

# Live Righteously

## Psalm 112:1-10

"Live so that when people speak evil of you no one will believe it."

- Unknown

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### 50 Years From Now It Won't Matter

During the early days of the Salvation Army, William Booth and his associates were bitterly attacked in the press by religious leaders and government leaders alike. Whenever his son, Bramwell, showed Booth a newspaper attack, the General would reply, "Bramwell, fifty years hence it will matter very little indeed how these people treated us; it will matter a great deal how we dealt with the work of God."

*The Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching & Preachers, W. Wiersbe, p. 185*

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In the Antarctic summer of 1908-9, Sir Ernest Shackleton and three companions attempted to travel to the South Pole from their winter quarters. They set off with four ponies to help carry the load. Weeks later, their ponies dead, rations all but exhausted, they turned back toward their base, their goal not accomplished.

Altogether, they trekked 127 days. On the return journey, as Shackleton records in [The Heart of the Antarctic](#), the time was spent talking about food -- elaborate feasts, gourmet delights, sumptuous menus. As they staggered along, suffering from dysentery, not knowing whether they would survive, every waking hour was occupied with thoughts of eating. Jesus, who also knew the ravages of food deprivation, said,

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for RIGHTEOUSNESS." We can understand Shackleton's obsession with food, which offers a glimpse of the passion Jesus intends for our quest for righteousness.

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In recent years a head coach divorced his wife of 26 years when he left coaching a college team to become head coach in the National Football League. He said he needed a wife while coaching on the college level for social functions and to show families that he would be looking out for their sons. In pro football, however, she was an unnecessary accouterment and a distraction to winning. He said winning football was his number one priority and his two sons second. How tragic!

In contrast to this, Tom Landry, former coach of the Dallas cowboys said, "The thrill of knowing Jesus is the greatest thing that ever happened to me ... I think God has put me in a very special place, and He expects me to use it to His glory in everything I do ... whether coaching football or talking to the press, I'm always a Christian ... Christ is first, family second and football third."

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### Heart for Others (Characterized by a heart of integrity.)

As professional golfer Ray Floyd was getting ready to tap in a routine 9-inch putt, he saw the ball move ever so slightly. According to the rule book, if the ball moves in this way the golfer must take a penalty stroke. Yet consider the situation. Floyd was among the leaders in a tournament offering a top prize of \$108,000. To acknowledge that the ball had moved could mean he would lose his chance for big money.

Writer David Holahan describes as follows what others might have done: "The athlete ducks his head and flails wildly with his hands, as if being attacked by a killer bee; next, he steps back from the ball, rubbing his eye for a phantom speck of dust, all the while scanning his playing partners and the gallery for any sign that the ball's movement has been detected by others. If the coast is clear, he taps the ball in for his par. Ray Floyd, however, didn't do that. He assessed himself a penalty stroke and wound up with a bogey on the hole."

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What are you willing to do for \$10,000,000? Two-thirds of Americans polled would agree to at least one, some to several of the following:

- Would abandon their entire family (25%)
- Would abandon their church (25%)
- Would become prostitutes for a week or more (23%)
- Would give up their American citizenships (16%)
- Would leave their spouses (16%)
- Would withhold testimony and let a murderer go free (10%)
- Would kill a stranger (7%)
- Would put their children up for adoption (3%)

James Patterson and Peter Kim, *The Day America Told the Truth*, 1991.

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### **Inner Strength**

During his term as President of the U.S., Lyndon Johnson was somewhat overweight. One day his wife challenged him with this blunt assertion: "You can't run the country if you can't run yourself." Respecting Mrs. Johnson's wise observation, the President lost 23 pounds.

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Scientists now say that a series of slits, not a giant gash, sank the *Titanic*. The opulent, 900-foot cruise ship sank in 1912 on its first voyage, from England to New York. Fifteen hundred people died in the worst maritime disaster of the time.

The most widely held theory was that the ship hit an iceberg, which opened a huge gash in the side of the liner. But an international team of divers and scientists recently used sound waves to probe the wreckage, buried in the mud under two-and-a-half miles of water. Their discovery? The damage was surprisingly small. Instead of the huge gash, they found six relatively narrow slits across the six watertight holds.

Small damage, invisible to most, can sink not only a great ship but a great reputation.

*USA Today*, April 9, 1997.

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It is said that as the great Michelangelo painted the magnificent frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel--lying on his back for endless hours to finish every detail with great care--a friend asked him why he took such pains with figures that would be viewed from a considerable distance. "After all," the friend said, "Who will notice whether it is perfect or not?" "I will," replied the artist.

*Today In The Word*, August, 1989, p. 40.