

Too Heavenly Minded?

“For me to live is Christ and to die is gain”

Philippians 1:21 (NIV)

There is an old saying that is still used occasionally and it goes like this: “He is too heavenly minded to be any earthly good”. The statement sounds interesting to the uninformed person. However, a brief look at the history of the church contradicts the idea that people who are “heavenly minded” cannot have much to contribute to this life.

Those who have read the history of England will tell you of many evangelical Christians who did so much to transform their society.

John Howard, who lived in the 1700’s was a wealthy man who spent much of his fortune to give relief to the suffering of prisoners. He spoke to the British Parliament about the abominable conditions in the prisons and was honoured for his tireless labours.

An international society was formed some years after Howard’s death to help prisoners. The society still is working in many countries today.

We all have heard of William Wilberforce (24 August 1759 – 29 July 1833) who did so much to free slaves. Like John

Howard he was motivated by his “heavenly mindedness”. We could go on but it is clear that being heavenly minded can have a profound and positive effect on how people live in this world.

However, there is more to this “heavenly mindedness” than the desire to improve society. Being heavenly minded can also assist those who suffer as they draw near to the Lord and recognize that this world is really not their final home.

There is a tremendous benefit for those who suffer when they get their minds off the present and on to the future. The future is when Jesus takes them to their eternal home with Him. I fully accept that there is enormous pressure on people in pain to stare at the present and ignore the future. Suffering grabs our attention and seeks to prevent us from considering that there is a better day coming.

Those who have terrible ordeals in this life need help to lift their eyes off the immediate situation and look farther down the road to what the Lord has in store for His people in heaven. I have had the immense privilege of helping wonderful Christian people in tragedy by teaching them

what is ahead when Jesus lovingly wraps His arms around them when they die and lifts them to the home prepared for them.

I possess a letter written to me just over 10 years ago by a young mother of a six year old daughter. This young woman was dying in hospital and frightened because she knew her days here were short. I visited her weekly and showed her from Scripture how God helps His people as they go through the valley of the shadow of death.

She went from fear to faith and in her final weeks was eager to go and be with Jesus. She became very heavenly minded and thus learned how to handle the enormous problem of dying young. Her painful last days became joyful as she anticipated entering the country where she would forever be with the Lord.

Are you heavenly minded enough to endure the sorrows of this life? Or do you need to get into the Bible and learn more about the glories that await those who believe in Jesus?

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