

## HOW TO ENJOY LIFE

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." I Timothy 6:19 (KJV).

"As for the rich in this world, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches but on God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous, thus laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed." I Timothy 6:19 (RSV).

"Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, Storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed." I Timothy 6:19 (New American Standard Bible).

Do you know how to enjoy life, really enjoy it? Are you really living, or are you just more or less existing? The pathetic fact is that sometimes people may have a pattern of life which they think is the way living should be. But actually it is a kind of phony living, not the real thing at all. Well, you may say, What is real life? The Apostle Paul had a splendid answer to that important question.

In his first letter to young Timothy he said, "Take hold of the life which is life indeed." What does that mean? Reduced to simple, everyday American speech, it means, don't fool around with anything but the best, don't be satisfied with an imitation or a substitute, be sure you get the real thing in life. "Take hold of life which is life indeed."

Have you got hold of the real thing? That is a question that only you can answer for yourself, and only I can answer for myself. But we may as well face it. A great many people do not have it. One positive proof that they do not have the real thing is the fact that they are not actually enjoying life. We should enter into life in such a way that there is joy in it.

People may be divided into two groups: those who enjoy their lives, and those who do not. It is revealing and significant that among those who do not enjoy living there are many rich and highly favored people. They have almost everything except the one thing it takes to really enjoy life. You will also find, of course, some rich or favored people who do have joy, real joy. But in the group of those who enjoy living, you will likewise find many who are always having to scrape to pay their bills, whose circumstances are very limited in one way or another. Though life may be hard going for them, they have that jewel of greatest price, a deep joy in their hearts. These are the people who "take hold of the life which is life indeed." Frequently they have personalities with tremendous power in them.

The big secret of joyous living is to take Jesus Christ into your life and to think, act, and live in His way. The person who does that takes hold of the life which is life indeed.

Seemingly the main impression of many people is that life is hard and difficult and the very frustration of all their dreams. Truly, life is full of conflict between good and evil, between happiness and unhappiness, and between suffering and painlessness. Life is not easy. It is filled with difficulty and agony; some of it self made, and some of it is part of the process of life itself. But life can be fascinating in spite of difficulties and sufferings. The big thing is not what happens to us in life, but what we do with and about what happens to us. There is something tremendous in the human being who can be victorious over anything life does to him.

Christ said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." When you follow Him, live with Him, obey His teachings, and do as He wills, life never gets so dark or difficult that you do not have hope or do not see creative possibilities. When people live this way, life is sure to be fascinating. Perhaps you have seen this statement: "When God is going to do something wonderful, He begins with trouble. When He is going to do something very wonderful, He begins with an impossibility." Do you have troubles? Are you faced with an impossibility? Then, you may be on the verge of a tremendous discovery. Greatness is developed out of difficulty.

We should be glad that we are alive. God's Word says: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." However, joy is not the ultimate end and aim of life. That would not be a worthy motive for living. We are urged to be joyful that we might become what God intended us to be; namely, effective people. We have a mission in life. We have a function to perform. A joyful spirit will help us to be effective.

If one is to be glad that he is alive, and if he is to enjoy life, he must get outside himself. So many people are sick as a result of self-centeredness. When you lose yourself in something greater than yourself you become filled with joy. People are miserable who live only with and for themselves all the time.

What is the meaning of life? Everybody wants to know this. Sometimes it seems that there is no meaning in life. Many people say there isn't any meaning in life. You are born, you go to school, you struggle, you suffer, you grow old, you get sick, you have aches and pains, and you die -- that's it. And there is conflict, confusion, frustration, disappointment, and unhappiness all along the way. There are those who see nothing but hopelessness in life.

But it is not that way if you have peace with God, love for Him, and the desire to please Him. It is not that way if you are seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. For then you know, no matter how mixed up, how unhappy, how sad your circumstances are, that you have a commission from the Lord to bring value out of this confusion and to make life good. That is the task which is ours.

In a western community was a boy thirteen years old. His father had an automatic pistol which the boy admired. His father told him never, under any circumstance, to touch this pistol unless he, the father, was with him. But one day in his father's absence the boy took the gun to try his marksmanship. He put some cans on a fence for targets. Some of the children of the neighborhood gathered around. Among them was a little girl named Marie, nine years old, a child of sweetness and beauty, the darling of that

community. The boy shot at the cans. Then, thinking he had fired all the shells, he thought he would frighten the girls, so he waved the gun in their direction. But there was one shell left in this automatic pistol. The boy pulled the trigger -- and little Marie was struck and fell to the ground and died two hours later.

The whole community was swept by grief and anger. John, who shot the gun, and Marie, who was killed by it, had lived side by side -- children of two Christian families who worshiped in the same church. The little girl's family, in their grief, were full of anger and bitterness against the neighbor boy who had killed their little girl. The boy himself was filled with remorse and despair. Why had this happened? How could he have done it? He could not face people, so he stayed in his room.

A grown brother of little Marie lived in distant South Dakota. He came quickly by plane. He came in time to see the body of his little sister and to be with his family for the funeral. Most of the people in the town attended the funeral services, except the unfortunate boy. Then the next morning the brother went over to the neighbor's house and said to the boy, "Come with me. I will take you to school." The boy replied, "No, sir, I won't go to school. I don't want to see anybody any more." The young man insisted, "Come with me, John." He took the boy to school, took him to the office of the principal and said to the principal, "I would like it if you would call the entire student body together." So 580 students filed into the gymnasium.

The brother stood up before them and said, "A terrible thing has happened here. My little sister has been killed -- accidentally shot by one of your classmates. This is a tragedy; but this is life. Now I want you students to know that we in our family are Christians and our family and John's family have been to church together this morning, and we have settled it before God." Then he called to the boy: "John, come over here." And standing there before the students he put his arm around the boy and said, "This boy's future depends on us. We in our family have forgiven him and have it in our hearts to love him. Little Marie would have wanted us to do that. I want to ask you students never again to mention what has happened either among yourselves or to this boy. Strike it out of your minds forever and let there be love and understanding and forgiveness."

When those students marched out, the glory of the majestic experience reflected in their faces. To take the adversities, the confusion, the mistakes, and the tragedies of our lives and extract from them the high values in them and make something beautiful out of them is to find meaning in life.

If you are to enjoy life, you must conquer self, which is your worst enemy. In ancient times two cities were striving for the mastery of the world. Rome was in the ascendancy, but Carthage in thenorth of Africa was seriously threatening the claims of the mighty city on the banks of the Tiber. The people of each city hated those in the other city. Regubus, one of the far-sighted Roman statesmen, saw the coming of the inevitable conflict. He knew that if Carthage were allowed to grow and increase her power, she would be a constant menace to the authority and ambitions of Rome. Every time that he made a speech in the Roman Senate, he always ended with the words, "Carthage must be destroyed." Three great wars were fought between the two cities. In the last, Hannibal, the Carthaginian general, one of the greatest military strategists the world has ever known, was utterly defeated and Carthage fell, never again to challenge the supremacy of the imperial city.

There are two rival natures in man. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other" (Galatians 5:17). Each of these rivals is striving for dominion.

Self is ambitious. Self is contentious. Self creates discord among the people of God. Self creates discord among the people of God. Self is vindictive. Self is deceitful, lustful, avaricious, resentful, and obstructive. Christ wants us to be distrustful of self, and to give Him complete sway in our lives. He wants to reign supreme. Unless He does control us, we shall never enjoy life.

"Take hold of life which is life indeed." You cannot have and enjoy life indeed until you are saved and transformed, and you stop thinking exclusively about yourself and start loving God enough to do His will and to help your fellowmen. You will really come to enjoy life when, as a child of God, you go out and do something to help other people, when you do something that is useful and uplifting to humanity. If you want to have real joy in life, you must live for something more than yourself. The real way to be happy is to go out and lose yourself in helping people. And you do not need to look far afield for plenty of opportunities. Let the power of the Lord flow through you, and you will enjoy life which is life indeed. Practice Christ's way fully. The more you do so, the more the deep joy will flood your mind and soul. Then you will truly have the life which is life indeed.