

The Life Jesus Gives

Dr. David H. McKinley

Easter Sunday, April 15, 2001
Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, FL

Easter was an outdoor event. Easter was a celebration of life as it was meant to be: full, abundant, strong, eternal! Jesus is the Life Giver. So many people today are seeking more out of life, but they are looking to the wrong sources. I want us to consider the result of the resurrection and the life Jesus came to give. Easter represents a fresh start, a new beginning! This is what we have come to celebrate: life in Christ!

Four facts of life Jesus gives . . .

☐☐ The Life Jesus Gives is Spiritual

Much of world today focuses on the physical needs of the body. Life is a physical thing, but it is also a spiritual.

Many of us can quote John 3:16. The opening verses of chapter 3 is a discussion with a religious man who has a need to understand the importance of spiritual life.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." John 3:3-6, 8

When Jesus speaks of our need for birth, He is speaking about a birth of the spirit, a new beginning, a new life source.

The quality of the life you live is based on the source of life you depend on.

Think of **common life sources** in our world today:

People: We can't control them

Places: We get bored with them

Possessions: We never get enough

Pleasures: We get obsessed with them

Dry wells. Empty lives. Our need is not something physical; it is something spiritual.

Nicodemus was a religious man, but not necessarily a man whose spiritual needs had been met.

When you understand who Christ is and what He has done, you realize how great it is to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and new life. Everyone of us needs to come to the One who provides the source of spiritual life.

☐☐ The Life Jesus Gives is Powerful

Everyone who has ever truly met Christ, is transformed!

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

II Corinthians 5:17

☐ The Life Jesus Gives is Fruitful

What part of the grocery store do you like? Nothing is more inviting and beautiful than the produce section.

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” John 10:10

When I see that word “abundant,” I think of garden, one that is overflowing.

When Christ is in you, He gives you a new source and expression of life.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:19-23

The Christian life is one that Christ lives in you by the power of His Spirit and resurrection. Contrasted with this is the old life, the products of the natural man without Christ.

The fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 provide a fantastic picture of the values and virtues needed in our lives, homes, churches and communities. Once we receive the gift, we begin to open the “packages” and enjoy the benefits. Do you need some of these in your life?

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, unclean-

ness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outburst of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19-21

In contrast, Galatians 5:19-21 gives us a look at what life is like without God.

Jesus came to give you a new life with new fruit, a new nature unlike the one with which you were born.

☐ The Life Jesus Gives is Eternal

“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” John 10:28

Eternal life! Life that lasts forever!

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

You were made to live forever, not a recycle plan, but a genuine reality in time, space and eternity. You will live forever, either in heaven or hell. Jesus came and took our sins, our separation from God, so that we might experience life abundant through Him.

This message was preached from the pulpit of Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, Florida, on Easter Sunday, April 15, 2001, by Dr. David H. McKinley, Senior Pastor. The complete message is available on audio cassette tape through the media ministry of Boca Raton Community Church. To order this message, simply email us at tapes@bocacommunity.org and specify the message title, date, and billing information. (\$4 per tape including shipping and handling).

Life to the Fullest: I Choose Love

Dr. David H. McKinley

Sunday, April 22, 2001

Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, FL

Love is the most vital need of people in our world other than air, food, and water.

“Love is the one ingredient of which our world never tires and of which there is never an abundance. The world will never out-grow its need for love.” —C. Neil Strait

“Love is the medicine for our sick old world. If people can learn to give and receive love, they will usually recover from their physical or mental illnesses.” —Dr. Karl Menninger, Founder of Menninger Clinic

On the web site www.amazon.com, there are 31,547 book titles listed on the subject of love.

Galatians 5:13-14
Galatians 5:22-23

Life to the Fullest is the theme of the series over the next few weeks. Christ can change a life and make it productive, fruitful, abundant.

John 10:10

Preliminary Thoughts:

1. God wants me to live a love-filled life.

2. The source of love is God.

God alone enables and empowers a life of love. Of all the descriptions we employ to describe and relate what God is like, the purest and simplest is this: “God is love.” I John 4:16

“By this will all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

When we get connected to the Creator in a dynamic relationship, His life flows in us.

3. Love is the key to a fulfilled life.

“If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don’t love, I’m nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. If I speak God’s Word with power, revealing all His mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, ‘Jump,’ and it jumps, but I don’t love, I’m nothing. If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don’t love, I’ve gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I’m bankrupt without love.”

I Corinthians 13:1-3 (The Message)

Life - Love = Nothing

4. Love is developed through the work of the Holy Spirit of God in my life.

Just as fruit must bud, grow and mature, so should the fruit of love.

WHAT DOES THIS FRUIT CALLED LOVE LOOK LIKE?

☐ **It is decisive.**

Intentional. What God commands, God enables. Love is not something you fall into, but something you step onto by choice.

☐ **It is active.**

Love is not an ornament (noun), but a function (verb). It is shown in behavior and attitude.

☐ **It gives and forgives.**

Love does not keep accounts of cost or the loss, but gives.

Ephesians 4:2

WHAT DOES THIS FRUIT CALLED LOVE ACT LIKE?

The Bible gives a beautiful description of what love is like in I Corinthians 13. There is another brief, yet powerful description of love found in Romans 12:9-10, "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another."

☐ Love is truthful [without hypocrisy]

☐ Love is tough [abhor what is evil]

☐ Love is thoughtful [cling to what is good]

☐ Love is tender [affectionate]

WHAT DOES THIS FRUIT CALLED LOVE TASTE LIKE?

When your life is characterized by this love, how does it feel to others? What will they experience?

I Listen

I pay you the highest of all compliments when I give you my attention.

I Overlook

Many would be happier and healthier if we would lighten up. Love covers a multitude of sins.

I Value

Express value to people. Acknowledge them, call them by name, write them, pray for them, visit them, be kind to them.

I Encourage

A son once asked his dad if he would play darts. After 30 minutes, the dad said, "I thought you wanted me to shoot darts, but you are the only one throwing them." The son said, "No, I'll throw the darts. You just stand there and say, 'Wonderful!'"

While on a trip, a salesman called his wife from a pay phone. After he finished the conversation, hung up, and walked away, the pay phone rang. He turned around, answered the phone, and the operator said, "I thought you would like to know that after you hung up, your wife said, 'I love you.'"

God, in a decisive act of giving and forgiving, reached out to us to touch us with His love and to save us.

John 3:16

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Life to the Fullest: I Choose Joy

Dr. David H. McKinley

Sunday, April 29, 2001

Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, FL

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, . . .” Ephesians 5:22

The word, *Joy* or *Joyful*, is used 250 times in the Bible and the word, *rejoice*, 200 times.

Scholars’ suggestions for the word, *joy*:
bright and shining

A child’s eyes on Christmas morning or a bride on her wedding day.

leaping or jumping

The crippled man healed at the gate.

chanting and shouting

Yes! All right! Awesome!

moving around in a circle

This fruit called *joy* is a vivid reminder of what “Life to the Fullest” is all about.

JOY IS THE BLOSSOM OF NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

When a person truly experiences the life Jesus gives, the result is a blossom of adornment called *joy*. It is the result of experiencing the love of God firsthand in your life! Joy is love smiling.

Acts 8:39

What a picture of a man whose life is changed by an experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ! “... he went on his way rejoicing.” Joy is intended to be the blossom of evidence that we have life in Christ.

“Let all those rejoice who put their trust in You.” Psalm 5:11

Far too few Christians genuinely display joy. They are green with life, but there is no flower.

“If your life is not full of joy, you have a leak in your Christianity.” —Billy Sunday

“The Christian is a person of joy; the Christian is the laughing cavalier of Christ. A gloomy Christian is a contradiction in terms, and nothing in all religious history has done Christianity more harm than its connection with black clothes and long faces. It is true that the Christian is a sinner, but he is a redeemed sinner, and therein lies his joy. How can any man fail to be happy when he walks the ways of life with Jesus?”

—William Barclay

What attraction does the fragrance and beauty of this blossom in us have on those around us? The world seeks joy in all places, yet it is a silk flower. When people come to church, they should immediately be amazed by the joy that is present.

“. . . praising God and having favor with all the people . . .” Acts 2:27

One theme found in Luke 15 is *joy*. Who do you think the prodigal son responded more favorably to: the smile of the father or the scowl of the elder brother?

“C.S. Lewis told me, there is too much solemnity and intensity in dealing with sacred matters, too much speaking in holy tones. The tragic loss in all this pious gamesmanship is to the individual in the pew, who begins to feel that in the midst of the religious razzle-dazzle he cannot get through to the Lord Himself. We have learned that joy is more than a sense of the comic, more than earthly pleasure, and to a believer even more than what we call happiness. Joy is

the enjoyment of God and the good things that come from the hand of God. If our new freedom in Christ is a piece of angel food cake, joy is the frosting. If the Bible gives us the wonderful words of life, joy supplies the music. If the way to heaven turns out to be an arduous steep climb, joy sets up the chair lift.” —Sherwood Wirt, *Jesus, Man of Joy*

Christ’s joy is real! It is fragrant and beautiful to behold. Do you think He was stern, long-faced, weighed down with suffering? What did the children see? What about the sinners? There was something more beautiful about Him than they could describe and they sought to be in the presence of such joy.

“There is more joy in Jesus in 24 hours than there is in the world in 365 days. I have tried them both.” —R.A. Torrey

“These things have I spoken to you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” John 15:11

JOY IS SUSTAINED BY A SUPERNATURAL SOURCE

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” John 7:37-38

Joy talk is not just motivational speaking. It is a spiritual truth sustained by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

“Unless I have received the Holy Spirit, my personality is dead to all He has to say . . . Every characteristic seen in the life of Jesus becomes possible in our lives once we hand our hearts to Him to be filled with the Holy Spirit.” —Oswald Chambers

Joy will not blossom or remain without the supernatural source of the Holy Spirit.

The world seeks happiness in many places and things. But happiness and joy are not the same.

Happiness = happenings, happenstances, circumstances. Zippedee do dah, everything is going my way.

Joy = continuous, fountain, complete.

Happiness and joy look a lot alike, but they are different in their source.

JOY IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE DISEASE OF SIN

At one point, David’s life was infected and infested with a sinful act of disobedience that resulted in a loss of the joy of his salvation. In Psalm 51:12, David writes, “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.”

I do not believe you can ever lose your salvation, but you can lose your joy. Joy is fragile and can be easily tarnished or tainted.

Protective Measures:

□ Apply the Scriptures to your life.

John 15:1-4, 11

“Your words were found and I ate them, and your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by your name, O Lord God of hosts.” Jer. 15:16

You learn about God through Bible study. But you get to know God through obedience, praying, witnessing, waiting, giving, loving, etc.

□ Activate your life in service.

“Joy is the by-product of service. The most miserable people I know are those who think only of themselves. The happiest people I know are those who think only of

others. Selfishness always smothers happiness. It is one of the killjoys of life. But sacrifice and service open the springs of God's happiness and flood our hearts with joy." —Warren W. Wiersbe

JOY IS ROOTED IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN THE HARD GROUND OF LIFE

Life is not a rose garden. So many places where weeds have grown in, soils have dried and hardened. Can you really have joy?

The Bible is never a book of theory. It is never a research document in the laboratory of the church. Rather, it is a field guide and it addresses life as it is. Much of what the Bible has to say about joy is spoken of in the arena of hardship, resistance, opposition and difficulty.

The joy of the Christian life is in Who we know, not what we understand about life.

"Dear brothers and sisters, whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything." James 1:2-4 (NLT)

Happiness and difficult circumstances don't balance. Happiness and unhappiness do. But joy can be found and known even in sorrow because we know God.

". . . as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing . . ." II Corinthians 6:10

The Bible is filled with many challenges toward joy.

"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." Philippians 4:4

"Rejoice always . . ." I Thessalonians 5:16

Joy is a standing order in the Christian life, not because of circumstances, but because of confidence in Who God is and what God is like.

"The Christian is joyful, not because he is blind to injustice and suffering, but because he is convinced that these, in the light of the divine sovereignty, are never ultimate . . . the humor of the Christian is not a way of denying the tears, but rather a way of affirming something which is deeper than tears." —Elton Trueblood

"You will show me the path of life, in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forever more." Psalm 16:11

"Now may the God of all hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

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Life to the Fullest: I Choose Peace

Dr. David H. McKinley

Sunday, May 6, 2001

Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, FL

INTRODUCTION

Peace--The World Talks About It

Hardly a day passes when we do not hear a feature story through the medium of CNN, MSNBC, FOX or some other news broadcast on peace or the need for peace. Our world gives great “lip service” and attention to the need for peace, but in reality, few know peace in our world.

Peace--People Seek After It

People are seekers of peace and search for it through various means: bottles and pills, sexual experiences, mindless entertainment, trips to exotic places, etc.

Peace--You and I Long to Achieve It

How can I have, know, and enjoy peace today?

Peace is a prominent theme in the Bible. In the Old Testament, the word *Shalom* refers to *wholeness, well being*. In the New Testament, the meaning is *tranquility* or *serenity*.

Peace = “the realization that God works through the disparities and contradictions of my experience and brings them into harmony.” —Eugene Peterson

Peace = “the inner tranquility and harmony enjoyed by the believer who is living in conformity to the will of God.”

—J. Oswald Sanders

When the Bible speaks of peace, “binding together,” it means having it together in life despite circumstances, hardships and challenges.

I NEED PEACE TO COPE WITH MY CONFLICTS

Because life is often lived in disruption and disturbance, we must discover peace.

Abraham Lincoln was walking with his two sons and both sons were fighting. One person asked, “What’s the matter with your boys?” Lincoln responded, “Exactly what is wrong with the whole world. I have three walnuts and each one wants two!”

James 4:1 tells us that much of the conflict in the world comes out of the conflict in us:

“Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?” James 4:1

“Desire” = dissatisfaction

Our general sense of dissatisfaction with life causes us to share that dissatisfaction with others and to create a generally miserable existence. Our pride, our pursuit of pleasure, and our endless need to put others down in order to pick ourselves up causes enormous conflict in families, churches, offices, communities and nations.

“Human nature is indeed in the grip of an overwhelming ray of occupation. Its natural aim, it can truthfully be said, is pleasure; and when we consider the amount of time, energy, money, interest and enthusiasm that men and women give to the satisfaction of this aim, we can appreciate the accuracy of James’ diagnosis; and Christians can use it as a reliable yardstick by which to measure the sincerity of their religion. Is God or pleasure the dominant concern of their life?”

—R.V.G. Tasker

We have to get peace within us before we can have peace between us.

As good as we all look sitting in church, the reality is that there are many storms beneath the surface: unhealthy desires, conflict, different personalities, different interests, etc.

I NEED PEACE TO CULTIVATE MY CONTENTMENT

One of the most elusive of all qualities in our day is that of contentment—contentment in the enjoyment of what God has provided for us and confidence in what God will provide.

Just as conflict focuses on all the disturbances of life, discontentment and dissatisfaction focuses on what we don't have. When we are discontented, we lose peace and joy.

Contentment is a matter of trust.

Philippians 4:10-13

Two Convictions:

1) God loves me. God cares about my needs and meets them by His grace. Over and over, His care and love are affirmed.

2) I can trust Him. God is never going to cheat me.

Contentment is not necessarily satisfaction. Contentment is gratitude for and faith in the goodness of God regardless of the condition of my life.

“Life is full of disturbances. Without are fights, within are fears. There is no peace. A dozen open doors beckon us to some kind of peace—escape, entertainment, alcohol, sex, drugs, hard work—and we run from one door to another hoping to find peace. What we need is Jesus Christ; for His name is Prince of Peace, and that takes care of the disturbances of life.”

—Warren Wiersbe

I NEED PEACE TO COMBAT MY CONCERNS

Worry. Fret. Fear. We are often prone to give into anxious thoughts and uncertainties about the future.

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” John 14:27

To know and experience this peace, however, is not just a subjective thing. Feeling peace is more objective. It is when my thoughtlife directs my feelings.

How to have peace when you want to panic:

◆ Rely on God's love.

“. . . casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:7

◆ Review God's will.

“Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.” Isaiah 48:18

“. . . for to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Romans 8:6

◆ Remember God's Word.

“. . . great peace have those who love Your law and nothing causes them to stumble.” Psalm 119:165

◆ Rest in God's care.

“. . . You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.” Isaiah 26:3

I NEED PEACE TO CLEAR MY CONSCIENCE

So many people live with flashbacks of things they have done, failures they have known, and sins they have committed. So

many live in the shadow of yesterday, overwhelmed by their seeming inability to step out of the shadows.

“Satan wants you to feel guilty. Your heavenly Father wants you to know that you are forgiven. Satan knows that if you live under a dark cloud of guilt, you will not be able to witness effectively or serve the Lord with power and blessing. Sad to say, there are some churches that major in guilt. They seem to feel that unless a Christian goes home from a service feeling like a failure, the services have not been a blessing. ‘Every time we go to church,’ a lady wrote me, ‘the pastor spans us. What should we do?’ To be sure, there is a place for proper spiritual conviction; but we must not major on guilt. To do so is to play right into the devil’s hands.”
—Warren Wiersbe

Peace is real and available that we may live freely and confidently. This is the promise of God found in Romans 8:28-29—to take the distorted, discarded and difficult things of the past and to shape us into the “image of Christ.”

I NEED PEACE TO COME TO MY CONCLUSION

Life ends in death and death is the enemy of all mankind. No place is there a greater need for peace than in the face of death.

So many in our church family have walked this way in recent days. I stopped to call one of our seasonal associates who has recently

experienced the death of a spouse. She communicated that God has used songs to minister to her heart and provide comfort. One, in particular, is “Be Still My Soul.”

*Be still, my soul—the Lord is on thy side!
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to thy God to order and provide—
In every change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul—thy best, thy heavenly friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*

*Be still, my soul—the hour is hastening on
When we shall be forever with the Lord,
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love’s purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul—when change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.*

Do you need a peace summit in your life?

You must have peace with God. Religion cannot give you peace. It will make you restless, but Jesus can and does give peace to all who come and call upon His name.

“... therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”
Romans 5:1-2

You can experience the peace of God.

“... and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 4:7

“And the God of peace will be with you.”
Philippians 4:9

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Life to the Fullest: I Choose Patience

Dr. David H. McKinley

Sunday, May 13, 2001 (Mother's Day)
Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, FL

INTRODUCTION

Monday morning at 7:32 AM, I faced a test. I began the day with my typical "start up" activities. I took a bundle of clothes to the cleaners, but the first shop I went to did not open until 8:00 AM. Okay. I preached on peace last Sunday, so I didn't want to lose it at 7:30 AM Monday morning! I drove to another shop across town and delivered the clothes. When I received the ticket receipt, I was told the clothes would be ready on Friday at 5:00 PM.

I tried to contain myself as I asked the assistant, "Isn't this Monday morning before 9:00?"

"Yes," she replied. "If you want it sooner, you can pay 50 cents more per garment."

I left with the original arrangement, but I realized that between Monday and Friday, I was going to have to move from Galatians 5:22, *peace*, to the next in line, *patience*.

Patience or *longsuffering* = a long fuse, an abiding persistence, a love that is untiring and enduring.

Patience "is a willingness to stay cool, stick in, stick to, and stick it out until you arrive at the best outcome possible."

Patience is like the boy in the department store who stood looking at the escalator. The sales lady asked, "Son, are you lost? The boy replied, "No ma'am. I'm just waiting for my chewing gum to come back."

"Love is patient . . ." I Corinthians 13:4

On this Mother's Day, what could be a better subject or a more honorable virtue for us to consider than patience? Motherhood requires great patience and persistence.

When I speak of patience, I feel it vital to rescue this word from its common misuses. Patience is not passivity, complacency or inactivity. It is not as much about time as it is about tenacity.

"We must never think that patience is complacency. Patience is endurance in action. It is not the Christian sitting in a rocking chair, waiting for God to do something. It is the soldier on the battlefield, keeping on when the going is tough. It is the runner on the racetrack, refusing to stop because he wants to win the race. Too many Christians have a tendency to quit when circumstances become difficult. Dr. V. Raymond Edman, Wheaton College, used to say, 'It is always too soon to quit.'" —W.W. Wiersbe

"The most useful virtue is patience." —John Dewey

"He that can have patience can have what he will." —Benjamin Franklin

"Rome was not built in a day." —Latin Proverb

EXPECT YOUR PATIENCE TO BE TESTED THROUGH LIFE'S PROBLEMS

"Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Job 5:7

Everyday problems challenge patience:

- ◆ **Interruptions**--phone call during dinner, doorbell, work deadline when a meeting is called by the boss, getting a red light in when you are in a hurry.

Jesus' disciples were impatient with children. Jesus said to let the children come Him. They are not interruptions. They are reminders of His kingdom.

Few things interrupt life more than children, but few things enrich our lives more than these precious gifts.

- ◆ **Inconveniences.** We all struggle with the inconveniences of life. "God I want patience, and I want it right now!" —Oren Arnold, *Prayer of Modern Americans*

- ◆ **Irritations.** Irritations bring out the *best* or the *beast* in us. What really irritates you? Full parking lots? Traffic jams? Long lines? New attendant at a checkout line? Phone calls? Cold food? No coffee? Locked bathrooms? Out of hair spray?

- ◆ **Inactivity.** Elevators, red lights, etc.

- ◆ **Injustices.** There are things in life that don't seem fair. Moms know this well. They experience some things that expose, criticize or hurt their child. When this happens, get out the way because Mama is coming! There are also promotions that are given to someone else, low pay, etc.

All these things try our patience, our long

suffering. Expect your patience to be tested every day.

ALLOW YOUR PATIENCE TO BE INCREASED THROUGH LIFE'S PRESSURES

In Scripture, there are two words used to translate our word *patience*. We have already discussed one: *long suffering*. The other word means *to abide under, to withstand, to endure*.

God and mothers both share a common occupation in the lives of children. They are both in the "character building" business.

"My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me." —Henry Ford

This is true of a mother for her children and God, our heavenly Father.

"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to be patient. And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady. Then when that happens, we are able to hold our heads high no matter what happens and know all is well, for we know how dearly God loves us, and we feel this warm love everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love."

Romans 5:3-5 (Living Bible Translation)

God is patient. Scripture affirms this. God is in the business of building the character of Christ in us and He does it through test, trials and temptations in life. "God does not disengage us to make us holy. He develops holiness in us through the fires of life."

To the Christian, image is everything:
“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
Colossians 1:27

One of the common duties of a mother is signing permission slips for her children. Likewise, as a believer, we should sign a “permission slip” to make the image of Christ real in us.

“Learn to suffer with patience. God will send frequent and probably great suffering into your life. This is His doing; He has chosen it; accept it.” —Jeanne Guyon

ENCOURAGE YOUR PATIENCE TO BE DEVELOPED THROUGH FOUR SIMPLE PRACTICES

It is often quoted that “practice makes perfect.” Here are four simple steps that make a big difference when you are under pressure:

1. Look beyond the moment. Walls close in and light shuts out, etc. So often my impatience comes from looking at myself and measuring the whole of life based on me.

For most, this is the bottom line: How does it affect me? So often, things that interrupt and irritate me and my comfort zone become the rule of measure. Part of patience is seeing that where I am, what I face, what I do, how I act affects others and not just me.

Husbands, see life from wife’s view.
Fathers, see life from kid’s view.

Business, see life from customer’s view.
Employers, see life from worker’s view.
Christians, see life from God’s view.

Nothing has greater potential to reduce conflict and increase patience than to move from making yourself the center of your world and to look at life from the viewpoint of others.

“The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.” Proverbs 19:11

2. Learn to laugh at yourself. Are you too serious? Learn to find fun in your frustrations. People with a sense of humor live longer. Moms, be sure that some of the best memories your children have are those of your laugh.

3. Let life be a journey toward love. “Love is patient . . .” When we are impatient, we are not loving. Love is forbearing and forgiving.

4. Let God be God. Patience is an expression of faith. God is bigger than any problem we face. “No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.”

Phillip Brooks, a preacher in New England, was known for his calm and poise even though he suffered from irritability and anxiety on occasion. One day a friend saw him pacing and asked, “Dr. Brooks, what is wrong?” Dr. Brooks answered, “The trouble is that I am in a hurry and God isn’t.”

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Life to the Fullest: I Choose Kindness

Dr. David H. McKinley

Sunday, May 20, 2001

Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, FL

Life is full of moments when we stumble, stutter, suffer, struggle, etc., and our world is not sympathetic to most of the challenges and crises we face. Most people would rather we get out of the way than to offer a sympathetic hand.

We all need a little dose of something I want to discuss today: kindness.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness . . .” Galatians 5:22

Everybody needs and wants to experience kindness in life.

“Kindness is a language which the deaf ear can hear and the blind can read.”

—Mark Twain

THE FRUIT OF KINDNESS IS ROOTED IN THE NATURE OF GOD

What is God like? So often the picture is stern, harsh and judgmental.

The lobster is probably one of the least cute and cuddly creatures of God’s creations. They are classified as a exoskeletal creature, having an external supportive bone structure covering on the outside. People are classified as endoskeletal, having an internal supportive bone skeleton. Lobsters are hard on the outside and soft on the inside. In contrast, our skin makes us soft on the outside and our bone structure makes us hard on the inside.

Too many Christians are like lobsters in convictions, always showing a hard exterior in a harsh and unloving manner.

God became flesh—He put skin on—to reach us with His love and grace.

What does the Bible say about us?

“... There is none who does good, no, not one.” Romans 3:12b

Kindness is not a normal or natural trait to the human heart.

Galatians 5:19-21 does not exactly provide a flattering picture of us:

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

“But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons and daughters of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.” Luke 6:35

“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness (kindness) of God leads to repentance?” Romans 2:4

“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit . . .” Titus 3:4-5

“ . . . that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Ephesians 2:7

THE FRUIT OF KINDNESS MUST BE SHARED WITH OTHERS

In Galatians 5:22:

Virtues 1-3 (love, joy, peace) are toward **God**.

Virtues 4-6 (longsuffering, kindness, goodness) are toward **others**.

Virtues 7-9 (faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) are toward **myself**.

“Be kind to one another . . .” (Eph. 4:32) is one of 26 reciprocal commandments.

Take time to be kind!

♦ **Show active concern for those who hurt.**

Send a card, share a meal, offer a word of encouragement and recognition.

One of the astounding and, at times, amazing things we witness in our world are the rude, crude, harsh, hateful and uncaring attitudes of people. To be kind is not to be without wisdom and discretion. There are times to get tough, but too many fail to be tender.

♦ **Speak constructive words to those who hear.**

So often the injury of unkindness comes through the passage of a sharp tongue.

“There is one who speaks like the piercing of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health.” Proverbs 12:18

So often we are critical and injurious to others. We need to find ways to articulate, express and encourage others. Choose words well.

“Kind words don’t wear the tongue out.”

♦ **Seek effective witness for those without hope.**

One of the greatest tools for evangelism is kindness.

“Kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence and learning.”

—Fredrick W. Faber

What if we were known as the kindest church in this community?

“Nothing is more winsome nor effective than the loving kindness that reaches out in genuine sympathy to the spiritually forlorn . . .”

—Stuart Brisco, *Kindness Evangelism*

“We must not be a terror for sinners, but a haven for them.” —D.L. Moody

♦ **Share positive love with those who hate.**

“But love your enemies, do good . . .” Luke 6:35

Many live wrapped in a world of hatred. They are like a man with a winter coat on a blustery day. The more the wind blows, the tighter he wraps his coat around him. But when the sun comes out, the coat comes off!

In the Bible story of King David, the young David was viewed as an enemy of Saul, the present king of Israel. Jonathan was Saul's son and a much beloved friend of David. Once David was king and both Saul and Jonathan had been killed in battle, David ask, "Is there anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" II Samuel 9:1. Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, was found in Lo Debar.

Even though the practice in that day was to kill all remaining relatives of the previous king to secure authority and reign, David said, "He shall eat at my table like one the king's sons." II Samuel 9:11

The Greek word for kind is *chrestos*. The Greek word for Christ is *christos*. In the early days of Christianity, it was sometimes difficult for others to discern whether the religion was based on Christ (*christos*) or on people of kindness (*chrestos*).

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Life to the Fullest: I Choose Goodness

Dr. David H. McKinley

Sunday, May 27, 2001

Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, FL

Many people go to church because they think it is good for them, not because they enjoy it or really understand it. They go because they believe it is a way to get “extra credit” with God.

What does the Bible teach about goodness?

The word *goodness* (*agathos*) means uprightness of heart and life.

NO ONE IS GOOD ENOUGH TO GO TO HEAVEN

“Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?’ Mark 10:17

The law acts as a mirror to show us the lack of goodness in our lives.

“The worst of human badness is human goodness when it becomes a substitute for the new birth.” —Adrian Rogers

“If you want to be good, first believe that you are bad.” —Epictetus

“. . . There is none who does good, no, not one.” Romans 3:12b

Heaven is not based on a final “weigh down” on the scales of justice.

EVERYONE KNOWS THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL

Every classic tale and fantasy is built on the tension between good and evil.

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:21

There is a battle in this world and the Bible acknowledges our need to exercise goodness over evil.

In World War II during the Holocaust, there were painful experiments performed, intentional germ infestations, and furnaces built to burn millions of people. What? How? Why? Was it due to ignorance? Half of Hitler’s officers had master’s and doctor’s degrees.

We don’t have to look at history of society to see the evil in this world. We only need to look inside us.

“So I find this law at work: when I want to do good, evil is right there with me.” Romans 7:21

We are all weighted with a sinful nature anchor that goes against God. It creates a “tug of war” in our lives.

*Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love.
Here’s my heart, Lord, take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.*

GOD IS THE ONLY ONE WHO IS TRULY GOOD

“No one is good but One, that is, God.” Mark 10:18b

The Bible extols the goodness of God. Let’s proclaim it!

His plan. “And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.” Genesis 1:31

His provision. “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is not variation or shadow of turning.” James 1:7

Of all the provisions God has made, surely the provision of a payment for sin in Jesus Christ is the ultimate! In the Mark 10 passage, to call Jesus good was to call Him God. In His goodness, God became a man to provide Himself as a sacrifice for our sin.

His promises. “For the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.” Psalm 100:5

“The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.” Nahum 1:7

His purposes. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed into this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:1-2

“Being confident of this very thing, He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Phil. 1:6

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

*God is good all the time.
All the time, God is good!*

GOD INVITES EACH OF US TO KNOW AND SHARE THE GOOD LIFE!

The Christian life is the good life!

The Christian life is a life of **good works**.

“For by grace you are saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created by Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:8-10

Good works can never take you to heaven, but the surest sign you are headed there is when your life begins to show good works.

“Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.” III John 11

The Christian life is a life of **good wealth**.

“Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a

good foundation for the future, so they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”

I Timothy 6:17-19

The Christian life is a life of **good witness**.

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

*You are writing a Gospel,
a chapter each day.
By the deeds that you do,
by the words you say.
Men see what you write,
whether you're faithless or true.
Say what is the Gospel according to you?*

Through the New Covenant, you are called to live the good life!

“In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He has loved us and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another.” I John 4:9-11

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