

***After Life: What the Bible Really Says*** by Douglas Connelly, published by Intervarsity Press, 1995 (9 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

## **1. God's Authority**

Finally, standing as Lord over all. God emerges as the ultimate cause of Saul's death. "So the LORD put [Saul] to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse" (1 Chronicles 10:14). In the shadows of human history, a sovereign God works to accomplish what he desires. (Page 27)

## **2. Evaluate the World by the Word**

That's the problem with making evaluations. People think you are being judgmental and harsh. In an interview with a journalist about my evaluation of Eadie's book, the journalist was very unhappy with my criticism of a book he personally had enjoyed and had recommended to several other people. He ended the interview by saying, "I don't think we should judge other people like you have done. I think we should just affirm everyone's experience and try to learn something good from it."

His remark sounds noble. The problem is that we as Christians are responsible to judge what we hear and read and see. We are commanded to evaluate our own experiences and others' as well against the measuring stick of God's Word. The apostle John exhorted us to "test the spirits" in our world (1 John 4:1-3). Jesus had no hesitation about exposing wrong thinking or unbiblical belief in his society. We certainly are not to be judgmental in a self-righteous or hypocritical way, but we are to carefully evaluate the teaching of those who claim to give us spiritual insight. In the same sermon where Jesus said, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged," he also said, "Watch out for false prophets" (Matthew 7:1,15). Jesus concluded by saying that the standard we are to use in evaluating both the words and actions of those who claim to give spiritual direction is "these words of mine" (Matthew 7:21-24). If a person's experience or teaching is in harmony with what God has said in his Word, we can accept it. If what we are told is not in harmony with Scripture, even if it comes from an angel from heaven, we are to reject it (Galatians 1:8-9).' (Page 33)

## **3. Embracing Biblical Absolutes**

Standing for the truth of Scripture is not a popular position in our culture. The emerging relativistic consensus is that everyone is entitled to his or her own religious views and that no view can be declared right or wrong. I'm certainly an advocate of religious freedom; I'm an equally strong advocate of the need for Christians to stand courageously in a culture without spiritual foundations and to say, "This is what God clearly says." We've allowed "cultural correctness" to pressure us into silence. Jesus certainly had no problem exposing the faulty religious views of people in his day, and

we should be just as courageous in defending the truth of Scripture today—both inside and outside the church. Our faith is based on what God has declared in his Son and in his Word, not on the most recent breeze to blow across our society. (Page 42)

#### **4. Lights in a Dark Place**

What people facing death need are the clear, unshakable promises of God, not the weak, hope-so opinions of the latest guru. The most loving thing you can do for the neighbor or coworker or fellow student who has embraced a false view of death or Christ or salvation is to share the truth of the gospel and the Scriptures with them. If Jesus is the truth that he claimed to be, then we are called to be lights shining in a very dark place. (Page 42-43)

#### **5. Eternal Judgment**

The Bible clearly teaches that at death the soul or spirit separates from the body and goes either into Christ's presence or into a place of judgment. The final blow to belief in reincarnation is the declaration of Hebrews 9:27: "Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." (Page 44)

#### **6. God's Sovereignty in Death and Life**

Death and life are the sole prerogatives of God. Job declares: "Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed" (Job 14:5). David adds, "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:16) (Page 56)

#### **7. The Wrongful Termination of Life**

I certainly don't want to sound heartless or unsympathetic to people who are suffering intense physical and emotional pain. I've stood by too many bedsides and watched too many faithful Christians suffer through long months and years of pain to be unsympathetic. My wife's mother lingered through weeks of discomfort and agony as she died. We prayed that God would be merciful and take her life quickly, but his answer seemed a long time in coming. I am simply forced by my understanding of God's truth to conclude that the deliberate termination of human life is wrong. It is wrong because God may choose to bring healing or restoration or a time of remission to that person. It is wrong because God's purposes in that person's own life and through that person in the lives of others may not yet be accomplished. And it is wrong to terminate human life deliberately and actively because of the sanctity of all human life—born and unborn, young and old, normal and retarded, capable and incapable. Human beings are made in the image of God, and we have no right to arbitrarily take life for the sake of convenience or choice. (Page 57)

## 8. Honoring Life

The greatest demonstration of compassion toward a person who is dying of disease or old age is not to end the person's life but to nurture that person and to hold the human life resident in him or her in highest regard. (Page 61)

## 9. Comforting the Mourner

Joe Bayly had three sons who died. The first died when only eighteen days old after an emergency surgery. Another died of leukemia at age five. The third died when he was eighteen years old after a sledding accident. Joe wrote an excellent little book before his own death in 1986 entitled *The Last Thing We Talk About*. In it he describes how we can comfort the mourner.

When Job's friends came to see him after his children died and he had suffered in so many other ways, they missed the opportunity to go down in history as uniquely sensitive and understanding. There they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights, and they didn't say a word, because they saw how utterly grief-stricken he was. But then they began to talk and spoiled it all....

Don't try to "prove" anything to a survivor. An arm about the shoulder, a firm grip of the hand, a kiss: these are the proofs grief needs, not logical reasoning.

I was sitting, torn by grief. Someone came and talked to me of God's dealings, of why it happened, of hope beyond the grave. He talked constantly, he said things I knew were true. I was unmoved, except to wish he'd go away. He finally did.

Another came and sat beside me. He didn't talk. He didn't ask leading questions. He just sat beside me for an hour or more, listened when I said something, answered briefly, prayed simply, left. I was moved. I was comforted. I hated to see him go. (Page 125-126)

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