

THE  
Abundance  
L.I.F.E.  
LIBERTY. INTIMACY. FAITH. EXPERIENCE.

The Christian life can be abundant

CHRISTOPHER A. RIEBER

A four-part study & devotional

# WELCOME

Living Hope Fellowship presents this study of [The Abundant LIFE](#) with hopes that by completing this study you will experience all that God intended for you in your relationship with Him.

We hope that you will take the time to go through this study, and that in doing so, you will conclude with us that living life through Jesus Christ is abundantly good!

Free in Christ,

*Christopher A. Rieber*

*Pastor of Living Hope Fellowship*

# INTRO

Life can have many challenges. The heartaches and pains of life sometimes cause us to misunderstand God's love and intention for our lives. Don't be confused; the heartaches and pains that come are a result of the sin that exists in the world, and do not represent God's true intention for our life experience. It has always been God's intention that we would experience the best life has to offer. In the Old Testament, God called for His people to understand the options He laid before them. "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants." (Deuteronomy 30:19)

God's intention is again made clear when He sent Himself in Christ Jesus. While on Earth, Jesus plainly spoke: "The thief comes to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

Many of us have tried to live life on our own terms, only to find ourselves empty and without hope. The pattern of life we have chosen has only left us unfulfilled. If we want different results we will have to choose a different pattern for living. Before our pattern of life can change, we have to determine the basis from which we will build our pattern. There are three options we could build upon; we can attempt life without God (Atheism), we can decide to recognize the existence of God, but believe we don't really need a close relationship with Him (Agnosticism), or we can choose another option...

If you are tired of hopelessness, emptiness, and sadness in life, your only hope is to choose CHRIST! Choose to build your pattern for life upon Christ. I invite you to this new way of living life. It is a way of life that believes in God, comes to Him in a relationship through Jesus Christ, and seeks to live life abundantly as described in the Bible.

Will you choose the abundant life found in Christ? God is REAL, and He wants to have a relationship with you! He wants you to enjoy life abundantly, a life that is joyful, peaceful, loving, and satisfying. It is a life beyond the mundane. Jesus illustrates it as being like a fountain bubbling up from within and spilling over onto others around you. In this study you will find a four step pattern for life that will help you live life abundantly on a daily basis. No step in this pattern can be bypassed or avoided. Take the time to consider these steps as your path toward an abundant life.

≈ *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)*

≈ *"No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you." (John 15:15)*

≈ *"...and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God." (James 2:23)*

# one: two: three: four: LIBERTY

## Part 1

*The abundant life begins with liberty. If you desire a relationship with God, you must be liberated, be delivered, and be "saved" from that which hinders the relationship between you and God.*

### 1. We are spiritually lifeless because of the effects of sin on humanity.

The problem is that nasty thing called SIN! Sin brings death to all it touches. Sin destroys our bodies when we participate in its activities. Any activity in our life that is unapproved by God is sin. It may also be a refusal to participate in activities expected by God, such as loving your neighbor. Sin destroys relationships with others around us. Ultimately, sin destroys our relationship with God. Sin will keep destroying us until it is rendered powerless in our life.

List examples of how sin has brought death and destruction to your life:

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☞ *"Therefore, just as through one man's sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)*

### 2. God sent Himself in Jesus to die, be buried, and live again, in order to liberate us from the bondage of sin.

The death and destruction of sin holds humanity in captivity, separating us from the life God intended us to have. But the solution for the problem of sin is provided by God.

No one can deliver themselves from sin. The sin we all commit can never be undone. Since it cannot be undone, it must be atoned for, a price must be paid to nullify the penalty and power of sin in our lives. This can only be done by God Himself, since He is the only one who is perfect and has never sinned.

This is what Jesus is all about! God gave Himself to the world in human form (Jesus) as a payment to cancel our debt of sin, and the sin debt of all humanity.

Through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, we are liberated from the power of sin in our lives. We are forgiven, and are on our way to enjoying life abundantly.

☞ *"Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."  
(Romans 7:24 - 8:2)*

## Consider

☞ Can you not see the measure of God's love in this action? This love proves that God wants to have a relationship with YOU!

Thoughts:


*God's goal for us is liberation from sin. He has provided a way for liberation by following specific steps of action, thus leading us to our freedom!*

## **First.** You must first acknowledge your own bondage to sin.

Before you can receive God's help, and His forgiveness of your sin, you have to admit you need help by confessing your sins to God.

Acknowledge some of your own sins by listing them here:

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*~ "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)*

## **Second.** You must personally trust in God's provision for your liberty.

Remember, God is the only one who is without sin. He is the only one who has the power to liberate us from sin. He does this through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*~ "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)*

*~ "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)*

*~ "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

## **Third.** You must invite Jesus to be the Lord (boss/master) of your life.

Knowledge is good. To act on that knowledge requires commitment. In 1981 I knew I had found the greatest woman I had ever met, and knew I wanted to spend the rest of my life with her. On the day of May 15, 1982 I acted on that knowledge and committed in marriage to spend the rest of my life with my wife, Connie. I have never regretted that decision.

You now know God's plan to liberate you from the penalty of the sin in your life. The question is, will you act on that knowledge and commit your life to Him? Committing to His plan requires a

willingness to turn from your sinful ways and surrender your life to Jesus as the new authority over your life, and follow Him! Because He has defeated the power of sin, He can give you forgiveness and direct your steps to enjoy life as God meant it to be. A life that is followed after Jesus is an abundant life!

- ≈ *“Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:13)*
- ≈ *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13)*
- ≈ *“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” [from the penalty of sin which separates us from God] (Acts 4:12)*

## Consider

- ≈ Do you realize there is nothing you can do to erase the debt of the sin in your life?
- ≈ Do you believe and trust that God is able to, and has, settled your sin debt through the death, burial, and resurrection of His son Jesus Christ?
- ≈ To “invite” Jesus into your life as Lord is to surrender to Him the authority over your life, and to choose to follow His plan for your life.
- ≈ Are you willing to do this?
- ≈ If not, what is keeping you from doing so?
- ≈ Ask God to remove any hinderances you may have, and choose to enter His plan of forgiveness from sin by surrendering to Jesus as Lord of your life.

### Thoughts:


# STOP HERE.

*Before moving on to the next study I encourage you to:*

1. Pray for forgiveness of your sin, and thank God for making provision to forgive you. Ask Jesus into your life and give Him authority over your life as Lord and boss.
2. Tell someone about your new found liberty from sin and your decision to become a Christian (a follower of Jesus).
3. Talk to a minister about being baptized.

≈ *"And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)*

See also Acts 2:41

For further information on baptism visit: [www.sbc.net/knowjesus/baptism.asp](http://www.sbc.net/knowjesus/baptism.asp)

*If you gave your life to Jesus and are willing to follow His leadership in your  
life, then you are on the way to an abundant life!  
You are now liberated from the death and destruction of sin!*

*Continue on through this study to learn more about how to experience your  
new life as a Christian to the fullest!*



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# one: two: three: four: LIFE INTIMACY

## Part 1

*An abundant life in Jesus Christ is realized fully through intimacy! God's ultimate intention is that we would live our life in close intimate fellowship with Him.*

We all know it is possible to have a relationship with someone and yet have very little intimacy in that relationship. I'm not talking about a romantic intimacy, but the type of intimacy that is a sense of closeness of heart, closeness that binds individuals into an inseparable oneness. This is the intimacy God desires to share with us. But this intimacy does not happen by accident...we must work toward it. Understanding the following four aspects of intimacy will help you begin an intimate relationship with God.

### 1. Intimacy with God is developed when we pursue Him voluntarily.

Intimacy can not be forced. The desire for intimacy with God grows as you seek Him. The more you seek God, and find Him, the more you will get to know Him. The more you get to know Him, the more you will want to seek Him and stay close to Him...resulting in a desire for intimacy!

☞ *"And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."  
(Jeremiah 29:13)*

### 2. Intimacy takes time!

In His humanity Jesus grew intimately with God as He made time to be alone with God. Time is seen by many of us as our most valuable commodity. There are only 24 hours in a day, and to give time to one thing means that time is no longer available for something else. Giving time to building an intimate relationship with God will require you to adjust your schedule to make time for Him. Maybe you will have to give something up in order to carve out a time in your day that you can specifically devote yourself to God.

☞ *"And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there." (Mark 1:35)*  
☞ *"Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone."  
(John 6:15)*

### 3. Intimacy comes through familiarity.

The kind of intimacy I'm referring to is spiritual intimacy. We cannot become spiritually intimate with someone without first being deeply familiar with them. To be familiar is to "know" someone, not just know about them, but to spend enough time with them that you feel as if you know their heart, their passions, and who they really are. For this to happen, much time must be given to hearing the voice and heart of the one with whom you desire to be spiritually intimate.

In Luke, Mary wanted to just sit at the feet of Jesus and be with Him. She wanted to listen to His words more than anything else. Listening to God through reading Scripture and through hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit within you, will make you more familiar with who God is.

≈ *"And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord's word, seated at His feet." (Luke 10:39)*

The more familiar you become with who God is, the more you will know and appreciate His attributes. Here are just three of His many attributes:

#### ◆ God is our **Father** -----

≈ *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" (Matthew 7:11)*

#### ◆ God is our **Hiding Place** -----

≈ *"For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:3)*

#### ◆ God is our **Source of Peace** -----

≈ *"The things you have learned or received and heard from me, or seen in me - put into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:9)*

The Bible is full of the attributes of God. What are some of God's attributes that you are already familiar with?

*For more information on getting to know the various attributes of God, get a copy of "Getting to Know Him". (Available for download or purchase at [www.lhfellowship.com](http://www.lhfellowship.com))*

### 4. There is no limit to how intimate & close you can be with your Heavenly Father!

The Apostle Paul was a very religious man before becoming a Christian. He had studied the Law and Prophets of Judaism for years. When he came to Christ he went to the wilderness for 3 years to seek God, and he learned that Christ was the fulfillment of all his previous understanding of God. For the rest of his life Paul pursued a deep relationship with God. He compared all other knowledge

as rubbish. He pursued the knowledge of God and encouraged all, young and old, to pursue the same.

When I was young in the Lord and young in the ministry, I was intimidated by trying to minister to people who knew Jesus longer than I was alive. During that time I was taught by our Lord that our depth of relationship with God does not come from years having known Him, but with the time spent with Him during those years. I began to find out that few Christians are regularly spending time with God on a daily basis. I have now been meeting with God regularly for 30 years, and I am closer to Him than ever...yet I still desire to be closer even still. How about you?

- ≈ *More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, (Philippians 3:8)*
- ≈ *"...that I might know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death..." (Philippians 3:10)*
- ≈ *"Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe." (1 Timothy 4:12)*

## Consider

- ≈ Pursuing God implies a desperate need to be close to Him. Are you desperate to be close to God? Are you willing to expend the energy necessary to build an intimate relationship with God?
- ≈ How can you adjust your day to find time to become more intimate with God?
- ≈ How close do you feel to God today? How close do you want to be? Is there room for drawing closer?

### Thoughts:


*A deeper intimacy is experienced with God as we practice the following five important principles in our daily lives.*

**1. Express appreciation:** Tell God you are grateful for His love & His relationship with you.

*Write God a note of appreciation!*

- ∞ "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little loves little." (Luke 7:47)*
- ∞ "And as He entered a certain villiage, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him; and they raised their voices, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' And when He saw them, He said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And it came about that as they were going, they were cleansed. Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answered and said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But nine--where are they? Was no one found who turned back to give glory to God except this foreigner?' And He said to him, 'Rise, and go your way; your faith has made you well.' " (Luke 17:12-19)*

**2. Respect God's authority:** Live out what you say you believe! Let your actions match your faith.

*Write a note to God recognizing His absolute authority over your life!*

- ∞ "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." (John 14:15)*
- ∞ "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." (John 14:21)*
- ∞ "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us." (1 John 3:18)*

- 3. Walk in harmony with the Spirit of God:** Pray for God's Spirit to lead you each day that you may live rightly before God.

*Write a prayer to God asking for His spiritual leadership!*

- ☞ *"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30)*
- ☞ *"If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose." (Philippians 2:1)*

- 4. Openly reveal your desire for Him:** Tell God of your desire to know Him more. Ask Him to show Himself to you.

*Write a love note to God expressing your desire to be close to Him!*

- ☞ *"Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work'." (John 4:34)*
- ☞ *"Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life'." (John 6:68)*

- 5. Learn to truly trust Him:** Daily give God your fears and worries. Let Him lead you. Remember that He desires what is best for you.

*Write a note to God expressing your trust in Him, and your awareness of His trustworthiness!*

- ☞ *"If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself." (2 Timothy 2:13)*
- ☞ *"I will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress, My God in whom I trust!'" (Psalm 91:2)*
- ☞ *"The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my Rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my Stronghold." (Psalm 18:2)*

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# one: two: three: four: LIFE FAITH

*The key component to living the abundant life is faith. An abundant life begins in faith, and must be lived by faith. Faith is not just believing, but is a mindset and an act of absolute confidence.*

True faith is at the core of the abundant life experience. Faith can be expressed in many ways, but there are three truths we MUST have faith in for us to experience an abundant life in Christ. The three truths are listed here:

## 1. We must have faith that God Is

This begins at salvation, but must continue through life. To believe God Is implies confidence in Him. In many ways, having faith in God and trusting God are synonymous. If you are trusting God for something, faith is what compels you to know He is trustworthy. To believe God Is also implies confidence in His Word.

- ❧ *"And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)*
- ❧ *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the convictions of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)*
- ❧ *"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17)*
- ❧ *"Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth." (John 17:17)*
- ❧ *"The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgements of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether." (Psalm 19:7-9)*

Look up these other verses for more examples of what God's Word says about faith. Do you have faith that these words are true?

*Psalm 139:14*

*Romans 5:8*

*Romans 8:35-39*

*2 Corinthians 5:17*



## 2. We must have faith to make His way your way.

Faith is the process of forsaking all that you have built your life upon, and trusting His way as the foundation for your life. You can have faith in, and trust, God's Word for wisdom and clear direction for daily living. And remember, God rewards those who believe in Him and seek Him (Hebrews 11:6), so you can trust that God's way will be a good way!

∞ *"And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)*

It takes real faith to give up control, and change the way you live! A long time ago I was exposed to a statement that has stuck with me:

**"We practice daily what we believe, the rest is just religious talk."**

- unknown

The Bible speaks of the Christian life as being governed by the "law of sin and death." In other words, to live according to human desire is to follow sinful actions, which then produces death in everything it (sin) touches. As Christians, God has called us to follow a different way of living. This different way is called the "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This new law for living calls us to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit each moment of our life. The Holy Spirit will never lead us to sin, but only toward righteousness! Walking in righteousness will always produce "life" in us. By faith we are called to abandon sinful ways that produce death and destruction, and instead walk under the leadership of the Holy Spirit which produces life.

Many people understand the need for faith to give their life to Christ. However, sad to say, many people do not understand that the daily walk with Christ requires faith as well. The Holy Spirit draws us to Christ in salvation and by faith we respond. In the same way, the Holy Spirit draws us to live our life like Christ, and again by faith we must respond. Each day we depend on the Holy Spirit's direction and by faith follow His way. The Galatians of the New Testament started out good in following the Holy Spirit, but became foolish by falling back to their own way.

The daily walk of faith which follows the way and direction of the Holy Spirit's voice within us will allow us to enjoy abundant living!

∞ *"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Galatians 3:3)*

∞ *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." (Romans 8:2)*

∞ *"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." (Romans 8:11)*

### 3. We must have faith to fight the flesh!

The devil does not want you to enjoy the abundant life Christ has for you. He will fight you to the end, seeking to pull you back by distracting you with worldly temptations. But be encouraged... you CAN overcome him!

Prior to being a Christian I found that I did many wrong things that I did not really think about, and some I didn't even really desire. One of my favorite verses in the Bible is John 8:36 (see below). I find that as I submit to the Holy Spirit's leading in me, that I now have the power to overcome the worldly temptations Satan sends my way. In Christ you can overcome Satan's temptations! Do you believe that?

~ "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36)

~ "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world---our faith." (1 John 5:4)

The key to overcoming the flesh is self-denial. But again, that requires real faith! It takes real faith to say no to yourself. We all enjoy doing our own thing. There is a certain amount of security in knowing we are doing what we think is best for ourselves. The walk of faith requires us to follow Jesus' way instead of our own way. We all want happiness. We think happiness comes from fulfilling our own desires. The interesting thing is this: I have found that the truth is when I deny my ways and by faith follow the way of Jesus, I have more happiness than ever before! Denying selfish desires is a major key to enjoying the abundant life!

~ "And He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me'." (Luke 9:23)

The joyful abundant life Jesus came to give to us all is wrapped up  
in a daily life of faith! God's Word tells us without faith it is  
impossible to please Him.

## Consider

- ≈ Do you remember the first time you realized there really is a God? Is there a time in your life that God proved to you He is trustworthy?
- ≈ To trust and have faith in God also means you trust and have faith in His Word. The Bible is the written expression of God's Word.
- ≈ Think about some things in your life that will require real faith in order for you to change them, and follow God's way for your life.
- ≈ What do you think will be your greatest challenges in overcoming fleshly desires?
- ≈ What are some actions you can take to be victorious while having faith that God will help you succeed?

### Thoughts:


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# one: two: three: four: LIFE EXPERIENCE

*The abundant life is realized in a daily  
experience with God.*

Liberty from sin enables intimacy with God. Intimacy with God calls us to walk by faith. Walking by faith leads us into a daily experience of God's presence. You may have now noticed, it is all connected. Each aspect of the abundant life is a building block to the next. Therefore, each aspect is equally important for our lives as Christians.

It is impossible for mankind to fellowship with God on a fleshly level. Our sin has created the problem. Though our sin is forgiven in the work of Christ on the cross, we have yet another need in order to experience God's presence. God is Spirit, and they that worship (or fellowship) with Him must do so in spirit and in truth. When we received Christ's death on the cross as the atonement for our sin, God brought to life in us His Spirit. His Spirit now dwells within us. His Spirit now calls for spiritual living in us, not fleshly living. His Spirit enables us to put to death the desires of the flesh. It is His Spirit in us that confirms that we are His, and it is by His Spirit in us that we can experience His presence daily!

God's presence, through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit, is intended to be experienced in our lives daily in at least the following three areas:

- 1. Releasing control to the Holy Spirit through brokenness.**  
For further study read: "Release of the Spirit" by Watchman Nee
- 2. Walking in love with God and mankind.**  
For further study read: "Life's Ultimate Privilege" by Devern Fromke & "Getting to Know Him" by Christopher A. Rieber
- 3. Using the life, & gifts, that God has given you in service to Him and others.**  
For further study read: "Getting to Know the Father", a workbook series by Peter Lord

The above three areas will require a willingness for you to focus your life less on your own desires and plans, and more on God's desires and plans. You must pursue God with the intention of making your life revolve around His presence.

By placing His Spirit in us, God opened the door for us to experience a daily "spirit to spirit" connection with Him. In the Christian community we call this "walking in the Spirit." Enjoying the abundant life God intends us to have is contingent on experiencing God through releasing control of our lives to the Holy Spirit's guidance, through walking in love with God and mankind, and through using the life, and gifts, God has given us in service to him and others.

## *Consider*

- ≈ How does it make you feel to know that God Himself has made the investment of placing His Spirit in you?
- ≈ Are you willing to commit to making your life revolve around God's presence?
- ≈ How much do you really want to experience God's presence in your life?

Thoughts:


Let's continue on by looking deeper into the three areas listed above.

# 1. Releasing control to the Holy Spirit through brokenness

The abundant life can only be experienced through the Spirit filled life. Many terms and phrases have been used in the Christian community to refer to a Spirit filled life, such as being: filled, baptized, anointed, slain, etc.

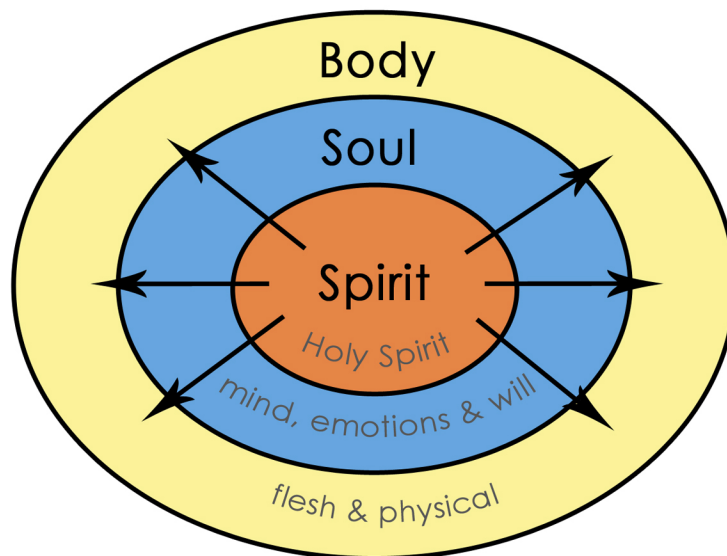
*The terminology is not so important, but the experience is essential!*

What do you think it means to be "led" by the Spirit?

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The illustration below may help give you a visual example of how this concept works in our lives. All of us are made of Body (our flesh), Soul (our mind, emotions, will), and Spirit (our inner person - which is brought to life through the Holy Spirit after surrendering our life to Jesus.) As you can see in the illustration, God's goal for our lives is that we would experience life in such a way that His Spirit in us would permeate the rest of who we are.



As you look at the illustration, which part of your being maintains the greatest control over you?

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To experience the abundant life of Christ, our body and soul must be saturated by the Holy Spirit - as a sponge is saturated by water. The spirit filled life can only come when our soul and body are broken and the Holy Spirit breaks through to our physical life. How does this happen? Many times brokenness comes through simple submission, hardship in life, coming to your "wits end"...you get the point. It is vital to know that a cry for help with a problem is very different than a genuine cry for God to take control of your life. Only the latter cry can release control to the Holy Spirit. When the genuine desperate cry for help and surrender comes from the deep recesses of the heart of mankind, God stands ready to take over. Hopefully the end result will be a loss of our own control, and an offering of control to the Holy Spirit.

If you really desire abundant living through absolute surrender to God, then take some time to pray right now. Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit. Tell Him you surrender all that you are to Him. Ask Him to release His power, His Holy Spirit, and His gifts in your life. Use whatever terminology you need to, but trust Him for a complete saturation of His Spirit in you! Remember, when the Holy Spirit overcomes the will of our soul, our body has the opportunity to enjoy an abundant life!

But be ready...you must **have faith to fight the flesh!** Satan does not want you to enjoy the abundant life Christ has for you. He will fight you to the end, seeking to pull you back by distracting you with worldly temptations. Yet be encouraged...you CAN overcome him!

Keep in mind, the key to overcoming the flesh is self-denial. But again, that requires real faith! If your flesh is crucified and your self is denied, Satan has nothing to work with, nothing to pit against you.

~ *"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth"*  
(John 4:24)

~ *"For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."*  
(Romans 8:14)

~ *"Submit therefore to God Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." (James 4:7-8)*

~ *"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world---our faith." (1 John 5:4)*

~ *"And He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me'." (Luke 9:23)*

The Bible tells us that the flesh and the Spirit are at war with each other. This war will never end in a treaty. The Holy Spirit of God will never surrender to our will. This war only ends when we surrender to the Holy Spirit. All people want peace. The peace of the Bible is not primarily a good feeling of satisfaction, but rather a peace of no war or conflict with God. The "peace that passes all understanding" comes to the person who is no longer at war with the control of the Holy Spirit. When our flesh is broken and defeated, and the Holy Spirit is released to control us, we are on the way to joyful abundant living.



Because you surrender complete authority to the Holy Spirit, the internal conflict pushing you to fight His way of living is removed! The lack of internal conflict then enables us to *experience* the presence of the Lord!

#### BE ADVISED:

There are no shortcuts to becoming "Spirit-filled". The only way it can happen is when you surrender complete control to him, and choose to follow His way for your life.

After the Holy Spirit overcomes and breaks the hardness of our hearts, resulting in submission, we will experience relationships with God and man as He has intended them to be. The joyful abundant life Jesus came to give to us all is wrapped up in a daily life of faith! God's Word tells us without faith it is impossible to please Him.

- ∞ "...This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)
- ∞ "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7)
- ∞ "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline." (2 Timothy 1:7)

## Consider

- ∞ Have you ever come to a place in your life where you can honestly say you have experienced the total control of God's Spirit in your life?
- ∞ Are you willing to surrender absolute control to Him? Will you make the changes He asks you to make?
- ∞ What do you think will be your greatest challenges in overcoming fleshly desires? Write down some things in your life that will require real faith in order for you to change them, and follow God's way for your life.
- ∞ What are some actions you can take to be victorious while having faith that God will help you succeed?

### Thoughts:


## 2. Walking in love with God and mankind.

*Love is the tool God uses to allow us to experience Him in our relationships.*

☞ *“And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.’” (Matthew 22:37-40)*

### Experiencing abundant life through loving God:

Our personal relationship with God through Jesus enables us to experience the presence of God through His many attributes. The more time we spend with Him, the more we get to know His presence with us. When we know His attributes and experience them in our life, our love for Him grows.

Below are some of God's attributes. Beside each one express how this attribute blesses you and causes you to love God deeper.

### God Is:

Our Friend..... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Our Lord (Boss)..... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Our Provider..... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Our Sustainer..... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
The God of Peace.. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Experiencing abundant life through loving others:

As we continue to spend time with God, we begin to experience His presence in our daily relationships with others. Consider how the following relationships could cause you to experience God's abundant life for you.

### 1. Family:

We all have family. Families are not perfect, but Christ-centered families do provide a place where God can be experienced in love relationships. In Ephesians chapter 4, Paul writes about how families are to experience God in loving one another. For some of us, our childhood families were troublesome, and it was only after entering God's family that we began to experience family love as it should be. God's family certainly gives us many opportunities to grow in love.

Read Ephesians 4:4-6

### 2. Friends:

Abundant life is also fulfilled as we experience God's presence through those who are friends to us, and through our willingness to be friends to others. Notice how the following verses illustrate this truth.

See below Galatians 6:2 & Romans 15:1

### 3. Marriage:

Without a doubt another way abundant living is experienced is through loving our spouse. In the book of Ephesians, God likens His relationship to the Church (Christians) to that of a husband and wife. Marriage reveals a lot about God's love for us and our need to love Him. Gary Thomas, author of Sacred Marriage, writes that He believes marriage is one of God's greatest tools of discipleship.

Read Ephesians 5:22-32

*ℵ "Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)*  
*ℵ "Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves." (Romans 15:1)*

*We were never intended to experience life alone. As we walk in love relationships with God and mankind, we experience the fulfillment of the abundant life God intends for us to have.*

## Consider

- ≈ Which of God's attributes give you a sense of fulfillment in life?
- ≈ How have your relationships with others caused you to experience God's presence and bring fulfillment in life?

Thoughts:


### 3. Using the life, and gifts, God has given you in service to Him and others

The abundant life of God is first experienced in the Spirit-filled life, which comes through the brokenness of our flesh, allowing the Holy Spirit to flow through our soul and body, and into the natural world around us. As we walk in the Spirit, God is experienced through our daily relationship with Him, and our relationships with mankind.

Abundant life is progressively experienced by actively serving God and others on a daily basis. As always, Jesus is our model of how to do this best.

~ *"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them." (John 13:14-17)*

How did Jesus model service in the verse above? \_\_\_\_\_

If Jesus, the Son of God and King of Kings, literally washed the feet of others, is there any task too humbling for us to do? Though we are not worthy Jesus lived, and still lives, to serve as well as intercede for us through His life.

God has equipped us all with specific gifts and abilities so we can serve one another, and thus experience His presence through our service. God has designed us to be ministers one to another! We are much more fulfilled in life when we do what we are designed to do.

~ *"Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." (Romans 8:34)*

~ *"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10)*

**READ: 1 Corinthians, Chapter 12**

This passage shows how all parts of God's church-body need one another. As each part of the human body fulfills a task, so each part of the church-body fulfills a task. Each part finds fulfillment and meaning in meeting the needs of others.

What happens if we, as a part of the church-body, don't serve the rest of the body?

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Your gifts in the Body of Christ are so important. What are some special abilities and gifts that you can use to serve God?

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Somehow, serving people makes us more aware of God working through our lives! And God considers service to be a high position in His Kingdom...so when we serve God and others, we can't lose!

Remember this...if you fail to serve others, even "the least of these", those who seem to be the least important of people, you have not only failed to serve those people, you have failed to serve God.

- ≈ *"Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'" (Matthew 25:45)*
- ≈ *"But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant." (Mark 10:43)*

## Consider

- ≈ Think of times you served others, seeking nothing in return. How did this make you feel? Remember when you serve another, it is as if you are serving Jesus himself!

Thoughts:

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# conclusion

Abundant life is God's plan for life! He desires His children to live free from the power of sin in the LIBERTY of the work of Christ. His longing for all His children is an INTIMATE relationship where He can be for us the loving Father that He is. In this intimate Father-child relationship, He wants us to know that we can have full FAITH in Him to help us face all the challenges of daily living. By the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, He wants us to EXPERIENCE His presence through spiritual fellowship, love and service.

This is the Abundant Life He has for you!

A large rectangular area with a light gray background and horizontal white lines, resembling a journal page for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page, providing a guide for text entry.



# CLOSING

It is my prayer that this study has helped you understand God's plan for you! It is God's plan that you would live an abundant life! As you continue your journey of life with Jesus as your Lord, keep in mind that one of the greatest acts of service is to introduce someone to Jesus! There are many people who are hurting, and need to experience life more abundantly. Tell them about Jesus and His love for them. Pass on what you have learned to someone else!

Who do you know that needs to experience abundant living?

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What are some ways you can help reconcile them to God by sharing about your new life in Christ?

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If you have any questions about this study, or would like more information about the ideas in this study, please contact our church office, we would love to speak with you. We pray God will bless you as you continue to live your new life in Christ abundantly!

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∞ *"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18)*