

EVERYTHING

DAY ONE: WHO'S THE OWNER?

All the time the joke is that the word 'mine' in its fully possessive sense cannot be uttered by human beings about anything. C. S. Lewis [Screwtape Letters](#)

Write the above quote in your journal and answer these questions:

Do you agree with that statement? Do you believe you're an owner?

"It's my life, my time, my relationships, my abilities, my resources, my stuff."

READ Psalm 24:1; 1 Chronicles 29:14; Revelation 5:12. How readily do you accept that life and everything that passes through our hands has been entrusted to us by God? If that's true, how should that affect the way you live? Think of some specifics God has entrusted to you (abilities, jobs, responsibilities, money, friends, family). Do you approach these as someone who's been given a trust to care for or as the owner and sole beneficiary? Someday you'll give an account of the life you were entrusted to live. Think about that. How is being an owner a curse?

DAY TWO: MY PLANS?

Two basic beliefs about getting the life we want:

1. My plans and strategies will get me the life I want.

2. God will get in the way of what I really want.

In what ways have you made decisions as if one/both of these statements were true? What were the results?

READ Psalm 37:4; 103:4-5; 145:16-17; Jeremiah 29:11; John 10:9-11.

If someone were to look at your life and examine where you focus your energy, invest your time, spend money, to what/whom you give devotion and what/whom consumes our thoughts, what would he/she conclude? Refer to the verses above. Do you believe that God wants to give you the best possible life? Do you believe He is able to do it?

Take your journal and write what you want in life. Be honest. Resist the urge to sanitize and Christian-up your list. God already knows. Now go back and talk to God about each one - even the ones you wish hadn't made the list (*if you didn't list any of those, go back and try again!*).

"Delight (take great pleasure in; enjoy) yourself in the Lord and he will perfect and give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4

DAY THREE: MY LIFE?

READ Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-4. According to the serpent, where can the best life be found? By what does God say we lose the best possible life? Two opposing ways. Eve (*and Adam*) needed to choose between the two. Despite unbelievable provisions from God, Eve chose to believe the serpent. Why? Eve was afraid. She feared that God was holding out - afraid that Eden or God wasn't enough. She may have thought God was in the way of getting her best life. "Just in case God can't, I'll do it." Not recognizing and acknowledging our fears will lead us to do the same. With what areas do you struggle in trusting God completely? A relationship? Your future? Confess any doubt or fear to God.

"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Mark 9:24

READ Proverbs 14:12 and Deuteronomy 30:11-16. There was no third choice in the garden - nor is there one today. Most likely after Genesis 3:13, we began believing there was a third option: **just enough**. We want *just enough* God to make us feel secure. With every decision we make or action we take we choose to believe the serpent OR God. Either way **everything** is the requirement.

Following Christ isn't something that can be done halfheartedly or on the side.

It is not a label we can display when it is useful. It must be central to everything we do and are."

Frances Chen

DAY FOUR: MY LIFE IS GOD'S LIFE?

READ Matthew 16:24-26. As Eve feared losing *the best life possible*, she chose to *take* it, but in doing so actually lost it.

In order to lose our life we must not make ourselves and our "survival" the ultimate point of reference in our world-must not, in effect, treat ourselves as God should be treated, or treat ourselves as God. We surrender "our life" in favor of God's life, which in turn preserves our life- which means that for the first time we are able to do what we want to do.

Dallas Willard

So, how do we *lose our life for God* in order to find it? **READ** Matthew 6:33 and Luke 9:23-27. What does Jesus tell us we must do? Basically, we should surrender our list from Day One, praying "Lord, I trust You with my plans, my hope, *my* will. I turn my heart and focus toward seeking You." If you're not willing to pray that prayer, ask God to help you lay aside your life and take up God's life. We can enjoy personal fulfillment and receive the life we long for - but we must be willing.

DAY FIVE: MY BEST?

Refer to the outline from last week's message and **READ** Malachi 1:6-14. What is God's complaint? How have the people shown contempt and defiled Him? Describe their attitude. Contempt is disapproval tinged with disgust, like something is beneath one's dignity and unworthy of notice or respect.

When I was 9 years old, my favorite aunt and uncle had their first child. At that time I loved stuffed animals and had hundreds of them. I wanted to give my new cousin a special gift - a stuffed animal, of course. When my mom came home from the store with two stuffed bunnies, I knew right away which one I'd keep and which one I'd give. I wanted the fluffy one wearing the cute dress. New cousin baby could have the scrawny, seemingly uglier one.

I remember resenting my mom for asking me to give up the fluffy bunny. It didn't matter that I had hundreds of other stuffed animals. I hated the ugly bunny. I remember seeing the pretty bunny in her nursery and actually wanting to steal it back! Silly, isn't it? But I often approach God in the same way. I don't mind giving Him something, (*I may even be praised by others for doing so*) but I want first dibs. Even when we understand that **EVERYTHING** belongs to God, setting aside our first choice is really what Jesus was talking about when he said we must deny ourselves and follow Him. Now, over 30 years later, as I recall giving my cousin the best bunny, I truly want to learn to give God my best... **joyfully**.

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