

Living Responsibly

Danny Lehmann in his book “Before you hit the wall” tells the story of when he ran his first marathon race and had been warned about hitting “the wall”. After about 18 miles into the race he “hit the wall”. He describes it like this: “At first I thought I was going to die. My body screamed at me, “I hate it, I’ve had enough, and you’ve abused me too long. I’m quitting!” My training had put my body into shape for a ten kilometre race not a marathon.” The responsible thing to have done was to have trained properly according to the race that he was to have run.

I was out walking in the street one evening in Spain when a drunk approached me. I told him that Jesus loves him. He went on to reply that he had been born again and thus was assured a place in heaven.

Is this the lifestyle that Jesus intended his followers to live? Absolutely no! Jesus expects his salvation to be worked out in responsible living.

Matthew 25: 1 – 13

1) God expects us to live responsibly

- Synonyms of responsibly: sensibly, correctly, dutifully, dependably, reliably, maturely, conscientiously
- Titus 2: 11 – 12 “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age”
- From the time God created man he desired that they rule over the rest of creation.
 - If we had a lot of property and possession and wanted someone to look after them while we were away what type of person would we look for? Some who lives responsibly
- We have been created for good works
 - The good works that God desires us to have are not merely things like being kind to the poor and helping the needy even though they are part of them
 - It is easy to live an irresponsible lifestyle and still do good works and be known as a good person.
 - God doesn’t want our good works to be added appendage to our lives but rather he has created us to live good, responsible lives in every aspect of our lives.
 - The problem with the Pharisees of Jesus’ time was that they did good works in some ways whilst living irresponsibly in other ways.
 - A modern day example is when a man takes his work seriously and acts so responsibly in his job that he puts in long hours to complete his work or to maintain a high standard. But in doing so he acts irresponsibly towards his wife and children by neglecting them.
- The responsible life that God intends us to live is to be responsible in every aspect of our lives and not to be so responsible in one area of our lives that we neglect another area of our lives.
 - This mounts to irresponsible living.

2) Irresponsible living came due to sin

- Synonyms of irresponsible: reckless, careless, negligent, foolish, immature, rash
- Sin causes us to see one particular need or want and thus meet that need irrespective of what the consequences will be.

- Esau was reckless to give away his birthright for a bowl of stew. (Genesis 25: 29 – 34)
- Irresponsible living allows us to be controlled by our emotions rather than our spirit working through our will
 - Our kids tug on our emotions for us to buy them something even if we don't have money for it. We feel sorry for them and buy it. Later on we don't have money for food or petrol.
 - We see something advertised that we would really like but can't actually afford it. We buy it in any case and can't give to the Lord His due.
 - We want to please our boss so put in extra hours at the expense of the family.
 - We spend so much time with Christians that we don't have time for our non-Christian friends and vice versa.
- When we were born again our spirits became alive to God and now we ought to be Spirit controlled people and not emotion controlled people
 - Emotion controlled people do what their emotions tell them. The problem with that is that our emotions change according to circumstances leading to an irresponsible lifestyle.
 - Spirit controlled people do what is right even if their emotions tell them to do otherwise. They remain constant in all circumstances leading a responsible lifestyle.

3) Characteristics of responsible living

- Set priorities
 - Family
 - Relationships
 - Church
 - Work
 - Finances
- Conscientious
 - You are careful and thoughtful about doing the right thing
 - If you borrow something you are conscientious to return it
 - If you borrow something in good condition you want to give it back in the same or better condition than you got it.
 - To keep the law and pay your dues.
- Make rationally thought out decisions rather than emotionally charged decisions
 - Living responsibly does not make decisions that will cause you to lose everything you worked for.
- Reliable and caring
 - You don't have to be forced to provide for your family. You are reliable and caring enough to do it conscientiously.
 - Takes care of your own spiritual, emotional, mental and physical well-being as others.
- Whatever you do make sure that it is done in a safe environment.
 - Living responsibly does not endanger your life or the lives of others in any way.
- Prepares for life's challenges
 - The 5 foolish virgins were unprepared and left behind.
- Is based on love for God, love for other and love for oneself

James 4: 17 Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.