



Life Assurance

A couple of weeks ago I was reading some information sent out by a health insurance provider concerning various services they offered to promote health. In the materials was a brochure for assistance with stopping smoking and detailed that one of the benefits was to add nine years to your life. I read through the brochure which emphasized the benefits such as improved heart function and beneficial changes to the nervous system and metabolism. There are a lot of people who will read that and come to a realization that their health is in danger and they need to do something but probably won't. I compared this to life insurance is designed to provide for our loved ones in the event of our death. In this case there was the projected promise of nine more years for quitting something that has known health risks. God has done the same thing in that he has warned us of things that endanger our existence and has offered a way to add, not just nine years, but eternity to our lives. I refer to this as life assurance. Christ came into the world to save mankind (**John 3.16**) as the final statement of God's love and grace toward us. Christ promised a home to those who follow him (**John 14.1-3**) and stated he would return for those who are faithful to him. We understand that we will all face death at some point in our lives (**Heb 9.27**) and will face Christ in judgment as well (**2 Cor 5.10**). God has pronounced that "...*all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...*" (**Rom 3.23**). That fact that sin is in the world and the nature of mankind is to stray is a reality that many accept. We have to decide what we are going to do about it. In the case of the smoker, the benefit of improving health and the quality of life is to stop smoking. In the same way, those who are not Christians must repent, that is change their way of thinking and living. Repentance is characterized in the New Testament as "*godly sorrow*" (**2 Cor 7.10**). We come to realize that the actions contrary to God, even done in ignorance, put Christ on the cross. That realization leads us to the conclusion that we have to do something about our lives. Paul told the Athenian philosophers

that God now commands all men everywhere to repent (**Acts 17.30**). This was stated in the context of proclaiming the difference between the idols of the time and the true God who created all things. There is a stark difference between the two and Paul emphasized the need for them to change their way of thinking. At the conclusion of that discussion there were a few who had some interest, but the majority turned away from the truth that was proclaimed. How many people turn away from the health warnings that come from insurance companies and others about the dangers of our activities. How many people turn away from the Gospel because they do not truly believe it, or, because it frightens them too much. Such information about our health may invoke fear and anxiety. Some might abandon themselves to the impossibility of change as they see themselves as powerless over something that has become a way of life. In relation to the scriptures, the Bible reveals that there may be many things that are in need of change and we may react in fear, thinking that we are not able to change them. Christ's disciples even thought that salvation was unattainable from a human perspective to which Christ answered, "*With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.*" (**Matt 19.26**). The rich young ruler had turned away from Christ in sorrow and Christ explained the difficulty of turning from worldly things to trust in the spiritual. Whether rich or poor, young or old, it does not matter. We will face challenges in doing what God wants. We must be confident that God will provide a way and means for us to obey and serve him if that is what we desire. As in any other endeavor that is worthwhile, we have to dedicate ourselves to that purpose, accept whatever challenges confront us with the attitude that we will succeed and that there is help from God. These are the same obstacles that smokers face, and the same reasons why so many fail. But, we can succeed. Hard? Yes. Impossible? No.

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