

These Lusts Are Hindering You From Abundant Living

What is abundant living to you?

Love? Joy? Peace?

Just as fruit grows from a tree, so is spiritual fruit designed to grow out of your daily relationship with Jesus Christ.

We are meant to grow in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

But what if instead you are experiencing bondage to destructive habits and emotions?

In John 10:10, Jesus said: "The thief does not come, except to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

In the following article, learn what could be blocking your experience of abundant living and what you can do about it.

The Meaning of Abundant Living

The first thing to check is your understanding of what life is really about.

Jesus gave us the meaning of life in John 17:3: "This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."

Are you drawing closer to the Lord every day?

You can do this through dependence upon Him, seeking Him first for wisdom and strength to face the challenges of the day through prayer.

You also bless Him for His presence, protection and provision with a heart of thanksgiving.

Entering Into Life

Jesus gave us guidance as to how to enter into life:

Enter at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who are going through it, because small is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it (Matt. 7:13-14).

Let's break down what this means.

The Gate

Jesus makes it clear that the gate is narrow that leads to life and shows us the way: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'" (John 14:6).

Jesus Himself is the narrow gate. Only through Him can you reach the Father.

If you have accepted Him as your Savior, congratulations!

You can feel good that you have already accomplished the most important thing in life.

You are in position to experience abundant life in Him. Everything else rests upon your position in Him.

Jesus' words makes it clear that there are not many paths to God as the world says; there is only the narrow gate, through Him.

The Way

Not only is Jesus the gate, but He also tells us that He is

the way. However, He also says that the way is difficult upfront.

Why is the way difficult? It is difficult because we must battle inner and worldly temptations as we strive to follow Him daily.

Our weapon is appropriating God's Word.

That is why it is important that we purpose in our hearts to endure to the end.

We cling to Jesus like glue every day and live for a purpose greater than ourselves.

One of the most powerful quotes I have ever read on this subject is by the late pastor Ray Stedman.

Pastor Stedman wrote:

The glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that the cross reverses our values. In its light we are able to strip away the devil's lie, and to act upon a totally different principle of life.

That principle is this: freedom is not having what I want; it is doing what God wants.

It is the man who gives up who gains; it is the man who flings away his life in abandonment to what God wants, who finally learns to live. It is the one who tries to keep his life who loses it. Is that not what Jesus said?

The man or woman who steps out upon this principle will discover that for him the devil is impotent. That man is set free to live the kind of life God intended him to live. He may not have some of the things others may have, for things do not produce happiness; but he has what God wants him to have: life lived to the fullest degree possible.

Roadblocks to Abundant Living

In John 10:10, Jesus said that we have an enemy. This thief has come to steal, kill and destroy God's people.

He does this through worldly temptations.

These temptations fall into three categories according to 1 John 2:16: "For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father, but is of the world."

However, God's Word assures us that we can overcome the world's temptations with His help: "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

To overcome these temptations requires that we:

1. Know God's Word.
2. Believe God's Word.
3. Act upon God's Word in faith.

Let's look at worldly temptations more closely. We must be aware of the enemy's devices against us so that we can overcome them.

Lust of the Flesh

Lust of the flesh is an inordinate desire to satisfy the flesh, no matter the cost.

This manifests as overindulgence in fleshly appetites, whether in food, drugs or drink. It can also manifest as an indulgence in sexually immoral behavior.

These indulgences result in an abuse of God-given resources.

The more a person indulges fleshly appetites, the more open they are to deception and distraction.

They come to think that daily life is only about pursuing pleasure or escaping pain rather than pursuing God's purpose.

The way of overcoming this roadblock is a change of heart and mind, repentance. Then, submitting to the Holy Spirit's guidance as to a new way of living.

Lust of the Eyes

Lust of the eyes is the greed for material things, which can result in envy, jealousy or coveting what someone else has.

Overspending or shopping addiction is a manifestation of lust of the eyes.

A person who has lust of the eyes is never satisfied with what God has given to them, but instead is always searching for more.

They are overly attached to material things. As a result, lasting peace and contentment will always elude them.

Pride of Life

The pride of life is a focus on self-will, not God's will. It can manifest through a distorted self-image, relationships with others and life purpose.

- **Self-image:** The pride of life in this area manifests as a person's desire to uphold their self-image or reputation before man, even above obedience to God.

A person who has the pride of life has a false view of themselves, either through thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to think (see Rom. 12:3) or through low self-esteem.

Low self-esteem insists that your feelings or other people's opinions outrank God's view of your identity.

The pride of life in self-image can also manifest in

comparisons with others.

- **Relationships with others:** The pride of life is insistence on having your own way in relationships, regardless of what God's word says.

In Matthew 5:44-45, Jesus says to us:

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Jesus also says to forgive others in Matthew 6:14-15: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men for their sins, neither will your Father forgive your sins."

The pride of life says, "ignore what God's Word says and instead only do what is right in my own eyes."

However, Jesus is not asking us to do anything that He was not willing to do Himself!

He gave us a beautiful example in the midst of His agony on the cross. He was able to ask forgiveness for His enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34a).

Finally, Romans 14:19 says, "Therefore let us pursue the things which produce peace and the things by which that build up one another."

As Christians, our ultimate goal is to win others to Christ. So we seek to do good to them and demonstrate Christ-like character.

That is difficult when your flesh wants to have its own way.

- **Life Purpose:** The pride of life in this area has the false attitude that “I am self-made, independent and don’t need God.”

So the person focuses on pursuing the things of the world.

But when Jesus was on this earth, His attitude was shown in John 4:34: “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’”

Life, Abundantly

Jesus left us His very Spirit to give us power to do what we cannot do on our own.

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Himself is walking with us on our daily journey through life. His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

Isn’t anything worth having worth pursuing?

Our relationship with Jesus is worth far more than anything else in this life!

May you experience abundant life to the full, every day: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control; against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23). {eo}

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify to God’s healing power to end binge-eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

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