

To Be Human
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As we look around we see the bleak clouds of anxiety and confusion stifling the air like smog, and the clear sky of advancement, progress, and peace is not in clear view. The present world is different from the “make-believe” world of your childhood with its instant solutions and cures.

On television, for example, you noticed the instant answers to found in almost all facets of your everyday living. You saw one pill in a glass of water dissolving faster than a Brand X pill in the other glass. This impressed upon your mind that your upset stomach, headache, or middle toe would receive instant relief from the wonderful product. Perhaps some of you as children tried to imitate a TV commercial by going to the medicine cabinet for some of that quick-action relief. (Is it any wonder that young people today take pills in order to turn on?) The TV commercial told you that if your girl didn't love you, it wasn't your difficult character, your unpleasant personality – no, none of these. It was your bad breath! All you had to do was try a new mouthwash and your girl problems were over. And let's not forget that a boy was attracted to a girl not because of her behavior or herself as a person, but because of the kind of toothpaste she used.

What are the results of this turbulent, phony society? It's obvious. We have become an impatient, nervous-tensioned generation with the false notion that we should get instant cures and solutions for every and all problems. The new decade you are entering is this kind of world. But don't be surprised to find that solutions and cures don't come that quickly. Don't cop out of life because of unsolved problems. That is nothing more than escapism. It is the gutless way out.

I have presented life and your world as anything but great, happy, and beautiful. I did it to impress upon you that your individual life need not be so terrible or phony. The basic truth is that life means problems. This is why we were made different from the lower animals which live only by their instinct. We have something greater than instinct. We have intellect, a brain with which to face problems and solve them. Because of this, we are the most unique creatures of the universe.

Someone very wisely once said, “An untried life is not worth living.” Certainly one who contemplates suicide has never learned this lesson. For him life means smooth sailing, no waves and no difficulties. The potential suicide and copout prefers the untried life, the one we call permissive and indulgent. This is the life of instant cures and quick solutions, of turning off what you don't dig.

Without question, your education is a vital factor in your living a positive, purposeful life. Equipped with a good education, you can better cope with life and its problems. However, let none come across the pitfalls of believing that education is everything.

Education, or knowledge, by itself is not nor has it ever been the initiator of progress and advancement.

To be in control of your knowledge so that you can solve life's problems, you need a vital factor which gives purpose and direction to your knowledge. Let us call it humanity because it teaches us how to be human.

Too many youth today are storehouses of knowledge, unique in their particular fields and professions. *But they are not human.* They are like computers. You feed them questions and problems, they spit out answers, and that's as far as it goes. These people have never learned – with all their knowledge – how to sit and talk with people. Were we to look into their past, we would see that TV sets, transistors, tape recorders and record players took up so much of their time that they had little time left for everyday type conversations with family, neighbors, friends. As youngsters, instead of falling asleep with a bedtime story, it was “OK, you can watch one more program before you go to bed.” When friends or relatives came to visit, instead of getting up and greeting them, the youngster simply waved his hand and continued to “do his own thing.” This kind of impersonal behavior was repeated as the children grew, probably becoming more pronounced as they became high school students.

Knowledge and education for our youth have been overstressed at the expense of human character and behavior. Albert Einstein said it well:

“It is essential that the student acquire an understanding of and a lively feeling for values. He must acquire a vivid sense of the beautiful and of the morally good. Otherwise, he – with his specialized knowledge – more closely resembles a well-trained dog than a harmoniously developed person.”

Humanity, then, associated with knowledge is essential in meeting life's problems. Humanity, moreover, gives rise to responsibility and this indicates that problems will be faced, for responsibility will demonstrate concern for one's fellow man.

One thing is yet lacking. If for a moment we call knowledge and humanity the vehicle which will take you into a successful future, you no doubt need the fuel to run that vehicle. You cannot move without this precious fuel. That precious fuel is your Creator. Without God nothing is possible that is any good.

So although you may have knowledge and humanity, you need also spiritual strength, sustenance, and inspiration. You can and do succumb to physical, mental, and spiritual fatigue, and depression. Only the strength that comes from God can help you face all problems. All of us need someone to lean on during certain periods of life's journey. No one human can be that someone all the time, for sooner or later he or she will be gone. Even in the fellowship of marriage one partner usually leaves before the other. There is only One who is always there, ready to help, to restore, to save.

If so many youth today have fatalistic and negative attitudes about life, it isn't because of any part of the Indochina War or the Middle East. It isn't the ROTC program or the military and industrial complex, the racial tensions or ecology. It is because they have no

one to turn to in times of crisis and confusion, in times of upheaval or despair. This past year churches have recorded a drop in membership while all the while the fortune-telling business is booming and the horoscope charts enjoy increased popularity. All this is because God is not anymore living in the hearts and minds of these people. Therefore, they have no Source of consolation, no Treasury of forgiveness, no Fountain of redemption, to inner peace.

Where God dwells, there troubles, confusion, and anxiety disappear. If God is not now living in the hearts of some of us, we can put Him there by using our knowledge of Him. Since God is the source of all knowledge, He will assist us – if we want it.

Once we possess knowledge, humanity and God, and then apply them to live in harmony with one another, we shall be able to overcome all difficulties that life will place before us. The peace and love of God which surpasses all human understanding will flow from our hearts and will preserve and protect us like a shield from all missiles of hate, harm, and destruction which may be directed toward us or be in our midst.