

Ambassador College
Pasadena, California

Philosophy of Life

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Fundamentals of Theology

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Philosophy of Life

Mankind has been created and placed on earth for the purpose of becoming a part of the God family. In the preparation and training of each individual for this awesome future, God has ordained that each individual should not endeavor toward this goal secluded from others; instead humans have been designed to be social beings with very interdependent relationships. In the pursuit of each one's own potential, therefore, it is necessary for these relationships to be based upon the one central goal of bringing all men into the family of God. Each must carefully consider his relationship with God, his neighbor, and himself to ensure that this central purpose is always being striven after, for it is one of man's greatest faults that he is a self-contradictory being in his proclaiming of one philosophy and living of another.

Relationship with God

To aim to be a member of the God family without having had a relationship with my father and elder brother aforetime would be absurd. For me to enter that plane of existence I must begin now to establish a close, intimate rapport with them.

Having not yet been begotten of God, I have not yet even come to the starting line of my race to enter God's Kingdom. I am still in the preparatory stages. I want to be a begotten son of the Father, to have his life, his power, his mind, and his character dwelling within me; but I want to make certain that I am ready for it first. One of my greatest fears is that I will begin my race without having adequately prepared myself for the awesome responsibility that comes with being given God's precious gift. Others have made the mistake of not being ready when they were

baptized and I don't want to repeat their mistake.

Before I am ready, I must recognize who I am, what I am, what I have done, and what I am not able to do without God's help. Mr. Armstrong has often spoken of Adam's spiritual incompleteness at creation; am I not the same in this regard? How can I become engaged to my future husband, Christ, if I do not see how I am incomplete without him? To do so, in my mind, is to enter a relationship in which the roles of each individual are not clearly defined. Not seeing where I am unable to live properly on my own, I would attempt to make things work through my own power, in effect, taking my life back from the one to whom I gave it.

The role that I must see is this, that I need Christ in me to live my life in a way that will bring welfare, happiness, and life; and to obey the laws that bring these results. I want to live by faith in him, and not by physical signs and manifestations. I want self-leadership and self-direction replaced by his direction in my life.

To be able to live by faith in his direction after baptism, I must begin on the right foot. I must start with a fearful, humble, and surrendered attitude toward his teachings. Unless this attitude is the foundation upon which I build my relationship with God, I will fail at some point later. With this beginning, I can go on to learn to rely upon him to provide for my needs, and to fulfill my desires. Then and only then can I go on to acquire his nature within my life. As I grow in knowledge and in character, God will become more and more real to me; he will become my friend. With the love that he gives me, I will be able to come to love him with all of my heart, with all of my soul, and all of my strength.

Relationship with Man

It is impossible to build a relationship with God if you are not obeying his laws. Since God's law is the law of love, obedience to God requires loving your neighbor; this must be the foundation of our relationship with

our fellow man.

I must love my neighbor because I cannot love God, who I cannot see, if I do not love my neighbor, whom I can see. In God I see my future spiritual Father, the almighty king of the universe. In my neighbor I should see a potential son of that Father, and a future co-ruler with me over all of of creation.

I must love my neighbor through a combination of thought and action. If I do not have an attitude of love, then anything that I do will be in vain, any good works that I perform will be only that-- a performance and a sham. But, with an attitude of love, I must also have the good works or else my attitude is for nothing. I desire to grow an empathetic love for my brother that is continually desirous of helping and serving him in whatever capacity I can.

I will help him with those resources that I have available to me; my time, my money, and my energy. I want to use these whenever I have them available to me-- not just when I make my first million-- in visiting others when they are alone; consoling them when they are hurt, listening to them when they need an ear, and being there to provide assistance. In short, being a friend. Giving without expecting return; providing without repayment; working to satisfy a need without desiring a reward; these are qualities of a reliable friend. This is the attitude that I want to attain for every brother of mine.

Ultimately, I want to grow in love for every neighbor I have, those I don't know, my enemies, my friends, my spiritual brothers, my children, and my wife. If I can attain this attitude of giving and serving toward each and every one of these neighbors of mine, then I will be able to better help them all become a part of the family of God.

Marriage and Family

God has given mankind a chance to foretaste in the microcosm of the

family both the parallel of the divine Family that he is beginning, and what we will be doing for all eternity-- practicing the way of serving and giving of oneself to others. A husband and a wife are able to experience a unique relationship between themselves through the agape love that God will provide them with if they are baptized, that parallels the divine love that God has for us as his children. Through this love they are able to begin to practice concern for each other and for their own children.

The basis of a strong family is a solid parental team. In the creation of my family, my first step will be to prepare myself to be a proper leader and provider. If I am unable to love and lead my wife, teach my children, and provide for my family, I certainly will not be able to be a strong partner for the team. My education and career will play a vital role in the shaping of me to be able to perform these duties. It is equally vital that my future wife be prepared to take on her role as a mother, manager of the home, teacher of our children, and partner with me in life. Her education and experience will likewise prepare her for the performance of her duties. When we are then joined together we will have the raw resources with which to begin to create a solid union.

God created man physically incomplete so that he will need a wife. This is a basis for the marriage institution. In my mind, it is of utmost importance for me to recognize the areas in which my future wife and I complement one another in talents, abilities, interests, personality, temperament, and emotions. A smooth harmony will be more easily produced if we converge to a balanced mix through complementary contributions of these areas into the family.

One area that is essential for my wife and I to be alike in is our direction in life. We must have convergent goals for our long term futures. This of course necessitates that we be in accord on religious, educational, economic, and social beliefs and goals. We must both be baptized and growing

in God's spirit, his grace, and his knowledge. It is essential that we both be converted before we become married, for I want us to be fully joined together by sharing the common hopes, aspirations, and commitments which will cement us in a more perfect union, and help to nurture the growth of that union.

As a husband, I will learn to love my wife. I will provide for her physical needs, soothe her emotional concerns, and give her spiritual and moral direction. In life she will have priority second only to God. As we both grow in spiritual, emotional, and physical maturity, I hope that I will learn more and more to identify her needs and desires as my own. The more that I will be able to love her, the one whom I will be physically closest, the more that I will be able to love the rest of my neighbors.

After we have had an opportunity to grow together for awhile, my wife and I will produce a family. We will be entrusted for a span of several years with the care and custody of future sons of God. In that short time we must prepare them to undertake their adult roles in society. This preparation will include the teaching of God's plan for them, his law, the importance of the family, and how they should conduct themselves with others. I want to teach them to have the right attitude and to hold the right values in every phase of their lives through example and instruction during their childhood.

Concomittant with spiritual and moral education will come family physical development. I will encourage my wife and children to be balanced and happy through exposure to a wide variety of cultural, educational, recreational, intellectual, and artistic pursuits. Through these I hope to encourage them to develop the talents they have in any and all of these areas to the fullest extent that they can while maintaining balance. By developing their interests, I hope to engender within them an appreciation for their human potential and make their lives more abundant.

Education

The preparation that I will need to be a good husband will be secured through my education. Since I was not born with the knowledge of how to live my life properly already within myself, I need to acquire it. Education is that process by which I will gain this most necessary ingredient.

Education comes in a variety of forms, it is not limited strictly to the classroom setting. To me, education is the means by which one learns how to live, and since all of the knowledge of how to live does not come out of books and lectures, I don't believe that one is truly educated in the classroom solely. I want to become educated in what different people are like, how they live, what their customs are like, and how they view life. This will require some travel; something that I would very much like to do in the future to gain insight in these areas. I also want to learn to appreciate the arts of painting, sculpture, music, and theater. Through attendance at performances and displays exhibiting these arts I will be able to enrich my life with these as well. Someday I will learn to create some of this artistry myself through music and some medium of paint. I hope to learn to play the piano someday so that I will be able to give to others some of the enjoyment that I have received in the past. All of these areas of education will not come only from "book knowledge." They will require active participation rather than passive acquisition.

Although this ornamental education is designed to complete my personality and enrich my life, it must have a base upon which it is built if it is to truly make my life more abundant. That foundation must be a way of life-- a philosophy-- by which my life is guided. That is why I am here at Ambassador College, to set that foundation by learning to serve, to be generous and giving with my resources, and to have concern for the needs of others. I am being instructed on the core beliefs by which I will direct my steps; I am gaining the spiritual knowledge of how to have a close relation-

ship with God and my fellowman.

There is still another type of knowledge that I do need. I still lack a technical background in general business so that I can have a skill with which to earn a living to support my future family. I believe that when I graduate from Ambassador College I may still need additional training in this area, and will therefore need to enter another college to obtain this training. That will be the extent of further education, however, since I believe that it would be wrong for me to study another philosophy once I have graduated from here. Any other school's non-technical teaching could erode the base that I will have set here.

Career

One of the largest aspects of my life will be the job that I have. On average, I will spend nearly one-third of my day devoted solely to my profession. The choice of my career is therefore very important.

The role of a job, in my mind, is multi-faceted. Primarily, it will be the means by which I will be able to provide for my family the goods that will keep it within a comfortable standard of living. It is incumbent upon me to do my best to provide sufficiently for my family's welfare; if I am doing my best, then God will supply the rest. Secondly, I believe that my job should perform a service for society in some way. I don't believe that I can have a basic philosophy of giving to others for two-thirds of my day and for the other third be striving to get as much as I can from the same agents in the market place. I want my life to be a harmonious whole, not self-contradictory. Thirdly, I want my job to be an arena in which my abilities, talents, and skills can be used and can grow. If I am in a job that stagnates my personal growth in either character or abilities, then I will be injured by it in my attitude and motivation. This injury will in turn hurt my family because my performance as a father and a husband will be hampered.

None of these purposes for my job in anyway imply that my job will direct my life. I believe that a job is a tool by which these three purposes will be met, but it is not to be my master in life. In my life, my job will hold fourth priority after God, my wife, and my family. In no way do I want my job to take the place of any of these in its importance to me. This is why I listed the three purposes that it will have in the order that I have. The first purpose is to serve the family, which in itself dictates that the family interests must come first. If instead I start to make my job into a means of self-actualization and self-gratification primarily, then it can replace my family in its importance. I strongly deny that such a role for my job is fitting or proper since God has created me to 1) become his son and 2) be a husband and father to lead and guide my family. Throughout the Bible the emphasis is placed upon the father and husband role of the man, and not the accomplisher role. Providing is important, for by it I will have the resources by which I can love my family more fully, and love my neighbor more completely.

I believe that I would enjoy a career in the field of business, in the banking world most likely. When I finish my education I will be ready for entry into the industry in a low level of management. From there through diligent effort I hope to rise within the structure of whatever company I join to the level that I am best suited for. I would like to be able to make use of my leadership, organizational, and motivational talents.

In my career I am not aiming to be among the highest ranks of any large corporation. I don't think that I could adequately devote the time and energies required from such a job and still keep a single minded direction toward entering the kingdom and be a good husband and father. The way that this world's business community is set up virtually requires that the men that are in powerful positions in their companies devote their lives to their jobs, at the expense often of other one time priorities. I would rather wait for