

Why Not Live an Abundant Life?

John 10:7-10

Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves & robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, & shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, & to kill, & to destroy: I am come that they might have life, & that they might have it more abundantly.

In John's Gospel 10:10, you will discover one of the most remarkable statements that has ever been made. It is the words of Jesus Christ who said, "**I am come that you might have life, & that you might have it more abundantly.**" This is truly one of the most significant statements Jesus ever made.

It is a truly beautiful promise; a promise of a life that is complete & full. Jesus is saying: "I came so that you can have real & abundant life, more & better than you ever dreamed of having. My purpose is to give you **life** in all its fullness!" **This, my friends, is a promise of life with a capital "L".**

Jesus was not preaching in a cemetery. He was not conducting a funeral. He was speaking **to living people**, telling them that He had come that **they** might have real life, & that more abundantly! Some people think abundant life means big cars, big homes, big bank accounts, & lots of stuff! But why settle for earthly, materialistic things when Jesus Christ is offering something so much greater than material success & stuff!

Why was Jesus able to make such a claim? Well, Jesus understood the laws that govern both the **Universe** & the laws that govern **human nature & relationships**. You see, God has set into motion certain laws: **physical laws** on the one side & **spiritual laws** on the other side. If we attempt to break these laws, we find that we do not, in fact, break them, they break us instead.

There is a law of nature called the Law of Gravity of which most all of us are very familiar; & if not, we certainly need to be familiar with it. We need to live in harmony with it! Suppose I were to say, "I just do not believe the Law of Gravity! After all, I never heard any sermons on the subject, have you? We never talked about it much around the table when I was growing up; when they taught that subject in science class, I was probably either absent, or day dreaming. Furthermore, I am a free thinker; I only believe what I actually experience. I just do not accept this idea of the Law of Gravity."

So last November I climbed up on a ladder, & the ladder slips away from underneath of me; it goes in one direction & I go flying in the other direction! **What happens to the Law of Gravity?** Absolutely nothing! The Law of Gravity is in the same place it was before, although my face was crushed as I hit the concrete down below! I did not break, nor defy gravity; it in fact broke me!

In 1961, President John Kennedy announced that we were going to put a team of American men on the moon & bring them back again before the end of the decade. Scientist began by studying the natural laws God had built into this Universe so that they could work in harmony with them, & at the cost of \$28 billion they were able to complete the mission of putting men on the moon.

When Neil Armstrong stepped out of that space rocket onto the moon, he announced, "One small step for man. One giant leap for mankind." It was all done because they had learned enough about these natural laws until they could live in harmony with them & not go against them.

God has also placed **spiritual laws** into effect which are just as real & just as important as **physical laws**. The Ten Commandments & the principles discovered in the Sermon on the Mount help us in part to better understand these spiritual laws. In any attempt to break these laws, we will discover that we only break ourselves instead, & we will live broken lives. That is why Jesus was able to say to living, but broken people, "I am come that you might have life abundant." What a pity it is that we live beneath our privileges, when all the while there is a vast

storehouse of blessing for us in Jesus Christ.

Some years ago in the town of Westchester, Illinois, there was little pressure in the town's water supply. They brought in experts to study the situation, to try to figure out what was causing the low water pressure, but all to no avail. Then one day a city worker happened upon a main valve regulating the water flow, that in fact was not open all the way, restricting the free flow of the water system. He turned the valve open all the way, & suddenly there was plenty of water pressure for everyone.

My friends, there are some things that block the flow of God's joy in our lives, & as a result we are not experiencing the abundant life God has in store for us. Let me describe some of these things to you: --

1. Negative Attitudes will block the flow of God's Joy in our lives!

There are some people who go all through life with a negative mind set! They are unpleasant to be around, & they wonder why they have so few friends.

It is no accident that some people live radiant happy productive lives, while other people who go to the very same church, sing out of the same hymn book, listen to the very same sermons, have lives that are beaten down, defeated & anxiety ridden.

It is no accident that some people take all the disappointments & trials in stride & rise above them, while other people who set in the same pews, instead of getting better, get bitter; instead of improving, they fall apart & become disorientated; instead of keeping their eyes upon the Lord, they begin to put their eyes on the inconsistencies of people & they lose all the joy & power from their spiritual lives. **It all has to do with attitude!**

A writer once penned the words: "There is very little difference between people, but the little difference makes a big difference, & the difference is **attitude**." If you **think** negative, you will **live** negative, & every thing you touch & see will appear negative! Negative attitudes can destroy a marriage, a church, a job, & even your health. Negative attitudes; always thinking the worst!

Are you familiar with the cartoon *The Born Loser*? Poor guy! He is ready to go out the door to work, hat & overcoat on & brief case in hand, with his usual gloomy look on his face. His wife says to him: "Don't go out this door with a negative attitude! Start fresh today by thinking positive. Tell yourself that everything is going to be perfect." With added enthusiasm she says, "Don't let a negative thought enter your mind. Everything's coming up roses!"

The born loser smiles for the first time & says: "By golly, Gladys, you're right! From now on, I vow to look on the sunny side!" And out the door he goes with a confident look & smile on his face, looking up! All of a sudden, he is back at the door & saying, "I forgot my umbrella."

So what can we do about all the negative attitudes in our lives? The Bible tells us, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Begin to ask yourself: "Self, what would Jesus' attitude be toward this, or toward that?" **Substitute your negative thoughts with Christ like thinking!**

2. Old Fashion Jealousy will block the flow of God's Joy in our lives!

I say old fashion jealousy because it has been around almost as long as the human race. Cain was jealous of his brother Abel who had a more excellent sacrifice acceptable to God, & that jealousy was so intense that Cain murdered his brother. The sons of Jacob were so jealous of their younger brother Joseph whom the father favored most with a coat of many colors, & that jealousy led them to sell Joseph into slavery & make the claim he was dead. The elder brother of the prodigal son was jealous when the father provided a welcome home party for

the son who had been gone, & that jealousy caused him to stew & to stay away from the celebration. That **green eyed monster of jealousy** will rob you of your spiritual joy & victory!

A high school girl became jealous of her best friend, because she appeared to have so many friends; she had a nice body, she wore name brand clothes, & her parents could afford to buy her anything she wanted.

A boy became jealous of his older brother, because he could do things so much better; he could get all the girls he wanted, & always had the right connections. Where once he looked up to his older brother, he now turned to jealousy & grew to hate his brother's popularity.

A man who was promoted to a very important responsibility received many congratulatory communications, but none from his own brother who was in the same profession, because the brother was jealous of his achievements.

A few years ago a fellow pastor told me he had gotten a new car & was getting 40 miles to the gallon. Do you know that I became jealous, not because he had a new car, but because of his good mileage. After all, my number one expense in ministry was due to the many miles I travel making calls & other church related activities, driving as much as 40,000 miles each year. Why should **he** be getting 40 miles to the gallon, while I was getting only 24 miles per gallon? I was jealous until I saw the car; why it was so small that that pastor who was a much larger man than I am, had to fold himself up to the size of a postage stamp in order to be able to climb inside his car. Then when he drove away, I watched as an ant crossed the road & the ant stepped on the car, & just crushed the car with the pastor still on the inside. I smiled, & felt so sorry for that poor ant! Shame on me! I decided I was better off driving my full size car!

Effective people are always subject to the jealousy of others. When you stand on your feet, or lift your voice, or distinguish yourself from the crowd, you are going to experience the wrath of someone's jealousy! People may be jealous of your successes, of your goodness, of your possessions, or what they imagine your possessions to be.

I've seen jealousy destroy families, & marriages, & relationships, & even churches. **Jealousy is an emotion people just don't want to discuss.** Very few people can be honest enough to recognize & admit jealousy in themselves! But everyone of us feel a certain amount of jealousy at one point or another & in many people it takes root until it colors their whole outlook on life! My friends, **your jealousy must be treated, or it will destroy relationships, & block the flow of God's joy in your heart!**

So what can we do about the jealousy in our lives? First, admit to it! Then pray for the grace to understand the cause of jealousy, & for grace to rise above old fashioned jealousy! **Jealousy, like other sins of the human nature, is subject only to the grace of God!** Recognize that by the cleansing grace of God there is a more excellent way, for the love chapter of the Bible tells us that "love is very patient & kind, **never jealous or envious**" (1 Cor. 13:4 LB).

3. Unresolved Resentment will block the flow of God's Joy in our lives!

Cancer may do its evil work in the lungs, throat, brain, bone marrow, or other parts of the human body, but the **worst kind of cancer** isn't in the body tissues at all. **The worst kind of cancer is unresolved resentment!** Resentment can poison your whole life!

A wealthy, old lady was about to retire for the evening, when she said to a friend, "Would you mind going down to see if the front door is locked, for **I can't trust my niece**. She left the front door open once, & burglars **might** have entered & robbed us." That had happened 38 years before, & the old lady forever despised her niece for that single omission. One moment of quiet talk & forgiveness, & the whole thing would have been cleansed away, but she lived with an ugly self for 38 years, upsetting herself & everyone around her.

A man who had high blood pressure, a heart affliction, & hadn't worked for ten years went to see his doctor. The

doctor asked him point-blank: "Against whom have you a resentment?" The man replied, "Against a nephew." The doctor got the man to fix things up with his nephew, & as a result his blood pressure is down, his heart normal, & he is back at work, a happy, healthy man.

Resentment often begins small, but it grows within the human spirit, & unless we rid ourselves of it, it soon destroys us! Because of unresolved resentment, friendships are broken, jobs are lost, homes are demoralized, psychosomatic illnesses develop, personalities grow brittle & unbending, emotions become unstable, & effectiveness dwindles.

It is quite common to have resentment toward a parent, over some thing that happened in your childhood. You might be bitter toward your boss, or a neighbor, or a family member, or even your pastor, or the church. You can go through life putting on a front, pretending to be happy, but you know the very spirit of your inner being is being eaten away. My friend, pent up unresolved resentment will literally destroy the very fiber of your life! I don't know what your resentment is, or how complicated it is. You may be as justified as anything on earth for the resentment you hold down in your heart today, but I want to tell you it is doing some thing to you! You are paying an enormous price for it!

So what can we do about all that unresolved resentment in our lives? Admit that it is there, & in all sincerity ask the Holy Spirit to eradicate it & to cleanse it from your heart & life! Resentment can only be cured by your willingness to receive the cleaning work of the Holy Spirit in your life!

4. Unconfessed Sin will block the flow of God's Joy in our lives!

The Bible declares that we "all have sinned & come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The concept of sin is not only **theologically** sound, it is also **psychologically** sound!

The fact that God forgives sin is a blessed thought, but there is one sin God cannot forgive, & that is the **unconfessed sin**. The Bible states very clearly that "If" -- "If we confess our sins, He is faithful & just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9). But my dear friends, if we refuse to confess our sins, God is unable to forgive us our sins!

Some people may resist the idea of confessing sins, but it is still the best way to deal with the problem of sin & guilt in a person's life. Sin cannot be worn down, or erased by ignoring it. **Sin can only be overcome through confession & forgiveness**. But confession is more than just an awareness of sin. True confession is a deep desire to turn away from the sinfulness of our lives. True & honest confession is called **repentance**! Repentance literally means: You are walking away from God while living in sinfulness; you **Repent**; & turn about face, turning away from sin & walking toward God!

So what can we do about unconfessed sin in our lives? Remember that 1 John 1:9 is still true! God still does forgive! There is no adequate solution for sin except forgiveness & divine cleansing.

Conclusion: -- The gospel was never intended to make you materially rich, nor to add to your possession of worldly goods. **The purpose of the gospel is to bring you & God together, & in this way you will find abundant life!**

A lot of people who would never even imagine robbing a bank, or cheating on their mate, or going out & getting drunk, **block the flow of God's joy** in their lives through their **negatives attitudes**, their **jealousy**, their pent-up **resentment**, or their **unconfessed sins**. Such things as these in your heart & life will always block the flow of God's joy. They will keep you from enjoying the abundant life! Jesus wants to take the brokenness of your life, the

brokenness caused by negative attitudes, by jealousy, by resentment, by sin, & in its place give you real & abundant life, more & better than you ever dreamed of having, **life** in all its fullness!

One of the great pipe organs of Europe failed to play one evening & the authorities called the best repairman in the city. But he was unable to fix it. Over the next year, expert repairmen from all over the world were brought in, but none of them could restore the organ to its previous playing condition. One day a man arrived on the scene, saying he could make the necessary repairs. The townspeople sneered at him for even suggesting that he could mend what skilled men had failed to do. On second thought, they felt they had little to lose, & so they allowed the man to try. He began cautiously but confidently, & after one full day **glorious music** was heard coming from the pipes of the organ once again. Everyone was amazed at what had happened, & they asked the repairman, "Who are you? How could you do this when specialists of the world could not do it?" The fellow replied, "**I am the man who built the organ.**"

Jesus is the One who created you & me, but if we try to live our lives contrary to the spiritual laws that God has put into motion when man was first created, we will discover that we are only broken people. **Jesus wants to redeem us from our brokenness & to give us abundant life!** Today, won't you allow Jesus Christ to remove those things from your heart & life that block the flow of God's joy in your life & experience for yourself the abundant life Jesus has promised to you?

Rev. Lyle W. Pettit -- Calvary Baptist Church -- Benson, AZ
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