

AUGUST 2008 Week 2 TEACHING

Your Right to an Abundant Life

Growing up, my elders would rarely commit to the success of anything prior to its completion. They would only speculate about their ability to be victorious over a new challenge or task by making the statement “*if it be God’s Will*”. Their response was one that elicited my reverence for the omnipotence of God, but it was also one that spun doubt and insecurity in my walk with Him. It sounds very pious to bring the notion of God’s intent into our everyday dealings, but we must do so from a place of authority, not ambiguity.

For the longest time I viewed most situations as disappointments waiting to happen. And to be quite honest, they were seldom much more than that. I was the queen of negative thinking, and when I was an immature Christian still drinking baby’s milk, God’s grace turned my lemons into lemonade. But as I grew to expect more from my relationship with God and more out of life, lemonade was no longer pleasing to my palate. I was no longer satisfied with what I had. I wanted more of God’s goodies, and His goodies—my personal desires—became the focus of my prayers. To my surprise, my life seemed to take a turn in the wrong direction. Rather than getting what I thought I wanted—it seemed as though I lost everything that was important to me.

Was I targeted by God to suffer one catastrophe after another? Was this His way of making me stronger? And if the answer was “yes” to either of these questions—how could I ever be sure whether or not my efforts towards success would be rewarded. Were they purposeful to my Christian journey or were they just a huge waste of time. At one point in my life I was immobilized by these questions. I didn’t know when to move forward, how to do it, or why I should even try.

I was as low as I have ever been and stayed that way until the enormity of one single scripture impacted my soul. It can be found in John 10:10 KJV:

John 10:10 KJV

10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have [it] more abundantly.

This verse lets us know very clearly that we have an enemy—a thief whose prime objective is to steal, kill, and destroy. In contrast, Jesus Christ says that he came to the earth that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. As Christians, we honor a God of love, life, liberty, and light. He is in the “*life giving*” business. The thief, on the other hand, is in the business of fear,

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death, bondage, and darkness. And make no mistake about it; the thief is good at what he does and he is constantly seeking a way to gain entrance into our lives.

Those of us who truly love our children can attest that seldom does anything in life compare to what they bring to us. We will sacrifice just about anything for their well-being and will go to great lengths to see them happy. Be assured that if we were to muster every ounce of affection and positive energy within our mortal bodies and lavish it on those we love most, it still would not match the depth of God's love for us.

It is an extraordinary love that we feel for our children. This is why God's sacrifice of His only begotten son is so meaningful. It's a love that goes beyond even what we experience as parents.

There are those for whom the thief is nothing more than a fictional character in the bible. They cannot stretch themselves to be fully persuaded in God's love which was reflected in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; therefore, they cannot fully believe in God's archenemy, the thief. Well, Jesus Christ affirms that the thief does in truth exist, and in order to appreciate what an "*abundant life*" is, we must first understand how it can be stolen from us.

Ephesians 5:8 KJV

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now [are ye] light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Romans 3:22 NLT

23 We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done.

A few weeks ago we talked a bit about acknowledging our shortcomings before the throne of God. Part of believing wholeheartedly in His love is coming to grips with what and who we were before we believed. We were walking around in darkness. Our eyes were closed to the possibility of a spiritual reality through Christ. Our internal light switch turns on "*when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins.*"

We make the choice to accept God's forgiveness and get plugged into Him through His son. And in this same way, we make the choice to get plugged into the abundant life that his son made available. You cannot do that without a flatfooted, unflinching belief that God wants the best for you. Not trusting in that critical truth is where many of us wane in our spiritual walks.

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The thief is relentless in his attempts to devastate our lives. Think how much more diligent the Heavenly Father is to bless them. That is the truth of which we must be convinced if abundance is our aim. God adores us. He doesn't ever want to see us fail, falter, or regress. The very moment we doubt that fact—we will have given the thief a foothold into our worlds.

When our backs are against the wall and it seems as though everything is crumbling around us, it may be difficult to have faith that God desires abundance for us. It was hard for me to trust in that during my times of struggle. I said to myself *“Why doesn't God just drop a miracle in my lap...why doesn't He just fix this thing already?”* God wanted me to see that He dropped a miracle in my lap as soon as I believed in His son. The miracle was me! I was the blessing that I was waiting for.

1 John 3:24 NLT

24 Those who obey God's commandments live in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Holy Spirit lives in us.

If you can trust and believe in the miracle of God's love through Jesus Christ, then you can trust and believe in what you have through Him. He wants the best for you, and through the Holy Spirit He has given you the best, which is *“Christ in you, the hope of glory”*.(Colossians 1:27)

Approaching life as if it is an accident waiting to happen is not the mentality of someone who walks in the light. We can do better than that. Jesus Christ bought and paid for your right to an abundant life. Through him, you are an OVERCOMER!!! You have everything you need to live victoriously. Our responsibility to ourselves, to God, and to the faith is to live in abundance by learning how to employ the gift that we have been given. Stay with us next week as we delve into how to do just that.

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AUGUST 2008 Week 2 Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for blessing my life to the point where I'm able to stand anchored in Your matchless Word. Help me to honor the gift that You have given me as I also learn to value my worth to the body of Christ. As I walk by the light of Your Word, know that I will not take on a spirit of arrogance, but one of humility and thankfulness for all that You have made me through Your son. Help my unbelief as I lean on my ability to overcome any situation through the power of Christ. In his name I pray. Amen.

AUGUST 2008 WEEK 2 Scriptures: Scriptures link to [New Living Translation.com](http://NewLivingTranslation.com)

Day 1: 1 John 3:23

Day 2: 1 John 3:24

Day 3: Galatians 3:22

Day 4: Matthew 22:29

Day 5: 2 Timothy 1:5-14

Day 6: 2 Timothy 2:2-7

Day 7: Acts 1:1-7

Spiritual Focus for the Month of AUGUST 2008: 0

The Choices of an Overcomer

WEEK2Prayer FOCUS:

Honoring the greatness of the gift

(Remember to pray for those on the SMS Prayer List.)

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