

## 9. Our Need for Personal Meaning and Purpose

*“Man's most desperate need is to find some meaning in life and meaning can be built only on certainties and convictions. Life has meaning only if there is purpose, a life task”. Victor Frankl*

If humanity on planet earth stems only from a cosmic accident and our destiny is annihilation, how can life hold any real meaning here and now? Without God, nothing of eternal value exists.

In Dr. Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, he refers to the quotation from Nietzsche, “He who has a *why* to live can bear almost any *how*.” He proved the truth of that statement in the crucible of a Nazi concentration camp. Frankl lost his wife, father, mother and brother, as well as all his possessions. He faced the hardest question: “Has all this suffering, this dying around me any meaning? For if not, life is not worth living at all!”

Frankl concluded that his attitude toward circumstances mattered the most. He discovered that the men who survived the prison camp possessed a profound, authentic faith enabling them to reach beyond themselves and find hope, meaning and purpose, even in the midst of suffering.

For the Christian believer, even suffering can have a purpose, a redemptive value. Speaking from my own experience I have learned more from pain than pleasure; more from poverty, than prosperity. I know now that although I could not always understand why trials and tragedies came, yet I did receive from the Lord the resources to endure. His grace was always sufficient for my needs.

Dr. Frankl goes on to say, “We live at a time of collective neurosis because of meaninglessness.” Perhaps this explains the increase in suicides, drug addictions, violence and family fragmentation. People will do almost anything to escape boredom. They drink and drug themselves, prostitute their bodies and sell their souls. They support absurd causes and fling themselves into lost hopes – all to escape the misery of feeling empty. Meaninglessness does not come from being weary of pain but from being weary of pleasure. The suicide rate among the idle rich is extremely high.

A recent news story tells of some well off young Canadians who have gone to Syria to become terrorists, followers of Isis. Why? What could possibly lure them away from our beloved Canada? Could they be deceived into pursuing a counterfeit, senseless cause to live and die for; one filled with violence, hatred and destruction?

But there is another option, open to everyone. To accept Christ's challenge to use the weapons of justice, truth and love in the fierce battle against hatred, falsehood, and death. If you do so, I cannot promise you an easy life, free from trouble. In fact, that kind of life, if possible, would not be best for you. But with Him, you can find a life task worth living and dying for, filled with both blessings and battles, and the assurance of ultimate victory.