

1st Peter

Christian Life Assembly

Spring 2015

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Today's Question #1


If you were to ask the average American, what would they say is the 'good life'?

Today's Question #2

**How would you define
the 'good life'?**




Our Subject

- **“That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. ¹⁰ For the Scriptures say, “If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days,”**
 - **On both sides of these words are instructions for us about how to really live.**
 - **Everyone wants to be happy, everyone wants to live the abundant life – well here is how it's done.**
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Background

- I want to begin by reminding us that Peter is writing to believers who were scattered by persecution.
 - Their lives were not easy and were frequently in jeopardy.
 - Peter specifically mentioned suffering and even a fiery ordeal that was theirs – my point here is that life was not peaceful, easy, or safe.
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Background

- In today's text Peter will tell his audience how to live the "good" life – which, by our standards, would seem out of their reach.
 - But by Peter's standards, the concept of the "good" life, even in these conditions, was well within their reach.
 - The only way that can be true is *if there is more to life than our present and temporal circumstances.*
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **1st Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. 9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. 11 They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- Heretofore our subjects were how to relate to civil authorities, slave masters (bosses), husbands, and wives.
 - Now we will look at how to relate to each other in the church, the neighborhood, and in the marketplace.
 - How we interact with others, no matter the setting, matters.
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **One of the two great commands is to “love your neighbor as yourself”.**
 - **Well, consider this – love is not mostly about what we feel for others, but about how we treat them.**
 - **This is how it is possible to love those we don’t like, and to love our enemies. Loving actions are far more important than loving feelings.**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **In this section, Peter lists the behaviors that, when practiced, whether in the church or elsewhere, lead to a life that you will love – the good life.**
 - **Verses #8 and #9 are really a mini roadmap to a life of virtue, and a life of peace, and joy.**
 - **If you behave as described in verses #8 and #9, you will be more of the person your best self wants to be.**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **Earnest Hemingway wanted nothing to do with the Bible and its teachings.**
 - **He pursued and, by most secular measures, acquired the ‘good life’ – he indulged in all sorts of fleshly pleasures and had lots of earthly accomplishments.**
 - **Yet at age 62, he put a gun to his head and pulled the trigger.**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention stats, among those at the highest risk for suicide are those over 60.**
 - **Why would that be?**
 - **Could it be they've found life so disappointing that they've decided it was not worth waiting around to see how it would end naturally?**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **It comes as no surprise to us that the ‘good life’ is not to be found in chasing the flesh, yet even for Christians, the ‘good life’ seems elusive.**
 - **I think it might have something to do with our approach to life – our attitude.**
 - **Peter says if you want to see good days, you can, but you must engage on God’s terms.**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **“be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.” (all attitudinal)**
 - **Five attitudes that are precursors to the ‘good life’.**
 - **None of them are flashy, fancy, or invoke any of the attributes that our world would associate with the ‘good life’.**
 - **This is more evidence of the extent to which the Christian life is counter cultural.**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- All of the things Peter describes in verse #8 regarding the “good” life are very simple and attainable.
 - I think we undervalue the simple, and tend to overvalue the prominent, showy, and seemingly exceptional experiences.
 - **1st Thessalonians 4:11** *Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before.* **12** Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others.
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **There are all kinds of powerful testimonies – if you were out on the fringe, shipwrecked, and found your way to Christ, you may well stand in front of crowds to tell your story.**
 - **If you were rather ordinary, and found Christ without a lot of drama, no one will ask you to speak, but your life will speak to just as large an audience.**
 - **Paul’s promise is “Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live”.**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **While the things listed in verse #8 are simple and easy to attain, the same cannot be said of what we are called to do in verse #9.**
 - **“Don’t repay evil for evil. Don’t retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing.”**
 - **Anyone who says these are easy, is either Jesus, or someone to whom I cannot relate.**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- When we are mistreated, our first instinct is to return the treatment in kind.
- Remember these Jews were living under these very conditions – they were being persecuted.
- Peter says, if you want to see the ‘good life’, you must resist your natural responses, and seek to be so filled with the Spirit, that your responses become supernatural.






1st Peter 3:8-12

- **We should define the ‘good life’ at this point – just what did David (Psalm 34) and Peter have in mind?**
 - **Ask the average person in our land and you are extremely likely to get the wrong answer.**
 - **Ask David, Peter, and serious Christians and the answer will be very different. (think lasting value, purpose, and blessing)**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **The good life and good days must begin with fulfilling the purpose God made us for – to glorify Him.**
 - **Before the fall there was meaningful, productive, work – we've been made as creative beings who find expression for our creativity through actions.**
 - **So part of the good life and good days must (I believe) include productive work. (paid or unpaid) We simply were not made to be idle.**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **We were also created to do things that have meaning – we must find a way to have meaningful activities in our lives.**
 - **And we were created to interact with God and other people – so the good life must include interactions with God and other people.**
 - **So if we only engage in leisure activities on our own, we are not going to have the ‘good life’ or ‘good days’.**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **“The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil.”**
 - **The righteous have God’s attention (his eyes and ears), but He pays little attention to those making no attempt to obey Him.**
 - **When you, or someone you love, needs the kind of help that only God can provide, your proximity to Him REALLY matters.**
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1st Peter 3:8-12

- **Romans 12:¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. ¹⁵ Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! ¹⁷ Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. ¹⁸ Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. ²⁰ Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads." ²¹ Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.**
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Questions

