

What Will I Leave Behind?

Acts chapter 9 tells about a Christian named Dorcas who lived in Joppa. "This woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did" (v. 36). Dorcas fell sick and died. The disciples washed her body and laid it in an upper room. They then sent for Peter, who was at nearby Lydda. "So

Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them" (v. 39). Peter had plenty of material to preach an impressive funeral sermon, but he did something even greater: he raised her from the dead!

The Bible doesn't reveal any other information about Dorcas. How old was she? What did she look like? Was she married? Did she have children or grandchildren? Was she a woman of considerable means or did she have little? We could guess, but that's all it would be — a guess.

What we do know about this woman is enough to raise a question worth considering. The Bible emphasizes the good she left behind. Now the question is: What will I leave behind?

I will leave behind whatever material thing I have. "For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either" (1 Timothy 6:7). What will those rummaging through my stuff find? Will they find any evidence of a God-centered life, or will everything point to a life focused on self?

What will I leave to others? Will there be anyone who can produce a gift I gave to them? Will anyone have a memory of how I provided for them in a time of need, the way Dorcas did for these widows?

What example will I leave? Will it be one of faithful service to God? Would it be the kind that might encourage a struggling Christian to remain faithful? Would it strengthen others to stand firm for truth?

What words of mine will people remember? Will it be words of encouragement or mostly complaining? Words of kindness or words of bitterness and anger? Will anyone remember me having taught them God's word?

What difference will it make? Will my brethren even miss me? Will it leave any appreciable void in the local congregation?

What will I leave behind?

- by Frank Himmel

"To Be Seen of Men"

In the news there was a story about a deer which had been killed in the local vicinity. Now, it is not normally a newsworthy item when a deer gets shot in this part of the country. In fact, it happens hundreds of times each hunting season. What made this particular situation unique was that the deer - a 12 point buck - was a tame deer which was kept in a fenced pen in a park! The deer even had a name - you guessed it - BAMBI!! He was shot at point blank range, his head cut off at the shoulders, and the remains left there in the pen. Somewhere there is now a beautiful trophy hanging on someone's wall.

Why would someone do such a thing? There can only be one reason. It was done so that this impressive trophy could be displayed. Other hunters, not knowing that the poor animal was "stalked" and shot while confined in a pen, will marvel at the hunting prowess of the one who now proudly exhibits his "kill". The fact is that this fella is no hunter at all, and certainly not a sportsman. He has done what he has done simply to impress others.

Similarly, in the religious world there are those who desire to make a big "show" of their service to God. Every move is calculated to produce the maximum impression on others. The list includes everyone from "media evangelists" right down to the man in the pew who is only there so that others will see and notice him. Jesus warned of doing our religious deeds "to be seen of men" (Matt. 6:1ff). Let's be sure that what we do is for the purpose of pleasing God, who "seeth in secret" and "rewards openly" (Matthew 6:4).

- by Greg Gwin