

The Good Life

by Chuck Smith

Living the good life means living in harmony with God, pursuing what is good, and avoiding evil, and seeking peace and living in peace with others.

Duration: 28:32

Scripture: Psalm 34:12, 1 Peter 3:10

Topics: "Godly Living", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

This sermon from 1 Peter chapter 3 focuses on the concept of living the 'good life' as outlined in Psalms 34 and Ecclesiastes, emphasizing the importance of refraining from evil speech, avoiding deceit, shunning evil, doing good, seeking peace, and trusting in God's provision and care. The message highlights the struggles with evil and the need for divine intervention to overcome it, leading to a life of fellowship with God and experiencing His watchful eye, provision, and answered prayers.

Transcript

Well, we're moving through the Bible this week, 1 Peter chapter 3. Tomorrow, or tomorrow next week, we will finish the book of 1 Peter. We'll take chapters 4 and 5. And so, read them over, and we're moving along. A couple of weeks in 2 Peter, then the epistles of John, then Jude, and then Revelation, and we're through the Bible once more.

And we'll start back with Genesis. Oh, incidentally, after the service, we'll turn our clocks ahead. So that tonight will be on the Pacific Daylight Savings Time.

So, move your clocks ahead this afternoon. But it was nice to have that extra hour of sleep. I enjoyed that.

Here in 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 10, Peter is quoting from the psalm that we read this morning, Psalm 34. Where he declares, 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. We hear a lot of talk about the good life.

We say of a person often, oh my, he's living the good life. But what do we mean when we say they're living the good life? He has a job, a nice home with a pool, a new car, a cabin cruiser, a cabin up in Big Bear, and oh, he's living the good life. But is he? Many people have all of these things, but they're in misery.

Jesus said, a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things that he possesses. Wise King Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 6,1, There is an evil that I have observed under the sun. It's common among

men.

A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he wants nothing for his soul of all that he desires. And yet, God does not give him the power to eat thereof. But a stranger eats it.

This, he said, is vanity, and it is an evil disease. Maybe Solomon was talking about himself. Because we read back in Ecclesiastes 2, that Solomon said, I said in my heart, I will find the good life through partying.

Therefore, I indulged in pleasure. And behold, this was empty. I said of laughter, it is madness.

And of partying, what good does it do? So I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquiring wisdom and to understand folly, that I might see what was the good life for the sons of men, what they should do to find the good life. And I made great works. I built houses, I planted vineyards, I made gardens and orchards, and then I made pools in order to water the orchards.

I had servants and maidens. I had servants born in my house. I had great possessions, large herds of cattle and sheep, and more than anyone in Jerusalem before me.

And we incidentally read that his provision to provide for his servants, and of course his wives, he had 300 wives, 700, can you imagine how much food it would take to feed all of these people? 10 fatted beef, grain fed beef, 20 commercial beef, this is every day, 100 lambs, plus he said the deer and the fallow deer, the roebuck and so forth, plus the fowls and so forth. He said, oh man, that would be great, it would be like something, it would count the cost. You know, I was yesterday in the paper, you know, they have the weekend ads for these houses down in Laguna and Newport and so forth, and they have these colored pictures and you look and you think, whoa, that would be something.

Then you look at the price, 19 million dollars. Do you realize that that would cost you 190,000 a year just for taxes? So in case you look at that and say, oh, I would like to have that, just remember, it's the upkeep that will kill you, the taxes. And here's Solomon with all that he has, but I mean, it costs a lot.

So with all of these things that he had, he said he amassed silver and gold and the treasure of kings, the kings of the provinces. I had men and women choirs, and I delighted the sons of men with musical instruments of all sorts. So I was great.

I had greater riches than anyone who had ever lived before me in Jerusalem. And also my wisdom remained with me, and whatsoever my eyes desired, I did not keep from them. I did not hold back from my heart any joy, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor, and this was my reward of all my labor.

At this point, you might say, wow, he did live the good life. But what does he say? He said, then I looked at all of the works that my hands had wrought, all of the things that I labored to do, and behold, it was all empty, and my spirit was vexed. There is no profit under the sun, and I reasoned within myself, what value is there in all these things? They are madness, they're folly.

What can a man do more than I have done? Therefore, I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me, for all is empty and vexation of spirit. Solomon should have given heed to the words of his father that we read in Psalm 34, where David wrote, what man desires the good life, and wants to enjoy many days, keep your tongue from evil, your lips from speaking guile, depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it, for the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their crying. So Peter is actually here in verse 10, quoting from Psalm 34, as he gives again the

formula for the good life.

He declares, first of all, refrain your tongue from speaking evil, watch your language. He's talking about filthy talk, dirty jokes. Some men's minds are like racehorses, they run best in a dirt track.

Paul admonished the Ephesians in 4:29, let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, that which will build up and minister to the hearers. In Romans 3:13, Paul spoke of those whose throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongues they use deceit, the poison of asp is under their lips, their mouths are filled with cursing and bitterness, they have filthy mouths. To the Colossians he wrote, now put off all of these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy communication out of your mouth.

In the book of Revelation we read concerning the Antichrist, that he opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle and those that dwell in heaven. The good life is to refrain your tongue from speaking evil things. Secondly, his lips, that they speak no guile.

The word guile is a translation of the Greek word *dolos*, which means duplicity or deceit. Often times a person will say things in such a way that they are seeking to deceive the person who is hearing them, so that that person will think that they are actually saying something other than they actually are meaning, other than what they mean. For instance, here is a lady who comes up to you and she's wearing a new dress, and you say, oh, you look stunning in that new dress.

Sounds good, doesn't it? But in your mind you are saying, I'm stunned that you would wear such a garish dress as that. So there's duplicity, there's guile. I had a minister friend who said that when parents would come up to show their new babies to him, he said some of them would be ugly as could be.

And as they were showing off their new babies, he would say, now that's a baby. Of course it is. But you're deceiving with your speech.

Back in chapter 2 of 1 Peter here, he says, laying aside all malice and all guile, that deceitful tongue, and hypocrisy and envy and all evil speaking. In verse 22 of chapter 2, speaking of Jesus, Peter wrote, he did no sin and neither was guile found in his mouth. Going on to give the formula for the good life, he said, let him eschew evil and do good.

The word eschew is an old English word, which means to shun or to avoid or to depart from. To shun evil, to avoid evil, to depart from evil. Back in the Old Testament, we're introduced to a man by the name of Job.

It tells us of Job that he was upright. He was one that feared God and eschewed or shunned evil. Peter is, of course, as we said, quoting from Psalm 34, and there the Hebrew word is translated depart.

Let him depart from evil and do good. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 16, 17, the highway of the upright is to depart from evil. He that does so preserves his own soul.

But as you have found out, and as all of us recognize, departing from evil is not a simple, easy thing. Paul speaks of his own struggle with evil. There in Romans 7, 19, he said, for the good that I want to do, I don't do.

But the evil which I don't want to do, that is what I find myself doing. Now, if I'm doing that which I do not want to do, it is not really me, but it is the sin that dwells in me. And I find then that there is a law that when

I would do good, evil is present with me.

Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? And as we strive with the evil in our own lives, in our own hearts, we find that so often we promise ourselves we will never do that again. But then, here we are doing it again. We find ourselves promising, I'm going to do this for the Lord, and then we don't do it.

And so we find that this struggle with evil is not an easy thing to be victorious over. Jesus said that we should pray, deliver us from evil. That's exactly what Paul did when he found himself struggling.

He said, Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? I can't deliver myself. So I call upon a power higher than myself. I call upon the Lord, as Jesus said, deliver us from evil.

And Jesus then said, for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen. The power to be delivered from evil can come to us and will come to us when we acknowledge that we can't fight it ourselves and we turn it over to the Lord and we ask the Lord for health, for strength, and for deliverance from evil.

It's so frustrating as we're trying within ourselves. Paul is crying, who will deliver me? He realizes that the help has to come outside of himself. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can be delivered from evil.

Paul wrote to the Romans in chapter 8, if we by the Spirit do mortify or put to death the deeds of the flesh, then we shall live, that is, we shall live the good life, which is freed from doing evil. John wrote, beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. For he that does good is of God, but he that does evil has not seen God.

This is the path to the good life. Finally, he said, let him seek peace and pursue it. Jesus said, blessed are the peacemakers.

They will be called the children of God. Paul said, as much as is possible, as much as you are able, live peaceably with all men. I'm glad he said that because I found that there are some men I just can't live peaceably with.

But as much, don't let it be on my side. You know, seek to live peaceably with all men. Again to the Romans he said, let's follow after the things which make for peace and things whereby we might build up one another.

And to the Colossians he said, let the peace of God rule in your hearts. What is then the fruit in the life of the man who does not speak evil nor deceitfully, who loves that which is good and hates that which is evil and who lives in peace with others? Well, that's the good life. He has found the truly good life.

For we read, Peter tells us, that God watches over him. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous. When Solomon dedicated the temple and he asked the Lord, when your people come here to pray, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayers that they make in this place.

When King Asa had depended upon the Syrians for his deliverance rather than upon the Lord, the prophet came to rebuke him. And in rebuking him for trusting in the arm of flesh rather than trusting in the Lord, he said, for the eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the entire earth to show himself strong on behalf of

those whose hearts are perfect towards him. In other words, God is just looking for people to bless, looking for people who are in harmony with him, that he might pour his resources in and through their lives because they're accomplishing the things that he wants accomplished.

They're in harmony with the heart of God. Oh, how important it is that we seek to get our hearts in harmony with the purposes of God because it is the path of blessing and it is the way of the good life. I find great comfort in realizing that God is watching over me.

I have a grandson who came home from Sunday school all upset. He asked his dad, Dad, is it true that God is watching me? And his dad said, Why do you ask me that, son? He said, well, my Sunday school teacher this morning told me that God was watching me. Is that so? And Chuck said, well, why did she tell you that God was watching you? He said, oh, I pulled the hair of the girl that was sitting in front of me.

But he said, that's not... Is God really watching me, Dad? And his dad answered him, Yes, son, God is watching you because he loves you so much he can't take his eyes off of you. Yes, God is watching and I'm thankful that God is watching because he loves you. He loves you so much he can't take his eyes off of you.

And how wonderful to know that God is watching over me. I trust in God. I know he cares for me.

Or mountain heights or the stormy sea. Though billows roll, he keeps my soul. My heavenly Father watches over me.

How comforting to realize that God sees. You know, it's an interesting thing. When Abraham was called upon God to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, as they were walking up the hill together with the fire and the wood for the sacrifice.

And Isaac said, Dad, I forgot something. We got the wood, we got the fire, but we don't have a sacrifice. Abraham answered, Son, the Lord sees.

And actually it is the Lord has vision. And the Hebrew word is vision. The Lord sees.

But you see with God there's very little difference between vision and provision. Sometimes we get alarmed because we think, well, wait a minute, we're short here, we don't have God sees. And because he sees, he'll take care of it.

You know, so many times we think that God doesn't know what's going on and here I am and God is no, God sees. And that's all you need to know. God is watching.

God sees. But then he goes a little further and he said, he is attentive to our prayers. That's the good life.

Walking in fellowship with God. Walking in harmony with the character of God. Living for God.

Knowing that God sees. Knowing that God will provide. The provision will be there because of his vision.

And knowing that God hears and will answer our prayers. Talk about a good life. How good can it get? God is watching over me for my good.

And when he sees that I'm in trouble, he takes care of me as I cry and day in, he hears and he answers. That is the good life. Father, we thank you that each of us can enter into that good life today.

And we would ask, Lord, that you would help us. Help us, Lord, to put a guard over our tongue. Help us, Lord, not to speak filthy things.

Help us, Lord, not to be deceitful. Help us, Lord, to pursue that which is good and to forsake that which is evil. Lord, we thank you again for the wonderful promises that you've given to us of the good life.

The life lived in fellowship with you. Lead us, Lord, into that relationship and into that fellowship where we might know, Lord, life on its highest plane. In Jesus' name we ask.

Amen. Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to pray for you. It could be that you're having a struggle with evil in your life.

It's interesting that Jesus follows that prayer deliberate from evil with the statement for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. The power to be delivered can come to you from God. No matter what it is, no matter how long you've struggled with it and how big a grip it has upon your life, God can set you free.

It may be that you have an evil tongue. It may be that it's just a part of your vocabulary and you know that it is wrong but you just don't seem to control it. As James says, man, the tongue is an uncontrollable instrument.

You know, I mean, we just, it gets us in so much trouble. God wants to set you free today. He will hear your prayer and so we would encourage you as we're dismissed, come on down and ask these men to pray for you today.

The effectual prayer of a righteous man avails much and God can help you to live the good life, the life in fellowship with Him. And we would encourage you, do so. The Lord bless thee.

And keep thee. The Lord make His face to shine upon thee. And be gracious unto thee.

And be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee. And give thee peace.

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