

March 2005: Only a Vapor

by Aaron Greenway

It's 7:00 am. Grab the coffee! Quick! Put it in the coffee cup! I need my coat! I am going to be late for work! Eeek! Where's my coat? And where are my keys?! Ah, there they are. Okay, now I need my briefcase! Oh, I am going to be late! Oh no! I haven't even shaved yet.

Do you recognize this scenario? Days like this happen often. We seem to get so much done, but unfortunately, these kinds of days skew our perception of reality. They change how we think about eternity because we are always in such a hurry and in the process leave God out our mornings. The American way of life is very fast-paced.

When I lived in Lima, Peru, a city of 8-9 million people, it could be fast-paced as well. But because people are more relaxed, the tendency to rush through the day is reduced. After having lived there for a few months, I came back here to find myself going through reverse culture shock. "Who are these crazy American drivers??" I asked myself. Responsibilities are important, but if our lives get out of balance in the process of doing what we perceive to be correct, then we lose the most important things. People sacrifice their spouses, their children, and even worse, their relationship with the Lord for the Lord! And only after losing our loved ones do we begin to wake up. At that moment, we are slapped back into reality, and we realize what is really important. And even no amount of ministry can take the place of our relationship with God. Ministry should be the result of our relationship with God, not the replacement of God Himself.

I could not begin to count the number of times my grandparents told me, "Time goes by so fast. Just yesterday, we were young. Tomorrow, you will be like us." I am 31 years old. What happened? Just yesterday, I was 21.

God wants us to live every day, and to do our duties. **But He also wants us to keep eternity in view.** Our lives are short. Seventy years seem like a long time, but in light of eternity, it is only a vapor. The importance of money, of fame, of influence crumble when put side by side with the reality that one day, we will come face to face with Jesus Christ. **When it comes down to it, what we have done with Him will be the only thing that matters.**

This May, Lord willing, I will be getting married, something that I have waited for for many years. The waiting seems slow, but then when we get to the other side, we regret having wasted the time fretting. We waste our time on meaningless things, don't we?

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:13-15).

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Maybe, it is time to slow down a little, to reflect and to get alone with the Lord. He is still speaking to our hearts, but sometimes, we allow the noise of this world to drown Him out. Spending time with Him refreshes us, keeps us in perspective, and keeps us from getting sucked into the world's system. We are rehearsing in the short term what we will be doing in the long term - knowing and worshipping God. In the meantime, any fueling and refueling we get on a daily basis will become the fountain of our ministry to others.

Where are we today? Is it worth it to lose our time with the Lord just so we can get that extra thing finished? Is it worth it to neglect our families, or our children? Even our ministry? Is it taking God's place. Ministry can be a god, can it not? Just a few minutes a day alone with the Lord, soaking in His Word, seeking His face is what we need to put everything else back in focus.

Something to ponder...

Your brother,
Aaron Greenway