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Mark 12:26-27, I Corinthians 15:20-22, 55-55, 57

When In Doubt, Read the Instruction: "Live, Now and Forever"

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It's so easy to get stuck in autopilot.

It can be challenging to put your life out of neutral!

Going through the motions and status quo can become our new normal standard operating procedure.

Yet, life was not meant to be that way.

At least not according to Jesus, the One who said

"he came so we could have life and have it more abundantly."

(John 10:10)

Yes, according to Jesus, there is existence and there is life.

What he wants for us is to live, really live!

According to the life and teachings of Jesus, life is about growth and change. That's why he came, so we can lead lives that are deeper, wider, fuller, effective, and satisfying.

Life according to Jesus, is about growth and change, and when we are no longer doing both that is your and my whisper that we are supposed to do something. When we are no longer growing and changing, we have moved back into neutral, shifted in autopilot, and thus are doing nothing more than maintaining the status quo, and that is not an abundant life, that is only existence.

We must look at our lives, if we are going to have an abundant life. And in looking, we need to have an honest conversation with ourselves on whether we are learning and getting better at living.

No more going through the motions, it's time to make things happen.

Writer Joshua Becker points out nine things that hold us back from pursuing the life that we want to live, the life that is really life.

The Promise of Tomorrow –We tend to live in a world where we expect tomorrow to come with bigger and better realities. We wait on the supposed tomorrow so long, that it keeps us from doing anything today.

The Pursuit of Perfection –Perfectionism causes us to set unattainable goals, that no one can reach and with it come the understanding that anything less than perfect is unacceptable. Perfection keeps us stuck in place, it prevents us from taking any steps towards who we want to become.

The Regret of Yesterday – Even though we say that an event is in the past, the effects from the event often stay with us. We get stuck in a cycle of wishing that we would have done things differently, instead of making lemonade out of the lemons right in front of us.

The Accumulation of Possessions –, “The more things you own, the more obligations you have.” The more stuff we have, the less time we have. We are spending time using our “stuff” instead of living in the moment with each other. It easily becomes a distraction from living in the present, in the now.

The Desire for Wealth – Wealth is often the measurement of success in our society. Yet, the desire for wealth can easily distract us from pursuing the dream that we desire. We become so

focused on collecting wealth for ourselves, that we can miss opportunities to connect and give back to others.

The Need for Notoriety – It's quite interesting how people seem to expect to be famous at some point in their lives. The pull to be adored and respected by others is a strong pull for sure! Yet, when we put our security in the opinions of others, we often lose sight of who we are and where we are going.

The Pull of Comparison – Comparison is a nasty disease. When we look at what others have and wish that we had it too, we lose sight of what we have. We totally lose our thankfulness for what's in front of us while we desire what's not ours.

The Appeal of Pleasure – We live in a world that teaches us that pleasure is the ultimate goal. Yet, the pursuit of pleasure often leaves us disappointed and empty. We forget that the best lessons and most growth we experience are during times of pain. So, let's not evaluate our lives and our success only by our pleasurable moments.

The Presence of Indifference – Do you ever feel bombarded by the messages trying to get your attention in this world? Just the amount of commercials alone could make a person want to quit it all. But this kind of indifference is toxic to living fully. Not engaging and caring about the world around us leaves us empty and dissatisfied.

What from this list is holding you back from living the life you want to live? Which lie keeps you from taking the steps that you need to take to move forward? Insight into our own roadblocks can often be the first step into understanding how to dream again and live, really live.

Our scripture texts for today talk about the life we have:
from and through God, and also
life with God, and for God.

God never promised us a safe or easy life.
Yet, not dealing with the things that have you on a course of self-
destruction is not playing it safe either.
Nor is it easier to just stay where you are and not move forward,
not grow and change. Not easier, because leaving things as they
are, continuing in the way you have been, habitually doing the
same thing day in and day out will kill your and my spirit, and
poison our heart.

Not moving, puts all of us individually and collectively at risk for
heart disease and dementia. If we do not grow and change, we
wind up with a heart appetite that no longer feels full and
satisfied, a mind that is stagnantly wasting away, and a body that
is frozen in time (either the past or the future), one that neither is
fully present or alive in the here and now.

We have been given an abundant life from and through Christ.
Yet, will we live an abundant life with and for God?

We have life with God, yet we often chose to ignore the
instructions God gives to really live – regarding compassion,
mercy, service, generosity, forgiveness, love, and peace to name
just a few. Instead, we hold some old play book and keep running
those plays only to get the same results –
When what we need is a game changer. That game changer is the
quarterback with the name Christ on the back of his jersey. He
offers us a series of plays, and upon calling out the numbers, he
gives us the means to not be tackled or sidelined, but reach the
goal, the end zone. If we would but realize that what he calls out

to us, is best for us. God is there, will we be running the plays he gives, or will we put our arms down, down field, refusing to even try and catch the ball, much less run with it. Or will we take what has been passed or punted to us by Christ and run with it, because he is with us, and we've noticed, and now have responded.

And then there is the fact that the abundant life comes not just from living with God, but also living for God. Once we are able to put our own agenda, pet peeves, harangues, and being set in our ways, aside, we can grow and change in a way that not only give us the chance to really live, but also gives life to others. Because a life lived for God is life giving to someone else.

Will we? Can we? Yes, we can!

Let us pray, Help us O God, to live, really live. Thank you for the chance to have an abundant life. Help us to do those things, which bring about growth and change, and move us beyond our static excuses of why we are, where we are. Help us to do that which will move us from mere existence to abundant life. May our growth and change begin now, right now, ever moving us forward. Amen.