



## Joy Through Surrender

Text: Philippians 3:4-11

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1. When you think of an example of someone who lived a meaningful life, a life with a purpose bigger than him/herself, who comes to mind? (Besides Jesus 😊) What makes their life meaningful?
2. Read Philippians 3:4-6.
  - a. What did Paul formerly look to for his worth and value?
  - b. What would a modern day equivalent look like?
  - c. What about you? Where do you find your worth? What builds up your self-esteem? What makes you feel self-conscious? What version of the question, "Am I \_\_\_\_\_ enough?" haunts you and drives you?
3. Read Philippians 3:7-11.
  - a. How does Paul describe his accomplishments?
  - b. What did Paul find that allowed him to break free from finding meaning and purpose in those things?
  - c. How does Jesus satisfy our desire and our quest for enough-ness?
  - d. Now think back to where you personally most often struggle with the quest for enough-ness. How does the fact that God made a way to bring you into a joy-filled, loving relationship with Him through faith in Christ's perfect life, substitutionary death, and death and sin-defeated resurrection speak to your specific situation? (See Study Deeper)
4. Read Luke 9:23-25 and John 10:10. C.S. Lewis once said, "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." But this requires that we stop trying to satisfy that desire with the things of this world. We must surrender to lordship of Christ.
  - a. What makes surrender so difficult?
  - b. How is it that surrender leads to joy?
  - c. How does giving up everything lead to freedom in Christ?

Challenge: What areas of your life do you need to surrender? What are some practical steps you can take right now to begin the process of surrender?

Prayer:

Father,

As St. Augustine said, our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You. You are the one and only source of unimaginable and everlasting joy. You are worth surrendering all things for if it means we get to know You and experience Your power in our lives.

We confess that we have all gone astray, like sheep, and sought joy and meaning in the things of this world instead of You, our great and beautiful Creator.

Lord, we thank You for Your abundant grace. We thank You that You did not abandon us to this endless rat race of chasing the things of the world and being left in want. Thank You that You went to the greatest of lengths to prove to us Your love for us in Jesus.

Help us rest in that love. Remind us that Jesus has already made us “enough”. Help us see ourselves and others the way You see us. And give us grace and strength surrender our lives to You so that we can experience true joy and life to the full as You promised we would.

Amen.

## **STUDY DEEPER**

### **Have You Found the Life You Wanted?**

Every day, I search for satisfaction, joy, significance – life.

But I don't always look for life in the right places. I search, but my quest often comes up empty. I keep chasing after something, but I lack what I'm seeking, even after I think I've found it. I hunt for purpose, but I'm left hungrier, thirstier, needier in the end.

I search for meaning in many pursuits – and I ask them to give me life – but they don't. They can't because I'm searching for water in the desert.

Only Jesus can give me what I'm really looking for.

### **Hardwired for Life**

Humans are hardwired for significance. We were made to live forever, and this is what God always intended.

In his two latest books, *A Peculiar Glory* and *Reading the Bible Supernaturally*, John Piper describes the human soul as a template shaped for God, who is the epitome of value, excellence, and beauty. We were made for God. We were made to enjoy and delight in him forever, to truly live by loving him.

But we sin. We fall short of his glory. We reject God, the very definition of love and the Giver of life.

Our soul-templates remain, but our affections have been distorted. We cram marred, misshapen pursuits into our soul-template, only to find they don't fit. They don't satisfy, but leave us searching for more, better, different.

Sin cripples our search. So, we ask "life" of pursuits that can never give us what we seek.

### **David's Search for Life**

In Psalm 21, King David searches in the right place for the deepest desires of his soul: for God who gives life. And he finds what he's looking for! He rejoices in the Lord's strength and revels in his salvation:

You have given him his heart's desire  
and have not withheld the request of his lips.  
For you meet him with rich blessings;  
you set a crown of fine gold upon his head.  
He asked life of you; you gave it to him,  
length of days forever and ever.  
His glory is great through your salvation;  
splendor and majesty you bestow on him. (Psalm 21:2-5)

I was profoundly moved by the simplicity of David's pursuit when I read this: "He asked life of you."

Like me, like every human, David was searching for never-ending life. But in this case, he was searching for the right thing in the right place. The desires of his heart were molded by the template of his soul. And he found everything he wanted – everything God made him for – in God.

### **Sin's Search for Life**

God knows we need him, that our longings will only be fulfilled in knowing and walking closely with him. He is our ultimate end and eternal reward. But we've rejected him in sin, so we ask life of the wrong things.

We search for meaning in our vocation. We look at the work of our hands and ask, "Life?" But we fail and lose the promotion – or we wildly succeed and find that the money and perks gravely disappoint. Our work cannot give us life.

We search for meaning in our families. We look at our spouse and kids and ask, "Life?" But they don't do or say what we want them to, making the days long and hard. Other times, they're everything we hoped they'd be, but still we feel empty when we lay down our heads at night. Our families cannot give us life.

We search for meaning in what people think of us. We look at friends and strangers, in person and on social media, and ask, "Life?" But they criticize, deflating our significance, or they compliment, leaving us to crave their accolades. People cannot give us life.

We search for meaning in money and prosperity. We look at our possessions and savings accounts and retirement funds and ask, "Life?" We feel secure, but only when we have a safety net. Extra cash and more

stuff appears to ease our worries, but only until it's lost, taken, suddenly stripped from us. Money and possessions cannot give us life.

We search for meaning in health. We look at our bodies and faces and immune systems and ask, "Life?" We feel beautiful when the workout is done, the makeup is applied, and the weight is lost. We're in control when the blood tests are negative, and the diagnosis is good. But when the disease returns or the wrinkles inevitably appear, fear increases. We see that death is real. Our health cannot give us life.

### **Where We Find Life**

So, what can we do? Where do we turn? And to whom?

We ask, "Life!" of the only One who can give it to us – eternally, freely, totally. Like David, we ask it of our Lord, whom we know to be the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). We seek to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he sent, for this is eternal life (John 17:3). We hide in Christ our life, waiting for him to appear so we will also appear with him in glory (Colossians 3:3–4), finally tasting the "length of days" for which we've been waiting, craving, searching.

Believer, seek Jesus, who is your life. Jesus is the greater David, the King who truly lives forever, the resurrected one who gives us abundant life and eternal hope from his victory over death (John 11:25; Revelation 1:18).

Return to this Eternal King whenever your sinful heart wanders. The beauty of God's mercy and grace is that it's new every morning (Lamentations 3:23). His faithfulness is great when yours isn't. Your failed, flawed, flagrantly sinful attempts to search for life in the wrong places are covered in Christ's righteousness. His life has always been perfectly tuned to his Father's will and glory, and now it's yours by grace through faith.

The more you soak in God's grace through Jesus and enjoy his favor, the more you'll find that the life you've been searching for is in him.

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/have-you-found-the-life-you-wanted>