

An Eternal Vision

By Sheila Luck

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While talking to a long-time friend, she noted that she was turning 50 this year and planned to give herself a special gift. I laughed and reminded her that I have been fifty for about a year now. The time has gone by so fast.

I remember when I thought people over 25 were old. Now, I don't know when old really starts. Don't get me wrong. I am already noticing the impact of my 50 years on my body and my ability to do the things of my younger years. It takes a lot more exercise and much better eating habits to maintain the status quo physically. And the status quo is a far cry from what it once was. Yes, 50 years does have a tendency to show from a physical standpoint.

However, today, age doesn't seem so obvious to me from an intellectual standpoint. And, from a spiritual standpoint, life is just beginning. I am certain that as long as I am still living, no matter what my age, God has a plan for me. Age, in God's eyes, doesn't matter.

A once common job interview question went something like this, "Tell me where you see yourself in five years." I remember my younger days when five years seemed like such a distant projection. Talk about long range planning, I thought. Today, however, my vision for my life goes beyond five years, ten years, or even twenty years. My vision for my life extends beyond death and into eternity. Now that's long-range planning. That's vision.

I'll never forget the first time I discovered that a life plan needs to go beyond five years, or even beyond retirement. I was reading the obituaries, being somewhat curious about those whose lives ended earlier than average. On this day, there was a woman that had died. The obituary listed her hobbies. This woman was an "avid QVC shopper." She liked to shop through the television shopping network. This was apparently a point her family thought was quite important, but reading that point made me ponder about my future obituary.

I then boldly instructed my husband to think of something better to say about me than the fact that I enjoyed shopping. He remained silent, being a man of good judgment, as I tried to give him noteworthy ideas. But, even though I was about 30 years old at the time, I discovered that I had not done anything worthy of listing in an obituary. At first it was a disappointing thought. But then I realized that I still had time to define my life, make it something of value, something memorable, something obituary worthy. There was still time.

That was the first time that my vision for life moved beyond the next five years and went all the way to the year of my death, whenever that may be. I just needed to identify something to do that I thought was worth listing in my future obituary. It was an interesting or even laudable goal, but I couldn't think of any ideas.

Several years later, still with no definitive vision, other than generally doing something obituary worthy, I had another epiphany moment. I was thinking about the death of my first baby; a death that I chose through abortion; a choice that I now knew was the wrong choice. I was thinking about forgiveness and reconciliation, about heaven, and about whether my baby would be in heaven. Suddenly, a somewhat frightening

realization came over me. I discovered the reality that my actions or inactions during my lifetime have eternal consequences.

Doing something that might be obituary worthy suddenly lost its importance. My life's vision was not about where I'd be in five years and it was not about the words of my obituary. My life's vision was, is, and must be an eternal vision.

In Colossians we are told to set our hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, and to set our minds on things above, not on earthly things. Set our hearts on heaven, and set our minds on heavenly things. Set an eternal vision, a vision set on Christ.

With a vision set on Christ, through God's great mercy we are born again into a living hope, because Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Now we hope for the blessings God has for his children. These blessings, which cannot be destroyed or be spoiled or lose their beauty, are kept in heaven for you. (See 1 Peter 1:3-4, NCV.)

With our hearts and minds fully set on an eternal vision, our lives will begin to reflect the love of Christ and a life of faith. There is nothing more obituary worthy.