

This is the Life!

By Mary Kane

When I was a teenager, my idea of a successful life centered on popularity, money and personal beauty. Since I didn't possess any measure of these three attributes, I thought I had very little chance for a life of happiness. Actually I was right; money, fame and beauty do not bring lasting peace or fulfillment because they cannot fill an empty soul. In the blink of an eye beauty, fame and fortune can vanish. What is the secret to a successful life? Where can one go to find meaning, purpose and satisfaction? The Bible, the only source of wisdom and truth, contains the answer to both of these questions.

Before we start today's study, please take a moment to pray and ask God to open the eyes of your heart to the truth of His Holy Word. Now, please read John 17:1-3.

How does a person find life?

Despite what the world says, all paths are not equal and all paths do not lead to God. There is only one way to live a real life (eternal life) and that is through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

According to verse 3, what is eternal life?

Eternal life is knowing the only true God and His Son Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus, we cannot know God. We may hear sermons about Him, attend church every week, even read passages of Scripture, but apart from Christ we cannot have eternal life or a relationship with God.

Please read verse 3 again.

The word *know* used in verse 3 comes from the Greek word *ginosko* which means, "to learn, to know, to understand, perceive and feel." It is also used to describe very intimate knowledge one person has of another. Schmidt describes *ginosko* as, "Knowledge grounded in personal experience" and "knowledge reviewed as the result of prolonged practice." *Ginosko* refers to not only understanding the outside of something but also of the underlying laws that make something "work." Isn't it amazing that through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that we can have a personal relationship with God?

Please fill in the missing word from verse 3:

"And this is eternal _____, that they may know You..."

Hopefully you filled in the word *life*.

In the space provided please write a definition of the word *life*:

Probably you wrote something like, "A living creature that can breathe, move and grow." The Greek word used for *life* used in this verse, *zoe*, means so much more than something that is simply not dead. *Zoe*

means "the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God" and "life real and genuine, devoted to God." I can give a witness to the fact that real life is only found in Christ. The *real life* I was living B.C. (before Christ) brought only death, misery and destruction to my soul.

Have you accepted Christ as your Savior?

If you haven't, please take a moment to do so right now. Ask Christ to come into your heart. Tell Him that you accept His death on the cross as payment for your sins. Thank Him for taking the punishment for your sins so that you can live with Him forever in heaven. If you just accepted Christ as your Savior you have been born again and are now a Christian.

I accepted Christ as my Savior in the early 1980's, but I didn't realize that Christ wanted to do so much more for me than just give me eternal life. He wanted to give me abundant life; to be my life. The writers of the New Testament understood what it meant to live for Christ. Let's take a look at some of their teachings concerning the "real life."

Please read John 10:10.

What does Satan come to do?

He has come to kill, steal and destroy. Kill our hopes, our joys, our relationships, our families; steal our gifts, our talents, our treasures; destroy our testimonies, our ministries, and our work in Christ.

What did Jesus come for?

He has come so we can have not just life but life abundant! Thank you Jesus. Think for a moment about the word abundant. Ponder on what *life abundant* means. The Greek word used in this passage for *abundant* transliterates as *perissos*. *Perissos* means: exceeding what is needed, super added, over and above, extraordinary, supremely, uncommon, more remarkable, more excellent. In Christ we have the opportunity to live an uncommon, more remarkable, and more excellent life (as if just *excellent* and remarkable would not be enough).

Let's combine the two Greek words that we just defined and write a definition for *zoe perissos* (abundant life):

Here is my attempt:

"Because of Jesus I can leave behind my life of death and destruction and live a life devoted to Christ that is absolutely over and above, uncommonly real, genuinely satisfying and deeply meaningful."

But what does it look like to live a life that is devoted to God? How does one go about living the abundant life? I believe that John the Baptist knew the secret of living the abundant life.

Please write John 3:30 in the space below:

John stated that, "He [Jesus] must increase and I must decrease." This statement is true not only concerning the kingdom of God in the world but the kingdom of God in our soul; He must increase and self must decrease. One of the meanings for the word used for *decrease* is "to decrease in authority." We can easily apply this meaning to our Christian walk in that if we want to live an abundant life we must decrease the authority of self and increase the authority of Christ. More of Jesus and less of me. More of His will and less of ours. We need to make room for more of Jesus in our lives. How can we put more Jesus into our lives? I have written a few ideas that have worked for me.

1. **Spend time in God's word.** Get up early/earlier in the morning so you have time to read God's word at the beginning of your day. If you are serious about living the abundant life, you will get serious with your schedule.
2. **Spend more time in God's word.** Technology can be one of the best gifts of the twentieth/twenty first centuries. We are literally one click away from extensive collections of solid, meaty biblical teachings. We can download podcasts, sermons and radio shows to our MP3's, IPODS, computers, smart phones and laptops. We can tune in to God's Word while we are shopping, running, walking, cleaning and driving. Never before in history has God's Word been so readily available. One of my favorite sites is Oneplace.com. Oneplace posts free downloads from

hundreds of Bible teachers. If you are unsure of whom to listen to I highly recommend Beth Moore, Dr. David Jeremiah, Chuck Swindoll and Joyce Meyer.

3. **Prioritize.** Maybe it's time to cut that TV show that's made you uncomfortable...or perhaps you can give up the hour time slot reserved for social media. Sometimes it's not just the bad things that have to go, but good things can get in the way of God as well. It's all about choosing what's best. Ask God to show you where you can carve more time out of your schedule for Him.
4. **You've got talent...are you using it for God?** An abundant life is marked by using gifts, talents and resources to further God's kingdom on earth. What do you love to do? What are you good at doing? What are you naturally drawn to? Ask God to show you how to use your gifts and talents to serve Him. Actively search for a place to get plugged in and start serving!
5. **Pray!** Prayerful lives are powerful lives. Every relationship is based on communication be it texting, talking, emailing or writing. If we truly want to know God and live an abundant life we must talk with Him. Our main mode of communication with God is prayer. Bring your every need, want, concern or interest to Him and ask Him to work His perfect will. Establish a daily prayer habit in your life. Choose a time that works consistently for you each day. During the school year I do a lot of my praying in the car while I commute back and forth to school. In the summer months I like to pray while I'm taking my morning walk. Set a time and stick to it.

So are you convinced that living a life abundantly full of Jesus is the only way to live? If you need a little more evidence let's look at a few more verses from a very credible witnesses. Please read John 14:6.

Who said these words?

What did He say about Himself?

Now please read John 11:25 and fill in the missing words:

"Jesus said unto her, I am the _____, and the _____: he that believeth in me, though he were _____, yet shall he _____."

You've heard it from the Man himself, He is the life!

From what you have learned today and from other Bible studies, what types of life does Jesus give us?

He gives us:

1. **Eternal life:** A life that is marked by a living personal relationship with God through His Son Jesus. Eternal life begins the day you accept Christ as your Savior. Are you seeking eternal rewards or earthly pleasures? Are you storing up treasures on earth or treasures in heaven?

2. **Abundant life:** A life that is full, meaningful and satisfying because of a deep relationship with God. What parts of your life do you need God to touch with His abundance?
3. **Resurrection life:** A life that is affected by redemption and restoration and looks forward to future resurrection after death. In the resurrected life God is working to bring dead things to life again. Dead relationships, marriages, dreams, hopes, plans. What dead things do you need God to resurrect in your life?

Please read a few more verses and notate what you learn about life:

Colossians 3:3:

Colossians 3:4:

Luke 4:4 (Remember Jesus is the Word):

Living "the life" with Christ is not a fifty/fifty proposition: part self and part Jesus. It's not a life of ease, comfort or guaranteed prosperity...as a matter of fact it's not necessarily a *safe* life, but it is the only life that will reap a harvest of righteousness, blessing, fulfillment, satisfaction and eternal rewards.

And this is the testimony:

that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

He who has the Son has life;

he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

God bless you. Get busy living!

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