

Born in 1905, Dr. Victor Frankl was a psychiatrist who was a survivor of the Auschwitz concentration camp. He suffered for 3 years in the camp.

After being rescued from Auschwitz, he was able to return to his practice. He noted that those people who survived the concentration camps did so because they had a reason to live; the survivors had “meaning” in their lives.

Dr. Frankl wrote a famous book, *MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING*. In the book, he recounts a group therapy session. A mother of a boy who had died at the age of 11 had attempted suicide. In a therapy session, she spoke of the death of her 11-year old son and that she was left alone with another, older son, who was crippled, suffering from infantile paralysis. The boy had to be moved around in a wheelchair.

His mother was overwhelmed and tried to commit suicide. In fact, her crippled son prevented her from doing so. The son liked living; for him, life still had meaning in spite of his disability. How could Dr. Frankl make the woman aware that her life had meaning?

In the group therapy session, he asked another woman to imagine she was old, at the end of her life, a life filled with financial success and social prestige but a life with no children, no family. Frankl asked her to imagine how she would feel in that situation. The woman said, “Oh, I was very wealthy. I had an easy life full of wealth, and I lived it up. I flirted with many men. But now I am 80 and I have no children or grandchildren or family. Looking back on my life as an old woman, I cannot say what my life was really for; actually, I must say that my life was a failure.”

Frankl then asked the woman with the handicapped son to pretend she was 80 years old and to look back on her life. The woman said, “I wished to have children and this wish was granted me; one boy died; the other boy, however, the crippled one, would have been sent to an institution if I had not taken over his care. Though he is crippled and helpless, he is, after all, my boy. And so, I have made a better human being out of my son.”

At this moment, there was an outburst of tears and, crying, she continued, “As for myself, I can look back peacefully on my life; for I can say my life was full of meaning, and I have tried hard to fulfill it; I have done my best – I have done my best for my son. My life was no failure!”

The values of the world are often in conflict with the values of people of faith. The world focuses on prestige, pleasure, and wealth. The person of faith focuses on service, sacrifice and meaning. As we can tell from the story, choose Godly-values; choose meaning!