

Searching For The Good Life

By John Albano

I left the comfort of my home at the age of 18. I felt I had ambitions and goals to meet as I left to find what I called my "independence." What does a person desire in life at such an early age? Probably the same things most people want; security, enjoyment in their work, and a life full of good friends and good times. As I achieved what others would call "the good life," I realized there was an emptiness that was never satisfied.

With all my effort and all my strength I pursued one goal after another. "Riches" I thought. "That's the real key to happiness" I said as I watched myself rise to the top of the department that I once submitted to. When I was a bartender I used to think how great it would be to have my boss' job.

And when I gained that position I realized how wonderful it would be to have the position of food and beverage manager; then I could control the whole operation! I did it! Twenty-one years old and in charge of over 80 people in four departments.

The work was unrelenting. I hated my life because of the work I had subjected myself to. I was not having a bit of fun anymore. Did it really matter to me what I was doing? What purpose does your life hold if not to be able to enjoy it. My heart was sad I was unhappy, and after all that I had hoped for. The emptiness was still there, the good life was still not achieved.

"Enjoyment," I thought, "I'm not having enough enjoyment in my life," I said to myself as I searched for what I needed to do to satisfy the

feeling of unrest. I tested all the pleasures to see what I felt was good. I tried cheering myself with drugs and alcohol, with women, entertainment and hobbies, but that also proved to be meaningless. I denied my heart no pleasure, I pursued every crazy idea. There was truly no limit to what I would do to achieve pleasure.

But when I looked back at my life and reflected on all I had done, it seemed meaningless. The pleasure never lasted, and neither would the days I had left. There was no purpose in all of it. The days became memories and the emptiness remained. So I hated my life and what I was doing and I searched for the answer to attaining the good life.

People would tell me, "be glad you are young, you can be anything you want to be; a doctor, a lawyer, a successful business man, anything." But I realized that all those efforts would only work to improve my name. I would never be satisfied, there would be no end. I had the same feeling about money. The more money I made, the more I wanted to make. I had a love for money and therefore I never had enough of the thing I loved. As my income increased, so did my wants.

The desire to buy something once obtained was replaced by another. I was working harder to fill a need that could not be fully satisfied. The desire for more fed on itself and grew until it became the controlling factor in my life. My time was being consumed by it and it would allow me no rest. What was the purpose in all of this? I could find no comfort in what I was doing. I was unhappy even though I was achieving what I had hoped for.

Stop the world I want to get off. I did not want to play the game any more. It all seemed so meaningless.

I watched my friends, my family, the people I loved toiling with the same mind as mine. They were chasing life the same way I was, only to watch it slip into the past, realizing with their new wisdom gained through the years that life was still meaningless.

The oppression I witnessed around me was sobering. Working for tomorrow, striving for a goal that lead to another, reaching for a dream only to be cut short by time. Looking for happiness in the darkness of caves, hitting one wall, changing directions, and finding another. I found this to be meaningless too.

I realized then all men have one thing in common. Whether we were wealthy beyond our needs and desires or too poor to attain the necessities, we shared the same fate. As one dies, so dies the other. We share the same bodies; no one has an advantage over the other. Everything was meaningless after all.

Realizing total defeat I gave up looking for the good life. I was convinced that it was just a dream that proved itself to be meaningless. But one day something happened. I actually found someone that was truly happy. And he hold me where to find the good life. "Where," I squealed as I anxiously waited for his answer having no doubt he knew the answer by the gleam in his eyes. "What is it that gives you so much pleasure," I asked. "Your problems are greater than mine yet you're happy and I'm not. Why?"

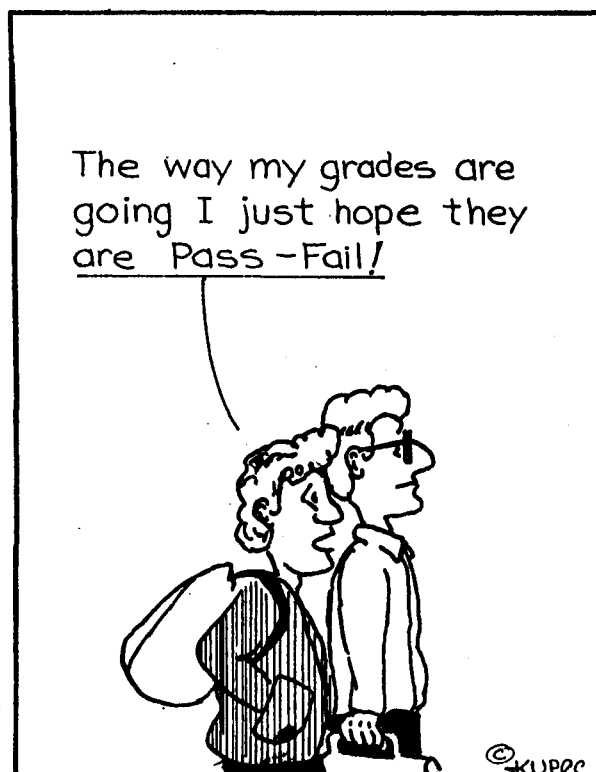
"Accept Jesus Christ as

your Savior," he said, "and believe in him and the emptiness that you have tried to fill yourself will be filled for you." I reflected on what he had said and thought about it for a long time. I struggled with the thought and tried to reason the possibility of it sensibly in my mind, but I just couldn't. But then after thoroughly thinking it through I reached a conclusion.

If everything is meaningless, what have I got to lose by trying? So I asked Jesus to reveal himself to me and I allowed myself to believe that He was the answer to my problem.

The following day I resumed by daily routine. I worked all day and into the night. But the day seemed brighter and the night more calm. I knew in my heart that not everything is meaningless. The concerns of the earth last only a short time, but God endures forever. God showed me the beauty of everything He made, and set eternity in my heart. I know now what that man I once met meant by what he said, for I know as surely as God lives forever so will I, and He has given me happiness. At last I know how I should live a good life. I know that there is nothing better for a person to do than be happy and do good while living his life. This is the gift of God.

So I urge you to continue to look for the good life. Strive to find happiness every day. Exhaust all possibilities that you can conceive. And then, if you finally admit defeat remember there is still one alternative left, one hope, one dream, one truth to obtaining the good life.



Student Art in Gallery Lounge

The current Gallery Lounge exhibit features student art produced in this year's studio art and photography classes. The show includes drawings, graphics, paintings, sculptures, photographs and mixed media pieces. It will hang through May 10.

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