

# Life Is Not Trivial

by John Piper

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*Life is not trivial, and we must cultivate a sense of awe and wonder by recognizing the hand of God in creation and seeing the sacredness of all things.*

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 32:46, Psalm 73:25, Psalm 104:24, Ecclesiastes 3:11, Isaiah 55:8, Matthew 6:26, Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:23

**Topics:** "Eternal Significance", "Godly Perspective"

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## Description

John Piper preaches about how extreme highs and lows in life awaken a hunger for deeper meaning, beyond the trivialities of day-to-day living. These moments of intense emotion reveal life's true essence, stripping away non-essentials and highlighting the eternal significance of every aspect of life. Piper emphasizes the importance of seeing the world through God's eyes, recognizing reflections of eternity even in the simplest things like a fish or a blade of grass. He challenges the congregation to view the word and worship of God as non-trivial, drawing inspiration from Moses' words in Deuteronomy 32:46 about the life-giving importance of God's commands.

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## Transcript

Isn't it the extremely high and the extremely low occasions of life that trigger in us a hunger that life not be so trivial most of the time? Every human being now and then feels a longing that life not dribble away like a leaky faucet. You've all tasted the desire that day-to-day life be more than a series of trifles. It can happen when you are reading a poem, when you are kneeling in your closet, when you are standing at the lakeside at sunset. It very often happens at birth and death.

When my mother died in December, 1974, I had to go home and help tend my dad's injury. I didn't know what, besides grief, I might feel. But one thing that happened was this: I wrote to Dr. Glenn, chairman of my department at Bethel College and said: "I know you want me to teach an overload in the spring but unless my job depends on it I'd rather not." The reason I gave was: "When I stand beside my mother's coffin and then look at my wife and son, the \$1,000 extra which I would make teaching the overload simply loses all its attraction because it would rob me of some of the quality time with my family." In other words, the crisis time of my mother's death awakened in me a longing that my family life not be trivial.

Why does this happen? I think it's because at these moments of intense emotion we see life for what it really is. The non-essentials get stripped off and life essential shines for what it really is - and it is not trivial. We see things in the light of eternity, we see the way God sees, and triviality has no place in God's

life.

The world is hungry for people for whom nothing is trivial, people who ooze with life because in everything they see a reflection of eternity - even in a fish and a blade of grass.

Last Thursday Noel and I got away to a lake for the day. Before we went Karsten picked out and read for us Psalm 104 at breakfast. This was a great preparation for a day out of doors. It is a nature psalm and says, for example, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom thou hast made them all; the earth is full of thy creatures. Yonder is the sea great and wide, which teems with things innumerable, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and Leviathans which thou didst form to sport in it."

Well, one of the things I did at this small lake was put bread balls on a little gold hook and pull up a dozen or so fish that were swimming under the dock. They all looked about the same - ordinary little panfish with yellow bellies. Then I pulled up one that really took me by surprise and awakened me. I held it there in my hand after I took the hook out and just looked at it. It had olive green stripes wiggling backwards from head to tail. Then sprinkled all over were light blue luminous spots. On the back of the gill there was a black protrusion about the size of a fingernail, and right on the tip of this was a deep red dot. I held it there in the sun and turned it back and forth and said: "You know what, little fishy? God thought you up. He thought up the olive stripes and blue dots and the deep red spot on black." How manifold are his works, in wisdom he has made them all. By the grace of God that little fish that day was not trivial, because Psalm 104 had opened my eyes to see the way God sees.

Another example of seeing reflections of eternity in something commonplace happened to me a few years ago. A student of mine asked me one day with a gleam in her eye, "Have you seen the grass growing up through the new asphalt walkway?" My answer was a sort of yes and no. Yes, I had seen it but, no, it hadn't struck me as noteworthy. But it had struck her and as we talked I came to feel that it should have struck me. Is it not astonishing that a soft blade of grass can push straight up through solid asphalt? What an amazing thing. When you see things with the eyes of God nothing is trivial.

If that is true of a little fish and blade of grass how much more true must it be of Jesus and his word and the worship of his name! Doesn't it make your heart ache when suddenly you wake up and realize that for some time past you have been going through the motions of devotion and worship as if it were all a very trivial affair? I have an emerging vision for Bethlehem Baptist Church - which I will be sharing along the way, but I can say now that an essential of that vision is that we become a church of people who see with the eyes of God and who see nothing as trivial, especially the word and worship of God.

Moses said to Israel in Deuteronomy 32:46f: "Lay to heart all the words which I enjoin upon you this day, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no trifle for you but it is your life." It is no trifle for you, it is your life! O that we might be such a people that when strangers come they will say, "The word of God and worship is certainly no trifle to that group." For it is not a trivial thing to hear God speak, it is not trivial to pray to our creator. It is not trivial to sing his praises. My prayer is that God will awaken us ever anew to see life the way he sees it. To see in every little fish and blade of grass and every human face a reflection of eternity. And above all to see in God the source and sum and satisfaction of all our longings, so that we say with the Psalmist: Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart may fail. But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Amen.

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