

Lessons From Life's End

*3 Short Pieces of Parting Wisdom for a Meaningful
Existence*

SEVENS

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PREFACE

Once upon a time, there lived a young man named Sevens who had no interest in becoming well known in the world but preferred to lead a quiet, secluded life. He ignored what the crowd was doing and assumed they ignored what he was doing; he was an outsider to the world. What others have in the clamor of parties and the game of camaraderie, Sevens had in the repose of reflection and the home of inwardness. Cowardice did not dissuade him, but the feeling that he was not like other people. The few who somewhat knew Sevens attempted to make sense of his reclusive behavior by presuming he was either depressed or disturbed. To some extent, those who believed the latter

were right. He was disturbed, deeply disturbed in intellection.

When Sevens was a child, he noticed a particular thought kept popping into his head. And when he became older, the thought popped in more often. The older he became, the more frequently it came, and his excitement grew. He became so consumed by it that he forgot everything else; this is all he wanted: *to live life in such a way that he would wish he had done when the time came for him to die*. This he took as his point of view in all his writing. When he put pen to paper, it was as if his old, dying self was doing it, as if he was simply writing to read what he had written to himself. Perhaps it was because he felt it was far easier to take advice from a voice other than his present, or perhaps it was because he felt death was the greatest teacher. Whatever it was, this is how he wrote. Whether he wrote anything good, he did not know. But he wrote furiously all-day and sometimes through the night; writing became the fabric of his existence.

This book is a collection of three short essays on diverse subjects that Sevens wanted his younger self to

know. I suppose some will find the form of this book odd and too “thesis-driven” to be edifying. Nevertheless, it is not without faith or hope of fulfilling its purpose. Sevens certainly never thought of himself as a serious writer or philosopher, but only a singular kind of thinker and essayist who did not wish to discover something new, but rather wished to reflect on that which is quite simple.

In addition to the essays, there are some pithy sayings and reflections by Sevens that I have included at the end. As most of them are random, I deemed “miscellanies” to be a suitable term for them. Regarding the order of the various miscellanies, I have left it to chance.

I pray this small book may contribute to improving your life. And should you be encouraged by it, I hope you will share it. Farewell.

MONTANA, *April 15th*, 2023

THE EDITOR

THE VANITY OF LIFE

We are all doomed to the same end. Death happens to the known and unknown, to the timid and confident, to the indolent and passionate, to those who have families, and to those who don't. As it is with the happy, so it is with the sad; as it is with those who have money, so it is with those who don't. The same fate happens to all. There is always hope and purpose for the living. But the dead have nothing; they have lost their chance. They are forgotten, and everything they lived for gets stripped away. Whatever they did with their meaningless lives—eating, sleeping, fighting, lusting, boasting, envying—is long gone. Who cares how great the show is—the last act is tragic. Three

shovelfuls of dirt are thrown on the body, and then all is over.

From age to age, it is all the same. The same pursuits, the same issues, the same commerce, the same jargon, to put it simply, the same sameness. People falling in love, raising families, building homes, going to work, throwing parties, getting sick, waging war, and so on. Lives once filled with the same fleeting hopes and dreams we have now. There they were, breathing the same air and believing the same lie that death was far from them. But tell me, where are they now? Where are their problems? Where are their dreams? Where is their life? It is gone. They are gone. Everything is gone. Indeed, “it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting” (Eccl. 7:2 KJV), for there, one can see that in the end, nothing really matters.

If, for a moment, you were teleported to the center of the universe and granted omniscience that allowed you to see the infinite number of galaxies and the infinite number of things occurring on earth, you would finally understand how pointless it all is. People running around in circles,

fighting and competing on an imperceptible atom floating in space. We live in Whoville from *Horton Hears a Whoo*. Nothing but a speck compared with the observable universe, yet we're down here blowing our trumpets and going nuts. "Human beings are all like a puff of breath; great and small alike are worthless. Put them on the scales, and they weigh nothing; they are lighter than a mere breath" (Ps. 62:9 GNT).

Everyone's ultimate aim is the same: *to be happy*. Whatever methods are used, whatever measures are taken, they are all directed toward this end. However, anyone who has strenuously examined the subject will undoubtedly agree that no one is so entirely content that something somewhere does not conflict with their state of being. There is always something missing or lacking, always a problem to be seen or a threat to be heard, and if the brain cannot see a problem, then the game of life will certainly create one to keep you occupied. "All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing" (Eccl. 1:8 KJV).

One becomes tired of living at home and moves out to

the city; one becomes tired of living in the city and retires to the countryside; one becomes tired of living in their country and travels overseas; one becomes tired of being overseas and moves back home. This inner disposition that moves people to seek amusement and opportunities abroad stems from their constant state of unhappiness. “But,” one will say, “if only I had such-and-such a thing—then I would be happy!” Such things, however, will never satisfy. The expectation of something is always better than the reality of it. “But,” says another, “if I could just achieve such-and-such a thing, then I would rest satisfied!” No, to achieve something is only to discover how vain and empty it is. For I have seen that all roads in this life only lead to death and vanity. I have also found that those who try to be happy are never happy. Happiness is a shadow that flees from those who chase it but follows those who dismiss it for the sake of serving others.

At first, many individuals adopt a sort of hedonistic ethos. “Life is a lemon,” they say, “and I’m going to squeeze it for what it’s worth.” However, living for pleasure is a cycle of vanity. There’s no point in it. When it

comes to fun and entertainment, what is there to profit from it? I have experienced the deceptive excitement pleasure is capable of inducing. I have also experienced the monotony and crushing regret that follows on its heels. It may feel like a moment of bliss to those who enjoy them, but they cannot keep it from slipping away when it inevitably does. Like seeing a sparrow on one's front porch, as soon as you get too close, it is gone. After the weekend always comes Monday, and after one generation always comes the next one, and the cycle of vanity continues.

Some try a different road and strive for the so-called "successful life." They want a pretty wife, a big house, a nice car, and all the material trappings of success. In turn, their concern is this: to make a life for themselves. But it's not a life; *it's a dying life*. For it holds true for everyone that when death comes knocking, you must leave all your possessions and belongings at the door as entirely worthless. "Surely people go through life as mere ghosts. Surely they accumulate worthless wealth without knowing who will eventually haul it away" (Ps. 39:6 NET). Hence, most people, if they glance back when they come to the end

of life, will find like me, that all along they have been but chasing after the wind. People say video games are a waste of time, but how is a life spent for worldly success any different? When it's game over, there is nothing to show but an old high score.

Others just want to be known. To them, simply being human isn't anything, nor is there any distance from or edge over all other human beings in that. But to become something — “At least that is something!” they think, for to be nothing at all is something to despair over. Nevertheless, they should consider whom it is they seek to achieve glory from. Indeed, what good does it do if another human thinks you're great? Does praise make any of the flowers of the field better? Or are the birds of the air suddenly hurt if no one admires them? After all, what is the difference between a known and an unknown person? Nothing! They are both going to the grave! In the end, Obama, Jordan, Elon, Beyonce, and all the others are nothing more than a collection of bones beneath the Earth.

“Look,” someone says, “this is something that matters: politics.” No, look, this is also vanity. Everyone thinks their

view is right, and everyone thinks their view is oppressed. Everyone thinks they're smart, and everyone thinks they're something. Yet, they should share their views with a mountain or star and see if it cares, for it was here before and will be here long after their lives and views become irrelevant; or rather, they should ask a citizen of Troy or Greece, and see if all the political wars they fought for even matter now.

What could be more evident than the vanity of life? And yet how few seem to live as though they were fully convinced of this?! How obvious is it that the wealth of the world is insufficient to make us happy? And yet, how many believe otherwise?! How will they assign more to it than the glory and beauty of that kingdom beyond!

Some do see the vanity of it all but still live all of it in vanity. They hold to the paradox of optimistic nihilism. They say, "there is no meaning to life, so create your own meaning; there is no right or wrong, so just do what feels right; there is no God, so be kind." Such nonsense, however, should seem contradictory. For how can one say life has no meaning and yet ascribe meaning to one's own

life? Or how can one claim to understand kindness when one rejects the author of it? Besides, what does one gain by denying the existence of God? What joy can they get from the expectation of nothing? What point is there in boasting that they are nothing more than an accidental speck of dust? Is it not, on the contrary, the saddest thing in the world?

There is only one thing that can matter in life, and that is God. For who can say they can find purpose without Him? Take God out of the world, and we might as well take the life out of the world. Take God out of life, and we might as well take our lives. For in my view, a life without God (a life without purpose) is a life not worth living.

I have endured a great deal of suffering, and every time I did, it was not because I failed to win at the game of life, but because I failed to see the vanity of it. I never asked myself: “Why do I hold so dear a happiness destined to pass away?” Thus, if I were caught up to the third heaven and could see God seated on His throne with all the angels assembled around Him, and He said, “Ask for whatever you want Me to give you. Do you want youth, fame, the most beautiful girl, or all the money in the world? Choose

but one thing.” I would tell Him, “Oh, what do I care for those things? It is you I want. That I may always have you by my side.” For God is more to a man than youth or fame or women or money. I have seen men have regret over these but never over God.

So, although the dead are all equal in the sense that their lives have ended, there is still one difference that makes a person’s life meaningful—*the difference of whether that life knew its Creator*. I hear a lot of talk these days about wasting one’s life, but it all amounts to nothing more or less than smoke. In my view, the only life wasted is the one that carries on living so deceived by life’s meaningless game that they never gain a definitive awareness of God and their existence before Him.

Therefore, dear self, I can give you no greater advice than this: *find God*. Find Him before your ears fade, joints stiffen, memory goes, teeth fall, hair turns white, and experience tells you, “Those are the only days ahead.” Seek Him before your heart grows entitled to His never-failing mercies. Know Him before the doors of opportunity are closed, and you are outside pounding, “Lord, open the

door for us!’... But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you’” (Luke 13:25 NLT). Trust Him before, “The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it” (Eccl. 12:7 NIV). For all is vanity, and only God is good.

“God looks down from heaven on humankind to see if there are any who are wise, who seek after God” (Ps. 53:2 NET).

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF TIME

There are two ways to make someone aware of the preciousness of time. The first is through reason, by showing them why it is precious. The second is through experience, where a person becomes convinced by old age how much depends upon it. The second method is the most effective, for it always works if nothing else does. But if the first method does not convince a person, the second will do them no good. If the first is unsuccessful, the second, though it always works, is always too late. I wish someone had warned me how precious time is before I lost it. I wish

someone had smacked me across the face and told me I was wasting it. But now is not the time to mourn; now is the time to change. So, allow me to employ the second method and give you three reasons why time is precious.

First, time is short. “Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away” (Ps. 90:10 NIV). It was but a moment ago that I sat as a kid in your shoes, going to school, overthinking my problems, worrying about my future, and drowning it all out with any diversion I could find. But now I find myself here, with death hot on my heels and my life fleeing from me. Soon I will be a pile of bones. At most, a mere name on a tombstone, and even that will be removed in time. However, time does not care; time will continue to flow down the stream it began; it won’t make a sound, reverse direction, or remind you of its swiftness. “A person’s life is like grass. Like a flower in the field it flourishes, but when the hot wind blows by, it disappears, and one can no longer even spot the place where it once grew” (Ps. 103:15-16 NET). People pity animals for their

brief lives, but our life is a bigger tragedy since it is just long enough to make us believe it is worth worrying about.

Second, time is precious because we do not know how long it will last. “Now listen, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.’ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes” (Jas. 4:13-14 NIV). We know the clock is ticking, but we do not know when the alarm will go off. We know the hourglass is passing, but we do not know how many grains we have left. Between us and death, there is only life, which is the most fragile thing in the world. We cannot see our end coming any more than the fish swimming safely can see the hook coming. As Solomon observes, “Surely, no one knows his appointed time! Like fish that are caught in a deadly net, and like birds that are caught in a snare--just like them, all people are ensnared at an unfortunate time that falls upon them suddenly” (Eccl. 9:12 NET). Many people today are enjoying good health and see no signs of death on the horizon. But many of them, no doubt,

will die suddenly within the next year and many within the next few months; in all odds, some will probably die tomorrow and some this very day! If there is one thing that experience proves, it is this.

Regarding my experience, or I should say our experience, I'm sure you'd like to know how long you'll live, but I cannot tell you this. And why should I tell you? If a traveler on a dangerous voyage had only a small number of supplies and knew that wasting or losing them could result in his death, he would be much more careful with how he used them. How much more would you value time if all you knew was that you had only a few years or months to live? Besides, show a person how their life will end, and they will lose interest in how it should be lived. Therefore, I say, do not worry about how many days you will live; worry about how you will live those days.

Third, time is valuable because once it's gone, it's gone for good. There are many things in life that a person might lose but can regain later. A person may, for instance, lose all his or her fortune and yet eventually repossess it. But not with time; once time has passed, it cannot be recovered.

No amount of effort or money can bring it back. And although we may lament our loss of time, it serves no use. Each day, we have the opportunity to get the best of time or let time get the best of us. But there is no delay. Time does not wait around to see whether we will take advantage of it. And if we don't, it is taken, and all opportunity is lost forever.

Scripture often speaks of making the most of our time and opportunities as an essential predicate to true wisdom. "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12 NIV). "If only they were wise and would understand this and discern what their end will be!" (Deut. 32:29). But how absurd is it that something so obvious as the preciousness of time is so seldom observed?! Nothing is more priceless than time, and yet everyone uses it as if it were cheap. People spend their time as if it were as abundant as gold during Solomon's reign, as if they had so much of it they don't know what to do with it. There are several types of people who, in a sense, throw away their time, a few of whom I will mention.

First, there are people who waste a significant portion

of time idle, doing little to benefit their souls, bodies, or neighbors. Such spend much of their free time watching TV, staring at their phones, playing computer games, listening to music, going to parties, drinking with coworkers, and squandering any leisure time they can get their hands on. Time is not precious to them. Instead, it is something to burn as if it were a burden.

Moreover, there are some who not only waste their time doing nothing but also spend it doing immoral things. Such spend much of their time gossiping about others, spreading lies, watching pornography, playing slot machines, sleeping around, eating junk food, and treasuring up a terrible punishment for themselves later on. It would have been better for them if they had done nothing at all, for then they would not have harmed both themselves and others.

Lastly, those who spend their lives trying to amass wealth and status in this world waste their time. These people spend their days worrying and working, trying to get a piece of the world, but in the end, what good does it afford them? What good does it afford them now? The

more possessions they come by, the more worries that come in. How wonderful it is to have material riches then! Once you have them, they will never let you be carefree again. Even in the midst of happiness, the question, “how long will these things last?” plagues these individuals. For they do not take as much pleasure in the immensity of their fortune as they do fear for its inevitable demise.

You are now aware of the preciousness of time and how people waste it; think, then, about how you have used your time. Consider how many days you have wasted watching TV, playing video games, eating junk food, staring at your phone, surfing the web, and sitting about doing nothing. Think of all the good that you could do with all that time. How much progress could be made in a year?! How much progress could be made in a day?! Each day that God has given you has been precious. But what have you done with them? What good things have you done, or improvements have you made with the precious time that God has given you? Have you not let the golden sands of your hourglass slip? Have you not, for the most part, wasted it?

I now come to the advice I set out to give you, for what more shall I say to you? Everything seems to me to have its proper emphasis. So, allow me here at once to exhort you to three simple things.

First, do me a favor, and live life one day at a time. “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matt. 6:34). To hope to live well tomorrow is to wait until it is too late. We always want the quick fix in life, yet always seem to put off the most important things to tomorrow. We tend to imagine that our tomorrow selves will be better, that our tomorrow selves will be super. But in reality, our tomorrow selves will only be worse unless we make our present selves better. Thus, tomorrow is the enemy, not our hope. The present is where life is. It is where salvation and death, good and evil, lie. Today is the only day you have. Today is the only day you lose. Today is the most important day you will ever live. A good day will make you, a decent day will sustain you, but a bad day will break you. So please, take these words to heart: if you wish to live well, you must become a master at one of the greatest gifts of

all—*today*.

Second, spend your leisure time wisely. “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16 NKJV). Many individuals have a lot of free time, and everyone has some. If you are so inclined, such time may be greatly enhanced. So, don’t squander or use it in such a way that will make it difficult for you to give a good account of it to God. The best way to invest your time is to invest it in the best thing, namely, God. If you give a smart guy money, he will invest it in the place where he can earn the highest returns. Similarly, you should invest your time in your soul since it will give you the greatest return. As Jesus said, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8:36-37 KJV). Where is the accountant capable of estimating this? Tell me, are you exchanging your soul for something? What an extreme gamble if you are!

Finally, be present. “This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps. 118:24

KJV). Learn to pause and appreciate each day and each moment. Do not get caught up in regret about the past or worry about the future. You cannot have your head in both the past and the present any more than you can bend two bows or saddle two horses. You can only live one moment at a time, so choose to live in it. However, this is just one of the most challenging things about life. When we feel depressed about the present, we reflect on the past; when we feel satisfied with the present, we contemplate the future. Thus, we are seldom present, and if we are, it is only to figure out how to sustain or make ourselves happier for the future. We never actually live, but we are always making plans to do so.

When you have dinner with your family, are you still flipping through your phone? Or are you living in the now and creating new memories? When you eat, are you eating mindlessly? Or are you present and appreciating the taste of each bite? When you watch a movie, are you watching it? Or is that bright glowing television not enough that you need to look at the other bright glowing thing in your hand? So, it is time to make a choice. You can sit back and watch

the days come and the days go, wasting an hour here and an hour there, never fully seizing the moment. Or you can truly become aware of the preciousness of time and do your best to redeem every minute of it.

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom” (Eccl. 9:10 NIV).

THE FEAR OF GOD

The Bible has a lot to say about the fear of the LORD. It describes it as the foundation of wisdom. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 9:10 KJV). It describes it as something God holds in high regard and bestows great blessings upon. “The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him” (Ps. 147:11 NKJV). “The fear of the LORD leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied” (Prov. 19:23 ESV). The Scriptures lay so much of true godliness on holy fear that it often cites it as the distinguishing mark of the righteous. The angel of the LORD said to Abraham, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God,

seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me” (Gen. 22:12). “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?” (Job 2:3 NKJV). In fact, this is what Solomon, the wisest of all before him, came to conclude after much observation and reflection in Ecclesiastes: “Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13 KJV).

What then, you ask, is the meaning of “the fear of the LORD?” Simply put, to fear God means to give God His proper place, to recognize that one is nothing without God, and deserves nothing from God. Perhaps the most straightforward illustration of this is in Psalm 46:10: “Be still, and know that I am God.” Note two things from the text. First, it lays a command: “Be still.” That is, “Be still, for God is in heaven, and you are on earth; therefore, beware of murmuring against Him.” Second, it gives a reason to obey: “Know.” That is, “Know that He is God, the ever-living, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, immovable, invisible, inescapable Creator of the heavens

and the earth.” Hence, the larger part of godly fear is to be still and know that God is God.

Most people today are essentially bankrupt of this holy wisdom, this fear of the LORD. Few mention God’s name outside of curse words, and if they do, it is only to say things like, “God is mean!” or “God is unjust!” But it is absurd to say such things. Tell me, when someone is welcomed into another person’s home, should they not, out of respect, accept whatever is placed on the table? And would they not be considered a lousy guest if they should complain and demand the host to give them something better? But is this not how people treat God? And is this not precisely what the Israelites did? “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!” (Num. 21:5 NIV). But oh, what an outrageous thing it is for such a puny creature as a human to contend with its Maker!

There are three reasons why one should fear God and never contend with His dealings. First, given that He is God, He is an infinitely and entirely perfect being beyond

understanding, and thus, it is illogical for us to dispute any of His unfathomable ways. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:9 NKJV). “His understanding is infinite” (Ps. 147:5).

Humans were made to apprehend God, not comprehend Him. If the unknown could be known, the unseen seen, and the inaccessible obtained, He would not be God. Only when the intellect is sufficiently comparable to something can it comprehend it. So, if our level of understanding is even somewhat comparable to that of God, then His thoughts and ways are no longer infinite. By ‘infinite,’ I mean God has no bounds or measures. Measurement is the means through which created things account for themselves. It expresses limits and imperfections which cannot apply to God. Only an infinite series of infinite universes could potentially fit and understand the mind of God. Hence, it is written (Job 11:7-8): “Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can

you know?”

We have about as much of an idea of how God works as a blind man has of colors. The God of infinite infinities shines with a brilliance too intense and glorious for us mortals. “He covers Himself with light as if it were a garment” (Ps. 104:2 NET). Even angels, those immortal and mighty spirits, must shield their faces from the Light (Isa. 6:2). Yet the Light sees, hears, and knows everything: everything possible and everything actual, all mysteries and all secrecy, all events and all creatures. Nothing, not even the sparrow or the smallest bug, escapes His notice. He cannot change for the better, nor can He change for the worse. “Who can measure his majestic power, and who can fully recount His mercies? It is not possible to diminish or increase them, nor is it possible to fathom the wonders of the Lord” (Sir. 18:5-6 NRSVUE).

With God’s eternity of knowledge being so long and our years of perspective being so few, who are we to judge the manner of His dealings? Were we there when God laid out the stars and stretched out the galaxies? Did we counsel God in determining the laws of nature and the principles of

mathematics? What can the finite possibly know about the infinite? Or the measurable know about the immeasurable? Does the ant understand the ways of humans? Then how can humans expect to understand the ways of God? “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33 NKJV). This, then, is the mystery of the universe: an omniscient God acts, and ignorant men question Him.

Second, given that He is God, He owns everything and has the right to dispose of everything as He pleases. God says, “Behold, all souls are Mine” (Ezek. 18:4), and “Whatever is under the entire heaven is Mine” (Job 41:11 NASB). God is the potter; humans are but the clay, and He molds and assigns each their place. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, to be molded as He pleases, so all are in the hand of their Maker, to be given whatever He decides” (Sir. 33:13 NRSVUE). To everything, there is a purpose, and a person to every purpose: a person for brawn, and a person for brains; a person for high places, and a person for tight spaces; a person for illustration, and a person for

calculation; a person for comedy, and a person for tragedy; a person for war, and a person for peace. “From age to age He observes all, and nothing is too marvelous for Him. No one can say, ‘What is this?’ or ‘Why is that?’—for everything has been created for its own purpose” (Sir. 39:20-21). We do not choose when we are born or where we are born. We do not choose who we are or what we are. And wherever we are, His eye is on us. And whoever we are, He holds our life at His disposal. “The earth is the LORD’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it” (Ps. 24:1).

There is no such thing as frustrating the sovereign will of God. “Whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it” (Eccl. 3:14 ESV). “For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?” (Isa. 14:27 KJV). People may deny or mock God all they want, but when the gas burns out and the plane crashes, everyone is praying.

What then should we say? Is this unfair? Is God unjust? By no means! Does the Creator need permission? “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you

make me like this?’” (Rom. 9:20 NIV). As the Creator, God has the absolute and unrestricted right to dispose of His work as He sees fit. He may help whom He pleases or deny help to whom He pleases. He may create something small or create something large, something great or something low. He has in no way obliged Himself to the universe or to anyone in it. For the one who could have been nothing deserves nothing, but the One who could have made everything deserves everything. Thus, if even one stray particle of liberty does not belong to God, He ceases to be God.

Third, given that He is God, His will and pleasure are infinitely more important than His creatures’ will; therefore, it is fitting that He should arrange all things for His own ends, as God does not exist for us; we exist for God. “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11 KJV).

Before time began, there was God: complete, self-sufficient, and in need of nothing. He was not a speck worse, nor became a speck greater when He created this

universe. And even now, what are all the earth's creatures to Him? Scripture answers: "All the nations are as nothing before Him, They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless" (Isa. 40:17 NASB). So microscopic and powerless are humans to the Most High that "The One enthroned in heaven laughs" (Ps. 2:4 NIV) when they strive against Him. The reason God created such an oversized universe to house a speck was to ensure we never forget the vast distance between Him and us. We must avoid thinking of God as merely the greatest in a hierarchy of other entities, beginning with a single cell and progressing from animals to humans to angels to God. He is as far ahead of angels as He is ahead of animals because the distance between angels and animals is finite, but the distance between God and angels is infinite.

Overall, these things show the absurdity and terrible dangers of refusing to acknowledge the complete sovereignty of God. It shows that few people understand what it means to be God. For it is from crude thoughts of God that people feel intelligent enough to examine and condemn his actions as unfair. But if they saw what God is

and were sensible of how great a being He is, they would exclaim, as Job did, “My ears had heard of You, but now my eyes have seen You. Therefore I retract my words, and I repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5-6 BSB). Or, as Isaiah did, “Woe is me! ... for my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts!” (Isa. 6:5 ESV). Scarcely there is an error in thought or problem in life that cannot be traced back to a low view of God.

So, what should you take from this? Here is the conclusion of the matter: *be still and know that God is God*. Recognize that life is a gift and that everything in it is entirely out of your control. Enjoy the simple good things God graciously gives you, like friendship, family, a good meal or a sunny day. We have no power over these things, and we certainly do not deserve them, yet that is what makes them beautiful. For accepting that God is God frees us to appreciate life as it is, not as we imagine it should be. Look at the birds of the air or the flowers of the field; they do not ask, “When will we get sunshine?” or “When will we get rain?” No, they are silent and rest contented. And what message does this silence convey? It conveys

reverence for God that He is King and He alone to whom all the power and glory belong.

It is no surprise that God's angels, who enjoy constant communion with him, are always so cheerful. A day spent with God in heaven is infinitely better than a thousand days spent elsewhere. All these things—friends, family, a good meal or a sunny day—are only scattered beams, but God Himself is the sun, the limitless supply of the rays, and the true source of fulfillment. Just as the eye cannot withstand the brightness of the sun, we cannot withstand the glory of God. So for now, enjoy the rays, but never forget the sun that supplies them. Otherwise, they will no longer be beams of light for you, but mere shadows of them.

“Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion... this is the gift of God” (Eccl. 5:18-19 KJV).

ONE FINAL POSTSCRIPT

Besides these, the author also wrote many other things. He did not have a wife to chat with at the end of the day, so instead, he read old books, wrote detailed essays, contemplated himself, and endeavored to connect with the one thing that felt real to him—*God*. The author weighed each word carefully and avoided writing anything he did not believe was certain or possessed of the highest truth.

If one wants to bring someone to the truth, one must first be sure to meet them where they are and start there. And here, in the three truths presented in this book (vanity

of life, preciousness of time, fear of God), no person starts at any other point. But if here, one is not willing to stop with this but would go further to worldly wisdom, to wordy philosophy, to everything that makes a person doubt their origin, I must warn them. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Prov. 14:12 BSB).

After hearing everything, the last word is this: “In the beginning God...” This is not only the first word of Scripture but also the first rule of life. If people would only concern themselves with this purpose, which is the highest thing one can do, they can begin to find peace and meaning, for the soul who has found God has found something for which they can live and die.

MISCELLANIES

I.—I don't think much of the smell of my own poop, but I hate the poop smell of others. I don't think much of my own body odor, but I hate the body odor of others. I don't think much of my own sins, but I hate the sins of others. Hence, we are blind to our own filth.

II.—An argument is just two people defending their pride. No one can ever have the last word because it is more about not losing than it is about truth winning.

III.—The lowest day of a person's life is the best day of their life. Then, for at least a moment, they let go of the world and stop caring.

IV.—We know we should be running to class, but we

speed walk to keep the status quo.

V.—In everything, there is beauty, but not everyone sees it. For everything, there is a reason, but not everyone thinks it. With everything, there is a secret, but not everyone knows it. Everything has its roots and its branches; everything has its beginning and its end.

VI.—If you want to know whether someone will change, just look at how often they get offended. People who are easily offended never change. On the other hand, those who swallow criticism well and reflect on it afterward are the meek who are determined to grow and become better people.

VII.—Whether it is anger, addiction, sloth, or envy, we all have inherent weaknesses. But how many of us actually change? Rarely in our lifetimes do we completely overcome even a single flaw. If we could simply focus all our prayers and energy on eliminating one flaw from ourselves each year, we would be well on our way to perfection.

VIII.—Most people, instead of seeking the best for others, seek to be better than others.

IX.—If your life is more about running from hell than it is about running for heaven, then you will never make it. The fear of loss will only get you so far.

X.—Before you judge someone, consider the times you have been guilty of the same sin. If you are honest, you will discover that you have in some manner, and if you are not, then at least acknowledge that the only thing keeping you from committing the same sin is the fear of what other people might say.

XI.—If you want to see how pretty your future is, look at old people. If you want to see how bright it is, visit a cemetery.

XII.—Every year, more and more people set their sights on becoming nobody in the hopes of joining the crowd and becoming like everybody.

XIII.—Instead of trying to figure out who we are when we look in the mirror, we try to figure out what the world thinks we are.

XIV.—Whatever life throws at us, whatever struggle rages within, we always have a choice. We are the sum of our choices, and we always have the choice to do what's

right. Every day, you can take a step toward heaven or a step toward hell. Every day, you can make life easy for the moment or make life better for the future.

XV.—The biggest failure in life is to regret your life.

APPENDIX

(BSB) *Berean Standard Bible*. Bible Hub, (2016, 2020).
(Also called *Berean Study Bible*).

(ESV) *English Standard Version*. Wheaton: Crossway,
(2001, 2016).

(GNT) *Good News Translation*. Philadelphia: American
Bible Society, (1992).

(KJV) *King James Version*.

(NET) *New English Translation*. Biblical Studies Press,
(2017).

(NASB) *New American Standard Bible*. La Habra, CA:

Lockman Foundation, (1995, 2020).

(NIV) *New International Version*. Colorado Springs: Biblica, Inc., (2011).

(NKJV) *New King James Version*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, (1982).

(NLT) *New Living Translation*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, (2015).

(NRSVUE) *New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition*. National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, (1989, 1993, 2022).