

The Secret to a Joyful Life Part 5

“One time while he crossing the ocean to Quebec, the weather turned cold and the ship was slowed as a fog rolled in. So this Christian man paid a visit to the captain whereupon he said:

‘Captain, I have come to tell you I must be in Quebec by Saturday afternoon.’

‘It is impossible,’ the captain replied.

‘Very well, if your ship cannot take me, God will find some other way. I have never broken an engagement for 52 years. Let us go down into the chart room and pray.’

‘Mr., do you know how dense this fog is?’ he asked.

‘No, my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God, who controls every circumstance of my life.’

And when this man prayed, the captain was about to pray with him but this man put his hand on the captain’s shoulder and told him not to.

He said, ‘First, you do not believe He will; and second, I believe He has, and there is no need whatever for you to pray about it. Captain, I have known my Lord for 52 years, and there has never been a single day that I have failed to get an audience with the King. Get up, Captain, and open the door, and you will find the fog is gone.’ And sure enough, when they go up, it was gone!

In fact, this one incident with this one Christian man so affected the captain that he himself later became a well-known evangelist.

The man’s name of course was, George Muller.”

Now folks, **once again**, I don’t know about you, but I’d say ol’

George Muller had a pretty cool life as a Christian, you know what I’m

saying? In fact, so much so that I'd say **now that** is A Life Worth Living For, amen? But that's right folks, as we've been seeing, **we've got a problem**. You see, even though God's the same God and we're just as much His children as George Muller is, most Christians read the Bible in one hand and take a look at their life in the other and say, "Man, something's missing here. Something doesn't match, something's not right. What's going on? Why do these people like George Muller get to have an amazing walk with Jesus Christ and here I am keep fumbling around in the dark? I don't have a life worth living for. I've got a life worth giving up!"

Oh, but people, once again, I'm here to tell you this is the great news. It doesn't have to be that way! That kind of life, a life worth living for, like George Muller had, **is available to every to every single Christian!** And that's exactly why we're going to continue in our series entitled, "**A Life Worth Living For.**" And what we're doing is taking a look at **4 different keys** that I believe are absolutely pivotal if we're ever going to have that amazing walk with Christ like George Muller had.

And we've already seen that **first key** to having **A Life Worth Living For** is when you and I finally learn **The Secret to a Worshipful Life** not a cry baby whiny complaining life. And then last **four times** we saw the **second key** was when you and I finally learn **The Secret to a Joyful Life**

not a some sour ungrateful grumpy life. And last time we saw the **first two ways** we get tricked into not having a permanent joy in Christ was by not having a permanent **prayer** or **study** with Christ. And there we saw that it wasn't just something for we Christians to do, but it's a great source of the joy of the Lord too!

But that's not all. The **third way** we get tricked into not maintaining a permanent joy in Christ is by **Not Having a Permanent Witness for Christ**. But don't take my word for it. Let's listen to God's.

Luke 15:3-10 "Then Jesus told them this parable: Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?

And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep. I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin. In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Now folks, according to our text, I think it's pretty clear. We are not only to be concerned about the lost sheep or lost coins, which are people by the way, but we are to what? We're to go out there and **search for them**, right? But not only that, what else did it say? It said when one of those sheep

or coins get found, i.e. saved, what happens? You not only get to rejoice, but what? The very angels of heaven rejoice, right? Therefore, the point is this. Witnessing, yes, even witnessing is a great source of joy, right? Of course! That's what the Bible says! And that's precisely why the enemy comes in and says, "No, no, no Christian. Witnessing is not a great source of joy. It's a great source of **fear**, like it was for this guy.

"Many years ago, there was a Christian who owned an old-fashioned barber shop and he became convicted about his need to share Christ with others. So he determined that the next Saturday, he would share the gospel with someone who came into his shop.

So throughout that day, many opportunities arose to share Christ, but each time, because of his fear of rejection, he froze up and found himself unable to say anything. Well, by the end of the day, the tension was building, and he knew he had to say something.

And so finally, just five minutes before closing time, the last customer came in the door and asked for a shave. And so the barber swallowed hard and said to himself, "Okay, this is the one. This is the one!"

So he cranked up his courage, lathered the man's face, pulled his straight razor out, and began to sharpen it on the leather strap with nervous sweat just pouring off his brow.

And then walks around to the front of the chair jittering and shaking, he knew this was his last chance. And then his lips started quivering and his hand that was holding the razor was shaking like crazy, and he had one minute to go so he hurriedly shouted, "Brother, are you prepared to die?"

And so the guy immediately jumped out of his chair, smashed through the door, and ran screaming down the street!"

Now folks, how many of you can readily identify with that guy's fear of witnessing there? Uh huh. I think we all can. But let me ask you the obvious question in light of our text. Do you really think it's by chance that **witnessing** which the Bible says is one of our greatest sources of joy, so much so that the very angels of heaven rejoice, has now become one of our greatest sources of fear? Are you kidding me? The devil knows what he's doing! He's robbing us of the joy of the Lord!

But that's not all! He not only gets us to be **afraid** of witnessing, he gets us to come up with **excuses** for witnessing! And the **first excuse** he gets us to come up with is "**I don't have time to evangelize because I'm too busy entertaining my eyes.**" That's right! Whether it's television or the latest Hollywood movie, we don't even scoff at the idea of spending hours being totally engrossed in them. In fact, the average household in America watches almost **7 hours a day** of television combined. And it's not just a time killer. It's a mind killer. Why in the world would anyone, let alone a Christian, spend **7 hours a day** ingesting into their brain things that glamorize homosexuality, adultery, murder, fornication, violence and anti-Christian teaching? Do we not realize that **every package from hell comes disguised in ecstasy**? And the point is this people. It not only puts waste into your mind, it totally wastes your time! So much so that most Christians

today are more concerned about what happens in Hollywood than whether or not their neighbor is going straight to hell!

People of God, doesn't it bother you that most people claiming to be Christians would rather watch hour and hours of sinful blasphemous material from Hollywood than tell a single soul how to escape the flames of hell? And do you really think it's by chance that every time you get ready to witness to someone that fear creeps into your bones? Do you really think it's by chance that thoughts of rejection start going through your mind? Do you really think it's by chance that you're tempted to go watch a movie instead or finish that sitcom? People of God, wake up! The devil knows that if he can steal away the time from God then he can steal away your witness for God. And if he can steal away your witness for God he can steal away your joy in God! On last time, what did our text say? Witnessing is not just a great source of joy for you, but who? The very angels of God! That's how powerful it is! But not only that, the devil knows that if he can keep you from witnessing to others on how to go to Heaven, then you'll never take anyone with you when you get to heaven. And now the people that God put into your path with the Gospel to tell, will instead one day go burn straight into hell! Don't you get it? Don't you see what he's up to?

But that's not all. The **fourth way** we get tricked into not having a permanent joy in Christ is by **Not Having a Permanent Service to Christ**.

And the **first way** we get to serve Christ and be filled with His joy is **By Our Talents**.

Matthew 25:19-21 "Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more. His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master."

Now folks, according to our text, I think it's pretty clear. If you and I expecting to one day hear from Jesus, "Well done thou good and faithful servant," then what should is He expecting us to do? Serving Jesus, right? Hello! That's pretty obvious in the text. But not only that. What else did it say? It says a life of serving Jesus allows us to enter what? Into the joy of our Master, right? Hello! How can it get any clearer than that?

And this is precisely our problem. Instead of maintaining a permanent service to Christ so we can maintain a permanent joy in Christ, we come up with excuses. And the **first excuse** we come up with is "**I don't have time for the House of God I'm too busy with the House of Man.**"

That's right! Whether its raking those leaves or installing that new jacuzzi, we don't even bat an eye at spending hours and hours doing whatever it takes to beautify our homes. And folks, again, don't get me wrong. I'm not

saying there's anything wrong with maintaining your house or making some improvements here and there. Please be responsible. Be a wise steward of to what God has entrusted to you with! **But here's the point.** In comparison to the time we dedicate to serving the needs of God, it's not only ironic, it's pitiful! Even though most Christians today have been entrusted by God with so much luxury and so much convenience, when it comes to serving in the Church they can only say, "I'm sorry, it's not convenient!" I got to go rake my leaves, I got to work on my new deck, I got to go plant some shrubs, Why, I got to clean my dog toe nails, and on and on it goes! Anything but serving in the Church, right?

But people, **let me ask you the obvious question.** How convenient do you think it was for Jesus to **bare** your sins on the cross? How pleasing do you think it was for Him to have his face **beat to a pulp** for your crimes against God? How awesome do you think it felt to have his **back shredded** for your forgiveness. And how wonderful do you think it was to have His **body pierced** for your transgressions? People of God, I don't know about you, but I'm so stinking glad Jesus doesn't serve us like we serve Him! Are you kidding me? I mean can you imagine Jesus saying, "I'm sorry guys. I made it halfway to the cross but I suddenly realized I needed to do some repair on those Pearly Gates. I hope you understand. Maybe next time." Or

can you imagine if He said, “Ooooh, too bad. You know, I was that close to saving you from eternal destruction in hell but suddenly I realized I needed to install a new light fixture in heaven first. Maybe later **when it’s convenient!**”

People of God, the facts are this. If Jesus served us like we serve Him, what in the world would happen? We’d all go burn straight into hell, right? And people, lest you think that’s too harsh, I didn’t say that, Jesus did?

Matthew 25:24-28,30 “Then the man who had received the one talent came. Master, he said, I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.

His master replied, You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

People of God, the Bible is clear. If you don’t have time to serve Jesus maybe it’s because you don’t belong to Jesus. You’re not headed to heaven. You’re headed straight to hell. Why? Because Jesus said a true child of God has a true desire to serve Him with their talents not their excuses!

But that’s not all. The **second way** we get to serve Christ and be filled with His joy is **By Our Treasure**.

2 Corinthians 9:7 “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Acts 20:35 “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Now folks, according to our text, I think it’s pretty clear. God not only wants us to give, but He wants us to give with what? A cheerful heart, right? Not under compulsion. Not because you have to but because you want to, right? But not only that. What else did it say? It said it’s more blessed to give than to receive, right? In fact, the word there for “blessed” can actually be translated “happy” or might I add, “joyful.” Therefore, the Bible is clear. From the very lips of Jesus. A life filled with giving is a life filled with what? Joy, right? Hello! How can it get any clearer than that?

And this is precisely our problem. Instead of maintaining a permanent spirit of giving to Christ so we can maintain a permanent joy in Christ, we come up with excuses. And the **first excuse** we come up with is **“I don’t Treasure for the Needs of God I only have Treasure for Needs of Man.”** And by the way, if you’re reading this and you’re not a Christian, let me set the record straight. I don’t want your money! That’s right. You heard me. A preacher in America has publicly declared, “I **don’t** want your money.” And guess what? Neither does God! Why? Because Jesus said, “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world yet lose his soul?” There

is something more important going on here. **God doesn't want a wallet from you. He wants to save you!** Got it?

But for the Christian, to whom this text is addressed to, you better wake up! Let me repeat the excuse again. **"I don't Treasure for the Needs of God I only have Treasure for Needs of Man."** That's right! Whether its buying things you don't need to impress people you don't know who in the end don't even care, or **building an even bigger house** to keep up with the Joneses when the one you got is perfectly fine, we don't even bat an eye at spending tons of cash on things we don't even really need. And folks, again, don't get me wrong. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with buying some things, hello, clothes come in handy! And I'm not saying it's wrong to make some improvements on your home. Hello! I'm doing some to my own. Please be responsible. Be a wise steward of what God has entrusted you with!

But here's my point. In comparison to the amount of treasure we allocate for the needs of God, it's not only ironic, it's pitiful! Even though most Christians today have been entrusted by God with so much luxury and so much cash, when it comes to giving in the Church they can only say, "I'm sorry, I don't have any cash!" I spent it on clothes that I don't even need, I

got this new toy that I don't even play, I bought this new house that I can't even pay, and on and on it goes! Anything but giving in the Church, right?

But people, **let me ask you the obvious question.** How much did it cost Jesus to **bare** your sins on the cross? How good of an investment was it to have His face **beat to a pulp** for your forgiveness? What kind of price did He pay to have His **back shredded** and **body pierced** for your transgressions? I'll tell you! It cost Him **everything!** And yet we can't give Him anything? People of God, I'll say it again. If you're reading this and you're not a Christian, let me set the record straight. I don't want your money and neither does God! **He doesn't want your wallet. He wants your heart!** But for the Christian, to whom this text is addressed to, do you have any idea how much a slap in the face this must be to God? He Who did not spare his Own Son but gave Him up for us all, you can't find it in your heart to give anything at all?

People of God, wake up! Who in the world do you think pays for the light bill in Church facilities? Who pays for the heating? Who pays for preacher to eat? Who pays for the staff? Who pays for the ministries to be maintained? Do we not realize that **we** are the hands and the feet of Jesus? Do we not realize that the reason why God entrusts so much treasure to us is so we can store up much treasure in heaven, not here on earth? And do we

not realize that we're not the only ones paying a price for our greedy hearts?

Do we not realize that sometimes it costs others their life, like it was for these guys?

“We put an extension on to the school and the orphanage a few years ago to handle extreme cases. We were going to bring in a doctor with vitamin pills with extra food and we were going to take these kids that belonged to nobody and gather them up.

They slept in doorways on the verge of death and probably would be dead in five or six months if they didn't receive instant and immediate care. So we were going to gather them up and bring them to this extension on the orphanage that we had built and care for them and nurse them back to health.

They day came for us to pick them up and I went with my associate in a bus and drove up to the place where these children were to be assembled. We thought there were about fifty in the community. But when we got there, there were three hundred of these kids.

Three hundred kids that belonged to nobody with their swelled stomachs, their emaciated bodies, and their black hair having turn rust color from malnutrition. Three hundred of them. We had room for fifty.

You know what I had to do. You know what I had to do. I had to stand there people, and out of that three hundred, I had to pick fifty to live. And you can't pick fifty to live without simultaneously choosing two hundred and fifty to die.

And I did what I had to do and we loaded those fifty kids on that bus. I stayed behind with the other two hundred and fifty and I tried to cheer them up and tried to talk to them and tried to get them to sing some songs. And foolishly I go them to sing this gospel song. I didn't realize what I was getting them to sing!

They were singing before I realized it that little gospel chorus, 'God is so good, God is so good, God is so good to me.' And I went into the second stanza, 'He loves me so...' these dying kids with their swelled stomachs,

with their falling out hair and with their emaciated bodies singing, 'He love me so, He loves me so, God is so good to me.'

And as they were singing that, something inside of me screamed against God and I was saying to my self, 'God, you're not good! God you don't care or else this wouldn't be happening!' And I sure as I am here I sensed God speak to me in the depths of my being and say, 'I am good. And I do care. And you know why this is happening.' And I had to admit that I did know why it was happening.

God in His care and in His love has given to the Church the resources to respond to the needs of the world. And if the world is in need and if in fact the Church is not responding to those needs then it is only because the Church of Jesus Christ is not as faithful as it should be. Were doing a lot but were not doing near what we should do because God has called us to be that instrument that responds to the needs of the poor and the oppressed."

Now folks, I don't know about you, but I'd say there really is a deadly price being paid for all our greed, how about you? And people, keep in mind, that's just one scenario. Can you imagine how many millions of other people have not just **already died** but will **keep on dying** because the American Church "**I don't Treasure for the Needs of God I only have Treasure for Needs of Man.**" People of God, wake up! If Jesus gave to us like we give to Him we'd not only still be **bankrupt** in our sins but we'd still be headed straight to hell! I don't know about you, but I'm so stinking glad Jesus didn't serve us like we serve Him! Are you kidding me?

People of God it's not that hard to figure out! Don't you see what the enemy is up to? Do you really think it's by chance that every time you get ready to serve in the Church that you're tempted to do something at home

instead? Do you really think it's by chance that when you finally decide to invest in the ministries of God that you suddenly get the urge to buy yourself something instead? Are you kidding me! He's not only trying to destroy your spiritual life, he's trying to destroy other people's physical lives! But not only that, what did our text say? The devil knows that if he can steal away your talents and treasure to the Lord, then He can steal away your service to the Lord. And if he can steal away your service to the Lord then he can steal away your joy to the Lord! **Do you get it!** He's trying to rob you of joy!

Oh people, don't you see what's going on here? This isn't just about joy. It's about being a witness! You see, the devil does not want you to be joyful in God. Are you kidding me? He wants you to be mad at God! He wants you to join him by shaking a fist at God by accusing Him saying, "God You're no good. You don't know what You're doing. And I'm going to scream and shout until I get it my way and the things that make me happy!" And folks, lest you think there's no way to go through life with a smile on your face for Jesus, let's once again take a look again at the life of George Muller. What were the three things that not only enabled him to experience the supernatural joy of the Lord, but empowered him to have an amazing walk with the Lord? Let's take a look.

“For a man who never gave a thought let alone the time to prayer, he not only prayed often, but many times he said he was so full of the joy of the Lord that he simply could not go back to sleep, so he just went back in for more prayer. And when he prayed, he prayed with a powerful faith in God.

And for a man who started out saying, ‘I care nothing about the Word of God,’ he not only started the Scripture Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad that was responsible for educating thousands upon thousands of people in the knowledge of the Bible. In fact he himself read the Bible through over 200 times, half of that on his knees, where he claimed the promise, ‘Open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it.’

And for a man who could give a rip about serving God, he not only instructed as many as 121,000 students in the Word of God, with thousands of them receiving Christ but he also distributed almost 300,000 Bibles in many different languages as well as over 1 ½ million New Testaments.

Then he not only preached the Gospel throughout the entire length and breadth of the United States three different times, but did so worldwide traveling a total of 200,000 miles, which was an incredible achievement for pre-aviation times.

And for a man who never entertained the thought of giving a dime to God, but he lived a life of total dependence on God for seven decades, addressing as many as three million people, telling them of the blessing of a life of faith until he was 90 years old, sending forth and/or supporting 163 missionaries, and sharing over 111,000,000 tracts.

In fact, when he died at the age of 93, he had not only given back to the Lord almost ½ million dollars of the personal gifts that he had received during 70 years of faithful ministry, but he left an estate valued at less than \$1,000 dollars. Why? Because his treasure was being stored up in a place called heaven.

Therefore, it’s quite obvious that the four key ingredients that gave George Muller an amazing walk with Christ was a life devoted to prayer, Bible Study, evangelism, and service. In fact, early on in ministry, he in essence admitted this when he commented as to why he originally saw so little fruit early on in his service to the Lord.

He said it was because, ‘I prayed exceedingly little respecting the ministry of the Word, because I walked so little with God, and because I was so rarely a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use.’ Rather the fruit came when he, ‘Made an entire and full surrender of heart, when he gave himself fully to the Lord, and when honors, pleasures, money, physical and mental powers were all laid down at the feet of Jesus.’”

Oh people of God, here's the point. If anyone had a “right” to excuse away their time with God it was George Muller, right? I mean, you talk about a busy man and a demanding life! But people, what did he do? Somewhere along the line **he had a choice to make**. And apparently he chose right! He chose once and for all not to excuse away his time with God but to rejoice in God! He simply devoted his time to prayer, Bible study, witnessing and servicing! **People, that's the secret! The Secret to a Joyful Life** and the key to unlocking **A Life Worth Living For**.

Therefore, if you're here today and you're sick and tired of reading the Bible in one hand and looking at your life and saying, “Man, something's missing here. Something does not compute. What is going on? Then maybe you too need to discover **The Secret to a Joyful Life**. Maybe you too need to stop living life as some ungrateful sad excuse for a Christian life and start living a life that rejoices in God **with your time**! And people, I'm here to tell you, once you do, you're going to discover just like that, that you just got empowered to finally have that **Life Worth Living For**! Amen?

To find the way to God, to understand the *truth* of God's Word, and to received the gift of eternal *life*, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

“Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.”
