
Joyful Warriors

Standing Tall In Christian Faith

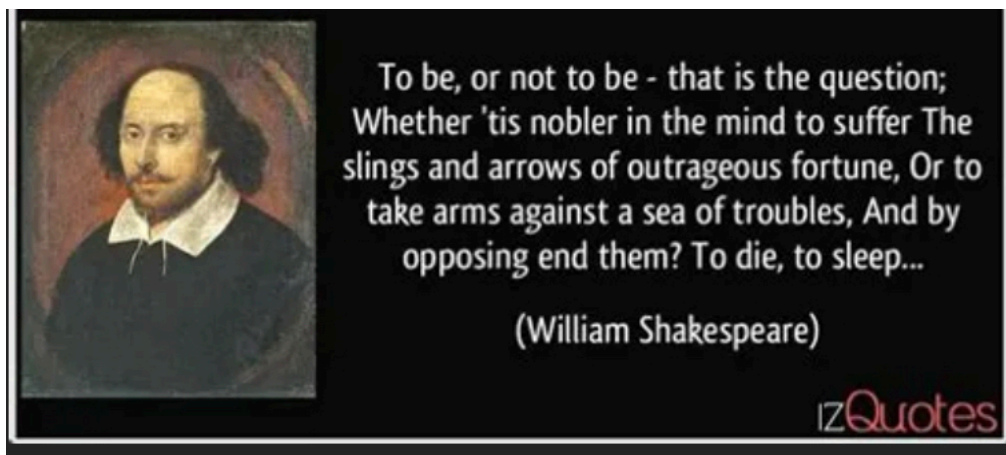
Leighton B. U. Grey, K.C. - February 18, 2023



Perhaps the most difficult thing to do in life is to discover genuine commitment. Many of us set goals and strive to achieve them. When we do, any ephemeral happiness dissipates so quickly that we immediately search for new mountains to climb. At some point, even the most driven and ambitious of us begin to ponder what we are doing—and why?

This is almost certainly beneficial for both ourselves and others. There can be little doubt that we are meant to constantly address the key questions in life: why are we here? What is our purpose? What wisdom are we to gather along the way? And most of, What comes next?

The remarkable result of posing such deep questions is that the act itself tends to frame our daily lives and put our mundane toils and troubles into startling perspective. It is to be expected that we will be triggered by politics, inflation, growing censorship, and encroaching state tyranny. It is thus challenging to rise above such problems to remain steadfast. Ultimately, we must either permit these tribulations to defeat us or else realize that temporal problems, now matter how great, are all surmountable in the grand scheme. As Shakespeare put it:



When we focus upon our true mission and what we are meant to accomplish, the most terrifying aspects of life can begin to be seen as opportunities for personal and especially spiritual growth.

This perspective also highlights the essential distinction between happiness and joy. Whereas happiness brings a sense of pleasure and personal satisfaction, it is both fleeting and misleading. Whatever makes us happy today could leave us frustrated, bored, and furious tomorrow. Just as with setting and achieving goals, happiness won is often soon lost. Life offers us no guarantees, and to live for today but to love for tomorrow is the wisdom of a fool.

In his 1998 book “Happiness Is A Serious Problem: A Human Repair Manual”, Dennis Prager notes that when people are asked about their most cherished values, happiness always tops the list. Prager examines how happiness not only makes us better people, but also impacts the lives of everyone around us, providing them with a positive environment in which to thrive and be happy themselves. But achieving such happiness is not easy. It requires a continuing process of counting your blessings and abandoning any expectations that life must always be wonderful:

“Can we decide to be satisfied with what we have?...A poor man who can make himself satisfied with his portion will be happier than a wealthy man who does not allow himself to be satisfied.”

Too many people today choose to see themselves as victims, not realizing that the only way to achieve our best desires is to take responsibility for our lives rather than blaming others for perceived misfortunes. Unlike happiness, joy is a much more enduring state of being; a kind of spiritual triumph that exists only when we are able to see beyond the horizon of our daily struggles and feel connected with the transcendent. This involves moving forward and maintaining a sense of gratitude, even when nothing seems to be going our way.

Can we distinguish between that which is within our control and what is not, and accept the difference? Do we have the wisdom to recognize that life is much more than a hedonistic quest for pleasure and comfort, and appreciate the cathartic value of struggle and pain? For example, if you have a bond with a loved one that is indestructible, then you have undoubtedly experienced some measure of joy that has not come without some corresponding degree of struggle. As Prager explains:

“Yes, there is a secret to happiness—and it is gratitude. All happy people are grateful, and ungrateful people cannot be happy. We tend to think that it is being unhappy that leads people to complain, but it is truer to say that it is complaining that leads to people becoming unhappy. Become grateful and you will become a much happier person.”

Experiencing joy and gratitude connects us with the divine. We become acutely aware that we are both part of something much larger than ourselves and singularly responsible for our own destiny. Joy clarifies our vision and helps us to see the truth vividly. Joy is the path to inner peace. It reminds us that our lives are more than just a succession of moments falling into days, months, seasons, years, or even decades. Once we discover joy and learn to cherish it, then our problems begin to look much different and to sometimes even melt away effortlessly.

Atheists are incapable of experiencing this phenomenon. They invariably describe existence either mathematically as the preordained result of deterministic events, or else as the

inscrutable result of a random sequence like the “Big Bang Theory”. Either the laws of physics (which are hardly random) dictated that roughly 14 billion years after the Big Bang we would all be here together, or the unpredictable chaos of the universe took one miraculously improbable turn after another until we stumbled into our present reality. Either way, neither random chaos nor mathematical determinism leave much purchase for the operation of free will or a sacred understanding of life.

Since such atheism is far more pronounced among leftists, it seems strange that they are so angered when they do not get their own way. After all, if there is no God and free will is illusory, then why is it so imperative that the leftist world views on gender, climate change, free speech, etc. be imposed on everyone else? If life is no more than a collection of moments and our choices are just complex math equations, then why are leftists so incapable of simply accepting the world as it haphazardly unfolds? Just as there never seem to be any leftists in a foxhole, there never seem to be any inclined to forfeit the exercise of their OWN free will—especially when doing so comes at the cost of their stifling grasp over the fates of others.

No matter how ponderously leftists describe humans as nothing more than algorithms that can be hacked and programmed for optimal control, their efforts evince an unsettling understanding that we are in fact so much more than mere biological units or complex mobile chemical laboratories. The future of humanity is predicated either upon the deliberate choice of those who seek to control others or of those who resist such control. A gathering storm is shaping between these competing forces of will. Within it, there are certain eternal truths: to be alive is precious, as is being part of God’s universe; to be sentient in such a vast world and yet to feel intimately connected to such vastness is special. We are not just numbers, or a basic code such as DNA. We are all part of something much greater that is spiritually connected to human flourishing and joy.

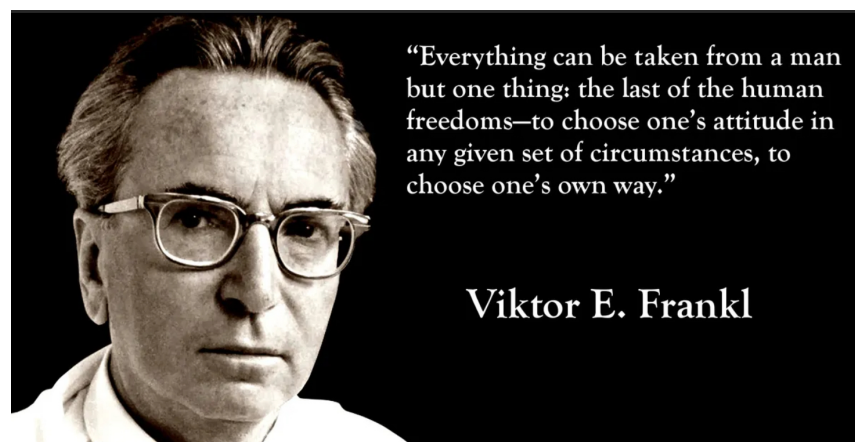
In his best-selling book, “The Return of The God Hypothesis: Three Scientific Discoveries That Reveal The Mind Behind The Universe”, Stephen Meyer presents groundbreaking scientific evidence of the existence of God, based upon actual breakthroughs in physics, cosmology, and biology. Beginning in the late 19th century, many intellectuals began to insist that scientific knowledge conflicts with traditional theistic belief—that science and belief in God are somehow at war. This was not how the great early scientific giants like Newton, Bacon, Copernicus, or Galileo viewed the matter. They saw the role of science as revealing the mysteries of the natural world which God created to be discovered. Meyer challenges God vs. Science view by examining scientific discoveries with decidedly theistic implications. Building upon the intelligent design of life that he developed in his previous books, Meyer shows how discoveries in cosmology, physics, and biology establish the identity of the teleological intelligence behind life and the universe.

Meyer argues persuasively that theism—with its affirmation of a transcendent, intelligent and active creator—best explains the ample evidence we now have concerning biological and

cosmological origins. He provides an evidence based answer to perhaps the ultimate mystery in the universe. In so doing, he reveals a stunning conclusion that the combined genius of Newton and Einstein took on faith: the data support not just the existence of an intelligent designer of some kind—but instead the existence of a personal God in whose image we are all uniquely fashioned and purposed.

Seen from this perspective, the events which dominate our daily lives are quite insignificant. Justin Trudeau’s reckless and harmful climate change policies and erosion of civil liberties do not matter. Skyrocketing national debt and inflation are of little concern. The growing national security surveillance state is of no great consequence. The World Economic Forum’s attempts to remake and dominate the world do not decide our fate. Nor even the threat of Chinese imperialism or escalation of the Ukraine-Russia conflict. What really matters instead is how each of us responds to such threats and the choices we individually make.

In his riveting memoir “Man’s Search For Meaning”, Austrian psychiatrist Viktor Frankl describes the horrors of life in the Nazi death camps and its lessons for spiritual survival. Between 1942-45, Frankl laboured in four different camps, including Auschwitz, while his parents, brother, and pregnant wife all perished. Based upon his own experiences and those of others he treated after WWII, Frankl argues that we cannot avoid suffering; but we do have the ultimate freedom to choose how to cope with it, find meaning in it, and move forward with renewed purpose. Frankl’s theory, logotherapy, derived from the Greek word “logos” (meaning), holds that our primary drive is not pleasure or even happiness, as Sigmund Freud posited, but rather the discovery and pursuit of what we personally find meaningful:



People and institutions with power have a strong vested interest in convincing everyone else that resistance is futile. They have a clear interest in showing those they rule that there is no God by the side of the faithful who choose to pray. They have a Machiavellian interest in virtue signalling to human beings that they are not as worthy of protection as the planet we inhabit. They have an enduring interest in confirming that each of us are tiny, alone, and

impotent. They seek to keep us from feeling connected to a greater purpose such as love, family, peace, charity, freedom, or prosperity.

When we refuse to submit to the will of powerful interests and instead ask the grand, important questions in life, we succeed in making tyrants themselves feel uncomfortably small. We connect with the transcendent and thereby place ourselves on a path toward authentic joy. We open our lives to the helping hands of God. With each breath and each step, one choice at time, the miraculous happens as we place ourselves in His Mighty hands: the temporal powers of the worldly kingdom, which is Satan's dominion, become astonishingly conquerable.

Perhaps, therefore, being a joyful warrior simply requires a willingness to trust in God so completely that courage vanquishes fear and the joy of righteousness replaces doubt. As inspiration, permit me to offer one example of this brand of courage. Josh Alexander is a grade 11 student suspended and arrested at St. Joseph's Catholic High School in Renfrew, Ontario for opposing radical transgender ideology. Josh, his elder brother Nick, and their friend Marty Walker donned red "Save Canada" hats and organized live student walkouts in solidarity to the freedom convoy. Josh was suspended several times by the public school board for his Christian activism, so he decided that it would be best to move to the Catholic system. But what happened next was truly astonishing:

"And not long into my time there, I was informed...male students were using the female washrooms and they [females] were obviously disturbed and uncomfortable with this. So I decided to speak up about it when it entered a class discussion."

When the school principal refused to take up Josh's crusade, Josh began to hold peaceful protests. He was suspended for two days before the protest started, so that the school administration seized the opportunity to go from class to class to intimidate students, threatening them with loss of school transportation and repetitional destruction. In short, the imperious power mongers at the school attempted to make an example of Josh. The night before his initial suspension was to expire, he was notified of his expulsion from the school because it was felt that his presence "would be detrimental to the physical and mental well being of the other pupils." Adding insult to injury, he was even issued a trespassing notice warranting his arrest for attending at school and resulting in loss of all four credits earned during that semester.

How did Josh react to all of this persecution? Undaunted, he returned to school for the new semester on 6 February 2023. He was immediately barred from any class that included a transgender student, which included half of his classes. He and his lawyer protested that such conditions were unlawful, and that they would not abide by them:

“A few minutes into my time there on February 6th, I was brought into the office, and my lawyer was on the phone at the time. And the principal kind of stood in front of the exit of the office and told me there’s some people on the way to see me, and two Ontario Provincial Police officers walked in. They told me I was trespassing. I explained to them the situations that I was merely excluded from the school because of my religious beliefs, and I was going to continue to attend as any other student would. And, yeah, they read me my rights, escorted me out of the school, put me in the back of the cop car.”

What evil is he fighting? Consider pride flags on the wall in a Catholic school next to the crucifix. Male breastfeeding encouraged by teachers. Traditional gender roles treated as systemic prejudice and traditional family values overtly attacked. Josh holds that gender dysphoria is a mental health issue, but does not personally attack its sufferers. He has sympathy for them because they are victims of this society, but that does not mean that he will stand idly by as they perpetrate evil, perverted actions. In short, he hates the sin, not the sinner.

Josh has set up a webpage entitled “I stand with Josh Alexander” to help raise funds to organize legal opposition to WOKE propaganda in schools, including his own legal defense. When asked from whence he and his brother derive their courage, Nick Alexander said this:

“When you look out into the world, and you see the wave of indoctrination, the perverted actions, the iron grip of tyranny closing around us, especially as a Christian, I think we have an obligation to stand up and stand defiant to what is morally wrong, and what’s harmful to those around us and to future generations.”

Touché, Greta Thunberg.

