integrity, and sharing. Moreover, the busier we get, the less time we spend with God to the point that spending hardly any time in prayer and reading his Word no longer bothers us. However noble the original goal may have been, when its pursuit becomes the *first thing* in our lives instead of God, it will be just a matter of time before our core values and beliefs are compromised beyond recognition. No other recent event speaks more clearly of this than what happened to Enron Corporation, the big energy company run by a Christian CEO who seemingly could do no wrong. But once lies and deception replaced honesty and transparency, the company was ripe for a fall. Now it is a byword for corporate greed run amuck.

As we set our goals and attempt to reach them, remember the *first thing*: “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.” God promises that when we live like that, then “all these things will be given to you as well” (Mat. 6:33). All things? Yes, all the things that God knows will give us lasting joy and satisfaction. First, “all things” start with believing in Jesus Christ whose redemptive sacrifice gives us an opportunity to get right with God. That will bring peace (Rom. 5:1) and joy (Acts 16:34) to our soul from knowing where we are headed both in this life and the hereafter. Second, it continues with his timely and ample provisions “to meet all [our] needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). So, how are you doing in your

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relationship with the Lord? Is he number one in your life? Take some time to examine yourself.

Further Reflection

1. Read the parable of this rich man in Luke 12:13-24 who has a lot in common with Alzado. In what sense were they similar?
2. What does it mean that we seek the kingdom of God? I think one way to look at it is to make decisions and engage in activities that would result in the three kingdom virtues mentioned in Romans 14:17.
3. Examine the advice Paul gave to the feuding Corinthians apparently over some borrowed money that wasn't repaid in 1 Corinthians 6:1-8. Had the offended brother taken this advice, in what sense would that decision have resulted in bringing the kingdom into this ugly situation?

Bible Reading

1. Wednesday: Proverbs 10 & Judges 10
2. Thursday: Proverbs 11 & Judges 11