

Be a Man!



Lesson One: “Be a Man Who Stays Focused on the Final Goal”

“We, who by the grace of God are Catholics... must steel ourselves for the battle we shall certainly have to fight to fulfill our program and give our country, in the not too distant future, happier days and a morally healthy society, but to achieve this we need constant prayer to obtain from God that grace without which all our efforts are useless; organization and discipline to be ready for action at the right time; and finally, the sacrifice of our passion and of ourselves, because without that we cannot achieve our aim.”

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati

Introduction

Father Larry begins his book with a startling declaration about the one certain truth in life: “You are going to die!” Whether we are rich or poor, powerful or weak, healthy or ill, sinful or saintly, no one will escape the experience of death. No one. Fr. Larry points out further that whether we live in this world for one hour or 100 years, our lifetime is a “blink of an eye” compared to eternity, where will be either with God or without God—forever.





The world tries to persuade us to direct all our attention, energy, and resources toward promoting ourselves in this life. We are bombarded with products that, for three easy payments of \$24.99, will show us how to goal set in order to be the best version of ourselves, to get ahead in business, to stay at the top, to retire a millionaire. “He who dies with the most toys wins,” the saying goes. But the question, “Wins what?” is never considered.

It is true in our business life and in our personal life that we will never reach our potential – or reach beyond it –without first establishing goals, goals that demand our best effort. Where should our focus be? What is the final goal? Scripture teaches us that this world is passing away (1 Cor 7:31), and all within it will become like a stolen purse that is moth-eaten and destroyed (Lk 12:33). If we “want it all” in this life and in the next, Scripture gives us the key: “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all... shall be yours” (Mt 6:33). In this lesson, and throughout this study, we are going to examine our personal *spiritual* goals and discuss the need to set goals that will make an *eternal* difference in our lives, and in the lives of others.

Catechism Connections

- CCC 1022 explains what happens to the soul at the moment of death.
- CCC 977 explains the relationship between the sacrament of Baptism and the forgiveness of sin and union with Christ.
- Prayer is a vital necessity and is inseparable from Christian life. For more information, see CCC 2743-2745.

Study Questions

The study questions for this lesson correspond with chapter 1 of *Be a Man!*

1. Fr. Larry begins his book with five little words, “You are going to die,” and then challenges us to be men who stay “focused on the final goal.” How does Jesus make these same points in Luke 12:16-21? What phrase does Jesus use to describe “the final goal?”



2. In the parable above, the man is often referred to as “the rich fool.” What does Psalm 90:10,12 suggest we do to “get wise?” Rewrite the verse in your own words.

3. How does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* suggest we “prepare ourselves for the hour of our death?” (See CCC 1014)

4. Fr. Larry states: “We believe that we are saved by grace [1], but we need to receive this grace [2], and live this grace [3], in order to use our God-given talents [4], if we are to be great in anything on earth.” Match the Scripture and *Catechism* citations below with the numbered phrase they support in Fr. Larry’s statement. ___Mt 5:13-16 ___Eph 2:8 ___Mt 25:20-25 ___Acts 2:37, 38 ___CCC 2004 ___CCC 1966 ___CCC 1996 ___CCC 1999

Voices of the Saints

“For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”

~*St. Francis of Assisi*

Questions for Reflection

1. Fr. Larry states, “The God question is the question you have to deal with before you can move on.” Has there been a “come-to-Jesus” moment in your life? Do you believe Jesus is the Son of God? If so, why? Is this “head-knowledge” or “heart-knowledge?” What is the difference?

2. Fr. Larry shares a little bit about his family background and then makes the statement, “We all come from some kind of dysfunctional family.” How did your family, and specifically your father, influence your understanding of manhood? Of God?

Rome to Home

Before his conversion, Paul had not been a man distant from God and from his Law. On the contrary, he had been observant, with an observance faithful to the point of fanaticism. In the light of the encounter with Christ, however, he understood that with this he had sought to build up himself and his own justice, and that with all this justice he had lived for himself.

He realized that a new approach in his life was absolutely essential. And we find this new approach expressed in his words: “The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

Paul, therefore, no longer lives for himself, for his own justice. He lives for Christ and with Christ: in giving of himself, he is no longer seeking and building himself up. This is the new justice, the new orientation given to us by the Lord, given to us by faith.

~*Pope Benedict XVI*

General Audience, November 28, 2006



Notes