

Keys to the Abundant Life

Opening Text: Psalm 34:12 - *Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?*

Have you ever longed for a life you could actually enjoy and a life filled with good and not evil? I believe that in spite of the fallen world we live in, in every man's heart is the desire to live a life like that - full of meaning, complete, abundant, a life of better things, and one we can enjoy more.

Countless volumes have been written by so many different people, experts, and non-experts, religious and secular, addressing the issue of the happy life. Countless run here and there, trying to find answers from gurus, self-help writers, searching for some hidden piece of wisdom, some powerful key to unlock such life. What if I told you that I know someone in "*whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*"?

Colossians 2:3 - *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

Jesus is not some mystical 'guru' but He is the very Author of Life. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, He has all the keys. Jesus made this powerful statement:

John 10:10 AMPC - *The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and **enjoy life**, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).*

Jesus is a Master at this kind of life. His Word teaches us the very keys that will enable you and me to do life better, have it in abundance, and enjoy it to the full, till it overflows.

In the New Testament, The Apostle Peter quotes the same text in Psalm 34 and expands it a bit more:

1 Peter 3:10 - *For "he who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit.*

Do you long for a life you can actually love and to see good days? The Bible has plenty to say about that. In fact, let us read the whole passage in context, in order to see the spiritual keys at work that lead to that kind of life:

1 Peter 3:8-12, 14 - *⁸ Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. ¹⁰ For "**he who would love life and see good days**, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. ¹¹ Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."*

14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

V.10 For he who would love life and see good days, let him...

Let him consider 3 things today:

1. The power of our choices

Good and evil are two predominant words in this text (7 times). The abundant life Jesus promised and that we long for, is tied up with the choices we make, one way or the other – and God calls us to choose 'good'.

Deuteronomy 30:19 - *I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore **choose life**, that both you and your descendants may live;*

A good life is attained by making a conscious decision of good over evil, life over death, blessing over cursing.

When confronted with evil, we choose good over evil. According to Ephesians 6 evil days do come sometimes. V.14 speaks of 'suffering' for sake of what is right. So, in this world, there will be days when evil will try to prevail, when we go through tough seasons. However, even then we remain blessed (v.14b) and we will live to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

2. The power of 'good'

a) Good overcomes evil!

Romans 12:21 - *Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.*

Galatians 6:9 - *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

b) What does 'good' look like?

V.8-9 - *8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.*

Good looks like this: living in unity, being compassionate (full of empathy, recognizing the suffering of others and taking action. Some of the happiest people are compassionate, giving, altruistic kind of people), brotherly love, being tenderhearted, blessing others -instead of retaliating.

Proverbs 17:13 - *Whoever rewards evil for good, evil will not depart from his house.*

Matthew 5:44 - *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,*

Does that work? Yes. You will be happier and inherit a blessing (1 Peter 3:12). That brings me to the next point:

3. The power of the tongue

1 Peter 3:10 - *For “he who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit*

Proverbs 18:21 - *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

The happy life begins with mastering the thing that potentially can bring most destructiveness and sorrow to our lives: a wild tongue.

James 1:26 - *If anyone among you thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless.*

James 3:4-5, 10 ⁴ *Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. ⁵ Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! [...] ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.*

Proverbs 6:2 – *You are snared by the words of your mouth; you are taken by the words of your mouth.*

Proverbs 12:13-14a – *The wicked is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, But the righteous will come through trouble. ¹⁴ A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth ...*

Proverbs 15:4 – *A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.*

Psalms 141:3 – *Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.*

So let us use the power of the tongue in the right way:

- **We speak blessing and things that edify** – **Ephesians 4:29** – *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*
- **We speak the word of God** – **Psalms 119:172** – *My tongue shall speak of Your word, for all Your commandments are righteousness.*
- **We speak praises unto God** – **Psalms 35:28** – *And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness and of Your praise all the day long.*

Ephesians 5:19 – *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

Conclusion

We started today with the question in psalm 34:

Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?

We then read the words of Peter:

For he who would love life and see good days, let him...

Let him consider,

1. The power of choices we make,
2. The power of good to overcome evil
3. The power of our tongue – our tongue is like a rudder: it determines the course of our lives

I believe that if we consider these 3 keys, we are on the way to experience a life we will love, good days, and the abundant life Jesus talked about. Even when adversity comes, we will remain blessed.