

The Christian's outward quality of life is the result of godly character in the inner person

Philosophers have for centuries debated the *summum bonum* (“the chief good”). What is the highest good that can be achieved in life, the best thing a human being can pursue? It’s an old question, of course. Solomon wrestled with it: “What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?” (**Eccl. 1:3 NKJV**). All of us, philosophers or not, want to “love life and see good days” (**1 Pt. 3:10**). We want the truly “good life.”

Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be the Christ, nothing less than the Son of God. Today, those who reject Jesus’ claim often portray the life of His followers as a drab, dreary existence devoid of any good quality that would make life pleasant. Unfortunately, Christians themselves sometimes slip into thinking they must do without any real happiness in this life so they can go to heaven and be happy there. We may catch ourselves thinking of God’s do’s and don’ts as unfortunate limitations that keep us from “living it up” as other folks are free to do.

The truth, however, is just the reverse. It is sin that prevents us from enjoying all the goodness that we were created to experience. To the extent that we respect God’s boundaries on our conduct, we will find life becoming better and better. And this is true even if life hands us some painful experiences. It is the Christian who can truly rejoice in the deep-down goodness of what life is really about. Speaking of the hope that Christians possess, Peter wrote to some who had difficult lives in this world, “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials” (**1 Pt. 1:6**).

The “lifestyle” of the Christian is as good as it gets! And the reason is obvious when we think about it for a moment: the very best things in life are the things that come from good character in our hearts. The outward “fruit” of our lifestyle is borne by a tree that has “roots” in our inmost being. Since nothing makes more beneficial changes in a person’s heart than obedient faith in Jesus Christ, no one can have a better lifestyle than the faithful Christian. This week, let’s remember that *the Christian’s outward quality of life is the result of godly character in the inner person*. The better the roots, the better the fruits.

Monday: Luke 6:43-45

Key Idea: A quality life is not possible without a quality character.

Questions for Family Growth: What kind of tree bears good fruit? What comes out of the “treasure” our hearts? What happens when we try to get good things by taking shortcuts? What principle does Paul mention in **Gal. 6:7**?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 28:23**.

Tuesday: James 1:27

Key Idea: The Christian's life is positively good, and not merely the negative absence of sin.

Questions for Family Growth: How does this verse show that there is both a positive and a negative side to true religion? Does following God's requirements result in a burdensome life? Consider the points made in [1 Jn. 5:3](#) and [Mt. 11:28-30](#).

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 28:24](#).

Wednesday: Romans 12:1,2

Key Idea: The Christian's way of life is a triumph of Christ-like character over circumstance.

Questions for Family Growth: How is it possible for the Christian to have a quality life when his external circumstances in the world may be unpleasant? What advantage is it for the Christian to have a "transformed" mind?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 28:25](#).

Thursday: Philippians 3:8

Key Idea: The Christian enjoys a lifestyle that is truly "excellent."

Questions for Family Growth: What does it mean for one thing to "excel" another? In the NKJV, how does Paul use the word "excellence" in [Phil. 3:8](#)? What was the thing for which Paul was willing to suffer the loss of everything else?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 28:26](#).

Friday: Matthew 5:6

Key Idea: Those who hunger and thirst for righteous will be filled.

Questions for Family Growth: If we find life "empty," what is the problem? Is the problem in the world or in ourselves? What happens when we learn to seek the highest and best things? In addition to [Mt. 5:6](#), consider [Mt. 6:33](#).

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 28:27](#).

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