



SOLVING THE ISSUES OF LIFE

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Welcome to the program today. It is good to be with you, as always. Thank you for joining me for Let the Bible Speak. I hope you will remain for a few moments as I want to talk about your life. I'm sure you value your life, and you want the best life that you can possibly have. But do you ever stop and wonder what life is all about? What does it mean to live the best life? Why are we here? What is the meaning of life? And how do I get the most out of the brief time that I'm allotted? Those are age-old questions that have challenged the philosophers and confounded many a person who finds life a great mystery.

In 1 Peter 3:1-12, the apostle quotes from the Psalms saying, *"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open under their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."*

I think we all want the most out of life. We want to have a good and profitable life and when it is over, we want to look back and feel as though we lived it well. I believe the key to doing that is understanding what life is and settling some important issues about life. And I want us to consider some of those questions and issues today, that help us sort out the ultimate meaning of our existence here, and to live life to its fullest.

Quoting the 34th Psalm, Peter is giving instruction to those who *"love life and would see good days."* I suppose that describes most of us. For many of us though, life is a real struggle. It is a mystery. We spend our days just trying to survive and eek out an existence, perhaps finding some satisfaction or pleasure in the moments that afford such. But overall, life is difficult and a vexing mystery. Many people spend most of their lives trying to figure out how to make the most out of the life they are given and somehow make it a good and profitable life. Peter suggests that living a rewarding life is not a matter of our circumstances, but rather a matter of choice and a matter of action. He plainly tells us that if we

would love life and see good days, we must make up our minds and make certain choices to have that kind of life.

You see, everyone is faced with a great decision between a good life and a bad life; between a right path and a wrong path; between right and evil; and circumstances have little to do with that. The path that we choose (not wish for) will determine the kind of life we have, regardless of circumstances that are beyond our control. Moses said in Deuteronomy 30:19-20: *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you. That I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the Lord by God and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of the days:"* We choose either the path of life or the path of death. It is as simple as that: the path of success or the path of eternal failure. But before we can sort through the issues of life that confront us and make the right choices, we must consider life itself. We need to get some basic issues about life straight in our minds. And I propose that when we understand some things about life, we'll begin to look at things not only from a *different* perspective, but the *right* perspective and it will cause us to make the right choices concerning life. As Peter says: we will love life and see good days.

First, I would suggest that we must consider the **source of life**. The origin of life is a vital issue that we must first settle if we are to get the most out of the time we have here in this world. The way we view our lives has a great deal to do with where we believe life came from. Are we a divinely created being with a unique nature or are we merely another life form that somehow randomly appeared on earth and evolved by natural forces into a more intelligent animal? Did we, as one author phrased it, go "from goo to you by way of the zoo," or were we intentionally and divinely created?

According to Genesis 1:26-27, God said, *"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So, God created man in his own image in the image of God created he-him, male and female, created he them."* And then in Genesis 2:7, we are told that *"God created man from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And man became a living soul."* Now, science teaches us that all life is the antecedent of life. We have never observed life coming from non-life. Abiogenesis tells us that life arises from **life**. Now, if man is merely an accident, as some claim, that changes the whole meaning of life. But life is not an accident. You can't explain life as we see it without having life before it. Even the simplest forms of life are so amazingly complex, scientists cannot even agree on a definition of life, or where it begins. We think we understand many of the components and building blocks of life, but there is no proven natural explanation of how life originated. The only reasonable explanation for any form of life, especially intelligent life that can think reason, feel, love, empathize, and hope, is that it proceeded from some other living source. And the Bible rightly teaches that source is eternal and transcendent God. He created the earth and he filled it with all forms of life to serve various purposes but then he created man in **his own image**. Man was created as a spiritual and an immortal being. The wise man said in Ecclesiastes 3:11 that, *"God has set eternity in the heart of man."* And when we recognize and acknowledge God as the creator of our body and the giver of our spirit, the problems of life begin to be sorted out.

The theory of molecules-to-man evolution is so cold and so void of reason, that it is no wonder so many are confused about life and fail to value it any more than they do. Life is cheap in the eyes of many today. We see an unborn baby as a mass of cells and tissue and therefore think nothing of disposing of millions of such lives every year in abortion. One of the reasons people so indifferently and callously shoot people down in the streets and take innocent lives is because they have no respect for God as the giver of life. They have no respect for the sacredness of life. Brutal and atheistic dictators have been responsible for the deaths of millions upon millions of people down through the stream of time because they view life as cheap and expendable. Some have allowed the theories of evolution to influence their world views, to justify removing those that they see as weak and in the way of society.

You see, when we determine the source and origin of life, this helps determine how much regard we have for life. What man needs more than anything today is to realize that he is the creation and the handiwork of God, and not merely some clump of cells or some glorified ape-like creature that got here by chance. Man has a spirit created in the image and the likeness of God and this lifts him above the animal kingdom. It gives him responsibilities and makes him accountable to the God who created him for His purposes. It makes man a moral being who is held accountable for the moral choices that he makes. You'll begin to find direction in life and discover the keys to a good and profitable life and make wise decisions in life when you first settle the matter of where your life came from. That must be a building block in life's foundation.

But then we must also discover the true **purpose of life**. If God placed us here, why did He do so? Is there a design and a reason for life, or is it all an unlikely cosmic happenstance? Again, if there is no creator God and if we are not created by God with an end in mind, then why does anything really matter? What meaning does life have? Well, none. But your existence upon earth IS a purposeful one. The wise preacher told the young man and Ecclesiastes 12:13, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man."* Why did the wise man say that? Because he tells throughout the book of Ecclesiastes of his search for meaning and fulfillment in life. That search led him to try many things he had the opportunity, the ability, the riches, and the authority to try. He had a life full of vast and I suppose unparalleled experience. But all of this he found empty and unfulfilling. Relationships, fortune, fame, or pleasure afforded Solomon, no true satisfaction, and no true sense of meaning and purpose in life. He concluded that all those things ended in vanity (emptiness) and vexation of spirit. But he did find that the true purpose in life was to fear and obey God. Why? Because we are God's creation. We are made in His image, and He made us for a purpose. Micah 6:8 says *"He has showed the old man, what is good and what the Lord does require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God?"* To love and obey God as well as deal, honestly, and justly with our fellow man is the ultimate joy and fulfillment in life.

So many people are living their lives and frustration and they spend their years chasing the wind because they never find this true objective and purpose at living. Reminds me of the old story of two young men who graduated from high school, and one asked the other: "What do you plan to do with your life now?" The man said, "Well, I plan to go to college." "Great!", his friend said. And "what then?" He replied: "Well, I'll get a good job and start a career." He said: "Wonderful. What then?" "Well, I'll climb the ladder. And I'd like to one day maybe own my own business." He said, "Great! What about then?" His friend growing frustrated said: "Well, I don't know; I suppose I'll end up getting married and having a family." "And what about then?" "Well, I guess reach the point I can retire and sit back and enjoy some things." The man said "Oh, that's nice and what about then?" Exasperated, the man said,

"Well, I suppose at some point in all of that, I'll get around to dying!" And of course, the other man asked, "And what then?" And if someone asks you about the plans of your life and the goals and the dreams and the aspirations and the purpose of your life, would you begin to break down life in that way? Would you begin laying out all the dreams and goals you have set for yourself? How are you going to answer the question at the end of the way: "what then"? In the big scheme of things, all that makes no real difference. Even those who achieve some of those things and maybe leave some great mark upon the world -- truth be told, when those people are gone, they are quickly set aside and largely forgotten.

Can you see the futility and the emptiness and living merely for temporal things? The earth is passing away. The things of this world are passing away. Can you see the silliness of investing all of ourselves in things that are, within themselves, uncertain and elusive? And if we can grasp some of them, they're so quickly passing and fleeting. When one builds his or her life upon eternal things, though, there is purpose, unending joy, and satisfaction. And when God becomes the great factor in the equation of life, the problems of life have an answer. Oh, if the world could but understand that! But the devil keeps us running here and there and wasting the precious life, the precious moments, the precious hours, the precious days, and the precious years that we are given, on things that are uncertain, unsatisfying, and that quickly fade away -- and then we are *lost*. The key to a good life, and seeing good days is realizing life's ultimate purpose. And that is serving and glorifying God, and therefore enjoying him and his benefits forever. Another key to a good life is always remember life's brevity.

No one is ever promised a tomorrow. That is why the Bible never tells us to do anything tomorrow. Everything the Bible tells us to do it tells us to do today, because no tomorrow is guaranteed. Now, if we knew that life would last a definite period, perhaps we could apportion of our lives to any number of things, but we're never promised anything beyond the present moment. Even if we live, as the Bible generally allots to man 70 or 80 years, life is still incredibly short. James said in James 4:13-14: *"Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."* Like the wispy morning fog that briefly appears with first light but in moments is burned off by the sun, so it is with our lives. A lifetime may seem like a long, long time. The younger you are, the longer it may seem looking forward. But life is not long at all. Ask any older person how quickly the years have flown; how soon we look up and the years have slipped away from us, and we have more years behind us than we do before us. The Bible compares life, not only to a vapor, but to a shadow, to a weaver's shuttle, and then to grass, and then to a tender and delicate flower. There is an old gospel song that says, *"As the life of a flower, as a breath or a sigh, so the years that we live as a dream hasten by; True, today we are here, but tomorrow may see just a grave in the vale and a memory of me."* And when we realize the true brevity of life, it gives life a sense of urgency. It makes the moments that we are given even more precious. How are you using your fleeting moments? As the years fly by, how are you spending them? Jesus had 33 years to live on this earth. He had much work to do. God sent him here for a purpose, just as He put you here on earth for a purpose. And Jesus looked at the 33 years of his life and said, *"I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day. The night comes when no man can work."* (John 9:4) When he was only 12, his, he told his mother and foster father, *"I must be about my father's business."* The wisdom of a 12-year-old Jesus should speak to you and to me today about our lives. It should remind us of the urgency of life, and what our life is about and whose business we ought to be about. Jesus was keenly aware that every day He was commissioned to spend on earth was precious and there was work that must be done. God

has created us for a purpose and that is to serve and glorify him and we are to spend our lives fulfilling that purpose. We're to spend our lives working for his glory, working for his kingdom.

Time is short and many are wasting the breath of life that God has graciously given them; they are making no preparation for eternity. Every heartbeat is one that can never be reclaimed, and it puts us one second closer to death and the judgment. And when we remember and respect the brevity of life in view of where life came from and what its true purpose is, we will get our priorities straight and we will live for the things that truly matter and not the things that are vain and ultimately unimportant. The prophet Jeremiah said of God's wayward people long ago, *"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."* The same can be said of many a person today. Have you frivolously wasted the life God has given you? Are you wasting your life today? If death were to come and place his icy hands on you this day; if the grim reaper is standing nearer by than you may think with his sickle raised to harvest and summer for you has ended; will you go as an unprepared and disobedient soul to God into the judgment? As the famous woman of Tekoa said to David as she interceded for David to allow his rebellious son Absalom to return, in that beautiful conversation recorded in 2 Samuel 14:14, she said: *"For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again..."*. The poet said, "The clock of life is wound but once and no man hath the power to tell just when the hands will stop, at late or early hour." Life is so brief. We are here for such a short time. We quickly take our place in the procession of man as one generation passes through and then passes on and another takes our place. How are you using that very short window of time? Is it "all vanity", as the wise man said, or is it counting for Christ and for eternity? Are you laying up eternal treasures or earthly ones? When you settle this issue and invest the time you are given in eternal and lasting things, your life truly counts for something. It is well-spent.

And because of all these things, then we also need to see the **value of life**. The Lord one time said *"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his soul. Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Matthew 16:26) In other words, man is, by essence of his creation, a spiritual being. And if God made us in his image and He did so for a purpose which He ordained, and if He gave us a certain amount of time to carry out that purpose, does not that make life seem much more precious? If the true meaning of life pertains to spiritual and eternal things, does not that make a life lived for the fleeting things of earth rather pointless and ultimately meaningless? Jesus says if a man could gain the whole world money, power, fame, pleasure, you name it, and in the process lose his soul, he hasn't gained anything because those things are temporary. At best, they are fleeting. One day they will be gone. Jesus says that in pursuing those things, he has lost the one thing that lasts forever: his soul.

Your life means something to God. You are a soul made in the image of God. Your life is considered a precious commodity in God's eyes. Jesus said the Father takes notice of a tiny sparrow that falls. And if that be the case, how much more does He care for you who are made in His image? He created you for a purpose, and I'm asking you today, are you fulfilling that purpose? Are you allowing Him to fulfill that purpose in you by yielding your heart, mind, body, and soul to Him? Think about this: He demonstrated, what life is all about, and how much He cares about your life, not by enriching you with money, not even by promising good health. He showed His true concern, and He showed the kind of value that He places upon our life by sending His Son, who gave up His own life to redeem ours. He took the form of man. He bore our sins upon Calvary that we might know the forgiveness of our sins. And once again, have a relationship with holy God to redeem and restore all that was lost through our sin. That shows the value God, places upon your life and friend. If you would love life and see good days, the key is to live for him,

to love him, to serve him, to fear him, to obey him. Whereas the wise preacher said, "this is the whole duty of man."

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