

Living and...



By Dr. Steve McVey

LOVING It!

Jesus Christ said that the primary reason He came into this world was so that we might experience life to the fullest. He said in John 10:10, "I have come so that you might have life and have it more abundantly." How can we truly love life when circumstances so often threaten to rob us of our joy in life? Joy in life can be experienced by applying three important principles to our daily living:

We must recognize the difference between joy and happiness. The root of the word "happy" comes from the old English word, "hap," which refers to outward circumstances. We experience happiness when things *happen* the way we want. Happiness depends on the events that occur in our lives. On the other hand, joy doesn't depend on the events of life. Joy is an internal sense of peace and contentment which comes through one's relationship to Jesus Christ. His last prayer was that His joy might remain in the lives of those who know Him. (See John 17:13) Ask Jesus Christ to give you the joy that comes by a relationship with Him. Happiness

is volatile and often short-lived. Joy is eternally grounded in Christ.

We must trust God in every circumstance of our lives. In order to love life, it is necessary that a person be convinced that God is in control of his life. The events of our lives don't happen by accident, but are guided by a loving God who always works through circumstances for our greatest good and for His own glory. (See Romans 8:28) You can only relax and enjoy life when you know that "it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Your life is on a course set by God Himself and He will accomplish the plan He has for the plan He has for you in every situation you will ever face. (See Daniel 4:35)

We must allow Jesus Christ to express His life through us. The Christian life isn't a lifestyle in which we seek to imitate Christ, but is one in which Jesus lives His life through us daily. Christianity isn't about living by religious rules. It is a lifestyle in which we know that He is our life, then we

simply rest in Him and trust Him to express Himself through us. Christ gave His life *for* us so that He could give His life *to* us and then express His life *through* us. We can love life because He *is* our life and "in Him we live and move and exist" (Acts 17:28).

If your lifestyle seems to drain you more than it energizes you, perhaps you have fallen victim to religious legalism. Jesus Christ came to offer rest to those who follow Him. (See Matthew 11:28) Religious legalism is demanding and tiresome. Will you turn to Him in faith right now and trust that Christ will express Himself to you and then through you to others? If that expresses your desire, perhaps it would be helpful to pray a prayer like the following prayer.

Dear God,

I do want to love life and I know that it is only by trusting You to give your life to me and then live through me that I will know the abundant life you promised. May Your life be mine and may I learn each day how to trust You to be who you are in me and to do what you have promised. I trust you now. Thank you for your promises.



Hi, I'm Steve McVey, President of Grace Walk Ministries, and we are thrilled that you have let us send you these proven, biblical principles that will help you restore the joy in your life as a Christian. Grace Walk is a teaching and training ministry which exists for the purpose of sharing the life of Jesus Christ with others. Our mission is to help Christians discover the freedom of their new life in Christ. To this end, we use conferences, mission trips, Bible studies, books, newsletters, CD and DVD Studies and my weekly Sunday Preaching message broadcast via our website. Again, thank you so much for this opportunity to serve you. There's lots more in store at our web site. Be sure to visit us there at www.gracewalk.org. We hope you'll drop by for a visit and that you'll tell a friend about us.

In Him,

flip over for another article by Steve



Jesus Christ Doesn't Take First Place In Your Life

by Steve McVey

We've all been told at times that Christ wants to have first place in our lives. Although this is a statement that sounds true at first glance, closer examination will show it is actually a statement that can set you on a wrong course in your grace walk. Christ doesn't want to be first place in your life. He wants you to recognize Him as all of your life.

If Jesus Christ wants the first place spot, what comes second? What about third place? What comes after that? The whole concept is absurd because it implies that our lives can be divided into compartments, with Jesus being one of those compartments.

To understand this point, think about your physical life for a moment. What would you think if I were to suggest that breathing should have first place in your life? What if somebody else said that having a heartbeat should be number one in your life? Maybe someone else could argue, "No, your circulatory system should come first, then breathing, then heart beating."

It's a ridiculous discussion because your body is a whole, unified entity. You can't prioritize which is most important. Your physical health will give expression to every one of those actions in your body. They all work together as they express your normal state of health.

In the same way, our lives are indivisible when it comes to the effect of Christ's presence within us. We can't divide our lives into marriage, parenting, career, hobbies and so on. All of those areas make up our lifestyle as one unified life and Jesus is the source of our attitudes and actions in each of those areas.

Jesus Christ isn't first place in your life. He is your life. He is the essence of who you are. Paul wrote in Colossians 3:4, "When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory." He described life in Philippians 1:21 by saying, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Note that Paul didn't give Jesus a high place in his life. Paul realized that the very core of his existence was his union with Jesus Christ. He said it this way in Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me."

So, there it is. Paul said that he didn't have a life apart from Jesus Christ. That's true for you too. While it may sound admirable to say that we want Him to be number one in our lives, it misses the point of our union with Him altogether.

Christ wants to be the life of your family, the life of your career, the life of your hobbies, the life of your finances, etc. Do you see the point? He is your everything!

We do ourselves a disservice when we think that Jesus is a part of our lives, even if it is the number one part. He is the substance of everything that you are. He is our very essence.

You know you're on the right track in your thoughts when you find yourself seeing your marriage relationship in a way that it is Christ living His life through you, expressing His love and life to your mate. Parenting becomes an expression of His life when we know that it is He who is loving and guiding our children through us. You have a right understanding of priorities when you know it's Him who animates your activity at work.

When we know the truth, we stop thinking of Jesus holding first place in our lives and we begin thinking of Jesus being the source that animates every place in our lives. His isn't number one. He's the whole list!



Grace Walk Ministries
1-800-472-2311
or visit our web site at
www.gracewalk.org