

Let’s talk about: The Good Life. What is it exactly and more importantly, are you living it? We are conditioned to think that it consists of a few key elements. If you have these: Life is Good!

- **Money** – The more money, the more security, the more ability to enjoy life. Money is good.
- **Stuff** – Part of the money goes to buying lots and lots of cool things. A valuable life has valuable stuff!
- **Importance** – Being respected and acknowledged by others. Like **Power**, influence, honor for self.
- **Health** – Being healthy, fit, not in pain – these make all the rest work and demand diet and exercise!
- **Good-Looks** – Spend tons of time and money on exercise, clothing, makeup and hair gel.

We might call this: The American Dream. Money, Things, Respect, Health and Beauty. It is sold to you as the key to happiness on countless billboards, television screens, by our neighbors and certainly the devil.

Question: If such EXCESS makes “The Good Life,” why are so many rich and beautiful people so unhappy?

- Hollywood infidelity, divorce, bickering, self-destructive behavior, substance abuse, suicide.
- The Lotto Curse – stories of going broke, legal troubles, broken homes.
- Television Reality Shows – people who “have it all” have lives filled with needless drama.

Now don’t get me wrong: things like financial stability, a measure of good things to enjoy, some respect among your peers, and good looks (I hear), can certainly be nice, and bring a measure of happiness to life, but is it really what “The Good Life” here is all about? And does it mean that true happiness is only for the few who have such?

This begs a question: “WHO WILL SHOW US GOOD?” Will our society show it to us? Will you find it on your own? **Psalm 4:6**. The answer is God. **God knows Good!**

And we will find goodness and peace and happiness in life, right here and right now, under the sun, when we find the goodness in the things that are good to God.

What are the things God made FOR US and said, “There it is. That’s the good stuff”?

Excess Riches, Things, Power, Beauty? Where is the verse for that?

No, “The Good Life” is a lot simpler than that, and because of God’s wisdom, a lot better too.

Let’s go back to the beginning, Genesis 1-3, to see from the Father’s giving hand what makes life great!

I. The Natural World is Good to God

- a. **Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25** – The universe, sun, moon, stars, sky, trees, animals, mountains and oceans: all made by God FOR us! And what did God say? “Good.”
- b. But who has enough time to smell the roses? Who can sit on the porch and listen to the birds sing? Who can take a walk near a body of water in a life where every second is used to reach for more?
- c. We are too busy working for money, enjoying our electronics, seeking approval of men, or pursuing a better reflection in the mirror. A beautiful blue sky day is God snapping His fingers: “Hey!”
- d. **Psalm 19:1-6** – *God did this to fill your life with joy and to draw your mind to Him!*
- e. My friend **Rick** lost his wife to cancer. His life lost meaning. He had faith in God but no joy or sense of goodness to move forward. Then he joined Habitat for Humanity and went to Alaska to build a school. One day he went off on his own and sat on the side of a mountain for hours. He looked, breathed, cried, smiled, and came down a changed man!
- f. Every appeal to the good and fulfilling value of nature may not be as dramatic as that, but it can be as powerful! Sitting on TSP lake with our \$10 fishing poles, my two boys and I catching and releasing perch as the sun sets through trees. That’s the good life! (Alaskan Bush People)

II. The Basics of Life are Good to God

- a. **Genesis 2:7-10, 15-16** – After making man, God surrounded him with a place to live, a river to provide water and trees from which to eat. Adam could have lived there forever, cared for and nourished and safe, without an iPhone!
- b. A place to eat and drink and rest and live: well many have come to call it inadequate. But don’t you see, those are the true building blocks of the good life: basic provisions of safety and need.
- c. This has long been forgotten by most in our time, hasn’t it? There is little true appreciation and gratitude for the basics. An exuberance and satisfaction with “food and raiment.”
- d. Prayers and conversations about the joys of existing, fed, housed and whole.
 - i. Until they are in jeopardy or gone, then they become so precious. Sad.
- e. **Matthew 6:25-33** – Jesus wants you to FEEL something. Right here and right now, and every day you live. What is it? Contentment. A singing bird-like happiness that you are blessed with life itself and all you need to live it. Already. In your life. From God.

- i. And this clears our heads and hearts to live for the kingdom in thankfulness.
 - ii. Sure there will be the pursuit of more, but by a life that doesn't need it.
- f. Sad to chase what is already here. Sometimes we long for what is quite literally right under our noses. A man sits at a breakfast table, in his house, dressed comfortably, recently up from a night's rest, wondering: *"When will I find happiness?"* It's already here. Embrace it while you can!

III. Your Beloved Family is Good to God

- a. **Genesis 2:18-24; 1:27-28, 31** – God saw that man had a need. He was surrounded by many good things but needed something "very good."
- b. **Proverbs 18:22** – "He who finds a wife finds a good thing." **Eccl. 9:9** – "your reward"
 - i. What more is there to the good life than nature and needs? A companion.
 - ii. Not just an institution, nor an agreement, but another person to share life with.
- c. **Psalm 127:3** – "Behold, children are a gift of the Lord."
 - i. Children are the fruit that grow off the tree of marriage and bring great joy and purpose and perspective and a dose of humility to this life!
- d. If this is God's great reveal for happiness, why are so many homes unhappy, breaking or even broken? Why are so many seeking joy and purpose in other things and other people? Why is there not breathtaking pleasure every time you see their faces?
 - i. Maybe people have given up on God's plan for "The Good Life." Maybe some of God's people have bought in to the idea that good is out there, and can never be attained. The Chase!
 - ii. Maybe people have forgotten that good is not what you make of life, but what God has built and handed to you: and most precious of all – your family.
- e. *Two friends of mine were married two years. They were both Christians and she was raised in a Christian home. All he wanted in life was to make enough money to provide for her and just be together, enjoy each other, raise a family. But for her, it wasn't enough. She needed a career plan, prestige and progress in the world's eyes. She pursued the temptations that lay around it, and she has lost her marriage. The world does not love her, but her husband did. He was good for her and to her and she will never find that again, not in a way that pleases the Giver of all Good.*
- f. Invest in your home. Spend time with your family. Don't look for what is already here.

IV. Your Eternal Soul is Good to God

- a. Do you feel like there must be more? More than nature, provisions and relationships? You are right. There is something more, something very good that God has crafted for you and in you.
- b. It seems in our design to need HOPE and something to reach for to live a fulfilling life.
- c. **Genesis 1:26-27** – Unique to all God's creation, he gave you... His Image! What does that mean?
 - i. **Ecclesiastes 12:7** – A spiritual, eternal, everlasting soul is in you... Like God!
 - ii. A part of you exists that will live beyond this place and time and return to God!
 - iii. You will see God and the goodness of God and be in it's presence with God forever!
- d. There is nothing Good about your life found in the Bible or the world compared to your soul!
- e. So, why do men live like animals? As if the only joys in life reside in the momentary fulfillment of the next conquest or accomplishment in a fleeting physical life?
 - i. Without the soul, even God's gifts will not sustain us, as this life passes away in death.
- f. **Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, 9-11** – There it is. Do you feel that? Eternity in your heart. Hope of heaven.
- g. Protect this! Take care of it. Don't let the world cause you to disregard it. Your soul is truly the greatest Good God has given you, and He wants it back one day. That's something to live for.
 - i. **James 1:21-22** – Hear, Believe and Obey, and never let your soul lose its goodness!

Conclusion: You have seen what is Good to God: elements of the Good Life. So, let's close with a warning. Satan wants to strip it from you. He wants you to lose all that God has provided, and have nothing, as he has nothing.

Genesis 3:4-6 – So he tries to SUBTRACT by ADDITION! Do you follow? He wants to add to your life the hope of greater things outside of what God has provided. He tells you the real greatness of life is in the sinful things, the worldly things, greed and selfishness and immorality, where God will not let you go. By adding things that ought not be... we lose things – we lose focus or maybe family or maybe our forever with God – all of the Good Things!

Say no to the devil. How? By saying "THANKS" to God. Thank Him for your life. Thank Him for the natural world of beauty and evidence. Thank Him for your food and covering and home. Thank Him for your loved ones. Thank Him for the hope of heaven for your soul through Jesus. Then, live like it is enough; because for the child of God these things are more than enough. They are: the Good Life.