**THINK ETERNALLY, LIVE TEMPORARILY**

Would you like to play a word game?

Ordinarily I’m not much into indoor games, especially board games and card games. I don’t know why exactly I don’t enjoy these type of games but it probably is because I had to sit still and think. I am not good at either sitting still or thinking deep thoughts. Since childhood I’d rather be outside playing ball, mowing lawns, jogging or just kicking over ant hills to watch them swarm. Anything but sitting and thinking. But today I’ll force myself by playing a word game with you. Hopefully it will cause both of us to grow in our faith. Here’s the game: I’ll make a statement that requires you to fill in the blank. Hint: They are all taken from the Bible.

“For to me to live is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and to die is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

“Our outward man is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, our inward man is being \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

“While we are at home in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we are away from the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

“The world and its desires \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_, but whoever does the will of God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

“What is seen is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, what is unseen is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

“Our present \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are not worthy to be compared with the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that will be revealed.”

“Whoever finds their life will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it, whoever \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ their life will find it.”

“Whoever sows to the flesh reaps \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, whoever sows to the Spirit reaps \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

So, how did you do? To seasoned Bible students it will be like Alex Trebek playing Jeopardy. To others new to the Bible it will be like Wile E Coyote catching the Road Runner. (Note: My apologies to readers who don’t watch game shows or remember Looney Tunes).

The object of my fill-in-the-blank game was to help us think eternally while we live temporarily. Let me show you what I mean by allowing this to be an open-book test. I’ll give you the Bible references and you then go back and fill in the blanks.

Philippians 1:21
2 Corinthians 4:16-18
2 Corinthians 5:6
I John 2:17
Romans 8:18
Matthew 10:39
Galatians 6:8

Can you now see the “secret” to how Jesus, Paul, John and others thought that allowed them to deal with life and death threats against them?

Start with the first question. “For to me to live is CHRIST, and to die is GAIN.” Far too many would insert things into the first line without giving thought to the second line. For them they live for this world without meditating on where they go after death. If you get the first line right, you will get the second line correct. If you get the first wrong then you are playing Russian Roulette with the second (and the gun is fully loaded).

Examine now the second one. “Our outward man is PERISHING, our inward man is being RENEWED.” Time stands still for no man. Life always ends in death. At least our earthly life does. This outward flesh-and-bones man is born to perish in death. But at the moment of conception God not only creates a body, He also creates a soul. That spiritual man lives forever. That soul is our “inward man.” While we grow old, get wrinkles, fight disease, resist the grim reaper with all our meager strength, there is something else wonderfully happening inside us. The soul that “seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33) grows stronger, more beautiful, more happy with each passing day. Can you feel that flesh-vs-spirit tug of war in you? I sure can.

“While we are at home in the BODY, we are away from the LORD.” I’m homesick. How about you? Living in this fleshly body, this tent, is only meant to be temporary. As a kid I loved camping out in my pup tent in the backyard. But when I wanted to eat, go to the bathroom, watch TV, or escape the storm, I was very ready to leave my tent and go in my “permanent” house. So it is with my life on earth. I’m but a tent-dweller here, living only temporarily while I await my permanent home in the presence of my Lord Jesus.

“What is seen is TEMPORARY, what is unseen is ETERNAL.” Temporary comes from temporal, meaning terrestrial, earthly, fleshly. It is chronological or time-based and has an end. Eternal on the other hand is celestial, heavenly, spiritual. It is not confined to time or space. It has no end. What I can now see all soon goes away. What I cannot see never goes away. “When we’ve been there ten-thousand years … we’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we’d first begun.”

Go ahead and finish our game on your own. While I did not like to play indoor board games, card games, or other games which made me sit still and think, as I grow older and face the prospects of coming death, I actually now enjoy games like this one we played today. It makes me focus on what is important. It is truly better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting (Ecclesiastes 7:2-4).

Just for today while you are still living in this temporary tent, why not experience an out-of-body moment by thinking eternally. Read all these motivational scriptures which remind us that we are not meant for this world. Here we are but caterpillars squirming around. Death puts us into a cocoon, from which we emerge as beautiful butterflies that allows us to spread our wings and fly free.

Until tomorrow… Think eternally. Live temporarily. Now that’s a game I like to play.

I love you. - Rick