

Live Righteously
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Think about the most Godly person you've ever known. Got 'em in your mind clearly?
Share some of the CHARACTERISTICS of that person? (Discussion)

Psalm 112 is all about the CHARACTERISTICS of a Godly person.

- His children will be mighty and blessed
- Her righteousness endures forever
- He's gracious and compassionate
- Good will come to her because she lends freely
- He will have no fear of bad news
- She will never be shaken

Wow! Where do I sign up for that?

- Before we dive into these ten verses in Psalm 112 though, let me address something important.
- The title of our lesson is LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY
- Does it feel like that is possible?
- Did you know that your teacher is a good deal like the Apostle Paul? Are you impressed? Did you know that YOU are a lot like the Apostle Paul? Now you're REALLY IMPRESSED.

Romans 7:14-25 (New International Version)

¹⁴We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.^[a] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²²For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

- SEE! We're JUST LIKE THE APOSTLE PAUL!
- Is it possible to LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY?

- One of the most encouraging quotes I've heard in a long time was Pastor Johnny talking about his visit to Billy Graham a few weeks ago. He said he was affirming Dr. Graham on how much his life and ministry had meant to Johnny and Janet and countless millions. Remember how Mr. Graham responded?
 - "Johnny, if you knew me like Jesus knows me you wouldn't feel that way."
 - That did my heart GOOD!
 - Even Billy Graham struggles. Paul struggled.
- Is it possible to LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY?
- It MUST BE. In Matthew 5:20 Jesus said:

Matthew 5:20 (New International Version)

²⁰For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

- Is it possible to LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY?
- Stay tuned...we're going to answer that question by the end of class.
- BUT, In case you leave early I couldn't start this study of Psalm 112 without assuring you that the GOOD NEWS is YES. And HOW we LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY is all about THE Good News...Christ's TRANSFORMING POWER IN OUR LIVES.

Let's get into Psalm 112 --- Who would read verse 1?

Psalm 112 (New International Version)

Psalm 112

^{1[a]} Praise the LORD. ^[b]

Blessed is the man who fears the LORD,
who finds great delight in his commands.

- If you look back up at verse 10 of Psalm 111 it tells us:

¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.
To him belongs eternal praise.

- What does it mean to FEAR the Lord?
 - That word DOES translate being FRIGHTENED
 - But when used in reference to God it denotes AWE and REVERENCE
- Our lesson commentary says: "Godly people demonstrate their fear of God by giving him TOP PRIORITY in their lives."
- Now if you view God in AWE and REVERENCE you would likely want to respond like the second sentence in verse one.

- "...finds delight in his commands."
- Remember last week's lesson used that word DELIGHTS? What did we say it means to DELIGHT in something?
 - To DESIRE; To find PLEASURE; To ENJOY
- The Godly person DESIRES the commands of God.

1 Peter 2:2 (New International Version)

2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

- Think about how a newborn CRAVES MILK! Ever had a newborn baby ask you for it's milk? Was it a polite little whimper? How about a blood curdling SCREAM at TWO IN THE MORNING?
- The Godly person can't wait for God's Word! They'll even wake up at TWO in the morning and cry out for it!
- To summarize: The person who is BLESSED and LIVES RIGHTEOUSLY
 - Has proper FEAR OF GOD and
 - DELIGHTS IN; DESIRES; CRAVES His Word
 - God is that person's PRIORITY!
- What is the person who LIVES RIGHTEOUSLY like?
- Let's read verses 2-5

² His children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches are in his house,
and his righteousness endures forever.

⁴ Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man. [c]

⁵ Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely,
who conducts his affairs with justice.

- How does LIVING RIGHTEOUSLY impact FUTURE GENERATIONS of your family?
 - Verse 2 says his "children will be mighty" and that future generations will be blessed.
- Now, true confession time! Some of this part of Psalm 112 is a challenge to interpret.
- Verse 3 "Wealth and riches are in his house"?
- A lot of GOOD GODLY PEOPLE would read that verse and say "Have you seen my checkbook?"
- Despite what you might see on TV or hear in some BIG churches in Atlanta or BIG arenas all over the country...

MATERIAL WEALTH AND RICHES DO NOT ALWAYS COME TO THOSE WHO FOLLOW GOD FAITHFULLY.

For some of us, the only significant RICHES in our house will be the BLESSINGS of God that can't be bought with money and the LEGACY of generations of "MIGHTY" children who serve God.

- Living RIGHTEOUSLY provides INNER STRENGTH. Let's read verses 6-10

⁶ Surely he will never be shaken;
a righteous man will be remembered forever.

- Based on your experience as a Christian have you NEVER BEEN SHAKEN?
- Remember WEEBLES? What were WEEBLES?
- Remember the advertising slogan for WEEBLES?
 - WEEBLES WOBBLE but they don't fall down.
 - People who have their trust in God might WOBBLE but we don't fall down.

Our Lesson Materials remind us:

We all know that a friend's betrayal or a cancer diagnosis can certainly leave us shaken. It helps to understand the meaning of the Hebrew word mot, translated in this verse as shaken. It does not mean we never have problems, or that we remain unfazed in every situation. It means that when trouble comes, we are not overwhelmed.

⁷ He will have no fear of bad news;
his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

- My Bible is pretty well worn where this verse is printed!
- I can't tell you how many times I've come back to this verse and prayed hard to claim it
- I recently read Max Lucado's latest book: "FEARLESS: Imagine Your Life Without Fear." It's a good one. Here are a couple of quotes:

"We find Jesus in morning devotionals, church suppers, and meditation. We never expect to see him in a bear market, pink slip, lawsuit, foreclosure, or war. We never expect to see him in a storm. But it is in storms that he does his finest work, for it is in storms that he has our keenest attention."

"Whether or not storms come, we cannot choose. But where we stare during a storm, that we can."

"That's what God wants us to do. His call to courage is not a call to naïveté or ignorance. We aren't to be oblivious to the overwhelming challenges that life brings. We're to counterbalance them with long looks at God's accomplishments...Do whatever it takes to keep your gaze on Jesus."

⁸ His heart is secure, he will have no fear;
in the end he will look in triumph on his foes.

- Look at verse 9

⁹ He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor,
his righteousness endures forever;
his horn ^[d] will be lifted high in honor.

- The person who lives **RIGHTEOUSLY** will **GIVE GENEROUSLY**
- It says “his horn will be lifted high in honor” –
- But we Christians aren’t supposed to seek **HONOR** for the good we do are we? What does that mean?
- This metaphor refers to the horns of an animal. Since the **HORNS** or the **ANTLERS** are a big part of the animal’s **DEFENSE** -- the bigger the horns the more **STRENGTH** we attribute to that animal. Everybody wants to get a **12 POINT BUCK** right?

Matthew 5:16 (New International Version) Jesus said...

¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

- It’s not **HONOR FOR US**...it’s **HONOR FOR HIM!**
- We are to be **TROPHIES OF GRACE** on God’s wall
- He wants to be able to say: “Look at that **TWELVE POINT BUCK** that I bought with the blood of Jesus...**HE STAYED STRONG** in the faith and look at how it **HONORED ME!**”

So, back to the beginning of the lesson: **CAN WE LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY?**

- The **KJV Bible Commentary** said that in **Matthew 5:20** when Jesus said our righteousness should exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees...

The significance of this is seen in the fact that the Jews of Jesus’ day considered these people to be the most religious in all Israel. However, their religion was merely an outward show of self-righteousness. What the Saviour demands is a kind of righteousness that is so godly that it cannot be the product of human effort but must be the gift of God. This righteousness Christ would establish in His life and death would be made available as God’s free gift. This is the righteousness that would exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. ¹

¹*KJV Bible commentary*. 1997, c1994 (1887). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

John MacArthur writes:

When a person is saved, he is freed from sin's mastery but not from sin's presence. He will still battle with sin, but it will no longer dominate him because he has the ability to forsake it.

Because a Christian walks "after the Spirit," he is able to fulfill the righteousness of the law. Saint Augustine said, "Grace was given, in order that the law might be fulfilled". When God regenerates a soul, He produces within the person the ability to fulfill God's holy law.

*A Christian does not fulfill the law by producing external behavior based on a code of ethics. Holiness, righteousness, and obedience are not external; they are internal. They are the product of the Holy Spirit, who dwells within the believer's heart.
... Because Christ has given us His Spirit, we can fulfill God's law.*

1 Peter 2:24-25 (New International Version)

²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

John Piper writes (of 1 Peter 2:24-25)

Peter wants you to feel it as good news by the way he describes it in verse 25: the word of the cross brings us to a shepherd not a slave master. Yes, the Shepherd guides. He does not let sheep stray very far or very long. He uses a rod and staff when he must. He provides. He protects. And he relentlessly pursues us with goodness and mercy all our days.

So...What Does It Mean to Die to Sin? I think it works like this: When the word of the cross breaks into our heart by the power of God's Spirit (cf. 1:3, 23), and we awaken to the fact that God loves us so much that he takes the life of his own Son in order to bring us under his Shepherd-care and Shepherd-protection and Shepherd-provision and Shepherd-guidance, at that moment we die to the lie of sin. We die to the power of sin's deceit which tries to persuade us that a better future can be had through sin than through righteousness.

- Can we LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY? Yep!
- But like Billy Graham, you don't know me like Jesus knows me!
- But as John MacArthur said: "*Because Christ has given us His Spirit, we can fulfill God's law.*"

What's the TAKEAWAY?

Do you want...

- Children will be mighty and blessed?
- Righteousness that endures forever?
- To be gracious; generous; and compassionate?
- To have no fear of bad news?
- No matter what happens to us, to never be shaken?
- To be a TROPHY OF GRACE that honors God like a TWELVE POINT BUCK?

Psalm 112 tells us

- It starts with making God our PRIORITY
- It starts with DELIGHTING in His Word DAILY
- And even if we MESS UP...and WE DO and WE WILL...His Spirit in us will enable us to turn from the lie of SIN and FOCUS on Him