

When I Grow Up

By Bill Scheidler

Go ahead, dream a little! What do you want to **be** when you grow up? You notice I did not say, “What do you want to **do**?” There is a **big** difference.

Most people have been challenged at some point in their life with the question of career goals. From the time children are very young, parents enjoy asking them the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” The answers may change from year to year, but usually the expected answers include such things as a fireman, a nurse, a school teacher, a cowboy, a policeman, an astronaut, a fashion model or a movie star. These are the normal answers to this question, but they are not totally accurate. These answers reveal possible **career goals**, but they do not deal with **personal goals**. These answers deal with the question of what someone may want to “**do**” with their life, but not with what they want to “**be**” when they grow up.

Every human being is going to grow up (in the biological sense), but this does not mean that every human being is going to attain maturity. Maturity, by God’s definition, implies more than just being full of years or of full physical stature. **Maturity by God’s definition means that a person has come to a place where the fruit of the Spirit in his or her life has become so complete that it can be pleurably enjoyed by others.**

In society we have such a sad concept of maturity. One can drive by a theater today and be confronted with a marquee stating, “Unbridled Lust, Uncensored and Uncut, For Mature Audiences Only.” These are things that appeal to “immature, adult” audiences. True maturity is never “unbridled” or out of control. True maturity is perfect self control.

It is tragically possible for people to grow up biologically but never mature or come to the fullness of what God intended for them when He made them. We are constantly reading about people who started strong but ended in disaster because of moral weakness. How does this happen? What went wrong?

For many of these people, their life went sour because they had a misplaced emphasis. Their emphasis was constantly on, “What am I going to do? What career am I going to pursue? Am I reaching my career goals? What can I do to get timely promotions? How can I build financial security for myself and my family?” None of these questions are wrong in themselves, but they are not to be the foundation on which our lives are built. They are not to be the things for which we work the hardest.

There is a more important question, “What am I going to **be** when I grow up?” That is, what kind of person am I going to be? What character qualities am I

going to possess? What kind of Christian will I be? This is foundational to whatever else I will do with my life.

Many people have career goals but very few people have personal character goals or goals as a Christian, and yet, these personal areas are the things that will shape and mold everything we will do. These are the things that will cause each of us to make a lasting impact on our generation. Do you have any goals as a Christian? Do you have a target that you are aiming at in your Christian life? What kind of Christian do you want to be?

For myself, I have some goals as a Christian. They can be summarized in the following five areas. First of all, I want to be the kind of Christian that God can use for His purposes. God does indeed have a plan for all of our lives, but if we fail to be the good and faithful servants that He wants us to be, we can be left on the shelf because we have not made ourselves ready or fit for the Master's use.

Second, I want to be mature enough to weather the storms of life. Being a mature Christian does not exempt anyone from the storms of life. It rains on the just and the unjust. But I want to be the kind of Christian that is not blown over or canceled out by the trials of life that come everyone's way. I want my faith to stand in the good times and the bad times.

Third, I want to be the type of Christian that others can follow. Paul encouraged his friends to follow him as he followed the Lord. I want my life to be an example that my children, grandchildren and associates can feel good about. We are all an example of one kind or another. I want to provide a positive pattern for others to follow—a pattern that will lead other to life.

Fourth, I want to be a true reflection of Christ to the world. The word "Christian" means a follower of Christ. I realize that the only Christ that people will see is the Christ that comes through the human vessels that He has touched and filled with His Spirit. What kind of image of Christ am I portraying to the world? Will people truly see the true Jesus in me at work, at home, in the marketplace as well as in the church?

And finally, I want to be a Christian who genuinely senses God's anointing on my life. I want to believe that each day I am an ambassador for Christ and that what I do not only has his blessing on it, but I can feel His anointing. Like the runner in the movie "Chariots of Fire" I want to feel His pleasure when I run for Him.

What kind of Christian do you want to be? It is never too late to ask that question. Go ahead and set some personal, character goals. Write them on a piece of paper. Put them in a prominent place on your life. Ask God daily to help you achieve success in these areas. I am convinced that with the help of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God in our lives we can move toward those God-pleasing goals.