

## THE SWEETNESS OF LIFE

By: Bill Irby – Minister, West Hobbs Church of Christ, Athens, Alabama

A fine young woman of this congregation, Meggie Peek by name, spent a little time in the hospital lately due to an argument between her car and a telephone pole. All of us are thankful to the Lord that neither Meggie nor her passenger was seriously hurt, which is more than can be said of her car.

A congregation is like a big family, so we are interested in things like what happened to members of our family and relieved when matters resolve positively. But things like what happened to Meggie do make us think. One such thing is that life is precious and sweet, particularly the lives of the people we love and care about. The older I am the more impressed I become with the importance of living each of my moments thinking about love for God and for my family and friends.

Now, I do not intend to go all *sappy* on you. And I really don't think love, at least the kind I have in mind, is always a *sappy* thing. Loving God means doing His will (John 14:15). Loving each other means wanting the best for them without regard for the cost to us. Loving family and friends makes life sweet.

But it is obvious that lots of folks just don't see it this way. The influence of the old Devil is strong (1 Peter 5:8). Because of the influence of evil in this world there is barriers to people enjoying the sweetness of life thank that God, through His love, would have us enjoy. Knowledge of truth will break down these barriers.

One barrier to enjoying life's sweetness is *selfishness*. Selfishness is a potent manifestation of worldliness (Romans 12:3). The way to destroy this barrier is to "be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). When people need to have their own way it is frequently because they think more of themselves than they should. Sweetness of life comes out of love and interest in others, not in one's self. Conceit robs life of any opportunity for real happiness.

Another barrier to enjoying the sweetness of life is *superficiality*. I am thinking of a life that is more about style than substance. A life that is concerned with others thinking that I am “really something” is a surface sort of existence. There is nothing wrong with wanting, for instance, to dress and look nice. Indeed doing so is a good thing. But when *looking* good becomes more important than *being* good, trouble is afoot. We should remember that shallow streams dry up soonest.

This last barrier is perhaps somewhat controversial. This barrier to enjoying the sweetness of life is *sensuality*. Our world (remembers 1 John 2:15-17) deluges us with the idea that to really enjoy life one must flood the senses with every kind of experience possible with no regard to the morality of the activity involved. Thus our young folks are encouraged to be sexually active as soon as possible, to drink any sort of booze as much as possible and to do whatever they want to do as long as it is perceived to be “fun.” It is a trick of the Devil that many people, and too many young ones, think that to enjoy life means to experience it sensually without restraints. There is no bigger lie. Now, God made us able to enjoy a world He created to be enjoyable. But there are laws, there are moral restraints and He has placed these on us for our own good (Galatians 5:19-21 and Hebrews 13:4, for example). Rampant sensuality destroys life’s sweetness.

So, things happen to us and our friends that make us think about important things. It is good that we do this kind of thinking, for an un-contemplated life is empty. God made life sweet. Thank about that.