

# THE EDIFIER

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## *Wisdom for building a satisfying Christian life*

The following scriptures present the life of a godly person as being intensely satisfying:

*How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures (Ps 36:7-8).*

*Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips (Ps 63:3-5).*

*Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever (Ps 73:25-26).*

*Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness (Ps 107:8-9).*

*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Matt 11:28-30)*

*... I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly (John 10:10).*

*So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness ... (Acts 2:46)*

*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy (1 Thess 2:19-20).*

*Now godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim. 6:6).*

### **Emptiness in the Christian life**

Despite what you've read above, it's all too common for Christians to struggle in terms of finding satisfaction in life. We sometimes feel a void in our lives, and try to fill it with things of the world. We might chase after worldly dreams, interests or schemes. We may even go back to some of the things of darkness that we renounced when we became Christians (Galatians 2:18).

We sometimes feel bored or restless and don't know what to do with ourselves despite God's word crying out to us with a myriad of worthwhile and glorious things to do.

This *disconnect* between the intensely satisfying godly life we read about above and the lives we actually lead could be due to a whole host of factors. It's certainly true that the Christian life has its challenges. It does involve self-denial. Sometimes we must deny ourselves the satisfaction that could be ours because of the higher purposes and standards of God. It also may involve trials and tribulations for the sake of Christ. We are instructed in 1 Peter 2:11, *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul*. Our fleshly nature wars against our new spiritual nature and this detracts from the great satisfaction and fulfilment that should be ours. In light of all of this it is important we as Christians know how to build satisfying Christian lives. Below are some pieces of wisdom for so doing.

### **Advice for building a Christian life that is intensely satisfying and fulfilling**

*Have realistic expectations.* You can't have everything just as you want it. Nobody, Christian or otherwise, does. There will be trials and tribulations for Christ's sake and for other reasons, but you know that ultimately God will work everything out for good for those who love Him.

*A close relationship with God should be the number one priority.* Note the attitude of the Psalmist in

the scriptures above. King David went through hard times, but his feeling of fulfilment in God is strongly evident in these verses.

*Set affections on things above, not on things below.* Colossians 3:2 instructs us to do this. Lay up heavenly treasures, not earthly treasures. If our focus is in gaining fulfilment or satisfaction in earthly things, then it's little wonder we will not gain much satisfaction from the Christian life.

*Serve God heartily.* We generally only get out of something what we put into it. Colossians 3:23 says, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Christ."

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## ***Set affections on things above, not on things below.***

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*Set out to please God and not men.* Colossians 3:23 above also reminds us of this. We can't please everyone, but we can please the One who matters most. Seeking to please men can be very frustrating. Sometimes we will be rejected, or we will go unnoticed. God sees everything and rejects no one who serves Him in truth with a sincere heart.

*Seek deeper fellowship with brethren.* Acts 2:46 and 1 Thessalonians 2:19 illustrate the deep fulfilment that can come from having close relationships with brethren and through serving them.

*Always be looking to grow spiritually and to experience new aspects of the Christian life.* A great source of fulfilment for many is the sense of challenge and growth. Many of us grow discontented if we have no challenges or aren't growing or experiencing new things. Many don't like to be in the same old rut. There's an emptiness or barrenness in stagnating. 2 Peter 1:5-9 counsels us to keep growing so that we are neither barren nor unfruitful as Christians.

*Be patient.* Impatience breeds discontent. Remember a day is as a thousand years for God and a thousand years as a day. God has a different view of time than us.

*Remember to focus on the things that are pure, lovely and of good report, the positive things.* Philipians 4:8-9 counsels us to do this, and promises us peace if we do. In fact, it promises us that the God of peace will be with us. This includes not comparing ourselves negatively with others, such as by focusing on what we don't have as compared to them. We should focus on what we have, not what we don't have. A sure way to feel dissatisfied is to focus on the negative. By training ourselves to replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts we will find more peace and fulfilment.



*Practice obedience to every word of God especially filling your life with love toward God and your fellowman.* Jesus instructs that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. Guilt and a lost sense of purpose result when we stray from God's plan for our lives. Read Psalm 119 and you will see the fantastic sense of purpose and fulfilment the Psalmist had from walking according to God's standards. This includes not cultivating or recultivating the things that war against our new man (1 Peter 2:11), or building again some of the wicked ways we renounced (Galatians 2:18). Love is the fulfilment of the law. Love for God will especially cause us to keep the first four of the 10 commandments and love for our neighbour the last six. Focus on loving God and others and you will be one of the most fulfilled people there is.

*Serve according to giftedness.* We should put most of our energy in serving God into the area we feel God has gifted us in. It's very frustrating trying to put a square peg into a round hole. If we are a preacher and have no ability at constructing mission houses, getting involved in mission house construction will be a disaster. Terrible failure will be most unsatisfying for us.

*Make sure of the Holy Spirit's presence and power.* If we don't have the Holy Spirit, any attempt to live the Christian life will be most unsatisfying. We will lack the true desire for God and His service, we won't understand the point of being a Christian at all, and we won't have the ability or power to live as a Christian.

*Deal with the things that hinder*

*the Holy Spirit.* A true sign the Holy Spirit is being hindered in us is when we don't have much of a desire to do the things mentioned above. A Christian 'unhindered' will have Isaiah's, "Here am I, send me" attitude. The stresses or cares in our lives, as Jesus said, can choke the Word in us. They choke the Holy Spirit too. If our jobs, studies, relationships or other things are hindering the Spirit in us, we need to deal with these stressors. We can't just ignore them and expect to have a fulfilling Christian experience.

#### **One more thing**

The reader is also encouraged to read the book of Ecclesiastes, a book all about King Solomon's search for meaning and fulfilment in life. Much more great advice will be found there for building a satisfying godly life.

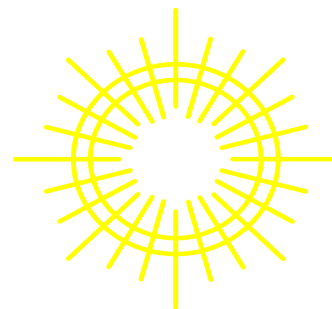
*Written by David Kidd*

#### **Continues from page 4**

(Mat 25:35) "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, [36] I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me... whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

God treasures those selfless acts of service towards one another. It is, in effect, the essence of outreach that God is calling us to.

*Written by John Klassek*



## ***The Second Coming of Christ***

The awe-inspiring phenomena of streams and arches of brilliant coloured lights shooting up into the night sky are characteristic of the auroras borealis and australis. Observed in the northern and southern polar regions of the earth, they can easily light up the night sky, making artificial lights unnecessary. But as bright and breathtaking as the auroras are, they will be paled by the display of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. See what the Scriptures say about the glorious appearing of Jesus.

**Please send for the  
FREE BOOKLET**



### ***ON THE WINGS OF PRAYER***

**Just close your eyes and open your heart,  
And feel your worries and cares depart.  
Just yield yourself to the Father above,  
And let Him hold you secure in His love.**

**For life on earth grows more involved,  
With endless problems that can't be solved,  
But God only ask us to do our best,  
Then He will take over and finish the rest...**

**So when you are tired, discouraged and blue,  
There is always one door that is open to you,  
And that is the door to The House of Prayer,  
And you'll find God waiting to meet you there.**

**And The House of Prayer is no further away,  
Than the quiet spot where you kneel and pray.  
For the heart is a temple when God is there  
As we place ourselves in His loving care.**

**And He hears every prayer and answers each one  
When we Pray in His name - Thy will be done.  
The burdens that seemed too heavy to bear  
Are lifted away on the wings of a prayer.**

~ Lauren Newcomb ~



### **I was thirsty...**

When God attracts your attention and you become a follower of Jesus Christ – a Christian – God also gives you special responsibilities. Not only are you blessed with wonderful hope but now you become part of the ongoing process of sharing it.

“Tell the good news everywhere,” says God in effect. “Do good, feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the homeless, visit those in jail; wherever you go, be lights in this world.”

And this is where we can sometimes misunderstand our Father's desire for us. We say: While I'm happy to be a Christian “on the quiet” – this outreach is beyond me. It's just not me! I don't have the skills! I'm not that sort of person! Besides, I don't have the resources or the time. It's easy, I suppose, to give voice to our limited view.

But, did you know that God doesn't ask more of us than what we already have? God says:

(Mat 10:42) “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones... he will certainly not lose his reward.”

God is not asking for what we don't already have! Anyone in a society like ours can procure a cup of cold, thirst-quenching water. What God is also looking for is a willing attitude. And as we live this way of life toward our fellow man, then God's response is:

***Continued on page 3***

## ‘WORLDLY TRUTH’ - WHAT IS TRUTH?

How many times have you heard, and accepted, a Prime Minister's claim that concerning a particular issue, "the majority of Australians are behind me"?

To be convinced that this statement is true, all that is needed is that there is a perception it is true. The subconscious mind does not evaluate information, it only retrieves information. For instance, when a person says "I am no good at math", the subconscious mind acts to retrieve examples of your poor performance so as to support the statement as being true.

Another cognitive bias, 'anchoring', is where the most recent information or experience forms the basis of subsequent judgements. Jesus warns us to be aware of this and counsels us not to make such judgements (by what we may see). Likewise Solomon, in terms of what we hear, said:

*The first one to plead his cause seems right, Until his neighbour comes and examines him.* (Proverbs 18:17) NKJV

Once an anchor is set, there is a bias toward interpreting other information around that anchor. For example, the initial price for a used car sets the standard for the rest of the negotiations, so that prices lower than the initial price seem more reasonable even if they result in a higher price than what the car is really worth.

Christians have been bought with a price and now belong to Christ. (1 Corinthians 6:20) Satan cannot physically touch us because he has no authority to touch that which belongs to Christ. God has set a wall around us and Satan is not able to climb over because there is no limit to how high, how wide, or how deep the foundation of that wall is. However, he can seek to influence us and we should be aware of this, at all times. His attack on us and God is through opposing, distorting and destroying the values and standards of God. This attack comes through the actions and thoughts of others, thoughts being very powerful. (*"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he..."* Proverbs 23:7) NKJV

The economist John Maynard Keynes wrote "*the ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood.*"

Expanding this, "*What people believe determines how they behave, who they vote for, what laws and rules they embrace, and what kind of systems they'll work to achieve. Change ideas, and you can change the course of history.*" Lawrence Reed (1994), Mackinac Centre for Public Policy.

Public Policy Centres are part of the broad network of Think Tanks (in excess of 5,000 worldwide). A Think Tank (or policy, research institute) is an unregulated, tax exempt organisation that performs research and advocacy concerning social policy, political strategy, economics, military, technology and culture to name but a few. Their activities and objectives remain private, funded by those wishing to create an outcome that their research findings will promote and establish. They are Governments, Multi-National corporations and elite wealthy families. In Australia we have the Lowy Institute (Westfield fame), while in America MIT, Stanford and Harvard Universities, the Carnegie, Rockefeller and Ford foundations and the Council of Foreign Relations.

According to the Economist (Sept 20, 2014 page 60), Think Tanks "*are also embedded in journalism, more to promote ideas than to inform the public or expose wrongdoing*". An example is the U.S. Government, which richly aided by the media created the pretext to invade Iraq. We were told that the majority of American's, and the free world, supported this action (a worldwide poll?).

The aim was to convince the "targeted population group" (Jonathon Coleman, Committee of 300) of this 'truth' by subjecting them to a constant stream of



syndicated, repetitious news articles and discussions via the media.

In reality, there was no majority of Americans calling for war.

#### Polls – changing values on poll at a time

Polls, we are told, are scientifically based, rigorously conducted and accurately reflect the ideas, values and opinions of the total population. This is a powerful tool that few have thought to question. It is false on two counts.

First, the (supposedly random) small sample taken is supposed to represent the entire population numbered in their millions. Second, it is not seeking to understand public opinion, but rather create public opinion.

In his book "The Opinion Makers", David Moore, a former senior editor of the Gallup Poll for 13 years, exposes how pollsters don't report public opinion, they manufacture it. This in turn influences what Government does. Coleman writes that **insiders consider polls a tool to change public opinion.**

The media, complicit in this, conduct their own opinion polls, the results of which they keep headlining as if such information were news (and true). Moore argues that public opinion is made to reflect and justify the current policies of the politically powerful, which is the very opposite of what polls claim to do: hold policy makers accountable for acknowledging popular will.

What we see is what the pollsters think we should see. The purpose of this social conditioning is **to find out how responsive the public is to policy directives** handed down by those who would like to destroy or repudiate Christian standards, and to see how much resistance is generated to what appears in the 'nightly news'.

So next time you hear a poll saying 76% of Australians support same sex marriage, don't accept it as fact or an inevitable outcome. And when you see an article in a newspaper promoting the same, write in if you can and stand up for God's standard, being the salt of the earth you are. Don't get disillusioned by what we face; Elijah thought he was the only man of God left (his false perception). (1Kings 19:10&19) The Lord only needs one man to stand up.



## A Hymn That Resonates

It was a cool afternoon during working hours earlier this week. You could find me walking from a bank on the errands I do for work, only to see me singing to myself as I advanced along the Terrace. Singing to myself isn't an uncommon occurrence for me, as you can find me almost always singing in the shower, in the car or very loudly when wiping crumbs from the kitchen bench-top. I enjoy noise accompanying the background, as it always was when I grew up in my parents' home with day-time television always trying to sell you household appliances when you're doing homework on the dining room table or peeking into the fridge for a snack. I henceforth listen to the radio a lot, typically filled with popular pop-cultured songs, although I more commonly have hymns playing repetitively in the hollows of my head; which I attribute to every Sabbath of my life.

On this particular occasion however, the words of the hymn that resonated within me caught my full attention. Each word settled deeply within my heart and mind, gently forcing me to reflect with thanksgiving and praise to God in my own life. Allow me to relay some of the lyrics to you (emphasis added):

All of my ambitions, hopes *and* plans, I surrender these into *Your* hands. For it's only in *Your will* that I am free. All I am and all I have and *ever* hope to be.

The song is 'Jesus All For Jesus' by Robin Mark – a hymn I've sung explicitly in Church many, many times. Perhaps it's simply because I've experienced some amazing but huge life changes over the past several months, but wow. These words are so rich in meaning, aren't they. *I surrender these into Your hands... for it's only in Your will that I am free.* Amen to that!

*Continued on page eight*

*Written by Richard Todd*

**Answers to 'Test Your Knowledge'**

1. c 2. a 3. c 4. c 5. c

# Youth Vibe



## God of Mercy

Understanding mercy is often difficult for adults and for youth. It is easy to be a harsh critic when you want others to get what is coming to them. “I hope they get what they deserve” and “I’ll get him for that”. God, however, is merciful to the worst of offenders and doesn’t always issue the punishment deserved.

Rom 3:23-24

*“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,”*

*But go and ..... what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not .....’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” Matthew 9:13*

*If we ..... our sins, He is faithful and just to ..... us our sins and to ..... us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9*

*For judgment is without ..... to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy ..... over judgment. James 2:13*

*Therefore be ....., just as your ..... also is merciful. Luke 6:36*

‘Fill in the blanks’





*Continued from page seven*

**Psalm 95:1-5** Come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us give a joyous shout to the rock of our salvation! Let us come before him with thanksgiving. Let us sing him psalms of praise. For the LORD is a great God, the great King above all gods. He owns the depths of the earth, and even the mightiest mountains are his. The sea belongs to him, for he made it. His hands formed the dry land, too.

*Written by Leah Anderson*

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Which of the following names is not a book in the Bible?

a. Nehemiah; b. Jude; c. Hezekiah; d. Joel; e. Song of Solomon

2. Who was the first king of Israel?

a. Saul; b. Solomon; c. David; d. Samuel; e. Moses

3. Who of the following is not a prophet from the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament)

a. Elisha; b. Elijah; c. Aaron; d. Isaiah; e. Joel

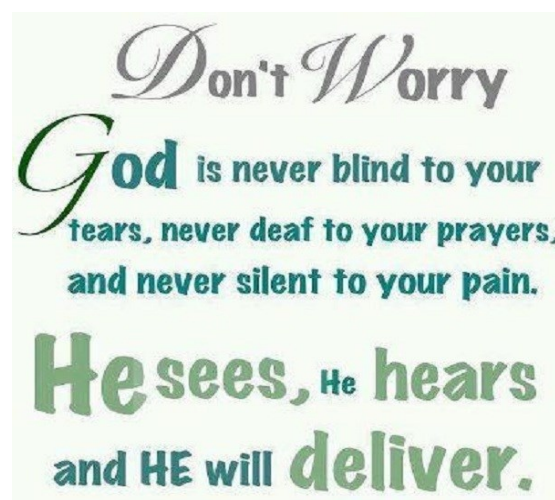
4. How many temptations did Jesus endure in the wilderness?

a. one; b. two; c. three; d. four; e. five

5. In which book is the phrase *"in the beginning was the Word"* found?

a. Acts; b. Isaiah; c. John; d. Leviticus; e. Romans

Answers to these questions are on page six



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Postal Address: P.O. Box 29, Tanunda SA 5352

Web Address: [www.cog7aus.com](http://www.cog7aus.com)