OF FAITH AND FABLES

By Bob Haynes

Finding Meaning And Purpose For Our Lives

A few months ago I wrote a column featuring one of my favorite songs… “What’s It All About, Alfie?” In that column I tried to explore some of the nuances of choices we have as we grow older and hopefully wiser.

My inspiration came from a devotional by Pastor Rick Warren where he stated: “You were saved to serve God. The Bible says, ‘It is he who saved us and chose us for his holy work not because we deserved it but because that was his plan’ (2 Timothy 1:9 LB). “God redeemed you so you could do his “holy work.” You’re not saved by service, but you are saved for service. In God’s kingdom, you have a place, a purpose, a role, and a function to fulfill. This gives your life

great significance and value." It was a powerful devotional.

So I had to ask myself, how do we go about finding our place, our purpose, or role and function? First, we must believe in the power of LOVE and second, we should love not only ourselves but those in need as well. God did not put us here JUST to serve HIM, he put us here to serve others and by doing so we serve HIM. That is what I concluded to be "What it's all about."

"One of the items in *Ripley's Believe It or Not* is a picture of a plain bar of iron. It is valued at $5. The same bar of iron has a far different value, however, if it is fashioned into different items. As a pair of horse shoes, it would be worth $50. Made into sewing needles, it would be worth $5,000. Formed into balance springs for fine Swiss watches, it would be worth $500,000. The raw material is not what is important. What's important is how the raw material is developed!"

I believe that each of us has been given talents and abilities—some have received more, others less, but we all have received some unique gift from God. As Christians, we also enjoy spiritual gifts which flow from the Holy Spirit of God. I now understand more fully that the value of these raw materials (gifts), however, are moot unless we develop and use our talents, abilities, and spiritual gifts as a force for good in this world. Solomon, in Proverbs 2, said: "*If you live a God-honoring lifestyle, you will receive God's reward." That was the advice he gave to those living a moral lifestyle. He also gave the same advice to those who were living selfish wicked lifestyles. He let them know that their actions would always lead to ruin."*

One of the ideas I once had was that my success in this life was my doing, and that God was out there somewhere simply observing the happenings but taking no action. I now realize that God was walking alongside me even when I strayed from the chosen path He had set for me. I believe that's true for you as well. And circumstances weren't really circumstances but had His mark on the outcome of all my experiences – both good and evil.

But we do know this: "God is good and all-knowing" - nothing catches him by surprise, not the car out of control, the malignant tumor, the hurricane, or the disease. So even as we wonder and question the reason and cause for each event, we can be confident that God knows and

that in everything, even the senseless tragedy, He is working.” Shalom!