

Sermon: Go Your Way

Text: Daniel 12

Discussion Questions:

Just over 31 years ago, in 1989, Steven Covey published the international best-selling book *“Seven Habits of Highly Successful People.”* The second of the seven habits described how we ought to ‘Begin with the end in mind.’ In other words, don’t just blindly go through life without considering what truly matters in the end. I understand that Covey was writing a self-help book from a worldly perspective. However, this principle is firmly rooted in the truth of God’s Word. God calls us to live in light of eternity. We are warned in Scripture to make choices in light of the reality that we will all stand in front of the judgment seat of Christ to give an account for the things we did in this life—whether good or bad (**2 Corinthians 5:10**).

A good way to think about this is in moving a long, straight strand of rope. Let’s say you want to move this rope a hundred feet, keeping it in a straight line. How are you going to do it? Are you going to push the rope—or pull it? Obviously, pushing the rope isn’t going to work. Within a few steps the rope is going to double back on itself and end up in a bunch. No, the best way is to go to the far end of the rope and pull it. Doing it this way keeps the entire rope in line.

The same is true with our lives. Instead of trying to “push” our lives along by our own effort (and quite often getting things all bunched up and creating a mess), we are far better off thinking about the end of our lives, and allowing eternal values “pull” us. The Bible calls this wisdom. We’re told in **Proverbs 9:10** that *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”* The word “fear” in this verse doesn’t mean “fright” or “being afraid.” It means living with a sense of holy reverence—being fully aware that God is a righteous judge before whom will all stand. It means to journey along in life day by day with the end (standing before God with eternity in the balance) in mind.

- What are some ways that living with a holy fear of the Lord might impact the way that we spend our time?
- What are some ways that living with a holy fear of the Lord might impact the way that we spend our money?
- What are some ways that living with a holy fear of the Lord might impact our daily habits?

The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3:10-13:

“But each one should build with care. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work

- What does Paul mean when he says “build with care”?
- What are some examples of building with gold, silver, and costly stones?
- What are some examples of building with wood, hay & straw? What happens to these?

Examination:

- Read **Daniel 12:1-4**

- We have a reference once again to the arch-angel Michael. Here he is called “The great prince who protects your people.” One day, we will have the opportunity to meet Michael face to face (along with all of the angels). Put into words how you picture Michael in your mind. How big is he? How do you imagine his face? Quite often, we illustrate angels as having wings. Do you think Michael has wings? How else do you imagine him and why?
 - How does God protect His people? Have you experienced His protection?
 - There are three references in verse 1 to “that time” or “a time”—indicating an actual moment in the future when all people will be raised up and will appear before God the Righteous Judge. Think of it like taking a college class. The professor hands out the syllabus on day 1, and makes it clear that in twelve weeks there will be a final exam that will determine your grade for the course. According to this verse, who are the people who will “pass”? Who will be “delivered” into eternal life?
 - Verse 2 states that EVERYONE will be raised up—and will then experience one of two realities. What are those two realities?
 - IN LIGHT OF this final judgment—what does v. 3 tell us about how to live?
- Read **Daniel 12:5-13**
 - The reference in verse 7 is to “a time, times and half a time.” Most scholars believe we should read this as “one” plus “two” plus “one half.” Which equals three and a half. When will these 3 ½ years take place? What does your study bible (or online commentary) tell you about these 3 ½ years?
 - Does it encourage you to know that Daniel didn’t understand? (v. 8)
 - In verses 9 and 13, the angel tells Daniel to “go your way.” What do you think he means by this?
 - Verse 10 talks about many who will be purified and made spotless—as well as others who are called “wicked.” The purified will be refined and ultimately raised to their allotted inheritance. The wicked will go on being wicked, and fail to understand any of these truths and teaching. What do you think all of this means? Why doesn’t God just make it so that everyone is purified & saved?
 - The angel gives Daniel some encouraging words in verse 13. He is told that he will “rest,” and then at the end of the days he will rise to receive his inheritance. What do you think this is a reference to?
 - Hebrews chapter 4 describes the fact that God has promised an “eternal rest” or a “Sabbath-rest” for the people of God. The warning is then given (**Hebrews 4:11**) that we are to “*make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish.*” The paragraph goes on to say (v. 13) that “*Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*” What’s the warning here? How does this reinforce the principle of “beginning with the end in mind”?

Application:

What are some practical ways you can put this message into practice in your life today? How can you live your daily life with a greater awareness of having to give an account to God?