

Ah, the Sweet Mystery of Life

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Ecclesiastes 8-9.
- B. This section deals with the mysteries of life—the great questions.
- C. A sense of contentment is the significance of life.
- D. We are to take life as it comes and not understand everything about it.

II. Four reasons not to try to solve all the answers of life.

- A. Life is too vast to understand everything about it.
 - 1. However, we should not adopt an anti-intellectual mentality.
 - 2. Regardless, we must remember that there will always be mysteries remaining.
- B. It is difficult to know from the events of life whether we have the approval or disapproval of God.
 - 1. Prosperity is not a sign that God is blessing you, nor is adversity always a sign of punishment. (Job)
 - 2. God's ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts. (Isaiah)
- C. Death comes to us all.
 - 1. This is a proof that we are not in control of our lives.
 - 2. Death forces us to face the reality of sin.
 - 3. We do not deserve to live forever—heaven is an act of grace.
 - 4. This fact makes everyone somewhat religious.
 - 5. The reality of death leaves man without a final philosophy to satisfy.
 - 6. Use life—do not waste it. Seek after significance.
- D. We can live life happily because of God's prior acceptance of what we do—He has established a relationship of righteousness based upon the death and resurrection of our Lord.
 - 1. Good works flow out of the reality that God has already accepted us by grace.
 - 2. It is a pleasant thing to have work to do and do it with all our might.

III. Conclusion—the problem to the meaning of life can only be solved by trusting in God.

Application questions:

1. What are some questions of life to which you have struggled to attain answers?

2. Why is contentment so important in these big questions?

3. What is the proper response to difficult questions, and how is this related to Christ's work on the cross? Explain.
