

A Work of the Spirit!

Welcome/Follow on social media/Italy Trip

Intro: Life-long transformational journey. Living in God's presence. Why?

We all want to be happy, right? What is the secret to happiness? What makes us happy?

1. **Strong Social Connections**: Positive, deep relationships with family, friends, and community is the single most significant predictor of health and happiness.
2. **A Sense of Meaning and Purpose**: Connecting to something larger than yourself— provides deeper satisfaction than fleeting pleasures.
3. **Physical and Mental Health**: Maintaining your body through regular exercise, adequate sleep, and proper nutrition supports the production of "feel-good" hormones like serotonin and dopamine.
4. **Gratitude and Mindset**: Actively practicing gratitude and reframing negative events as opportunities for growth. This requires faith and produces hope and can rewire your brain for a more positive outlook.
5. **Financial Stability**: While wealth does not guarantee happiness, having enough to meet basic needs like food, shelter, and security is essential for reducing chronic stress.
6. **Autonomy and Freedom**: Having the power to make your own life choices and act authentically is a major driver of life satisfaction.

This is abundant life, a blessed life, a description of the kingdom of God. This is how God invites us to live, the way we are designed to live, and the way Jesus lived. The question is, how do we learn to live this way? This week and next I'm going to do my best to answer that question.

- **Acts 1:8, Witness**- not primarily preaching, this is about my life, your life being a witness to the people around us. They see a blessed, abundant, kingdom culture life and it is a powerful witness for Jesus.

1. Posture of Surrender. Ephesians 5:18

Explain: This is why the gospel message is so important. If there is a God, who created me to flourish, who loves me so much He was willing to die on the cross to free me from the power and penalty of sin and sent the Holy Spirit to empower me to live a blessed life, I want to follow Him. History shows us, independence, sin, violating God's law, the law of love produces Hell. Jesus came so that we might have life! Surrender is trusting in the wisdom and goodness of God and deciding to follow Him, leading us into eternal life. When we begin to follow Christ, we are spiritual children and need to be led by a wise, loving father.

- **Adam and Eve**
- **Children**- We have to teach them everything
- **Teachers, Coaches, Mentors,**

Illustration: Prodigal, elder brother- they do not trust the heart of the father

Argue: Matthew 7:24-29. Wise and foolish builders

Apply: Moment of prayer- do you believe God is good, wise and wants to lead you into your best life or are you hanging onto your independence. The Bible teaches; independence creates Hell in your life. **How do we surrender to God?**

2. Surrender to Scripture. 2 Timothy 3:16 NIV

Explain: The Bible is not just a religious book. The Bible is God's self-revelation. The Bible is the primary way God has communicated to mankind concerning who He is, His kingdom, and how we can experience heaven on earth.

- **All Scripture:** Some is tough to understand- marriage/giving/mornings/lust
- **God breathed/Inspired/from God.** 40 men, 1,500 years, 3 languages, 3 continents
- **Teaching (Doctrine/noun):** Instructs believers in the truth, doctrine, theology, morality, and ethics.
- **Reproof (Rebuking):** Identifies and convicts of sin, error, or wrong behavior, showing where one has wandered from the right path.
- **Correction:** Provides the means to set things right and restore the believer to a proper condition; it "straightens us out" after a rebuke.
- **Training in Righteousness:** Offers ongoing, positive education in godly behavior, helping the believer develop the habits and character necessary to stay on the right path.

Argue: Psalm 1:1-3 (NKJ version)

Apply: Do you read and meditate on scripture?

- OT, Gideon: Rise up mighty warrior! Judges 6
- NT, Peter denies Christ, becomes the leader of the early church
- Ps, Worship, do not harden your hearts

3. Surrender to Holy Spirit. John 14:26

Explain: When we have a heart of surrender, when we are meditating on scripture, it is much easier to hear the Holy Spirit when He speaks to us.

Illustrate: In the book, Sensitivity to the Spirit by Kendall, he points out that the Bible describes the Holy Spirit as a Dove, rather than a pigeon. These two birds may, at first glance, appear similar but they are very different.

Dove (Holy Spirit)

Gentle/peaceful/sensitive
Cannot be trained or controlled
Easily frightened
Eats clean: fruits and seeds

Pigeon (Man)

Boisterous, feisty, aggressive
Can be trained, manipulated
Unbothered by noise, traffic, people
Will eat almost anything even poop

Mate for Life

Several mates, no long-term loyalty

Argue: Ephesians 4:29-32

Apply: Prayer for forgiveness and renewal.

4. Surrender to Authority.

Explain: Your Christian community can be a source of wisdom and protection if you take advantage of it.

Illustrate: Think about the worst decisions you have made...If you would have asked... When you are unwilling to ask, or you keep asking until someone finally agrees with you, again independence is on the verge of bringing Hell into your life.

Quote: "I have made up my mind, do not confuse me with the facts." Dr. Bennett

Explain: Church is led by a group spirit filled believers. Acts 6, Acts 15, Elders in each church

Argue: Proverbs 11:14: "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety."

Proverbs 15:22: "Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established."

Apply: Prayer, Lord, what am I hiding, what do I need counsel about?

5. Quick Repentance.

Explain: When we have a heart of surrender, are meditating on scripture, when we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and when we are living in community, we are naturally quick to repent. When we think of the word repentance, it feels harsh. Repentance, for a follower of Christ is a gentle, simple, daily course correction.

Illustrate: Shepherds staff- you do not beat sheep; you just apply pressure. You are simply guiding. However, when we do not live this way, we grow insensitive to this gentle pressure and again our independence brings Hell into our lives.

Argue: John 10:27, Ephesians 4:30 (do not grieve...), Hebrews 12:5-11

Apply: Prayer of repentance