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## How is Jesus "The Life"? (Part III)

**John 14:6:** (NASB) *Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.*

What do you think of when you hear the statement, "Ah, this is the life!" Ease, fortune and comfort? Well, Jesus said he is "The Life" - so what does that mean and does that statement still develop the same picture in your head? It probably does not. How is Jesus "The Life" and how should that affect our daily experiences?



(This is Part III of a three-part series from October 11 and November 8, 2015.)

Let's start with the long term - the big picture - and then work back to how to get there.

**Here is the context of Jesus as The Life - the future fulfillment:** John 14:1-6: (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. This takes place the night before the crucifixion and Verse 1 is a command to his Apostles. This will be the basis of OUR personal actions NOW to be a part of The Life later.*

*<sup>2</sup>In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.*

Verse 2 establishes where The Life in the future will be - it gives us an address:

*<sup>3</sup>If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.*

Verse 3 promises us the ability to be transported to The Life.

*<sup>4</sup>And you know the way where I am going. <sup>5</sup>Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going, how do we know the way? <sup>6</sup>Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.*

These verses are the reason for our program. How do you follow Jesus? You understand he is the pathway and he represents the truth of God's plan. You also understand he shows us a future fulfillment of life and a present, active fulfillment of life as well.

**Just a few hours later that same night, Jesus prays for his followers to live The Life:**

John 17:24: Jesus now expands the meaning to all of his followers that would come after his death. We can take this personally as we are living in the time of the Gospel call.

**We don't know much about The Life promised to the faithful in the future, but we do know enough - it will be a life like that of Jesus himself!** 1 John 3:2-3: In order to have that future hope, we have to do something today.

Our hearts are strengthened when we focus on The Life Jesus gave us and we live based on that focus. **LET THE LIFE JESUS OFFERS YOU NOW MAKE YOU SHINE!** But how do you do that?

**First, know that if you were called or are being called, it is for a good reason:** Romans 8:28: (NASB) *and we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* If you are being drawn to becoming a footstep follower of Christ, God is unequivocally working with you and through you. How are you responding? The reason for the call is for His purpose - just like Jesus was called for God's purpose as well. It is a BRIGHT and different purpose.

**Second, know that who you are does fit in!** 1 Corinthians 12:14-18: Your strength and weakness, your dogmatic approach or your welcoming spirit, your brilliance of mind or your sensitive heart - all are a part of the whole - and the whole is the body of Christ!

Believing in Jesus is not something we say with our lips one day and that is it. The way we live our lives must correspondingly change.

**Third, know that you have something to do!** Exodus 4:1-2: The staff would be a symbol that God would help Moses do what he needed to do. Moses needed to do the work, but God worked through him.

Each of us has something in our hand. It may be an opportunity, a present day challenge or a lesson from our past. It may be the power of prayer or fellowship or study. It may be the



power of an open ear. What is that in YOUR hand? Whatever it is, it is yours to use in The Life Jesus gave you!

**Fourth, let your light shine - be the example - BE the Gospel as it may be the only version some will ever "read" in this life!** Matthew 5:13-16: Shine! When your character shines in the darkness of our day, you are living The Life!

**LET THE LIFE JESUS OFFERS YOU NOW MAKE YOU SHINE! LET THAT HELP YOU MANAGE YOUR MOMENTS!**

Ephesians 5:13-16: (NASB) *<sup>13</sup>But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. <sup>14</sup>For this reason it says, awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you. <sup>15</sup>Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, <sup>16</sup>making the most of your time, because the days are evil.*

**Six steps for managing our moments so our life is immersed in living The Life:**

**Step 1 VISION: The all-encompassing picture that captures the imagination.**

Proverbs 29:18: (KJV) *Where there is no vision, the people perish: With knowledge and technology come choices - lots and lots of choices - embedded in various shades of grey, all designed to capture our hearts and imaginations. This is distraction but not a vision. The vision is a focused picture of what your life is supposed to be about.*

James 1:8: (KJV) *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

Focus hard on this! Are we double-minded in our Christianity? Be brutally honest with the mirror! **KNOW YOUR GOD!**

Matthew 6:24: (KJV) *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

Imagine the quality of our thoughts when the Almighty is "true north"!

**Step 2 PRIORITIES: The necessary ordering of the details of our life.**

Ephesians 5:25: (NASB) *Husbands, love your wives. Your spouse is a priority*

Ephesians 6:4: (NASB) *Fathers...bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Your children are a priority*

1 Timothy 5:8: (NASB) *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. It is a priority to take care of yourself and your family members.*

Galatians 6:10: (NASB) *...let us do good to all people... Doing good to all is a priority.*

2 Timothy 2:15: (NASB) *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. It is a priority to study and know the truth of the Scriptures.*

John 15:12: (NASB) *This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. The brotherhood is a priority.*

Galatians 6:2: (NASB) *Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. It is a priority to take care of one another.*

**All of these and more must, of necessity, be melded together into a harmonious recipe for humble and focused service to the glory of God!**

**"Do the most important thing at any given moment."**

All of these priorities have their time, and those trying to live The Life according to Jesus must learn how to put them in perspective under the umbrella of "following Christ." Be fully engaged!

Galatians 5:17: *There is always another road to choose, and there is always another internal battle to be fought. Armed with VISION and PRIORITIES, we are able to choose rightly - even if our humanness would rather not.*



Find a way to have contentment and fulfillment in the moments, challenges and difficulties in living The Life for Christ, which means a life of sacrifice and a life *different* than those around us.

**Step 3 - URGENCY: The application of focused energy for a very specific purpose.**

Urgently strain forward towards that which is most valuable! That is what Jesus always did and that is what The Life he has laid out for us requires us to do.

**Our urgency:** Philippians 3:12-16: The idea of being a follower of Christ is a standard. Once we reach that point, we are to accelerate, work harder and focus on the goal.

Here we can see the VISION and PRIORITIES in place and the deep URGENCY to fulfill them. Without urgency, vision and priorities become "just another thing" in life and are merely theoretical - kind of like New Year's resolutions.

The first three steps are the necessary elements we must have in place to *redeem the time*. (Colossians 4:5) These next three things are the "how to" part of the equation. They represent what must be in place in our hearts and minds to back up and execute the VISION, PRIORITIES and URGENCY we have chosen.

**Step 4 - INSPIRATION: That which feeds and lifts the heart so that it may overcome.**

Find those things which inspire your spiritual growth and drink them in!

**Inspiration works best when we have someone whose struggle we can observe:** 2

Corinthians 12:7-10: The Apostle Paul saw his difficult experiences as positive ones.

He is saying, "My inspiration comes because I am weak. The fact I have these things holding me back and holding me down are inspiring because they make me realize that when I am weak, I can be strong in Christ." His own difficulties motivated him to work harder and be more dedicated.

There are hundreds - perhaps thousands - of biblical accounts, promises and prophecies we are at liberty to make our own for the sake of inspiring us to redeem the time so we can live The Life.

What about the lives of other Christians here and now?

**Look at who inspired the Apostle Paul:** 1 Thessalonians 2:19: (NASB) *For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?*

He looked to the churches he established for great inspiration.

Inspiration changes everything! It is a core value of Christianity that helps us move forward in every circumstance.

**Step 5 - PERSPIRATION: The result of continuous exertion that stems from being fully engaged.**

INSPIRATION without PERSPIRATION is a waste of time. The inspiration must press us to urgent action.

1 Peter 5:6-9: (NASB) *<sup>6</sup>Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.*

**So there is rest...yet:** *<sup>8</sup>Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.*

While there is rest in the Spirit, we have to be alert because we are being hunted. The perspiration of our experiences is critically important for us to live The Life given to us in Christ.

Nothing replaces hard work! We hear the adage, "work smarter, not harder," and this is true; yet for true Christians, our "working smarter" is working through the power and influence of God. That enables us to work harder and more productively at those things of greatest importance.



**Why would we be willing to sweat for the cause of Christ? Philippians 3:7-11**

**Step 6 - CONSISTENCY: The continual long-term application of all those things necessary towards faithfulness.**

**Revelation 2:10:** How do we check ourselves to be sure we are consistently following the right path, the right thoughts, the right attitudes and the right actions?

**Here is the answer! Philippians 4:4-8:** We are to *rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS* - not just when we feel like it or when things are going our way. Rejoicing is a life choice, not just an emotion based on our external circumstances.

*Dwell on these things* - this shows consistency. What do we always go back to - our troubles and difficulties? How do we make our consistency to be that of spiritual things? The answer is to make the choice to rejoice in the Lord.

**LET THE LIFE JESUS OFFERS YOU NOW MAKE YOU SHINE! LET THAT HELP YOU MANAGE YOUR MOMENTS! LET THIS HELP YOU EMBRACE HARDSHIP AND PERSECUTION!**

**Hebrews 12:3-4:** (NASB) <sup>3</sup>*For consider him who has **endured <5278>** such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.* <sup>4</sup>*You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.*

Wherever and whenever there is persecution, it creates a crossroads. We can go down the road of caving into persecution's pressure or choose the high road of principled endurance. This second choice is The Life!

**1 Peter 3:13-17:** (NASB) <sup>13</sup>*Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?* <sup>14</sup>*But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. No one can harm what you are living for and your standing with God. Persecution for the right reasons brings blessing:* *And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled,* <sup>15</sup>*but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; The secret for blessing from persecution lies in what our deepest focus is seeing. If it is Christ, we will always be ready to answer with a spiritual mind. As humans, we are called *new creatures in Christ*. We are earthly beings trying to live according to a spiritual will. These can be at odds with each other and we always want to choose the higher road.* <sup>16</sup>*and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.* <sup>17</sup>*For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong. Just because we may be able to represent Christ, and even "win" when falsely accused, does not mean our conscience is on autopilot. Persecution can spur retaliation if we are not focused! We want to look at The Life through Christ-likeness and not the eyes of opulence, possessions, ease and "me first!"*

**Persecution can and often does come from those who are close - those whose influence is important to us: Luke 21:16-19**

**Because persecution is difficult, we are constantly reminded of what enduring it produces: Matthew 5:10-12**

**It is a fight! Our endurance finds its nourishment in the strength of God: Ephesians 6:10-12:** What is The Life? It means we mold our lives around letting our lights shine. That light comes from God through Jesus in us that shines through our character, actions, thoughts and integrity. We manage our moments each day. By doing so, we are more prepared when hardship and persecution comes. We understand the power of the VISION, URGENCY, PRIORITY, INSPIRATION, PERSPIRATION and CONSISTENCY.

Be alive in Christ! This is The Life!

*So, how is Jesus The Life?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*