



Finding Significance In Service

By Paul Jetter, Pastor of Upper Valley Community Church, Piqua, Ohio
<http://www.uvcc.info>

A while back I read that for about \$13,000, you can change the ashes of your loved one into a 1.3 carat diamond. Or if you have less money, about \$2000 will get you a quarter-carat stone. Or if you prefer, you can have the diamond made from the ashes of your deceased pet.

A company called LifeGem uses intense heat and pressure to grow synthetically made diamonds from the ash of cremated remains. Because of other elements in the ashes besides carbon, the diamond will have a yellow tint. In a recent year the company sold 500 of the gems.

Why would anyone want to keep his or her loved one around for the next zillion years as a little rock? Could it be that they really don't know where he or she will go after they die? Could it be that they just can't face the possibility that this life ends it all? Might it be that they will go to any length to keep their loved one "with" them forever?

There is a tendency for people to fear that they will be forgotten once they are gone. In their search for significance, they go to great lengths to make sure someone will recognize and remember them.

For some people, that means stamping their will on others. Significance becomes power. The more power or authority these people yield, the more important they feel.

For others it means erecting a monument – perhaps a building named in their honor, a sign in a public park, or a nameplate on a church pew. When someone names something in honor of someone else, it is honoring that person. But when a donor or a public official in charge sees that they themselves are recognized, it is not honor but self-gratification.

Isn't it interesting that the most honored person of all time, Jesus Christ, never tried to do anything to honor himself? And instead of advising his followers to seek power and wealth he advised them to become the servants of all.

I once read a quote that said, *"There is no limit to what a man can accomplish in life if he does not care who gets the credit"*. In other words, if you want to succeed, pass the praise around freely and build others up.

Unfortunately, persons who were not given praise and respect as a child often have a hard time recognizing it as adults. Instead of finding lasting satisfaction in service, they often crave the approval of others and mistakenly believe that it is found in bullying others and in building personal monuments.

The problem is that all the power and all the credit in the world cannot fill an empty hole. No spouse, no co-worker, no employee, no achievement can give enough significance to fill a person who is empty inside.

The Bible says, *"Humble yourself before the Lord and he will lift you up"* (James 4:10). Herein lies the secret of significance. The one who yields himself to God no longer has the need to control others or to build monuments. His only desire is to please God. As he walks with God, he has the assurance that nothing – not even death itself – can separate him from his eternal purpose.

We might as well get used to it. None of us will be here forever, not even those who are turned into yellow diamonds. But we can find eternal significance in a life of Christ-like service.

"All men are like grass and all their glory like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever" (1 Peter 1:24).

* * * * *