



It is a little hard to get away from the subject of new life with the plum trees blossoming and a two week-old baby in your life. But I think it's important at this Spring / Lenten season to look on down the path of life as well.

There are those who say as we grow, so does a vague sense of unworthiness. Many suggest this has something to do with the way religion is presented. After all "Original sin" takes us back to Adam and Eve! Or is this uneasiness just a natural part of the human condition, a concern about how we use the gift of life?

I have come to feel that my own occasional low-grade disquiet has something to do with a fruitless drive for perfection and a confusion about the purpose of life.

Those of us old enough to have suffered through catechism classes would have memorized something like, *"God made me to know him, to love him, and to serve him in this world and to be happy with him forever in the next."* I think that is way off the mark. There was an alternative "New Catechism", which had a brief existence before it was expunged, where it was suggested that the first step in understanding the Gospel's "Good News" was *"to live life as if it really mattered."* Other people have come to the same conclusion and it makes a lot of sense to me.

But doesn't everyone live life as if it matters? I don't think so. In fact, we are pretty good at distracting ourselves from facing that issue. What is a person's distraction of choice — money, prestige, drugs, alcohol, life in the fast lane? How about always being Number 1? Never settling for anything but the best? Always being right, and on the "right side"? Being in that number when the Saints go marching in?

Living life as if it mattered means, among other things, to accept our imperfection, It means we simply do the best we can.

Many sacred writings warn that rigid trees break in the storm but flexible trees survive. Here are a couple of thoughts from different parts of the spiritual spectrum.

Chapter 76 of *The Tao* warns

*... the stiff and hard are attendants of death, the supple and soft are attendants of life.*

An old Shaker Hymn puts it plainly

*Yielding and simple may I be, like a pliant willow tree.*

Good advice for those who set out to do the best they can in living life as if it mattered.

***Brother Toby***