

FROM OUR PASTOR

June 4, 2016

Sabbath Greeting to Everyone!

It came as no surprise when it was reported this week that rock legend "Prince" died of a drug overdose. He joins a list of other stars, including Michael Jackson, Judy Garland, Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Chyna, Margaux Hemmingway and hundreds of others whose lives ended early as a result of an overdose.

These people are "celebrities" and we have become a society that worships "celebrities." The success of long-running talent search shows such as "American Idol" reveal just how many people want to become celebrities. When you see the large percentage of entertainment celebrities that die, either intentionally or accidentally, as a result of drug overdoses it makes one wonder why.

Prince's death from an overdose of the powerful opioid fentanyl is another example of the national opioid epidemic driven by prescription painkillers. It seems that people everywhere are trying to deal with "pain" in some way or another, and often it is with drugs. Often the prescription pain drugs become addictive and lead to heroin use. The number of opioid overdose deaths in the USA has reached nearly 30,000 per year.

The AP reported this week, *"Rising drug and alcohol overdoses, suicides, and disease from chronic alcoholism – labeled "deaths of despair" by one expert – are cutting the lives of white Americans short by nearly a half a year on average."*

Deaths of despair? How can this be happening in the most prosperous nation in history? The answer is simple: As a people we crave those things that do not really bring satisfaction or happiness. The Creator who made us understands human nature and how we think. Does money bring happiness? Surely these celebrities all had wealth. Consider His words: *"He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase."* Ecclesiastes 5:10. What about fame? Don't most people want to be famous? *"...What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."* Luke 16:15.

What most celebrities lack is one of the sources of true happiness—a lifelong marriage to a spouse that they love deeply, are loyal to, share values with, and build a family together. As the years pass, a "life well loved" is more rewarding than possessions or fame. *"Let your fountain be blessed. And rejoice with the wife of your youth."* Proverbs 5:18. And naturally, a rewarding marriage usually results in more rewarding blessings: children and grandchildren! *"Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD. The fruit of the womb is a reward. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them."* Psalm 127:3-5 and *"Grandchildren are the crown of old men."* Proverbs 17:6.

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