

OUR BEST LIFE

This Book tells us who God is. It tells us what He is doing, and why we are here. It tells us how to succeed, how to find happiness, and how to live our absolute best life. It is the lamp to our feet and the light to our path.

This morning we're going to examine the relationship between God and His children. We'll revisit His primary goal to increase His Family, giving careful instruction for achieving our "best life," ultimately leading to our inheritance. If you'd like a title, that's it, "Our Best Life."

In the beginning God created all things.

Genesis 1: He speaks and brings light in to existence.

Does God need light? He kept bumping into things so He created light? He is light!! Throughout the Bible it talks about how his face shines like the sun, that His glory, His power emanates from Him...at the very end of the Bible He tells us that New Jerusalem, set up on a new heaven and new earth has no need of the sun or moon to shine, for the glory of God illuminates it!

He creates the atmosphere, an expanse covering the earth, He gives us the air we breathe. Does God need oxygen to survive?

He divides the land from the water, and introduces vegetation. Does God eat?

He gives us the sun, moon and stars to govern time. God exists outside of time.

He creates all animal life, each according to their kind. Some for food, some for beauty and majesty, some to clean up the place.

And then, once everything is done, once everything is ready, He makes us.

From the very first molecule and atom coming into existence, we were the reason behind it. All things brought into creation that it might serve the future sons and daughters of God's Family.

WE'RE NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED, BUT WHY IT HAPPENED.

Ephesians 1:3-6- He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved

THIS IS IT RIGHT HERE. THIS RELATIONSHIP IS EVERYTHING. Our goal this morning is to center ourselves, to focus on this reality. The intent of our Creator. The desire of our Father. For us to see the connection, the emotion behind God's actions.

Before the foundation of the world, God the Father and Jesus Christ sitting down at the kitchen table...

Kind of like what happened here. There was a time, about four years ago, that Mr. Monson and I sat down at the Forrestier's kitchen table. Sketching on notepads. Coming up with the plan.

Why? You were the reason behind all of it. Before the dorm foundations were laid, before the first slab of concrete was poured and the first hole dug for the pool, the youth in God's Church were the reason behind making such effort.

Did we know you by name at that time? Not necessarily. But it was predetermined that a camp somewhere would serve as a place for God's youth to gather. To learn about Him and His way of life. To build relationships with each other. To strengthen the bonds that unite us.

That is the same concept behind the design of man. The intent of God, set on expanding His Family. His careful design, every detail thoughtfully carried out according to His perfect will.

It might seem a little crazy that the Creator of the universe, the One who made everything, stopped everything He was doing, to write a Book for you. But is that really too hard to believe? Doesn't that actually make sense?

Building your life: I need two volunteers, two artists. Really, are there any creative, adventurous, gifted artists out there?

I like art. I don't always understand it, but sculpture is fascinating to me. They can look super weird, but the artist often has a message.

For you two I'd like you to create a sculpture, from what I give you, that will represent your life, your hopes and dreams, putting together a successful life. One filled with love, with joy, with peace and happiness.

Is this not what you want to build for yourself?

While they get started, lets turn to Matthew 7.

Matthew 7:7- A Father gives good gifts

V. 11- If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Once again, can we all agree that God would be invested in our lives? Encouraging, shaping molding, each of us, that we may one day be full members of His family? Doesn't that make sense?

In your professional opinion, what are some strong character traits of an excellent parent?

Love, protection, encouragement?

Vs.

Hate, abandonment, discouragement?

How's it going back here? About done?

Ok so then what is it that God has asked of us? What is our guide? What has God given us to keep us on the right track?

2 Timothy 3:14- But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

V. 16- All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

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This Book, His word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Now let's try to get a little more specific.

The Exodus of the Nation of Israel:

Exodus 19:3-8- If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me

V. 8- All that the Eternal has spoken we will do.

In **Exodus 20**, God speaks the words of the 10 Commandments. They literally heard His voice!! He teaches them how to love God and how to love their neighbor.

In Exodus 21, 22, and 23 God gives the people a number of statutes, “do’s and don’ts” to help them in their day to day lives.

But within a number of days, the people would make their own version of God.

Why is that such a bad thing??? Consider the emotion behind a parent who desperately loves you, but you decide to turn them in for a different model!!! The feeling of rejection can be devastating.

God had literally just saved their lives! And within a short time, they’re walking away from Him.

Don’t just think about what He is saying in this Book, buy why He is saying it.

EXERCISE: Make a list of the things we can and cannot do

What are some of the things we can do in this life?

-Anything!

What are some of the limitations that God has given us?

Why are these things good? What makes these things bad? Why would God restrict us?

Again, what does our Father in heaven desire for us?

Deuteronomy 4:1- listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live

V. 2- You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Eternal your God

V. 5-6- be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear

V. 7-8- What great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments

V. 9- take heed to yourself and diligently keep yourself; TEACH THEM TO YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUR GRANDCHILDREN

Deuteronomy 6:24- And the Eternal commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Eternal our God, for our good always

Would the One who wrote these critical elements for our best life, later on, destroy it? Would He tell us, “Nevermind. Do whatever you want,”?

Matthew 5:17- Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

V. 18- For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

V. 19- whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

This is love. This is what leads to our best life.

1 John 5:1-5- For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

This is pretty simple right? But we're trying to make this real to us, we're trying to make God and His way of life our reality. And not just any version of it, not just any version of God, but the One True God. Not some made-up version of Him. Our Father, our Creator, the One described in the Bible. This is not a game. This is your life.

Deuteronomy 30:9- The Eternal your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand...if you obey the voice of the Eternal your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes, and if you turn to the Eternal your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

V. 11- this is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off

What we're talking about today is not that complicated.

What complicates things is our own human nature. A desire to serve self. To do what we want, regardless of the cost.

Satan will make it seem absolutely impossible to do it God's way. He will make it seem like the worst thing in your life to ever happen to you. But we know better than that.

You might be thinking to yourself, "Well I know plenty of people who don't go to church, who don't believe in God, who don't keep the Sabbath, and they seem plenty happy."

So how is that possible? Why is that?

3 reasons people seem happy without God at the center of their lives:

1. Because there are actually a lot of things we can do, that are fun! Things that CAN bring a kind happiness to our lives. The problem is, if we do those things on a day that God said to pause, and spend time with Him.

Going to the lake with your family for a waterskiing adventure is fantastic! But going on a Saturday breaks a key commandment, so we just pick one of the other 6 days of the week to make that happen.

2. They are actually keeping elements of God's Laws and statutes, without believing in God! I have certain family members that are practicing Catholics, who seem to be happy and have a pretty good marriage. However, the reason their marriage is strong, is because they are faithful to each other. They serve each other. They are actually obeying the words of this Book, and by doing those things, they are able to reap the benefits from them.

God promises blessings for obedience to His word. He cannot lie. Whether people believe in Him or not they will see the results of living His instructions, OR NOT.

Mr. Armstrong at one time put it, whether you believe in gravity or not, if you jump off the top of a building, you will see the effects of it. Whether you believe in God or not, if you are obedient or disobedient, ultimately you will experience the effects of those actions.

3. Finally, there are plenty of things out there, things that are painted by the god of this world, that seem to be fun. There are plenty of things that have the appearance of bringing you happiness. But they won't. It's all temporary and ultimately it destroys us.

Why would we ever think that in order for us to truly be happy, we would have to leave our family?

"I can't have everything that I want with God at the center of my life. I can't be happy using the Bible to lead me in my decisions."

"I must leave the Church, leave my family, and do things my own way, so that I can truly find happiness."

It's just not true. In what world would a parent willfully choose to deny happiness to their children?

Allow God the opportunity to show you who He really is. Follow the instructions He has laid out for every one of us, and He will open the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.

Have an awesome day, and live your best life.