

The Two Greatest Lessons I've Ever Learned

Franklin Church of Christ
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AM Assembly

Introduction:

As always, December makes me take stock of life. I want to review the year and look forward to the future. But I don't just review the year, I take stock of life in general. What have I learned; what do I still need to learn? I have learned all kinds of great lessons throughout life. I've learned them through Bible study, discussions with others and life experience. I want to share with you the two greatest lessons I've ever learned.

Discussion:

- I. Lesson #1: There is a God.
 - A. **Genesis 1:1** kicks off the Bible saying, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (ESV). Before there was anything, there was God. I believe that. I have heard many deny it. I've read arguments against it. However, I simply cannot fathom any other possibility. Not simply because I believe the Bible, but because I accept Paul's argument from **Romans 1:19-20**. I just cannot understand how anyone can look at the world around us and not see God.
 - B. We live in a world perfectly suited for our existence. We see day and night, seasons and years pass by with precision. Just consider the great precision of our universe, galaxy, solar system and planet. Some have suggested our galaxy, the Milky Way is traveling through space at 370 miles per second. Our sun travels through the Milky Way at 143 miles per second. The earth revolves around the Sun at almost 30 miles per second. At the equator, it rotates on its axis at just about a ¼ mile per second. The moon revolves around the earth at just over ½ mile per second. Yet, everything moves with such precision that we can launch a shuttle from the earth and get it to land on the moon and vice versa. You just can't describe that as anything more or less than design. This universe has a designer.
 - C. Then we can get as small as a cell in the human body. What's amazing is that nearly every part of the simple cell is necessary to survive. A cell couldn't survive without each one, yet we are expected to believe this just popped up one day. Get even smaller and look into the nucleus of human cells and look at the DNA in one cell. DNA is like the library of the cell containing the information, blueprints and instructions for how to create the rest of the parts of the organism. Each strand of DNA, we are told, has about 750 megabytes of information. That is not all, without RNA, the information is useless because it cannot be translated or transcribed. But you also need the proper proteins that help determine which parts of the DNA get transcribed.
 - D. We go from the expansive universe to the micro-compact cell and everywhere in between and we see design. To believe any of this happened by mere chance is ridiculous. Especially when the major premises of a godless existence have all been proven impossible. Scientifically we have proven that something cannot come from nothing and nothing can last forever. Thus, without a God not bound by our universal laws, the universe could not even exist. Further, Louis Pasteur proved that life comes from life. Life cannot merely spring into existence.
 - E. I just can't help but believe what the Hebrew writer claimed in **Hebrews 3:4**. "For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God" (ESV). There is a God.
- II. Lesson #2: I'm not Him.
 - A. On the surface, this should seem so obvious as not to be considered all that great. However, in practicality, this is a lesson that is hard to learn and really apply. Obviously, I'm not God. I can't create anything. I have a beginning and an end. I am the thing designed, not the designer. All that seems perfectly clear. The problem is not so much in ever thinking that I have the power of God. Rather, it has to do with thinking I have the wisdom of God. I know I can't design and create things like God. I know I can't sustain things like God. However, sometimes I get mixed up thinking I can run things better than God. Sometimes I get mixed up thinking that I can fix things better than God.
 - B. Sometimes I get to thinking that I can run my life better than God. God says if I seek first His kingdom and righteousness, that is if I simply follow His ways, He will provide for me everything I need (**Matthew 6:33**). But sometimes I think I can run things better. Sometimes, I think if I pursue my daily needs first, then I can get to spiritual things later and everything will still be okay.

Sometimes I think I need to make sure everybody likes me first, then I can work on God's spiritual things as they fit within that context. Here is the point I have to remember. Nothing is in God's Word by mistake. If He says I need to turn the other cheek, there is a reason for that. If He says I need to go talk to someone privately when they sin against me, there is a reason for that. If He says I must not let the sun go down on my anger, there is a reason for that. Sadly, we often have the schoolboy mindset of obeying God. We think we can ask, "How much do I exactly have to do to get a pass grade so I can go to heaven? Do I have to do 92% or maybe just get past 65%?" That is not how it works. God hasn't given us the Bible so we can barter over the grade requirements to get us into heaven. He has given us the Bible to communicate the way that works. When I want to change, barter, water down or just go halfway, I'm essentially saying that I know better than God. I have got to remember. There is a God and I'm not Him. I should just surrender to Him.

- C. Sometimes I think I can run or fix my marriage and family better than God. God has revealed principles for how I should live in my family. For instance, look at **Ephesians 5:22-6:4**. Further, His principles and guidelines for my individual life govern how I should live and behave no matter what is going on in my family. If God says I need to go to someone (including my wife) when I realize they have something against me (cf. **Matthew 5:23-26**), I need to go to them quickly and make amends, reconciling, then I had better do that. If God says I should put others (including my wife and children) before myself and view them as more important than I am (cf. **Philippians 2:3-4**), then I had better do that. When I do things that do not correspond with God's will whether it has to do with attending assemblies, speaking kindly, seeking vengeance or whatever else thinking somehow that is better for me or my family, I'm actually saying I know better than God. I need to remember that there is a God and I'm not Him.
- D. Sometimes I think I can run or fix Christ's church or this congregation better than God. Throughout the New Testament we see how churches behaved as God was revealing to them what to do. Sometimes, however, I think I can come up with better ways to do things. For instance, if God says the church is to be focused on spiritual things like being the pillar and support of the truth (cf. **I Timothy 3:15**) or being to the praise of God's glory (**Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14**), then that is what it is about and my ideas about entertainment, recreation or welfare just won't get God's job done. If God says multiple shepherds should govern only a single flock or congregation (cf. **I Peter 5:2**), then any ideas I have about hierarchies or denominational structure will not ultimately work. When I start changing the pattern God has presented in the New Testament for His congregations, I'm actually saying I know better than God. I need to remember there is a God and I'm not Him.
- E. The long and short of all this is if there is a God and He is not me, then I need to simply surrender to Him. I need to look at what He has said and just do that. I need to just keep it simple. If I add to what He has said or take away from it, then I am making myself out to be wiser and better than God. Why not just let Him run my life? Maybe if I just crucify myself with Christ and just live my life by believing Him and His word (cf. **Galatians 2:20**), the way might be rough and painful, but I will be going the right way, the way that provides freedom and salvation.

Conclusion:

There is a God and I'm not Him. Neither are you. Are you lifting yourself above God in places? If so, why not surrender to Him today, right now. Let Him have His way with you.