

Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

What Is My God?

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We live in a world of remarkable change.

Some of these are good changes. Over the last 10 years heart disease — as a cause of death — has decreased 24 percent. Stroke, as a cause of death, is down 32 percent. And TB is down 94 percent.

On the other hand cancer, as a cause of death in Americans, is up five percent, suicide is up 11 percent, cirrhosis of the liver (caused primarily by hard abuse of the body) is up 74 percent and murder has increased 100 percent.

We live in a society which is growing older. By 1980 11.2 percent of all the people in the USA will be 65 and older. Last year the average American man lived to be 69.4 years of age, while women lived to be 77.2 years of age.

Why do women live longer than men? The sociologists have a lot of answers, but I see it for two basic reasons. One, a woman's psyche is tuned to the emotions. Women cry easier than men. They love easier. They get angry easier. Unless this is

controlled by the woman, and understood by the men around her, it can lead to a lot of misery. But it is one of the ways a woman has to cleanse her system and therefore stay alive longer — even though she may be miserable in the process.

Women usually hang onto their friends much longer than men, also. They are much more personal. Men have the same opportunities, but they are too dumb to recognize it. They use the business world to run away from themselves. That's why men die so much faster. They are afraid to nest.

I recently read an article on executive mobility. That's a system top corporation executives use to select and produce people as single-mindedly devoted to their corporation as they are. The idea is to move people around so often that the only thing left in their life is work, money and power. If you keep separating a man from his friends, his community, even his family, after a while he'll begin to believe the only stable thing in life is his job

— and he'll throw himself into his work with total abandon for the sake of rising to the top where he won't have to move anymore. The trouble with that, is, he'll either die at an early age — burned out for Amalgamated Fertilizer Corp. — or in his effort to get ahead quickly, he'll make a horrible mistake and be fired.

It happens all the time.

Someplace down the line in this changing society as we grow older and enjoy it less, we need to ask the question: What is my God? Whatever controls us is our god. When money controls me, when the corporation controls me, when an ambition controls me — that is my god. The first commandment says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." But that was before the days of AT & T, General Motors and U.S. Steel.

Everyman needs to decide, before he dies, whom he will serve. If he doesn't, he may die early — or at best, live out his life in misery. There is a God who brings life. Very few follow Him, however.