

THE DEFINITION OF LIFE
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Luke 12:13-34

1. It is interesting, and also sad, to observe how our western culture defines life, and what gives meaning to life.
 - a. I once saw a beer commercial where one person said to another, "It doesn't get any better than this."
 - b. Years ago, at a stop light in Bonita Springs, FL a car in front of me had a bumper sticker that read, "Whoever ends up with the most toys wins."
 - c. I once saw a program on TV designed to market a new golf club, and the advertiser stated, "This new driver will change your life."
2. Jesus defined life differently than the world does, and He stated, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." John 10:10
3. Here we have someone bringing a complaint to Jesus concerning the distribution of an inheritance.
4. Jesus refused to be drawn into the conflict by saying, "Man, who appointed me a judge or arbitrator over you?"
5. It is clear that God is concerned about justice because in Luke 11:42 Jesus told the Pharisees that they were lovers of details while neglecting things like justice and the love of God.
6. However the Scriptures make it clear that life is not always fair, and that rather than straightening out all of the inequities in life God gives us the grace to deal with them victoriously and in love.
7. Jesus used the opportunity to teach on several issues related to what gives real meaning to our lives.

I. Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed. 15

- A. We are to be on guard against every greedy desire to have more.
 1. Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," Hebrews 13:5-6
 2. Paul wrote, "But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." 2 Timothy 6: 6-10

3. He added the following in 1 Timothy 6:11.

“But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.”

B. We are to be on guard against every form of greed because abundant life has nothing to do with what we do, or do not, possess from a worldly perspective.

C. As we have already noted abundant life is found in Jesus Christ.

D. We need to keep in mind that the majority of Jesus’ followers know little or nothing of the quality of life we enjoy, yet many of them know more about abundant life than we do.

II. Be on your guard against leaving God out of your life and plans.

A. The rich man in this parable was like a self-centered young lady named Edith, about whom I once read the following, “Edith lived in a little world, bounded on the north, south, east, and west by Edith.”

NOTE: Notice the personal pronouns in Jesus’ parable.

B. As he evaluated his wealth, he decided to take early retirement and live the good life the rest of his days.

C. Several things did not occur to him.

1. It did not occur to him that with wealth comes responsibility. 1 Timothy 6:17-19

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 (the certainty of) God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 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.**

NOTE: Life is not about what we leave to others when we die, rather it is about how we invested our lives and resources while we lived.

2. It did not occur to him that it is dangerous to presume upon God. James 4:13-17

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. 17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

3. It never occurred to him, that while he congratulated himself, God viewed him as a misguided and self-centered fool.

III. Be on your guard against losing your focus.

A. The sins of greed and covetousness are not confined to the rich.

B. Many people believe that if they could just have this or that they would be happy.

C. However, poor people can be just as grasping and self-centered as those who are rich.

D. Jesus pointed out that we are not to focus on what we do, or do not, have because life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.

E. We are to focus on:

1. God's love and care for us. 22-23
 - a. "Consider the ravens..." 24
 - b. Consider that anxiety cannot accomplish anything. 25-26
 - c. "Consider the lilies..." 27-28
 - d. Consider that our Heavenly Father knows our needs. 30
2. Advancing God's Kingdom here on the earth. 31-32
3. Laying up unfailing treasure in Heaven. 33
4. Valuing that which is valuable indeed. 34

APPLICATION

1. A young man was discussing his plans for life with an older Christian he knew, and the conversation went something like this.

"I will learn my trade," said the young man. "And then?" asked the older man. "I will set up in business." "And then?" "I will make my fortune." "And then?" "I suppose that I shall grow old and retire and live on my money." "And then?" "Well I suppose that some day I'll die." "And then?"

2. The Bible declares the following in Hebrews 9:27-28.

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

3. Those who know and love Jesus, while living their lives in eager anticipation of His return, do not have to fear death or the reality of judgment because Jesus has already died on their behalf and experienced their judgment on the Cross.

4. Are you in Christ?

5. Are you living a life that demonstrates that you are in Christ?