

Living The Good Life, Part 3

- **John 10:10 (KJV)** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.
- Since he has the perspective of more than a half-century of “Spirit-filled living,” John – more than any of the earlier gospel writers – talks about the Holy Ghost. He portrays the teachings, ministry, actions and reactions of Jesus in a way that shows us how to “live the good life” by walking in the Spirit. We need to pay special attention to John’s “snapshots” of the Spirit-filled man!
- While Jesus frequently spoke to “the multitudes,” he also spent considerable time in one-on-one situations. John’s gospel account reveals one such incident in chapter 4. Jesus’ travels were not haphazard; in fact, the gospels give the clear sense that His days were full of “divine appointments.” This is also true of us as Spirit-filled individuals!
- John says that He “must needs go through Samaria” (4:4). Samaria was not considered part of the Holy Land at that time, because it was populated by a mixed race with a pagan core. Because of ongoing hostilities between the Jews and the Samaritans, the most common route was the longer one that crossed the Jordan River and bypassed the territory completely. But Jesus had an appointment!
- John makes it a point to record that “the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans” (4:9), and that His disciples “marveled” that He broke Jewish custom and talked with a woman (4:27). He also reveals that the Samaritan woman was living an immoral lifestyle – she had three strikes against her, but Jesus still loved her!
- One ancient Jewish proverb was: “May I never set eyes on a Samaritan.” Most Jewish men at that time started their day with thanks to God that they were not a Gentile, a slave or a woman! A Hebrew man did not talk with women in public – not even with his mother, sister, daughter or wife. But with one request, “Give me to drink,” Jesus shatters all the religious barriers that held this woman back from a relationship with God.
- She is at first amazed that Jesus would even talk to her, and then intensely curious as to what He means when He talks about “living water.” The Greek language reveals that Jesus uses two different verb tenses in His reply. Consider His meaning:
- **John 4:13-14** Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh (**SUSTAINED ACTION**) of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh (**SINGLE ACT**) of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.
- Literally, whoever continues to drink of anything this world has to offer will thirst again, but whoever takes one drink of the water Jesus gives will never thirst again! The things of the world never completely satisfy; there is always an unquenchable thirst remaining. In fact, one of the most vivid pictures we have of hell is Jesus’ parable of the rich man tormented in flames crying, “I thirst!” That’s the cry of hell!
- Once Jesus reveals to her details of her life that He could not possibly know by human means, she realizes that He is a “prophet” and she asks Him the one question that burned at the heart of the Samaritan – Jewish conflict. **WHAT RELIGION IS RIGHT? WHAT KIND OF WORSHIP MAKES ME RIGHT WITH GOD?**
- The Samaritans only accepted the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, so they were missing all the later revelations God gave to His people. They didn’t know about all the wonderful forms of worship that King David wrote about. They didn’t have the exhortations of the prophets. They were missing huge portions of TRUTH about how to serve God.
- But the Jews were just as bad, because they had the entire revelation of Old Testament Scripture, but their religion had become mere formality. They had TRUTH, but they were entirely lacking the heart or the SPIRIT of relationship with God.
- Jesus bypasses the controversy entirely by giving this anonymous woman the most important key to true worship – **BALANCE BETWEEN SPIRIT AND TRUTH!** He tells her that the Father “constantly seeks” for such worshippers.
- **John 4:23-24** But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.
- The word “**BALANCE**” means to be in equilibrium, to be equivalent; to arrange so that one set of elements exactly equals another; to equalize in weight or proportion; to bring into harmony. It implies the adjusting of two or more things that are contrary or opposed so that no one outweighs the other in effect.

- **Proverbs 11:1** A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight.
- **Job 31:6** Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.
- **Daniel 5:27** Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.
- In life and in church, it is always easier to lean either to the right or the left. The most difficult position is in the middle of the road (where you get hit by the traffic coming both ways!). EXTREMES ARE EASY; BALANCE IS DIFFICULT!
- It is all too easy to overemphasize some Biblical principles at the expense of other equally important principles. But the Bible instructs us to balance the scales!

The same Bible that teaches	Also teaches
Be ready for His coming	Occupy until He comes
God looks on the heart	Man looks on the outside
We are saved by faith	Faith without works is dead
God is a God of love	God is a God of justice
God loves us just the way we are	He loves us too much to leave us that way

- Unbalanced teaching is damaging because it creates unbalanced churches and unbalanced Christians. And nowhere is balance more important than in our individual and corporate WORSHIP of God. If we don't do it the way He wants, we don't please Him!

WHY DO WE NEED TO BALANCE SPIRIT AND TRUTH?

1. GOD'S TRUTH STRENGTHENS THE STAKES; GOD'S SPIRIT LENGTHENS THE CORDS.

- **Isaiah 54:2** Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;
- There must be balance in evangelism. If the church is going to grow, we need to "lengthen the cords" and move into places we have never been before. But we must simultaneously "strengthen the stakes" and nail down the truths that have brought us this far. The church can never leave prayer, holiness or doctrine behind. A bigger tent with longer ropes must have stronger stakes, or it will be the victim of strong winds!

2. GOD'S TRUTH IS A DEFENSIVE WEAPON; GOD'S SPIRIT IS AN OFFENSIVE WEAPON.

- Truth protects me when the enemy advances against me!
 - **Psalm 91:4** He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.
 - **Ephesians 6:14** Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
- But the Spirit allows me to advance against the enemy!
 - **Isaiah 61:1** The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
 - **Zechariah 4:6** Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.
 - **Isaiah 59:19** When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

3. GOD'S TRUTH BRINGS DEATH TO THE OLD MAN; GOD'S SPIRIT GIVES LIFE TO THE NEW MAN.

- It is a known fact that truth can kill! Have you ever been caught between truth and tact when looking at a young couple's new bundle of joy? ("What a beautiful baby!")
- According to an article in one women's magazine, there are some questions that wives should never ask their husbands ...
 - a) WHAT ARE YOU THINKING? The proper answer to this question, of course is, "I'm sorry if I've been pensive, dear. I was just reflecting on what a warm, wonderful, caring, thoughtful, intelligent, beautiful woman you are and what a lucky guy I am to have met you." Obviously, this statement bears no resemblance whatsoever to what the guy was really thinking at the time, which was most likely hockey, baseball, hunting, or how he would spend the insurance money if you died.

- b) DO YOU LOVE ME? The correct answer to this question is, "Yes." For those guys who feel the need to be more elaborate, you may answer, "Yes, dear." Wrong answers include: "I suppose so," "Would it make you feel better if I said yes?" and "That depends on what you mean by 'love.'"
- c) DO I LOOK FAT? The correct male response to this question is to confidently and emphatically state, "No, of course not" and then quickly leave the room. Wrong answers include: "I wouldn't call you fat, but I wouldn't call you thin either," "Compared to what?" "A little extra weight looks good on you" and "I've seen fatter."
- d) WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF I DIED? Basically every answer to this question is a wrong one, except maybe this: "Dearest darling, in the event of your untimely demise, life would cease to have meaning for me and I would hurl myself under the tires of the first Domino's Pizza truck that came my way."
- In one small mid-western town a minister was given a home-baked pie by an elderly woman. He graciously accepted it and later on tried it with his family, only to find that it was absolutely horrible. Try as they might, they could not stomach the goods and finally were forced to dump the entire thing into the garbage. Of course, the next Sunday the same elderly woman asked, "Did you enjoy my pie?" The minister panicked, until sudden inspiration hit: "Sister, as God is my witness, I can truly say that no pie like yours lasts long around our house."
 - **Romans 7:7 (KJV)** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.
 - The "truth" about me brings death to me – my old man must die when faced with what the Word of God says about sin. But then God gives me His Spirit to help me live a brand new life!
 - **Romans 8:26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
 - **Romans 8:11** But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

4. GOD'S TRUTH GIVES ME SALVATION; GOD'S SPIRIT GIVES ME RELATIONSHIP.

- Listen to these verses and ask yourself "what saves me?"
 - **James 1:21** Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls
 - **1 Peter 3:21** Even baptism doth also now save us
 - **Acts 2:40** Save yourselves from this untoward generation
 - **Titus 3:5** According to his mercy he saved us
 - **Matthew 10:22** He that endureth to the end shall be saved
 - **Proverbs 28:18** Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved
 - **Luke 7:50** Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.
 - **Acts 16:31** Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved
 - **Ephesians 2:8** For by grace are ye saved through faith
 - **Romans 10:13** Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved
 - **Romans 8:24** For we are saved by hope
 - **Mark 16:16** He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved
 - **Romans 10:9** If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
- So which one of these things saves me? THEY ALL DO! I am saved when I obey the Word of God, which is God's truth.
- **1 Timothy 2:4** Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.
- **2 Thessalonians 2:10** They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
- If it was God's grace, mercy or love that alone saved me, the whole world would be saved. I HAVE TO OBEY GOD'S WORD TO APPLY SALVATION TO MY LIFE.
- Truth saves me, but there are a lot of insecure saved people! God's Spirit works with truth to give me a RELATIONSHIP.
- **Romans 8:15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

5. GOD'S TRUTH GIVES ME FREEDOM; GOD'S SPIRIT GIVES ME LIBERTY.

- **John 8:32** And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
- Some people see God's truth as too restrictive and confining. Their question is, "If Jesus came to set us free, then why does God's Word contain rules?"
- There are 206 bones in your body. They, like rules, are rigid and inflexible. But God did not give you bones to restrict your movement; He gave you a skeleton to provide you with maximum mobility. Without your unyielding bones, your muscles would have nothing to work against, and you would be little more than a blob of flesh on the ground.
 - What do you call a man with no arms and no legs in a swimming pool? Bob.
 - What do you call a man with no arms or legs that goes water skiing? Skip.
 - What do you call a man with no arms and no legs in a ditch? Phil.
- FREEDOM means, "the absence of restraint, liberation from slavery." That's what truth does for me!
- But LIBERTY goes beyond FREEDOM. It means, "the power to choose, lack of inhibition."
- **2 Corinthians 3:17** Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
- Quite literally, God's truth frees me from sin, but God's Spirit allows me to ENJOY my freedom!
- **John's third "snapshot" of a Spirit-filled man: He knows how to balance His worship!**
- **2 Corinthians 3:6** Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.
- Mere religion isn't much better than sin – they both KILL! But a real relationship with God brings LIFE!