

Christian Students @ SAC
College Meeting - Fall 2022
Week 9

BASIC LESSONS ON LIFE
LESSON SEVEN
THE DEFINITION OF LIFE (1)

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:18; Rev. 22:1; John 14:6a; 1 John 1:2; 5:12a; Col. 3:4a; Rom. 8:2a; 2 Cor. 3:6b

I. LIFE IS NOT DEVOTION

Many Christians consider devotion to be the spiritual life, but devotion is our exercise of piety. It is an exercise on our side by our own effort. Paul says in Galatians 2:20a, “I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” This shows that life is Christ living within us. We need to realize that we should never consider devotion as life. One may be very devotional and yet not have much life. Some nuns and priests in the Catholic Church may be very devotional, but that is merely their kind of pious exercise. Life is not any kind of activity. Life is altogether Christ Himself. We must stress this to the uttermost, [we need] to know that life is Christ Himself. Nothing can replace life.

II. LIFE IS NOT GOOD BEHAVIOR

Man was created good, but man was corrupted and damaged by the fall. Still there is something good within man, which was created by God. The teachings of Confucius are to help develop man’s good nature—the natural, good virtues created by God within man. These virtues have been damaged but are still left in man’s nature. The good behavior developed by man is according to his doing, but life is Christ lived out from us. Life is not our doing. Paul says in Philippians 1:21a, “To me, to live is Christ.” Thus, life is not good behavior; it is Christ lived out of us. First, Christ lives within us, and then Christ lives Himself out of us. This is life.

We have to train [ourselves] to discern the difference between good behavior and life. We may admire a certain brother because he is gentle, meek, humble, and patient. We may think that he is full of life, but this means that we do not have the proper discernment. This brother whom we admire may be expressing his natural virtues in his good behavior. Life, however, is Christ expressed from within us and lived out from within us.

- **Explain why good behavior is not life. Can you give an example (doesn’t have to be personal)?**

III. LIFE IS NOT POWER

We also need to see that life is not power. The Spirit has two aspects: the aspect of life within us and the aspect of power upon us. When the New Testament talks about the Spirit's power, it uses the preposition *upon*. Upon means outside. When the New Testament speaks concerning the Spirit as life, it uses the preposition *in*. The Spirit is in us.

The New Testament says that the Spirit of reality will be with you and even in you, and the rivers of living water will flow out from within you. There is the aspect of drinking the Spirit and the aspect of being baptized in the Spirit. To baptize a person is to put him into the water, but to drink is to take in the water. First Corinthians 12:13 covers these two aspects. We all have been baptized in one Spirit into one Body. Then we all have been given to drink one Spirit. These are the two aspects concerning the Spirit.

Acts 1:8 shows that the Spirit of power coming upon the disciples enabled them to carry out the work of spreading the gospel from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the earth. This verse shows us that power is for work, and John 6:57b shows that life is for living. In this verse the Lord said, "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me."

IV. LIFE IS NOT GIFT

Life is not gift. Gift is the ability for function (Rom. 12:6), but life is the Divine Being in our being. John 1:13b says that we believers are begotten of God. To be begotten of God is to have God's being in our being. Life is God Himself, the Divine Being, in our being.

V. LIFE IS NOT THE GROWTH IN KNOWLEDGE

The growth in knowledge is not life. The growth in knowledge is the increase of knowledge. You may accumulate a lot of biblical knowledge by reading books or by studying in a seminary and yet not know life at all. Life is the increase of God within us. Colossians 2:19b reveals that the church grows with the growth of God, with the increase of God as life.

- **Why is the increase of knowledge not life?**

VI. LIFE IS NOT OUR HUMAN LIFE

Our human life is not the life on which the Bible focuses. Our human life (bios and psuche) is mortal (Luke 8:43b; 21:4b; Matt. 16:25-26). Our human life is not life, because it dies and is destined to die. The real life is immortal. Whatever is mortal is not life. Both our physical life (bios) and our soulish life (psuche) are mortal, so the human life is not life. In

Luke 8:43b and 21:4b the Greek word for livelihood and living is bios. Bios refers to the physical life. In Matthew 16:25-26 the Greek word for soul-life is psuche.

Life (zoe) is eternal. Eternal means “immortal.” First John 1:2 says, “The life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us.” Then Psalm 90:2b says, “Indeed from eternity to eternity, You are God.” Strictly speaking, all lives that are mortal are not life. The real life is immortal and eternal, and this real life is God Himself because God is from eternity to eternity. God is eternal, so only God Himself is the real life.