

HOW TO EXPERIENCE THE ABUNDANT LIFE

A. GOD BLESS YOU

God wants you to experience a life of abundance. Remember that Jesus said in John 10:10: **I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.** What does it mean to experience abundance? What is abundant life? We know that abundant life begins when we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord, and we are born again. This is the beginning of life as God intended it to be, but it does not stop there. The abundant life, by definition, means the abundant, God-kind of life. What kind of life does God have?

God wants you to prosper in your spirit, in your soul (which is your will and the mental and emotional part of your personality) and in your body. Abundant life includes spiritual fulfillment, mental and emotional peace and physical healing and prosperity. Sometimes Christians are given the false impression that poverty, lack, oppression, sickness and tragedy in the life of a Christian are signs of spirituality. This idea proposes that in His sovereignty God afflicts a Christian with abuses so the Christian will demonstrate more nobility and humility than he would have if his life had been one of blessing and abundance. Maybe you've heard believers say things like, "The Lord is using this disease to teach me something." "God must have had a reason for allowing us to have that accident." "This tragedy is God's way of getting my attention." Insurance companies even call tornadoes, hurricanes and natural disasters "acts of God." The Bible does not teach that.

When we use the phrase "God bless you," we have to ask ourselves, what are we really saying? Does God want Christians to be blessed? Let's look at the Scriptures.

1. John 10:10

What type of life did Jesus say He came to bring? _____

Abundantly: "Superabundant (in quantity) or superior (in quality)." The implication is excessive and beyond measure. To have more, to have enough and to spare, increase, a surplus!"

2. 3 John 2

What did the Holy Spirit inspire the apostle John to wish for Christians? _____

3. Proverbs 10:22

What does God's blessing do for believers? _____

What does "he addeth no sorrow with it" mean? _____

Should we be ashamed, apologetic or feel guilty if we are blessed with abundance? _____

4. Deuteronomy 11:21

If we obey the Lord's command, He promises long life for us and our children. In addition, He says that our days can be like _____

Describe what "days of heaven" would include. _____

Describe what "days of heaven" would not include. _____

Where did God say we could have days of heaven? _____

Remember, for a Christian the command that we are under in the New Covenant is the commandment to love — to love God and to love one another. If we walk in the law of love, we will qualify for "days of heaven" on the earth.

5. Psalm 103:1-5

In verse 2, what are we to remember? _____

What benefits are listed in these verses? _____

6. Psalm 68:19

What does God want to “load” us with? _____

How often? _____

Is there any doubt that God wants believers to be blessed with abundant life? _____

B. WHY DOES GOD WANT US TO BE BLESSED WITH ABUNDANCE?

There are two basic reasons God wants us to experience the blessing of the abundant life.

First: God loves us and wants us to enjoy life.

Second: God loves others, and He wants us to be a channel so He can bless others through us.

God wants you to be blessed and to be a blessing.

It’s a fact that the more you have — in spiritual and material things — the more you can give to others.

1. 1 Timothy 6:17,18

God admonishes the rich to be aware of two things. This Scripture tells us that “God gives us richly all things.” For what purpose?

Verse 17: _____

Verse 18: _____

2. Deuteronomy 8:11-18

As we (believers) prosper in life, we are told to remember a few things.

Who gives us the power to get wealth? _____

Why does He give us power to get wealth? _____

TO ESTABLISH HIS COVENANT: God has always wanted His people to prosper. In the Old Testament we see the incredible wealth, well-being and health of God’s people. As people blessed of the Lord, their lives were a testimony of God’s goodness, and they had the resources necessary to perpetuate God’s covenant and to bear the truth of His Word.

God wanted His people under the Old Covenant to be blessed and prosperous. How much more does God want His people under the new and better covenant (Heb. 8:6) to be blessed

with abundance? As Christians are blessed, our lives testify to the generous nature of our heavenly Father. In addition, the Body of Christ then has the resources necessary to proclaim the good news of the Gospel around the world.

3. 2 Corinthians 9:7,8

Whom does God love? _____

Is God able to help you so that you will have plenty for enjoying life and plenty to give to others? _____

4. Matthew 6:33

What does this verse tell us? _____

When it comes to abundance, blessings, prosperity and divine health, we need to keep our heart attitudes right. At times Christians can be caught up in greed, covetousness, selfishness and pride. If we aren't careful, we may begin to think God's Word is a "get rich quick" scheme or that we can use God's Word to parade our *health and wealth faith*. This is a dangerous way to think and believe. The Bible teaches us that the **love of money is the root of all evil** (1 Tim. 6:10). Pride, including spiritual pride, goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. (Prov. 16:18.) Our motives must be pure, holy and righteous. When our desire for the life of abundance is in order to advance God's plan and His will *first*, we are in position to receive His abundant blessings. Believers who are walking in the light of God's Word and in His law of love are in position to receive.

C. WE MUST LEARN TO BE CONTENT

While God does want us blessed, at the same time, He wants us to be content in all circumstances. We are to expect and look forward to God's great blessings while being content with our current lot in life. This is not always easy. Trust God for an increasing measure of the abundant life, and don't allow yourself to grumble with discontent in your present status in life.

1. Philippians 4:11-13

What did Paul say he had learned? (v. 11.) _____

2. 1 Timothy 6:6

GODLINESS + _____ = GREAT GAIN

3. Hebrews 13:5

Concerning contentment, what does God tell us in this verse? _____

To be content does not mean you have to forfeit your desire or your faith for all the blessings God's Word promises. It simply means that while you are in faith for the blessings of God, learn to be content until they are manifested.

D. TWO AREAS OF ABUNDANT LIVING: HEALING AND PROSPERITY

The subjects of divine healing, health and prosperity have caused no small stir among churches and denominations. Those who believe in healing and prosperity through faith have been labeled the "health and wealth" believers, the "name it and claim it" group, the "confess it and possess it" Christians. While there have been abuses in these areas by misguided Christians, there is a solid biblical basis for believing that God Himself wants believers healed and healthy in their bodies and prosperous in material and financial matters.

You might wonder, *If it is God's will for Christians to be healed and prosperous, why are so many Christians sick and poor?* Perhaps these thoughts will shed some light on the subject.

The Bible teaches that God is not willing that anyone perish, but that all should come to repentance. God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish but would have everlasting life. (John 3:16.) It is God's will for all to be saved. Yet, we know that not everyone will be saved. Why? Simply because they refuse to believe God's Word; they refuse to believe in and receive Jesus Christ as Lord.

In the same way, we can see that the Bible teaches us it is God's will for all believers to have life and have it more abundantly. God wants us to prosper and be in health as our soul prospers. It is God's will for all believers to enjoy the abundant life — which includes healing and prosperity. Yet, we know that not everyone will experience healing, health and prosperity. Why? Many Christians refuse to believe God's Word on the subject. Many Christians would rather believe their experience, or the experience of other Christians, than to base their beliefs on God's Word.

On the other hand, there are times when believers do believe God's Word on the subject, but they are still not living in total health and prosperity. Why is this? There can be various reasons, but let's look at a few common reasons.

One reason could simply be a demonic attack in the areas of healing and prosperity. If the devil can defeat a Christian in these areas and "wear down" their faith, then he has accomplished a double victory. First, the Christian who became weary in well-doing, and who cast away his or her confidence in God's Word in these areas does not experience the blessing of healing and good health, nor abundant prosperity. Second, the devil has successfully silenced this Christian from preaching or ministering to others in these areas. There is no doubt that in these areas the Christian must patiently fight the good fight of faith to obtain

the promises. It is not always easy to do, and oftentimes takes perseverance and requires long suffering.

Another reason could simply be a misunderstanding of, or impatience, with regard to the law of sowing and reaping. Although this chapter does not include an in-depth look at God's laws of giving and receiving; nonetheless, giving is the way to abundant living! We will reap what we sow. (For further study please see: Gen. 8:22, 2 Cor. 9:6, Gal. 6:7-9, Luke 6:38, Mal. 3:10,11.) As we tithe and give offerings to the work of God we are sowing into God's Kingdom. Like any seed that is planted, a period of time will usually pass before we see any evidence of that growing seed. It was growing all the time, but often we have to wait a season or two to see and reap the full harvest of our seed on a consistent basis. Of course, our harvest will be in direct proportion to the amount we have sown. Again, we shall reap if we don't faint. This too is an area where faith and patience must be exercised on a regular basis.

Let's look at the Scriptures a little more closely. Most Christians will agree that God has the power to do anything. God has the ability to heal and prosper anyone he chooses. The real question in the mind of many believers is this: Is it God's will to heal and prosper *everyone*? We know God is able, but is He willing? Can we prove from the Bible that it is God's will to heal and prosper every believer? Let's look at these Scriptures.

1. God's will is revealed in our redemption.

Galatians 3:13,14

What has Christ already redeemed us from? _____

THE CURSE OF THE LAW: The term "the law" usually refers to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. According to these five books we can see that the curse of the law, or the result of breaking God's law, is threefold — poverty, sickness and eternal death. Jesus through His death, burial and resurrection redeemed us from this curse. In other words, He freed us from the bondage of poverty, the destruction of sickness and disease and the eternal separation from God, if we will only believe and have faith in Him as our Redeemer.

What do these Scriptures tell us could now come on the Gentiles (nonbelievers) through Jesus Christ? _____

THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM: We can see from a study of Abraham's life that the promise of the blessing of Abraham was first given in Genesis 12:1-3,5. Ultimately through Abraham's seed the Lord Jesus Christ would be born. Through Jesus Christ all of mankind would be blessed. In addition, the blessing of Abraham included blessings on him personally — on his body, on his name, on his family — and through him to others. In observing Abraham's life we see him as a man blessed of the Lord. He was blessed with a healthy, long life, as noted in Genesis 24:1. He was very rich, as mentioned in Genesis 13:2 and 24:34,35. He was a blessing to others, and he tithed ten percent of all that he had, as described in Genesis 14:18-20. His

family was blessed, and his son Isaac received the blessing of Abraham. We can clearly see the blessing of Abraham included **health** and **wealth**. That blessing of Abraham is for us today, because in Christ we are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. (See Galatians 3:16,29.)

2. What about sickness and poverty?

Deuteronomy 28

a. Deuteronomy 28:1-14

Beginning in verse 2, God categorizes the things He calls blessings. In our modern language, what are some of the blessings that come on believers as they obey God's Word?

b. Deuteronomy 28:15-68

Beginning in verse 15, God categorizes the things He calls curses. In our language, what are some of the curses that come on those who do not obey God's Word?

c. In examining Deuteronomy 28, please circle the correct answer. God categorizes,

healing and health	a blessing or a curse
sickness and disease	a blessing or a curse
prosperity and success	a blessing or a curse
poverty and lack	a blessing or a curse
disaster and tragedy	a blessing or a curse

A blessing is not a curse. A curse is not a "blessing in disguise." God's blessings are true blessings. When God calls something a curse, it is a curse! We can clearly see that healing, good health and prosperity are God's will for every believer. To be healthy and prosperous is a blessing. Health and prosperity are part of the abundant life Jesus came to bring.

E. PERSONAL APPLICATION

You may wish to study this area further. There are many good books on the subject. In addition, here are some ideas for your own biblical study in this area.

1. Study healing in the ministry of Jesus. A careful reading of the Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke and John — will be helpful. Remember, Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, according to Hebrews 13:8. Whatever we see Him doing in His earthly ministry, He is still doing today through His Body, the Church.
2. Study the prosperity of the Old Testament patriarchs. Remember, we are under a new and better covenant. What God did for people in the Old Testament, He will do for us as we walk in the light of His Word.
 - a. Abraham — Genesis 12-25
 - b. Isaac — Genesis 25-28
 - c. Jacob — Genesis 27-49
 - d. Joseph — Genesis 37-50
 - e. Moses — Exodus - Deuteronomy
 - f. Joshua — Joshua 1:8

F. GROUP EXERCISE

If there are those in your group who are experiencing lack, poverty, sickness or hardship, you may want to take time to pray for one another. Look at James 5:14-16.

¹James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance Compact Edition with Dictionaries of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992) "Greek Dictionary of the New Testament," p. 57, #4051, #4052, #4053.