

What Makes A Healthy and Balanced Life?

New Life In Christ

Spiritual

Getting to know God
Understanding Myself
Appreciation/Gratitude

Social

Growth time with supportive people
Caring for the needs of others
Celebration/fun times

Mental

Planning and reflection
Work -- community and personal
Understanding/Learning new skills
Creative expression

Physical

Diet and Hygiene
Exercise/Recreation
Rest

And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2)

Jesus shows us, in every way, how to live well. Priorities in his life included, growing in wisdom, physical health, spiritual relationship with God, and caring relationships with others. God wants us to have a life that is satisfying and meaningful. God created us with a variety of needs and abilities. It is in the balanced living of celebrating and sharing the gift of our lives that we find the depth of joy and satisfaction we crave.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139)

We've spent much of our life running after whatever the "felt need" of the moment shouted to us and so we've wandered in one direction and then another, experiencing fleeting moments of happiness but a general

condition of "looking for more." There is something in us that knows there is more to life than what we have experienced. We've tried new drugs, new relationships, new babies, new risks, new possessions, or new towns to fill that void. It's not long, however, before we realize that there's still a place deep within that hasn't been touched. That's because God has made us in a particular way. God has structured life around us so we can follow His directions and experience fullness of life. When we let our needs, our fears, our disappointments, or crises structure our lives, we end up with something less than what we need.

God invites us to return to the source of life and to walk in a life that is shaped for satisfaction.

Jesus said: *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (John 10, 2 Corinthians 5, Philippians 4)*

Only our creator has a full picture of what it takes for us to live well. God is more than willing to share that information with us and give us the strength to live in new ways. In order for God to do that effectively, we have to turn our will and our lives over to His care. We have to surrender control to a new power and trust His loving guidance by obeying each of the things God says work. Anything less will only bring us more pain and dissatisfaction. To the degree we learn and live according to God's instructions, that's the degree of joy and satisfaction we will experience. How much goodness do I want in my life today? How much effort am I willing to give to learn and follow Jesus' example of the good life?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What am I already doing in each of the 4 areas of life God intends for me to develop?
2. What could I do today to address an area of life I've been neglecting?
3. What do I know I need to do but I've been avoiding it because it's difficult for myself or for someone I love?
4. In what areas do I need more information in order to know a positive direction to take?

- **A new life requires new activities.**
- **I can live as a responsible person.**
- **I must do something new today if I want a new life.**
- **God has what I need today to live well and experience deep satisfaction**

What do I do next?

- 1. Talk to God.** Admit I'm out of control and need help. Ask God for help. Turn my life over to God. Agree to do what God says.
- 2. Talk to someone responsible whom I trust.** Admit I need help. Talk about what help looks like. Talk about goals for the next 24 hours and immediate recovery (Example: detox, safe housing, food, employment training or temporary work). Make specific plans. Agree to work this plan with a responsible person.
- 3. Accept responsibility for my own next steps.** No one can give me recovery. Caring friends will walk with me but if I want recovery, I have to keep the plan moving ahead.
- 4. Make the best of an imperfect situation.** It's my choices that have me in this mess. There is a way out but it's not magic and I'll have to give it 100% of my effort. I may need to live within temporary housing and food options that are available for the short term. I need to do so with gratitude.
- 5. Expect that some things won't happen immediately.** Be willing to consider and live with alternative plans.
- 6. Make a plan and live the plan.**

Prayer For God's Help

Lord, help me to come to you. Help me to receive and live a new kind of life. Take from me the distractions and tensions that seem to make peace impossible. Take from me the fears that do not allow me to move forward with you. Take from me the worries that blind my sight. Take from me the distress that hides your joy. Help me to know that you are with me, that I am in your care, that I am in your love. I ask this through Jesus, the Lord. Amen