



Happy living!

What do you think? Do you think God wants us to live a boring, miserable life, or do you think God wants us to have a life which is full and alive and interesting?

Don't let anyone deceive you: God wants you to have an ABUNDANT LIFE! Jesus said: "I have come that you might have life - life in all its fullness."¹ Life can be so happy and interesting if we follow God's blueprint!

The central piece of God's blueprint for life is RELATIONSHIPS. In fact, we may say "I AM ... in relationship". All of God's commands to us in the Bible can be summed up in three simple ones² which all deal with relationships:

1. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.
2. Love your neighbour with practical concern just as you would look after yourself.
3. Love one another sacrificially and with mercy, just as Jesus modeled to us.

These three commands show us the secret of what being in relationship means, and therefore the secret to joy and happy living! Let me now expand a little upon what these three 'love commands' look like in practice.

1. Practical love for God. In practice, to love God means to trust Him. Jesus

said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me."³ And to trust means to put our life into His hands. This includes our finances, our career, our plans, everything. It means to let go of worrying about our life and our needs, and leave all our worries with God.⁴

The following illustration may help to explain 'trust'. In the 1850's a French acrobat, Charles Blondin, crossed Niagara Falls a number of times on a tightrope. Crowds cheered as he accomplished these crossings, and on one occasion he even crossed the Falls pushing a wheelbarrow. When he completed this amazing feat, it is reported that he asked the crowds whether they believed he could even



wheel a person across the Falls in his wheelbarrow. The crowd all cheered 'YES, WE BELIEVE'. Blondin then asked for a volunteer, but no-one came forward! No-one was really willing to trust their life into his hands.

To trust God means to put our life in His hands like this.

(1) John 10:10. (2) Matthew 22:34-40; John 15:9-17. (3) John 14:1. (4) Matthew 6:19-34; Philippians 4:6,7.

Are you worried about anything today? Do you believe God could take care of your problems? Will you trust God with your problems today?



2. Practical love for your neighbour.

Jesus told a story to show what practical love looks like.⁵ Here is a modern day version: "A businessman was walking down Collins St one night, when two yobbos mugged him. A bishop from the cathedral saw it but he was late for a ceremony: he reckoned the cops would tend to it. A civic official on the way to a gala evening saw the man but didn't want to get himself dirty. Then a punk came along, and helped the man. He flagged down a cab and took him to the hospital himself. Which one do you think was being a good neighbour?"

Let us show practical love for one another, whether it is in the basic necessities of life, or in other realms such as education, self-esteem, or personal development, all whilst respecting each other's dignity and rights. Just ask yourself 'Would I want this done to me?'⁶

As a concrete example, why not turn off the TV and spend an hour with your child helping them learn a new skill! Or help out with literacy programs at the local primary school. Let's invest in the lives of others - so much joy comes

from helping others grow to their full potential as a human being!

Do you know of anyone in need in our community? How could you bless them this week?

3. Practical mercy. Jesus showed us that the only sure way to turn enemies into friends is by doing good to them. Jesus said: "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other cheek ... love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."⁷

When we are young and without much wisdom, it is easy for us to demand justice and take the law into our own hands and 'strike back' when we are offended and hurt. God understands. He is a God of justice, and there is coming a day when He will judge the



"If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love ... I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

Jesus

world⁸, because God hates evil, too. But as we grow in wisdom and maturity, we realize that God wants to give all people second chances, and that the only way to crack a person's hard heart is through grace.⁹ At some

(5) Luke 10:25-37. (6) Matthew 7:12. (7) Matthew 5:38-39,44. (8) Acts 17:30,31. (9) John 1:17.

stage, there comes a point where we need to 'absorb evil' and conquer evil with good.¹⁰ That's what God did at Easter. When Jesus died on the cross, God took our evil upon Himself, so that we could have a second chance.¹¹

Who do you need to show practical mercy to this week?

I guarantee that as you put these three practical loves into effect, your life will lift to a new level. Happy living is your destiny and what you were created for. Seize the day!

Let us pray:

"Dear God,

thank you for the awesome privilege of being able to love You and to love other people!

Help me to trust You with all the necessities of my life. And help me to use all my talents and skills to really bless other people around me.

Thank you for showing me just how much fun life can be when I forget about myself and focus on blessing others!

Amen."

My Answer

Q: "Dear chaplain, what do you think about this whole affair with the Governor-General?"

A: I think what we have seen unfold before our eyes in the last weeks and months is a clear application of what happens when a person in leadership is not "above reproach". The Bible says that a leader must be above reproach and that "he must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap."^a Whilst our society is quite corrupt in many ways, and just about all things (unfortunately) are allowed and legal between 'consenting adults', there is (thankfully) still one thing that is totally abhorrent to us: crime and abuse against innocent children. I hope what we've seen unfold before our eyes will help each one of us to examine our motives in all our behaviour and 'clean up our own acts', because there is coming a day when each of our own secret sins, whether they are 'legal' or not, will be exposed and judged by God^b. I take this affair with the Governor General as a warning for each one of us, and a motivation to live as God wants us to!

Thought for the month

"I am what I am today because of the decisions I made yesterday."

News & Events

* CELEBRATION SUNDAYS!

You are invited to our *next* Community Worship Service.

When: Sunday June 15th

Time: 5pm - 6.15pm (followed by supper)

Where: Preston Nth East Primary School Hall

- Great live music & singing!
- Stay to enjoy supper afterwards!
- Everyone is welcome, from children to grandparents.
- Come along and get to know others in our community!

27 people attended the first Celebration, and it was enjoyed by all! I hope to see you there at this one!

WANTED

Canoe(s) for the Youth Group

If you have a spare canoe at home, would you like to donate it to the youth group, or sell it at a low price?

More info: (03) 8430 8574



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