

# Life Is the Basis of Everything

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*Eternal life is a new consciousness, a new direction, and a new power that gives us fellowship with God and with other believers, and is the basis of everything.*

**Scripture:** John 10:10, John 17:3, Romans 6:4, 1 Corinthians 12:26, Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 4:13, Colossians 3:1, 1 John 5:9

**Topics:** "Eternal Life", "Christian Unity"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks preaches on the importance of eternal life as the evidence of God's witness, emphasizing the need for believers to have a personal experience and awareness of this life within them. He explains that eternal life is not just about living forever but about a new consciousness, direction, and power that comes from Christ. This life also leads believers to true fellowship with other Christians, highlighting the unity and interconnectedness of all believers in Christ.

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## Transcript

We will turn to the First Letter of John. And as this is the last of our evenings together on this letter, we come to the last chapter of this letter. Chapter five and verses nine through thirteen.

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

THIS IS THE WITNESS, or as we said last night this is the evidence. In this last chapter, the apostle is gathering up everything that he has written in the letter. As we have said, John wrote this letter because the faith of many Christians was being shaken. Their faith with regard to God was being shaken. And their faith with regard to Jesus Christ as the Son of God was being shaken. So John wrote this letter to confirm the faith of the believers. He says, then, finally this is the evidence. This is the witness, firstly as to God, and then as to His Son Jesus Christ. Then he says this witness or this evidence has got to be inside the believer. And here he has these two fragments, "This is the witness that ye may know." That is what we read just now. This is the witness that God hath borne concerning His Son, and these things have I written

that you may know. What is the witness? What is it that we are to know? The answer is in one word, and that word is "LIFE." "This is the witness that God hath borne concerning His Son, that He hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not the life. And I have written that you may know that you have eternal life." So the evidence is in our possession of what is called eternal life. We are going to spend our time this evening looking into this word, "Life."

I expect most of you who are believers, believe that you have eternal life. You believe that when you came to receive the Lord Jesus into your life, you were given something called eternal life.

Well, all true believers in the Lord Jesus believe that they have eternal life. But, if I came to every one of you believers and asked the question, "What is that life that you have got?" I wonder what your answer would be? If I say now, you believe that you have eternal life, please describe to me what eternal life is. Well, that would not be so easy. You might have some difficulties in giving an answer. You would say, "Well, I believe I have got eternal life, because the Bible says if I believe on the Lord Jesus, I am given eternal life. But if you ask me to explain what that life is, I am afraid I cannot answer it." Or perhaps you just underline the word, "eternal." And you would say, "Well, I suppose eternal life means that life goes on forever." Of course that life does go on forever, but that is not just the meaning of eternal life that it goes on after death. It means very much more than that. It is not only the extent of life, **IT IS THE NATURE OF LIFE. THIS IS A SPECIAL KIND OF LIFE.**

May I just say here that I know that Saturday night is the young people's night, and I see a large number of young people here. While I am speaking to everybody, I am having the young people very much in mind. So I want to try and explain this matter quite simply. And we are asking the question, "What is this life that God has given to us in His Son Jesus Christ?" We begin to answer that question by noting one word. John says, "I have written these things that ye may know that ye have eternal life." So we begin with that word "KNOW." That you may know that you have eternal life. Not only that you believe that you have eternal life, not only that the Bible says that you have eternal life, not only that the preacher preaches to you about eternal life, but, "That ye know that ye have eternal life." And this life is inside of you, you know it is inside of you.

So this life, this eternal life in the first place is a new consciousness. You are really aware in yourself that you have got eternal life. To you this is not a theory, it is not a teaching, but it is an experience. First of all, you are able to say, "I know that I have eternal life." The explanation of what that life is comes later on, but because we do not understand it, and because we cannot explain it, that does not mean we have not got it.

Now look at a new born baby. If it is a healthy baby, one thing about it at the beginning is that it is all alive. It will let you know that it is alive by the noise it makes. It will let you know it is alive by the way in which it throws arms and legs about. Somehow it knows that it is alive, and you know that it is alive. There are many evidences that it is alive.

This is the evidence - "Life." Now when we receive this eternal life, we do not, any more than a little baby, understand what we have got. We cannot explain it, but we know we have got it. We are aware that something has come into us, which was not there before. Some new strong energy has entered into us. It has taken hold of our consciousness. And if anybody asks us anything about it, the only thing we can say is, "I cannot explain it, but I know I have got it." That is the beginning of the Christian life. It is a new

consciousness, a new awareness of something having come in that was not there before. The evidence or the witness is in ourselves. John says, "That ye may know." And the true believer ought to be able to say, 'Yes, I do know that I have eternal life.'

Then in the next place, this Life gives us an altogether new direction. First, it is a new consciousness, and then it is a new direction. This power that has come into us in this Life, sets us in a certain new direction. In the New Testament, and in our common language, we use the word "converted." We speak of someone who has been saved as having been converted. Jesus spoke about being converted. Well, what does converted mean? It just simply means turning right around and going in the opposite direction from that in which you were going before. If you were going that way, now you turn right around and go this way. And it is this Life that has done that. It just turns you right around and gives you a new direction. The old ways which you used to follow are now behind you. And your ways which are before, are all new ways. That is the second fact about eternal life. And if that is not true, there is something wrong with our conversion. It is not conversion at all. It is only profession.

I remember when I was a young man newly saved. There was a great Christian Society for young people. It still goes on in England and America today. It was called, "The Society of Christian Endeavor." And all the young people who joined the Christian Endeavor were given a badge to wear on their coat, or on their dress. It was a little badge of two letters in English. C for Christian, and E for Endeavor. These two letters were put together in a silver badge. And these young people wore the badge.

Now one day there was a young fellow wearing the badge. He went along the road, and came to a theater, where there was something quite worldly and not good going on. And he stopped for a moment, and then he walked toward the door to go into the theater. There was a big man in uniform standing at the door. And he looked down at the young man, and he pointed to the badge, he said, "Young man, this is no place for you. If you want to go in there, you had better take that badge off." You see, it was a contradiction of his profession. And a man of the world knew the difference. The man of the world knew that there is a difference between a Christian and a kind of people that went into that theater. That young man was denying his testimony. On his coat he had a testimony in metal. In his life he was contradicting the testimony on his coat. And you know the world is very wise about these things. The world knows that a Christian ought to be different, that the Christian ought to be going a different way from the world. Now that is a very simple illustration, but you see, this Life that God gives in Christ sets us in a certain direction.

I intended to bring a compass here this evening, but I forgot it. You all know what a compass is, you know it is like a little watch, it has a magnetic needle. If you want to know where North is, you put that compass down, and the magnetic needle always moves in the direction of the magnetic North. So that you can take your bearings from your compass. The compass is quite true if there is no interference with it. Now young people, note these two things. If I had brought my compass with me this evening, and I had put it down on this desk just in front of me, I would be looking to see where the North is. I expect you could tell me without a compass where the North is. You see, I am not quite sure as to where the North is here, but I would be looking at my compass to see where the North is. But in this instance, my compass would tell me lies, it would not speak the truth. Why was that? Because I have put it in front of this piece of metal, and that metal turns the needle away from the North. The compass needle must be free from all outside interferences. If I had lifted it away from these metal objects, it would tell the truth.

Now this is an illustration of eternal life within us. This Life that we have received from Christ always points a certain direction. It always moves like the magnetic needle in one direction. And that direction is Christ.

That direction is heaven. It turns away from all that is not Christ and all that is of the world. Those who have this Life ought to know in their own hearts, what the Lord is pleased with, and what He is not pleased with. The very Life in them explains the right and the wrong. Of course, you all understand this. If you are a true Christian, if this Life is really in you, and you one day lose your temper, you become impatient. And you say something that is not kind. You are angry with somebody. How do you feel after this? Do you feel happy? Do you feel it is quite all right? You know quite well that you feel very bad inside. And the needle inside you points to Jesus and says, "Go and confess to Him what you have said, and what you have done." And the Life inside is not happy until we have gone to the Lord Jesus and asked for His forgiveness. You see, we have the witness of Life in us, and this witness of Life is a certain direction which is always toward the Lord. It is a Life away from this world toward Him. It is an upward Life and not a downward Life. Well, the second thing about this Life is that it brings into us a new direction.

Then there is a third thing about this Life. It brings into us a new power. It is a power which was not there before; before, we could not stop doing certain things. We were not able to do the right things before. We were always doing the wrong things. We were always saying the wrong things. And if anybody said, "You should not do that," we simply had to say, "Well, I cannot help it, that is the way in which I am made." But when this Life comes in we can do what we were never able to do before. Paul the Apostle said, "I can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth me." This Life is a new power to do what we could never do before. It is the power of victory. It is the power of a holy life. It is a mighty power at work within us. You see, this Life is not a theory, it is a real power.

I expect you know what mushrooms are. Well, something happened in England a few months ago. The government had decided to make a new motor road. They spent many months in cutting a way for this new road, and then the workmen got to work and put the concrete on this road, to make it very strong to carry all the motor traffic. The road was finished and it was opened, and the traffic started on it. Not very long afterward something happened. The road began to rise up in bumps, and there were cracks in the road. All the work seemed to be in vain. There was something breaking up this strong concrete road. So they had an investigation. And you know what they found? They found a bed of mushrooms underneath. Now you would say, "Mushrooms lifting a concrete road?" Perhaps you think I am telling you a funny story. All that work, all that concrete, and mushrooms spoiling it all.

But you see, it was just the power of life in a very weak thing. You could take a mushroom in your fingers and just break it into pieces. You say, there is no strength in this. Put it in the ground, and if there is life in it, in cooperation with its other friends of the same kind, it will lift anything. The power of life is a wonderful thing. I have seen great rocks broken open by a tree growing up from just a seed. This Life which is in Christ Jesus destroyed the power of death, and tore open the grave. **DEATH AND THE GRAVE COULD NOT HOLD HIM, BECAUSE HE HAD ETERNAL LIFE.** So we have something very wonderful when we have this Life. It is a power which can carry us through any kind of opposition. It is a new power.

Then John says another thing about it. If you look into this letter, you will find that John has a lot to say about fellowship. He says, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son. Then he speaks about our fellowship with one another. But what is it that makes this fellowship? It is this very thing - this eternal life. It is not a theory or a teaching of fellowship. We may have all the teaching and yet, the fellowship may break down. But, Life is a thing which draws all who have it together. It ought to be possible for us to recognize another Christian wherever we meet one without being introduced. It ought not to be necessary for anybody to say, 'You know, this is a Christian. I want to introduce this person to you as another Christian.' That ought to be

quite unnecessary. We ought to know another Christian immediately when we meet him or her without first being introduced. There is something about Christians which just speaks without words. And, you know, Life does speak without words.

I think in this country, the seasons are not so distinct as they are in our country. That is, you do not notice a great difference between spring and summer. I do not know whether we are in spring or in summer today. But if you went to Europe, you would find a very real difference. When we left England, it was cold and windy, with ice and snow. Letters are now telling us that spring is coming. And if you were to go over there today, you would see all the new flowers coming out through the ground. You would see all the new buds on the trees, you would see life showing itself in many, many new forms, the mighty demonstration of resurrection life. You can see it almost every day, but you cannot hear it. You go and put your ear to the tree and you will not hear anything; you put your ear to the ground, but you will not hear anything. And yet life is shouting at you from everywhere. It is speaking without words.

Now I am not saying that we Christians are not supposed to speak about life. I am not saying that we need not give a testimony in words. We must do that. My complete release in the Christian life came on the night when I stood out in an open air meeting and gave my testimony for the first time. I did not know what liberty in Christ meant until I gave my testimony. So do not think that I am saying you need not speak about Christ. But what I am saying is this: That even when you are silent, Christ ought to be manifested. The Life that is in us speaks for itself. So John says, This is the witness, this is the testimony, this is the evidence, even eternal life. IT IS FELLOWSHIP.

Now you know a living human body is constituted on the basis of fellowship. Most of you know that. Especially the doctors who may be here, they know all about that. But have you thought about it? Our bodies are constituted on the principle of fellowship. That is, all our members and all our organs work together. They work on the principle of fellowship. I could prove that to you, but I am not going to. If I were to take this microphone, and if I were to throw it at the head of that brother sitting there, and he saw this microphone coming at his eyes, what would he do? He would put his hands up. One member comes into cooperation to protect the other, but something had happened before that. His eyes saw the microphone coming, and the eyes said to the hand, put yourself up in front. Now you see, I could go right through the whole body like that. Not one of the millions of cells in a body is an independent unit. Every part of our body, to the smallest part works together with all the other organs.

If one little organ suffers, all the body feels it. Have you ever had a toothache? Have you had a bad toothache? Well, is it just located in the tooth? Does not all the body feel it? Don't you altogether feel bad because of that one little tooth? You see the body is one whole, and not one little part is independent. It is all constituted on the principle of fellowship. If it were dead, all the teeth might be wrong and the body would not know it. The arm might be wrong, the foot might be wrong, but the body does not know anything about it, it is dead. But if it is alive, it lives on the basis of fellowship.

Now there is a lot about this in the New Testament. Paul says about Christians, If one member suffers, all the members suffer. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you. The hand cannot say to the foot, I do not need you. You know that those things are in the Bible. We, as Christians, are not just independent units. The Life which we all have makes us necessary to one another. Not one organ in the human body can realize its life to the full by itself. Separate any organ from the body, cut off the hand or the arm or any other member or organ of the body, separate it from the body as a whole, it can never realize its life and the purpose of its creation when it is separated from the body. It demands the uniting

Life to make it able to fulfill its function.

Now I could give you many more illustrations of this, but with only a few minutes left, I must come to an end. But this is what I want to say to you all, and to the young Christians particularly. Your fellowship with other Christians is absolutely essential to the fullness of your life in Christ. As an individual member, you only have so much life. When you bring several members together, you have got so much more Life. When you bring all the members together, there is still much more Life. If we separate ourselves from other children of God, we limit God's Life in us. We limit our own spiritual Life, and we limit our own spiritual usefulness. Fellowship is essential to life, and the more true fellowship, the more life. See, the Lord Jesus spoke about this when He said, "two or three of you." He is Present where two or three are gathered together. But how do we know that He is Present? This is the witness, that we have Life. It is a good thing to have real fellowship with other believers. What a terrible thing it is to be isolated and cut off from other believers. It is a matter of life to have fellowship. And John says, "This is the witness." LIFE IS THE BASIS OF EVERYTHING.

I thought of saying a lot more things about this Life. But you see, it is eternal life. It is God's Own Life, and it would not matter if we would stay here for years talking about it, we will never get to the end of it. That is the wonderful thing about this Life. It is inexhaustible. You will never get to the end of it. You will never fathom its depth. Eternal life is a wonderful thing. We must come back to where we started. This is the evidence that God has given unto us eternal life, and these things are written that you may know that you have eternal life. Now do not take this as just so much more teaching, because life is not teaching. Life is just life. You cannot describe it. All the wise people in this world have never yet been able to explain what life is. We will never explain it, but we can experience it. We can know that we have it! May that be true of all of us. Amen.

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