

Drinking from the Source

Joe Slater

The first several years of my life we drank from a deep well in eastern Colorado. The water was cold, pure, and delicious! We also watered the garden with it. By the time the water reached the end of the irrigation row, it had picked up all kinds of dirt, small sticks, dead grass, and other contaminants. The greater the distance from the source, the more impurities it had. Did we drink from that? Of course not!

Jesus told the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well that if she had asked Him, He would have given her living water (John 4:10). She would never thirst again but would enjoy eternal life (4:13-14). He spoke not of H₂O, but of an infinitely more valuable gift. It's the word of the Lord and the salvation that comes to those who believe and obey it. Hear God's offer again: *"I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts"* (Revelation 21:6b). Once more in Revelation 22:17, "And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."

As with literal, physical water, the greater the distance between you and the source of the water of life, the more contaminated that water becomes. As it percolates through human traditions and sectarian errors, it loses the very qualities that made it so valuable.

Drink from the source! Drink deeply! You need nothing else. With the inspired word the obedient believer is completely equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:17).

Life is Too Short

In 2023 there were a lot of celebrities who died. The number seemed greater than in previous years. The ages range from the young to those in their nineties. However old they were, life is still short. The Biblical teaching is that the importance of life is not so much the quantity of years as it is the quality. The Psalmist wrote, *"We spend our lives as a tale that is told"* (Psalm 90:9, KJV). What kind of tale is your life telling? In thinking about the quality of our lives, emphasis is placed on making the most of the time we have.

We should pay attention and make the most of our lives on earth. The Psalmist wrote, *"So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom"* (Psalm 90:12 (NKJV)). This is a similar thought Paul expressed when he wrote, *"...redeeming the time because the days are evil"* (Ephesians 5:16).

We should make the most of our lives because we don't have long here compared to eternity. Peter described our lives as grass that eventually withers and falls away (1 Peter 1:24). In the Bible life is compared to: a sigh (Psalm 90:9), sleep (Psalm 90:5), a shadow (Ecclesiastes 6:12), a moment (2 Corinthians 4:17), and a weaver's shuttle (Job 7:6).

How are we spending our lives? Do we pay more attention to the physical comforts of life than we do the spiritual? Jesus said, *"One's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses"* (Luke 12:15). Let us be more diligent in our spiritual lives in case death comes too early for us and our lives end too soon.

--Bill Brandstatter (via *Bulletin Gold*) adapted

Untainted

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27 NIV).

Several years ago, Federal health regulators said they found tiny particles of trash in drugs used to treat rare enzyme disorders. Since the FDA has not discovered any adverse events, the agency is not removing the products from the market because it says there are few alternative treatments. The agency urged doctors to thoroughly inspect vials for particles before injecting them into patients!

How would you like to discover you have been injected with trash? What's a little steel, rubber and fiber as long as it makes you feel better? Years ago, when President Nixon attended a ceremony celebrating a high-tech water purification plant that treated water from sewage, he was offered a drink of its 99% pure water. He responded, "No, I'm worried about the 1%!"

There are so many people who do not worry about a little contamination. Just a little cheating, a little lying, a little sexual immorality, a little false doctrine are fine if it does not become a major percentage! Like the FDA, we tolerate a little bit of error and worldliness because we have not seen any adverse problems - yet. This is like saying, "I will eat out of trash cans as long as I don't get sick!" How foolish!

James tells us our religion must be pure and unadulterated, without spot (Jas. 1:27). Do we use a little "cussing"? What about a little lust? Perhaps a little road rage isn't all that bad! *"Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!"* (James 3:4-6 NKJV)

We need to be vigilant about the subtle contaminations of our souls that daily attack us.

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)