

Rebel Without a Cause

All across the human spectrum, people look for meaning in life, a cause to support, a meaningful movement to join. By “human spectrum” I simply mean people of all personality types and motivations. Some are rebels, some are strait-laced; some are non-conformists and some are OCD rule keepers. But virtually everyone wants to be a part of something that matters. James Dean’s 1955 movie *Rebel Without a Cause*, could serve as Exhibit A.

In his now famous book, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, Victor Frankl (the Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor) explains that the human mind yearns for something meaningful. While I’m not a fan of most psychiatry, I do find it very interesting when those who study the human mind seem to stumble upon God-given principles from His book. Frankl was quite perceptive when he wrote, “*Ever more people today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for.*”

People in every culture long for and search for meaning, “Why am I here? That search renders many answers, most of which, today, are self-centered and self-serving. But the best answers are found in God’s word, “Serve one another, love one another, consider others more important than yourself, love God, love your neighbor.”

As Christians we must never allow our “search for meaning” in life to devolve into the self-focus that plagues the world and delivers only temporary and insufficient satisfaction. To a world which seeks to save the whales, sea turtles, snail darters and spotted owls, I say “Congratulations, those are nice endeavors with worth-while goals.” God did, indeed, give man the mission of caring for His creation (Genesis 1:26: 2:15; 9:1, 2).

But to that same world I caution, “Be careful that your worthy *earthly* goals do not supplant your deep human need to make a difference in the lives and eternities of others. “Save the human souls” is the mission that gives life its deepest meaning. “Love one another as I have loved you,” is life’s deepest call. ***No earthly cause, whether it is “save the seals” or “save our planet” can deliver to the human heart the peace that passes understanding!*** In fact, many of those I see in various environmental movements are some of the least content people I know. In fact, the “peace that surpasses all comprehension” comes only ***after*** we focus our minds on the positive things God mentions (see Philippians 4:4-13).

Frankl certainly understood this concept when he wrote, “Religion is the search for ultimate meaning,” and “Faith is trust in the ultimate meaning.” After surviving several Nazi death camps, he deeply understood that the search is not without cost when he penned, “What is to give light must endure the burning.” From the cross of Christ to the whippings of Paul (2 Corinthians 11:23-29), God teaches us that for our own personal *search for meaning* He has the answers, but we must endure the struggle of the search and often the rejection of those who seek comfort over Christ.

What gives *your* life meaning? What are *you* searching for? Does your “inner rebel” have a godly cause?

Ray Wallace

Further study: Matt. 7:7; Deut. 4:29; Jer. 29:13; Luke 10:27