

Priorities, Values, Investments

By Dr. M. John Cava

“Are the things you are living for worth Christ’s dying for.” - Leonard Ravenhill’s epitaph (1907 – 1994)

When I was in my late thirties, the Dean over our school of theology took several of us on a road trip from Maryland to Texas. There we spent the better part of two days sitting at the feet of the then aged, English Christian evangelist, Leonard Ravenhill. His office and hospitality parlor was lined with books and plaques and was one large room that carried an atmosphere of prayer and spiritual sobriety. We sat circled around this accomplished sage hanging on every word he spoke, absorbing gems of experience and heavenly truth.

As I gazed around the room three plaques stood out that captured one’s soul as well as your eyes. They read: “Eternity”, “Judgment” and “A man who is intimate with God is not intimidated by man.” He was anointed in his use of words that stuck in your craw.

It seemed like time stood still in that room. We were suspended in a “Selah” between heaven and earth. Individually, we were evaluating our life goals, thought life, activities and priorities in light of the throne room of God.

At one point, Rev. Ravenhill invited us to pray with him, encouraging each one of us to lead out in turn as he bowed his head. We blurted out requests. Some of us rambled on a bit. A few of us pontificated with lofty spiritually correct words. Then he prayed something like this, “Oh Lord, as we were discussing earlier today, your glory is not being honored and this nation is in a terrible condition ... “ And on he went. He communicated with God. This was true prayer matured in many hours of heart to heart meetings with His God and Savior regarding kingdom matters.

All we could do was groan and say, “Amen or oh me!” Leonard Ravenhill had throne priorities, kingdom values and even proper etiquette before the Father. His life was invested in matters that were not his, but God’s priorities, and the earthly activities that he engaged in had heavenly and eternal value. He was not living for temporal gain. He rather stored his treasures in heaven. He was a man not moved by the shifting winds of man or even devils. Rev. Ravenhill was moved by God and moved in the realm of God bringing heaven to earth.

I moved on from those years leaning into serving in missions around the world, soul-winning, training disciples and pressing for revivals wherever a door opened. I did my best to be a good father, husband and example to those around me. The Bible was always alive and powerful and provided not only messages of life, but an anchor for my soul. I was more focused.

It is interesting to note that many people that had been influenced by Leonard Ravenhill, somehow over time intersected my life, such as; Keith and Melody Green, David Wilkerson, Michael L. Brown, and Steve Hill. Father God had used this great warrior and son via books, messages and counsel to create wave-makers for his kingdom purposes with like DNA. And in some way their efforts converged.

Why recount this episode in my life for you readers? Kings, presidents, media moguls, entertainers and even generals of armies will come and go. Jesus said that there would be wars, and rumors of wars, seas in tumult, pestilences and lawlessness that would beset the world. But it was never in his heart for us to be moved and focused on these things. He said, "Don't worry about what you eat or wear or your life ... [or even about] tomorrow." (Matthew 6:25-34) But it seems that this is what so many of us still do! There is so much fear around.

Maybe we need to switch what and where our treasure is? Why? Our hearts follow that treasure. (Matthew 6:21) The world is begging for attention and priority, so are our personal desires. They shout, "This is important. Give me your time and attention." But the joy they deliver does not seem to stay or have any depth.

Prayer, doing good, worship, loving and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ are kingdom priorities and values. Many of this world's "rich and famous" are poor, blind and naked in the eyes of heaven. Beware of fixing your eyes on them instead of Jesus. (Hebrews 12:1-2) We have a tendency to become like what we behold.

So my advice is – reassess and take charge of your priorities, values, and life investment (especially time and money). You will get your joy and spiritual strength back. Set your heart on personal revival by becoming hot with His presence. God will take care of the rest.

Eternity

Judgment

"A man who is intimate with God is not intimidated by man."

Stay heavenly minded and you will be very earthly good.