

Amazing Life

Bible Study | The Church of God International | August 4, 2018



Introduction



How are you today? How is life?



If life is good, why are you here?



Ah, because you want more than an okay life.
You want an amazing life!



Amazing is a relative word. Amazing may mean different things to different people. What is amazing to one may not be amazing to another.



However, we can agree that to be “amazing” is to be better than you are now. To be amazing is to level up to a position where you feel great about yourself.



What is an amazing life for you?



Is it a life of abundance, privilege, comfort
and/or luxury?



Is it having a fat bank account, living in palatial homes, wearing expensive clothing, deck with fine jewelry or living the life of the rich and famous?



If this is your idea of an amazing life, you
cannot be more wrong.



Money is nice; more money is better. Who does not want more and more and even more money?



Wealth is neutral. It can be a source of great blessing or a great curse. Wealth can be used for good or for evil. It can make one happy and another miserable.



1 Timothy 6:6-10

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.



1 Timothy 6:6-10

8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.



1 Timothy 6:6-10

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.



1 Timothy 6:17-19

17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.



1 Timothy 6:17-19

18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.



We will devote time to talk about riches one of these days – Biblical Principles on Riches –
“How to get rich the Christian way.”



Today we will focus on having an amazing life
– with or without a lot of money. Of course,
better with lots of money.



Life of a King



If there were a person destined to live an amazing life, it would have to be a king.



Take a look at the British royal family. Their lives must be amazing. The royal family is worth around USD 88 billion at the end of 2017 according to Forbes.



They command the adoration of millions of fans. Live in palaces, travel in style and wear the latest designer clothes and shoes and bags. They live in the lap of comfort and luxury.



Prince Charles and Princess Diana were also part of the royal family, but they seemed to live miserable lives. Their lives were less than amazing.



King Solomon



If there were a king who ought to live an amazing life, it would have to be King Solomon.



He was exceedingly wise, superbly good looking, fabulously wealthy and had a pageantry of beauty queen as wives. What can be more amazing than that, right?



Wrong, he was seriously unhappy and frustrated with life. At one stage in his kingly life, he sought happiness and meaning to life and found none.



As a king, Solomon tried everything to discover the secret to an amazing life. He did great experiments that only brought many headaches and heartaches. Finally, in his old age he eventually realized the formula to an amazing life.



King Solomon's wisdom was renown. Wise men came from far and wide to listen to him. Even the queen of Sheba came to visit. This was what she said of King Solomon.



2 Chronicles 9:5-8

5 She said to the king, “The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true.

6 But I did not believe what they said until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half the greatness of your wisdom was told me; you have far exceeded the report I heard.



2 Chronicles 9:5-8

7 How happy your people must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom!

8 Praise be to the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on his throne as king to rule for the Lord your God. Because of the love of your God for Israel and his desire to uphold them forever, he has made you king over them, to maintain justice and righteousness.”



Queen Sheba was truly moved and impressed
by Solomon's wisdom.



In an assembly of wise men; King Solomon started out with these words: “Meaningless, meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”



What words of disillusionment and frustration from the great and wise king! His surprising opening remarks must have shaken up a few wise men who came to listen to him.



He starts by expressing the futility of life. He looks at life and asks: “What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?” The answer is nothing.



In Ecclesiastes 1:15 he observes: “what is twisted cannot be straightened, and what is lacking cannot be counted.” The world moves on and the dead are forgotten. Life is short, flitting and futile; he sighed.



Experiments



Solomon narrated the great experiments he did in order to find meaning and marvel in life. He wanted to live an amazing life, thus he experimented with the following:



1. Wisdom



He thought wisdom is the key to an amazing life. How amazing would it be to have an IQ of a genius, able to fathom mysteries and become a walking Wikipedia?



King Solomon amassed much wisdom and found it to be futile. He construed: “for with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more the knowledge, the more the grief.”
(Ecclesiastes 1:18)



Solomon realized that great wisdom is actually frustrating. Although the wise man has an advantage in life, eventually both the wise and the fool meet the same death
“Meaningless,” he concluded in Ecclesiastes
2:13-16.



Ecclesiastes 2:13-16

13 I saw that wisdom is better than folly,
just as light is better than darkness.

14 The wise have eyes in their heads,
while the fool walks in the darkness;
but I came to realize
that the same fate overtakes them both.



Ecclesiastes 2:13-16

15 Then I said to myself,

“The fate of the fool will overtake me also.
What then do I gain by being wise?”

I said to myself,

“This too is meaningless.”



Ecclesiastes 2:13-16

16 For the wise, like the fool, will not be long remembered;

the days have already come when both have been forgotten.

Like the fool, the wise too must die!



2. Pleasure



He tested pleasure. He did what pleased him.
He tried laughter and wine. Like us today,
going to comedy bars where jokes, laughter
and wine are abundant. He had nightly
entertainment. He then undertook huge
magnificent projects.



Ecclesiastes 2:3-10

3 I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives.



Ecclesiastes 2:3-10

4 I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. 5 I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6 I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees.



Ecclesiastes 2:3-10

7 I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me.



Ecclesiastes 2:3-10

8 I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man's heart.

9 I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.



Ecclesiastes 2:3-10

10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;
I refused my heart no pleasure.
My heart took delight in all my labor,
and this was the reward for all my toil.



Ecclesiastes 2:11

11 Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done

and what I had toiled to achieve,
everything was meaningless, a chasing after
the wind;

nothing was gained under the sun.



His conclusion: “It’s meaningless. Nothing was gained from the whole exercise.”



Ecclesiastes 2:17-23

17 So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

18 I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me.



Ecclesiastes 2:17-23

19 And who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish? Yet they will have control over all the fruit of my toil into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless.

20 So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun.



Ecclesiastes 2:17-23

21 For a person may labor with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune.

22 What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labor under the sun?



Ecclesiastes 2:17-23

23 All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless.



3. Riches



He tried to hoard riches. The motto of riches is 'more is merrier' - the more the millions the more amazing life is. Solomon found out that it does not work that way.



Ecclesiastes 5:8-15

8 If you see the poor oppressed in a district, and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at such things; for one official is eyed by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still.

9 The increase from the land is taken by all; the king himself profits from the fields.



Ecclesiastes 5:8-15

10 Whoever loves money never has enough;
whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with
their income.

This too is meaningless.



Ecclesiastes 5:8-15

11 As goods increase,
so do those who consume them.
And what benefit are they to the owners
except to feast their eyes on them?



Ecclesiastes 5:8-15

12 The sleep of a laborer is sweet,
whether they eat little or much,
but as for the rich, their abundance
permits them no sleep.



Ecclesiastes 5:8-15

13 I have seen a grievous evil under the sun:
wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners,
14 or wealth lost through some misfortune,
so that when they have children
there is nothing left for them to inherit.



Ecclesiastes 5:8-15

15 Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb,
and as everyone comes, so they depart.
They take nothing from their toil
that they can carry in their hands.



We live in a materialistic world. We grow up thinking that money buys happiness - the more money the more happiness.



Money can buy comfort, fun and luxury but it is not directly proportional to happiness. There is a diminishing utility to wealth. If you have a monthly salary of P100,000, an increase of P50,000 will not necessarily bring more joy, because your aspirations and needs adjust with the new wealth.



An international team of researchers led by Jordi Quoidbach reported in the August 2010 issue of Psychological Science that, although wealth may grant us opportunities to purchase many things, it simultaneously impairs our ability to enjoy those things.



Their first study, conducted with adult employees of the University of Liège in Belgium, showed that the wealthier the workers were, the less likely they were to display a strong capacity to savor positive experiences in their lives.



The researchers stated that because wealth allows people to experience the best that life has to offer, it ultimately undermines their ability to savor life's little pleasures. Once we've had the opportunity to drink the finest French wines, fly in a private jet, and dine in the best restaurants, coffee at Starbucks with a friend, or a chicken joy at Jollibee doesn't provide the same jolt of happiness it used to.



Indeed, a landmark study of lottery winners showed just that: People who won between \$50,000 and \$1,000,000 were less impressed by life's simple pleasures than people who experienced no such windfall.



Insights



After much experimentation, King Solomon finally realized that an amazing life is attainable but not through wisdom, pleasure or abundance. King Solomon realized that an amazing life is one of contentment and finding nuggets of miracles in everyday life.



Since "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions," life for both the rich and the poor depends on what one brings to it. There is something inherently beautiful in appreciating the simple pleasures in life. Solomon made a short list of these simple pleasures of life; they are:



1. Enjoy your meals



Ecclesiastes 2:24-25

24 A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God,
25 for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?



We eat three (3) times a day and sometimes a little bit of snacks in between meals. The simplest delight in life is the ability to enjoy our food and drink. We should enjoy our meals.



A good meal does not have to be lavish. Simply, well-prepared meals are wonderful. A meal shared with family and friends is most enjoyable.



Workshop

List your favorite dishes. Make a menu for the week with one favorite dish a day. Now, you have something to look forward to everyday.



2. Enjoy your work



Ecclesiastes 3:22

22 So I saw that there is nothing better for a person than to enjoy their work, because that is their lot. For who can bring them to see what will happen after them?



We spend around 8 hours at work. Needless to say, that to improve our quality of life we need to enjoy what we do. If you are unhappy with your work, those 8 hours of work can be hell. Learn to love your work or find a work that you love. The work is not only at the office or factory, it can also be house chores.



Solomon said: “whatever your hands find to you, do it with all your might.”

(Ecclesiastes 9:10)

For a person to love his job and do it well, he must see a purpose in his work.



The secret in loving work, be it house chore or career, is always to focus on how you'll feel when it's done. Don't think about scrubbing the tiles, think about how clean and nice the bathroom will be after you clean it. The same goes for work. Think about how you'll feel if you give your project 100% and it becomes successful.



When you enjoy your work and do it well, the reward is a strong sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. Then, your labor becomes amazing.



Workshop

Set success parameters and goals for your work. Meeting them will give you a sense of fulfillment. Example, your project has a completion time of 5 days. You may set your own goal at 4 days. So, when you finish your project on the 4th day, you feel accomplished because you meet your own timeline and are ahead of the project deadline. Your boss is happy and you too are happy. It's that amazing?



3. Enjoy your wealth



Ecclesiastes 5:18-20

18 This is what I have observed to be good: that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them—for this is their lot.



Ecclesiastes 5:18-20

19 Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God.

20 They seldom reflect on the days of their life, because God keeps them occupied with gladness of heart.



We work to live and not live to work. Work is our source of livelihood. What do you do with your money?



Solomon said: do not hoard the money rather spend it for our enjoyment. We should not be slaves to money but money should be our slave.



It is nice to have money. It is true that money cannot buy you true love or true happiness. But, money can buy you well-being, comfort and luxury.



If we want to buy happiness, we need to squeeze as many rewarding and stretching experiences from our purchases as possible. Here are some helpful tips on how to enjoy your wealth.



1. Spend on activities that help you grow as a person like pursuing a passion: taking music lessons, cooking lessons, parenting lessons, etc.



2. Invest in the family. Buy the best education for your children, strengthen family ties with relatives and friends, provide for comfortable shelter and necessities. Do some family shopping, watch a movie, dine out, take a vacation, etc.



3. Give some back. Contribute to the community. Nice to do some charity work.



Workshop

Set a budget from your monthly income to splurge on a little leisure and entertainment. Also, make a list of things that you and your family and friends love to do together. Then, use the budget to make them happen. Enjoy your wealth.



4. Enjoy your marriage



Ecclesiastes 9:7-9

7 Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do.

8 Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil.



Ecclesiastes 9:7-9

9 Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.



You are married to your spouse for life. A large degree of your happiness depends on the success of your marriage. There are many challenges in marriage. Always remember that in a marriage, there is only love. There is no envy, jealousy and hatred. If you want an amazing life – be an amazing husband, wife and parent.



The happiness depends on small things in life that we share with our family, spouse, children and friends. An amazing family life starts with loving your spouse.



The secret to enjoying the spouse of your youth is to keep the romance alive. The routine of family life stifles the romance.

Create time for a little romance in your marriage and family life. Flowers, chocolates, candle dinner nights and late night movies help in maintaining the passion. To be able to court your spouse after marriage is fun and will keep your life amazing.



Workshop

List the things your spouse loves to eat, drink and do; and enjoy them together.



5. Follow the ways of
your heart



Ecclesiastes 11:9

9 You who are young, be happy while you are young,
and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth.

Follow the ways of your heart
and whatever your eyes see,
but know that for all these things
God will bring you into judgment.



The simplest thrill in life is to do what pleases you. A little adventure makes life more exciting and exuberant. Whatever your heart feels like doing, do it whether it be a sport, a hobby or a pursuit like a cause or a charity.



The things that make you happy are those little things you find enjoyable. Like a walk in the park, a ball game with friends, an evening chatting with friends, a nice book to read, a karaoke session with the barkada or a movie night with the family.



Workshop

List the things you love to do and do it.



6. Have a happy positive outlook



Ecclesiastes 3:12

12 I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live.



No one can enjoy all the above without a positive attitude towards life. Life, as we all know, is full of challenges.



Solomon describes it this way in Ecclesiastes
3:1-11.



Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

1 There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the
heavens:

2 a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,

3 a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,



Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

- 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
- 5 a time to scatter stones and a time to
gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain
from embracing,
- 6 a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,



Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

- 7 a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
8 a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.



Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

9 What do workers gain from their toil?

10 I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race.

11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.



Life is a mixture of beautiful and sad events. For anyone to appreciate life, he must be able to take the good as well as the bad. Life must be viewed in God's grand plan of salvation.



The secret to an amazing life is to have a positive outlook – be happy for the beautiful things that happen in our lives and learn to revere the Lord when beset with problems.



Workshop

List the beautiful things that happen in your life and meditate on them



7. Remember God and keep His commandments



Ecclesiastes 12:13

13 Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the duty of all mankind.



The greatest fulfillment of joy is a close relationship with God. The close relationship with our heavenly Father gives us the assurance of eternal life without which life is meaningless.



Solomon said the greatest vanity in life is death. The rich and the poor all meet the same end. Everything returns to the ground. If there is no eternal life beyond this temporal human existence, we are most miserable and life is not only meaningless but worrisome.



Therefore, our eternal hope and joy are in the Lord and eternal life hinges on our obedience to His commands.



Workshop

List the things you should thank God for. Go on your knees and thank Him daily. You will experience a transformation in your life when you do it. You can only experience an amazing life when God is with you.



Summation



To have an amazing life is to find contentment
in the daily providence of God. To have an
amazing life is to enjoy life's simple pleasures.



The ability to enjoy every moment, every meal, every labor, every thought at every opportunity is what leads to an amazing life. Celebrate every small achievement. Give thanks to God at every turn. Always keep His commandments. Wonders can happen in your life – life can be amazing!



We started the Bible study with a wonderful hymn entitled 'He Hideth My Soul.' The hymn was composed by Fanny Crosby. Fanny Crosby wrote more than 9,000 hymns in her life. 'He Hideth My Soul' is one of the most popular of her hymns.



At six weeks old, Crosby caught a cold and developed inflammation of the eyes. The medication applied to treat the inflammation damaged her optic nerves and blinded her. Crosby lost her eyesight but not her love for life. She lived a life faithful and appreciative of God's providence. She was never for a moment bitter about her condition. She remained happy and positive through out her life even having lost her daughter soon after birth.



Crosby later remarked: "It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me."



An amazing life is one that is happy and appreciative of God's providence. Enjoy what we have rather than whining about what we do not have. An amazing life can be yours if you follow these 7 simple biblical principles.



1. Enjoy your meals
2. Enjoy your work
3. Enjoy your wealth
4. Enjoy your marriage
5. Follow the ways of your heart
6. Have a happy positive outlook
7. Remember God and keep His commandments



END

