

Welcome To The Real World

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In the days, weeks and months to come you may have people congratulate you on your graduation and then add the comment, “welcome to the real world”—as if the world in which you have been living was not the “real world.” You have been living in the real world of course, but what they are alluding to is that most people your age have been people sheltered from some aspects of life to some degree. That is the way your parents wanted it and that is the way that it should be.

In the years to come you will come to a greater understanding of all the world holds for you and what the world will demand from you. You are about to enjoy greater freedom and greater responsibilities at the same time.

With this in mind let me remind you of something a very wise man said once.

Be happy, young man, while you are young,
and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth.
Follow the ways of your heart
and whatever your eyes see,
but know that for all these things
God will bring you to judgment.

So then, banish anxiety from your heart
and cast off the troubles of your body,
for youth and vigor are meaningless.

Remember your Creator
in the days of your youth,”

-King Solomon, Ecc11;9-12:1 NIV

The basis of Solomon’s words is balance. Of course, balance sounds bland to many—especially if you are young. Nevertheless, recklessness in life is often only one step beyond adventuresome.

Solomon was a man who had indeed seen and done it all. Solomon was a man who loved adventure and conquest, but he was also a man who knew the sting of foolish decisions. It would appear that Solomon is telling you and me that we should live our lives to their fullest. Enjoy yourself—especially while you are young. Indulge in life’s excitement. Don’t allow the worries of life to steal the joy of your youth. But wait, here is the balance, just remember God while you are living for the moment.

I. IN THE REAL WORLD THERE ARE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES.

A. In the real world there is excitement.

B. In the real world there are challenges.

No doubt you have seen such shows as *Survivor, Temptation Island, and The Real World* where people face “challenges” of varying types—from the physical to the emotional.

Many of these “challenges” of “real TV” are laughable in comparison to the challenges you may face in your “real world”. Much of “Real TV” is actually staged. The safety and well being of the contestants is constantly monitored by executives who do not want to be sued. However, it is not that way in your “real world.”

Nevertheless, there is One who wants to help you. His guidance, His protection, His love, and His care can make all the difference in the world.

II. IN THE REAL WORLD SERVING GOD IS NOT ALWAYS IMPORTANT TO PEOPLE.

A. In the real world people do not always take God along in their pursuits.

B. In the real world youth is valued more than it can deliver.

To consider the importance of serving God in one’s life is to open oneself up to a greater reality that the world can ever provide.

III. IN THE REAL WORLD THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES TO OUR CHOICES.

A. In the real world our choices may cost us more than we want to pay.

B. In the real world making the most of one’s life is better than just living for the moment.

Ask yourself, “How do you feel about today's world? If you could change anything about it, what would you change?”

Life in the real world is about more than just living for the moment.

Conclusion

We would do well reconsider these words written by a man who started out enjoying what God had provided *but became reckless and thus had to live with the consequences of his overindulgences.* There is a balance in his words. He is not telling us to live any way we want. Nor is he portraying God as a harsh judge ready to punish

those who have too much fun. God approves when we enjoy life. He is merely cautioning us not to become reckless in our decisions.

I realize that choices about life's adventures and thrills lie ahead for my daughters. They will both make mistakes and they will feel moments of life's enjoyment to its fullest. My only request of them and of other young people is for them to stop for a moment and consider what God would want them to do instead of just pursuing the excitement of the moment.

Let me challenge you to go out into the "real world" and make a difference in a way that honors God and you as a person.

In words that were meant to challenge the Christian to become all that God would have for them to become, Bishop Charles E. Blake also warns us that...

"There are some who try to get by with the bare minimum effort... the minimum of investment... the bare minimum of thought. Their focus is to just barely meet the minimum standard. But such people will suffer the consequences of their nonchalance. They will never know their potential. Others will underestimate them. They will underestimate themselves. And they and people and God will never receive the benefits that they are uniquely qualified to offer.

And when they die, what they had to offer will be buried with them. Their songs will be buried with them. Their inventions will be buried with them. The benefits they could have offered will be buried with them. The help they could have given, the inheritance they could have left behind—will be buried with them. And they will die frustrated thinking of what they could have done and should have done. But champions and innovators and those who have impacted the world for good are the ones who went beyond the norm."

Go beyond the norm! Don't just live for momentary enjoyment. Build a future! Build a life that can be respected, that has substance and value. Live your life to the fullest—just remember to live it for God.