

The Essentials for Living the Christian Life

Acts 17:24-26

If you were to ask a biologist, “What are the essentials of life?” he would answer, air, food, water, light. If you were to ask a pharmacist, “What are the essentials of life?” he would probably give you a long list of trace minerals, and important vitamins that you need. If you were to ask a survivalist, “What are the essentials of life?” he would say a shotgun, bottled water and a bunker.

But you are more than just physical life. Life has a *spiritual element* and life has an *emotional element* and there are *spiritual and emotional* factors that are just as essential to life as air and water and food and you need these to really live. In fact without these you are not really *living*, you are just *existing*. You are not *thriving*, you are just *surviving*.

I want to begin by sharing with you essentials for a balanced life.

We are living in a rapidly changing world that is radically different from what it used to be and it is my job as your pastor to prepare you emotionally and spiritually for the changes that are coming your way, because the years ahead are going to be very different in ways that many of us have never even imagined. We need to get ready for it. So we are beginning a new series today that I entitled “Living the Christian Life Today and Tomorrow.” **What is it going to take to live the Christian life today and tomorrow?** Today I just want to give you an overview of the *five essentials of life* and then we are going to come back and look at how to build these into your life.

First, you will need power to live on. You need that because there are lots of things in life that drain your life of *power*, drain your life of *energy* and *strength* and *vitality* and *stamina*. *Change* definitely can

rob you of energy. Stress can rob you of power. Conflict can drain your life. Delay can drain your life of energy. Frustration can drain your life of energy. And everyday work can drain you of the power in your life.

Where do you get the energy and the stamina and the power to live on? Where do you get the energy to just keep going when you feel like giving up?

People try different things: fads, therapies, pills, and things like that. But the real secret of power to live on is this: focus on God. The more you focus on God the more power you are going to have in your life. God is the source of all power. God has all the power you need. The Bible says, “Nothing is impossible with God.” The problem is this: our mind is more focused on our problems than on God’s power and promises! Isaiah 40:30-31 says, “Even youth grow weary and tired and vigorous young men stumble badly yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not become weary.”

God has all the power you need and you get it by waiting on Him or by focusing on Him. The more you focus on God the more you plug into His power. If you spend a lot of your life focusing on God, you are going to have a lot of power in your life. If you spend a little time focusing on God, you are going to have a little power in your life. If you don’t spend any time focusing on God, you are going to have no power in your life.

There is a word for focusing on God in the Bible. That word is “worship.” Worship is simply focusing on God. Some people think worship is a ritual. It’s not. Some people think worship is a regiment, rules and regulations. It’s not. Some people think worship is a ceremony. It’s not. Worship simply means focusing on God.

You can worship by yourself in your backyard. You can worship with another person or a couple of people in a small group. You can worship in a large crowd like this. **It doesn't matter.** Whenever you are focusing on God, you are worshiping and that is the secret of the *power* to live on.

How do you worship? Psalm 46:10 says, “Be still and know that I am God.” You need to *quiet yourself, drop the distractions, center in on God and His greatness and His love and what He wants to do in your life – His plan and purpose.* The more you do this, the more you be still and know that God is God, the more you are going to find yourself *restored, renewed and refreshed* on a daily basis.

Some of you came here this morning feeling pretty fatigued. You are frustrated by different things you are facing. You may feel a little *overwhelmed.* You may feel like the *problems* and the *pressures* and the *stress* in your life right now is at a pretty high level and rising.

I want to invite you right now to pause, step back and be still and listen as the Holy Spirit speaks to you in this Service. That is called *worship* and when you do that you will begin to feel the power of God ministering to you. The same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, the same power that rolled the stone away from the tomb so people could see that Christ is risen and is available to you.

Second, you need people in your life. The Bible calls it “*fellowship.*” You were made for *relationships.* You do need the *power of God* in your life but you also need *people* around you to *support* you, *encourage* you and to *fellowship* with. **The Bible tells us that when God made Adam, He put him in the Garden of Eden, which was a perfect environment.** No *problems, no pressure, no pain.* Yet Genesis 2:18 says God looked down at Adam in a perfect environment and said, “It is not good for man to be alone.”

It is not God's will for you to be lonely. You were made for *relationships*. I don't care if you ever get married or not. **I don't care if you are young or old, a Christian or non-Christian.** You were made for other people. And God says you need people to live with not just power to live on.

I recently read a study that discovered that if you isolate yourself from other people, no close friends, you have no intimate relationships with other believers, you are three times more likely to die an early death, you are four times more likely to suffer emotional burnout, you are five times more likely to be clinically depressed and you are ten times more likely to be hospitalized for emotional or mental disorder. You were made for *relationships*. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 puts it this way, "Two people are better than one because they get more done by working together. If one falls down, the other can help him up." The next verse in that chapter says, "If you don't have anybody to help you up when you are all alone, pity on you."

You need people in your life. Fortunately God has designed a custom-made support network just for you and it is called the "*church*." Church is *not something you go to*. **Church is not an event you attend.** Church is a *family that God meant for you to be connected to*, to be a part of. He wants you to have *relationships* and *connections* and *fellowship* in the body of Christ, in the family of God.

Unfortunately, when you get busy usually the first thing that gets short-changed in your life is your relationships. The first relationship that gets hurt when you get busy is your relationship to God. You start saying, "I don't have time to come to Church every Sunday. I don't have time to get involved in Sunday and/or Wednesday Night Bible study."

And if that describes you, you are too busy. Your priorities are all out of whack. The Bible warns about this in Hebrews 10:25, "Let us

not neglect our meeting together.” **Why?** Because you need it. It is not just what you *hear* and *learn*, it is the *relationships* that you build.

Three, you need principles to live by. You need *power* to live on and *people* to live with but you also need *principles* to live by. You need a clearly thought out philosophy of life. **You need a moral foundation.** You need a *code of conduct* and *conviction* that gives you stability when everything is flying off the wall.

The Bible says that you were created to have a relationship with God. That’s why you were made. And God wants you to live with Him in eternity by developing first a relationship here on earth. **You are not going to spend forever here on earth.** You are only going to be on this earth 60, 70, 80, maybe 90 years. When your body dies, that is not the end of you. **You are going to keep on living.** Where you spend your eternity and what you do in eternity is determined by your relationship with Jesus Christ while here on earth.

Every principle you need for life is in this book. Psalm 119:19 reads like this in the Hebrew, “I am a pilgrim here on earth (that means you are just passing through; you are not going to stay here) I need a map and Your commands are my chart and my guide.” Everything you need is right here – the *principles* to build your life on and to live by. They are right here.

Today, more than ever you need to settle in your mind the principles that you are going to live on. What are the *statements*, the *values* that are going to hold your life up?

Four you need a plan to live out. You need an *outlet* for expressing the *talents* and *abilities* that God has given you. You need a *plan* and a *place* where you can make a contribution with your life, with your *talents*, with your *abilities* in this world. **You need a plan for how God is going to use you to make the world a better place.** Really it all boils down to two options: *you can live your life by*

design or you can live your life by default. You can live your life *intentionally* or you can live your life *accidentally*. You can make the most of what God has given you or you can *waste it, blow it*, and kind of *drift through life unintentionally, without a plan and wasting what God has given to you.*

The truth and good news is, God does have a plan for your life. How do I know God has a plan for my life? Because He said so! Listen to Jeremiah 29:11-12, “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen.” The Bible says in Ephesians 2:10, “God made us to do good works, which God planned in advance for us to live our lives doing.” **The fact that you are alive means God has a plan for you.** God’s plan for your life is *service*. God wants you to *serve Him* and God wants you to serve Him by *servicing others*.

Before you were even born, God planned the ways of service, the ways of making an impact in the world that He wanted you to do specifically.

How do I know what God wants me to do? How do I know where He wants me to serve? The answer is in Jeremiah 29:12, “In those days when you pray, I will listen.”

Five, you need a purpose to live for. Everybody needs to feel like his or her life matters. You need to feel like you’re not *just taking up space*, that you’re not *just using oxygen, wasting resources*, that *your life matters and it counts*. **You need to know your purpose.** In fact, if you don’t understand your *purpose*, life simply does not make sense. **Why go another day forward?** If you don’t know your purpose in life and you are not fulfilling God’s plan in life, God doesn’t owe you one more day.

Sadly, most people never even discover God's purpose for their lives. They live and die just existing.

You were made with a hole in your heart that only God can fill. You were made to have God at the center of your life. If God isn't number one and at the center of your life, then you're going to try to cram something else in there that's a poor, second-class substitute. **And you're going to be disappointed.** If you give *first class allegiance* to a *second-class cause*, you are going to be betrayed. Nothing can take the place of God in your life. When you try to fill it with something else and put something else at the center of your life instead of God that becomes your god and it becomes an addiction.

These are the five essentials you have to have to live the Christian life today and tomorrow. In this series we are going to look at how do you tap into God's *energy* and *power*. We are going to look at how do you develop *healthy relationships* that support you. **We are going to look at how do you build your life on *unchanging principles* that last.** And we are going to look at how do you make the most of the *talents* that God has given you. How do you find and fulfill the *purpose* that you were put on this planet for.

But today, let me close by giving you the very first step. If you have never received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, why not make that decision right now?

Everyone please stand for prayer.

Father,

I want to thank You that You have promised to provide everything that I need to live and to serve You. I want to follow Your plan for my life and I want to fulfill the purpose that You created me for. In Jesus' name. Amen.