

How to Live a Long Life

Men have always been fascinated by the possibility of a fountain of life or the fountain of youth. They have bought elixirs, mineral waters, medicines, exercises, and vitamins. We have been told what to eat and drink, and what to avoid. These are attempts to postpone or deny the inevitability of death. Some people have even been willing to be cryogenically frozen, hoping to stay alive until “science” can find a way to extend their lives. They try all means to hide the effects of aging. I think the root of it all is the fear of death or just getting old, along with a love of this present world, and at least a semi-conscious awareness of judgment to come.

But the very life they are seeking is to be found in one place only, the place they most want to avoid – God. There really is a fountain of life, but it never could have been found as a literal fountain by the New World explorers.

Ps. 36:9 – “For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.”

Prov. 13:14 – “The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.”

Prov. 14:27 – “The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.”

Prov. 16:22 – “Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly.”

Prov. 10:11 – “The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

The obvious meaning of these verses is that fearing God, and seeking wisdom and understanding to obey his word, allows for an upswelling of spiritual life in the soul that affects the way we live, and can even be an influence on others. This life is like a clear flowing spring. Life is not just the “same old same old”, but a daily, living walk with God.

The error of the world is in seeking life in a physical or mental sense only. That kind of life is empty – just breathing, eating, working, recreation and socializing. But there can be no ultimately satisfying physical life without spiritual life – the life of Christ. This is the message of Ecclesiastes.

Mere physical life is temporary – all men die. But eternal life, spiritual, life is much more. It produces life and fruit here in this world, but does not pass away with the death of the body.

As Creator, God is the source of all life, and it is through Christ.

Jn. 5:26 – “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;”

God is the living, self-existent one. He depends on nothing outside himself to give him life or to maintain it. He IS life. All other living beings, whether angels, men, animals, or even plants, live only inasmuch as they were created by, and receive life from God. Our breath is given to us by him. Saying that Christ “is life” is much greater than saying he is alive. Even a dog is alive, but Christ is life itself, and the source of all life.

Jn. 1:4 – “In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”

Jn. 10:17-18 – “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”

Christ is the giver of life, both physical and spiritual.

Heb. 1:3 says Christ is upholding all things by the word of his power. Col. 1:17 says “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” All the universe is held together by Christ. He even sustains life in those that hate him or are indifferent to him, but he is the giver of eternal life only to those who receive him (Jn. 1:12).

Jn. 6:33 – “For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”

Jn. 10:10 – “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

Jn. 11:25 – “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. ...”

Jn. 17:2-3 – “... that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

1 Jn. 5:11-12 – “And this is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that

believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

Col. 3:4 – "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Naturally, when we think of receiving life from God, we tend first to think of eternal, spiritual life. But the Bible has much to say about God giving length or shortness of life, here in this world.

How can we live a long life in this world?

1. Choosing life by obedience and attending to God's words

Dt. 30:19-20 – "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days; ..."

Dt. 32:46-47 – "... ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land ..."

Prov. 4:20-22 – "My son, attend to my words, incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh."

2. By the fear of the LORD

Prov. 14:27 – "The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."

Prov. 10:27 – "The fear of the LORD longeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened."

3. By setting our love upon God

Ps. 91:14-16 – "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

4. By a guarded mouth (words)

Ps. 34:12-14 – "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."

Prov. 15:4 – "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit."

5. Wisdom and understanding

Prov. 3:18 – (of wisdom) "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her."

Prov. 4:13 – "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life."

Prov. 16:22 – "Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly."

6. By righteous living

Prov. 11:30 – "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."

Prov. 12:28 – "In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death."

Prov. 14:30 – "A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones."

Ps. 37 warns us not to fret about the apparent (but temporary) success of evildoers, saying repeatedly that they will be cut off.

Prov. 9:6 – "Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding."

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