Searching

I know a young man who engaged in a tremendous search for meaning and purpose in life, and attempted almost every conceivable way to find it. He tried alcohol, sex, gambling, being in a rock band, weight lifting, martial arts, Eastern religions, the occult, New Ageism, and belief in the theory of evolution, pretending there was no God. He pursued practically every pleasure and thrill imaginable. He even tried going to church. But all of the good feelings generated by these experiences were short-lived because the fulfillment he so desperately searched for never lasted. Nothing would silence the gnawing questions about life he longed to have answered -- Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? What is my purpose in life?

Millions of people search here and there, hoping to find true and long-lasting happiness, peace, and joy! Some may find it temporarily, but it soon eludes them, like the evasive pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Their search continues - always thinking if only they had this, or did that, then they would be happy and satisfied. But the more they get, and the more they do, the more they seem to want!

Perhaps you have been searching, too. Some people may not verbally admit that they are inwardly searching, but their actions show that they are. Maybe you have turned to drugs and alcohol, or given your life over to seeking nothing but pleasure, or joined some mystical group, or involved yourself in a host of other things in an attempt to attain fulfillment. Or perhaps you have even become so disillusioned with life altogether that you have either contemplated, or actually tried to commit suicide. Maybe you are like some who think that if they only had a better job, or that new home, or a different marriage partner, or more money or friends, they would then be happy, but soon realize they are still unhappy, still unfulfilled ... still searching!

Have you asked yourself, “Just what is the purpose of life and where is mine headed?” Have you invested the time and energy necessary to discover the answer to these vital questions, or have you concluded as so many others, “Why waste time trying to figure it out - I'll just enjoy it as much as I can, and as long as I can!”

Many movies and television commercials express this philosophy of getting all the pleasure and excitement from life, regardless of the consequences. In living color mass media proclaims the hedonistic philosophy that says: “If it feels good, do it! If I like it, it's right! Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die!” These cliches are characteristic of today's society. Everywhere we see a religion of self: self-centeredness, self-fulfillment, and self-indulgence.

But searching for selfish pleasure and self-gratification soon catches up to you. Today you may have your youth and good looks, but consider all those who have gone before you. Many who thought their youth and pleasure would never end are coming face-to-face with cold reality. A glance in the mirror and the aches and pains in their bodies reveal how quickly the aging process occurs and how temporary the pleasures of this world really are.

The Bible accurately reveals that the pleasures of sin are just for a season! They are short-lived and eventually lead to a dead end of emptiness, frustration, and despair. Then you have to “live with” or “die from” the consequences of your actions and lifestyle.

I Timothy 5:6 says that she “who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.” Physically you may be alive, but something deep inside is dead -- and you know it. It is your spirit that is dead toward God!

I remember the temporary fun and excitement of “partying” and “having a good time.” I only cared about the “now” and did not consider tomorrow. But after the party and “fun times” were over, I knew there had to be something more to life.

It has been stated that “once our stomachs become filled with pleasure, we notice the emptiness of our souls.” How true! Often people try religion when they finally realize the futility and hopelessness of a hedonistic and pleasure-oriented lifestyle, and that fulfillment in life cannot be found in material things.

But instead of looking beyond one's self to the God who created us, many people have been persuaded to foolishly refuse God's grace, and instead search inwardly for the answers. Hoping to discover the “divine within” and achieve “God consciousness,” they are sold the same lie Satan used on Eve when he promised her, “you will be like God” (Genesis 3:5). They end up being deceived into worshipping and serving the creation rather than the Creator. Perhaps you have tried this road, too, but still find an emptiness in your soul.

The real reason for your emptiness is because you are separated from the God who created you. You have a broken relationship, not on His part, but on yours. From the beginning, humans have chosen to rebel and disobey and do things their own way even to this day. As a result, you search, hoping to discover the missing ingredient in your life -- which is in reality -- God!

Jesus said to the woman at the well, “...everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again” (John 4:13). He

was revealing to her the futility of seeking fulfillment in anything or anyone other than Himself. Although you may be temporarily satisfied by drinking the water of this world, you will thirst again and never be completely fulfilled. But Jesus went on to say, “... whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst ...” (John 4:14). Jesus knew that deep down within, everyone has a need and a thirst that only He can truly satisfy.

The Psalmist knew of this inner thirst for God, for he stated, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God” (Psalms 42:1). The Psalmist also said, “In Thy presence is fullness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forever” (Psalms 16:11). Not the pleasure of the moment, or of an evening that is soon over, but forever!

King Solomon, who was known as the richest and wisest man in the world, told how he had searched - in opulence, pleasure, wine, women, and by trying everything which his mind could conceive - but it was all emptiness and futility. His wise advice, after all of his vain searching, is recorded at the end of the book of Ecclesiastes. He states, “The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments...” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

I have traveled throughout the U.S. and the world many times, and one thing I know for certain is that people everywhere are searching for something real to believe in that will give them lasting fulfillment.

The young man I mentioned earlier, who went through the tremendous searching endeavor, was me. In 1971, at the age of eighteen, after trying just about everything imaginable, I discovered the ultimate answer to my searching adventure as I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. It has not always been easy, but God has given me a meaning and a purpose, an inner joy and peace, and an exciting and challenging life that I would not exchange for anything. He has truly given me abundant life here and now and a blessed hope for the future!

Have you tasted of the water that only Jesus can give...the water of eternal life? If you do not yet know the Lord, you can end your search and begin a new and exciting life today by giving your life to the resurrected Christ. Jesus said, “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matthew 10:39). Christ is the answer to all of your questions. Find real purpose and meaning to life in Him today.

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(The preceeding is from Bill Rudge's Searching pamphlet book which is available from the Bookstore.)