



A young man had been hit by a car and was now being attended to by some paramedics. As they tried to assess the situation they began to make the required adjustments to prepare him for the trip to the hospital. At one point one of the paramedics asked him “Are you comfortable?” To which he replied, “Yeah...I make a living.”

It’s a common phrase and desire, to make “a comfortable living.” Comfort is a high commodity! Whether we desire it in the vehicle’s we drive, the homes we live in, the clothing we wear, or the salary we make, being comfortable would be deemed valuable...a priority in many peoples lives. I guess the question I have is what price are we willing to pay to acquire this comfort?

Let’s be honest, the last few years have displayed some pretty desperate acts with regards to business ethics. Characteristics like honesty, integrity, and accountability have been under the microscope with a number of businesses and financial institutions, not to mention governments. So where exactly does a good work ethic come from anyways? Personally I believe they are intrinsic, they come from within, which as I will explain in a few moments may be the very reason things are going a little awry these days!

What would you say if employees of a company walked out of that business one day with \$187,000 of the owner’s money? We would fully understand his reaction in calling the police! Do you realize if you operate a company with 100 employees who earn \$15 an hour, and each employee wastes an average of only 30 minutes a day your daily bill is \$750. Your annual bill (250 workdays) is \$187,500. Is that any less of a problem than if the employees raided the petty cash box?

It all adds up. Add text messaging, internet surfing, extended coffee breaks, and late arrivals with early departures...and no I’m not talking about the airport friends, and you have a theft issue. An article in the June 21, 2006 issue of the Toronto's Globe & Mail newspaper noted that a British employment law expert estimated the cost of lost productivity from employees in his country watching the World Cup soccer matches in the workplace that summer to be \$8.25 billion.

Work will take up about 1/3 of your existence on this planet! I would say how we view it and live it is pretty important, especially when we are instructed by Scriptures, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.” Col 3:23

But it’s tough isn’t it? Especially on those off days, you know the ones your mother said would exist, “There would be days like these!” You just didn’t realize there would be so many!

I want you to view a clip from the movie “Grand Canyon” as two very different individuals were experiencing their own bad day, and it all starts with one mans car breaking down in the wrong part of town...I believe they touch upon that intrinsic issue found within, and possibly the root problem of today’s upheaval in the world.

It's the obvious premise of the board game, "The Game of Life" and that is to at least minimally reach the status of a "comfortable living", in fact on the back of the game we read, "The object is to retire in style – so live life to the fullest and have fun. And why not, is that too much to ask for...who doesn't want to retire in style and if we can...have fun along the way.

Now in the board game you're offered a number of choices to attain these results. You can look at the longer route with a post secondary education or go directly into the trades, with every choice creating some obvious restrictions, boundaries and parameters to work within. There even lie within this game some unexpected turns like landing upon the space, "Car accident" or Lose your job. Take new career card."

So let me ask you, what does "comfortable living" look like anyways? I'm sure this term would be defined quite differently in Calcutta comparatively to our definition here in Calgary, and even within our own borders, the term would be used differently moving from one part of town to the other, or for that matter from one household to the other, in the same neighborhood. Even this morning within this sanctuary alone, I'm sure we would end up with some variations of what we deem as comfortable or not.

So what does the Bible say? Does it help us define "comfortable"? As we heard last week, Scriptures offer some great insight and wisdom, especially in regards to "life", and all the practical aspects and components like work!

So as we turn to the Scriptures what do we read about our vocations? Well one Proverb gives us the following promise, (Prov. 16:3), "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." A pretty strong statement, but before we ask for a written guarantee, I'm thinking we might want to consider what the working definition of the words "commit" and "succeed" are, because like "comfortable", I'm sure there exist a few possibilities from how you may define success and how I define it, but more importantly how God defines success! (I'm thinking success for this guy would be ending the day still breathing!)

But for sake of time this morning, let's focus in on the commitment aspect of this promise. What would this commitment look like? Is it simply showing up and following through on the jobs expectations? Does "commitment to the Lord" in your job involve evangelistic opportunities being created and than taken advantage of...tallying the number of souls won daily? What does one do to "commit" their work to the Lord? And since I've been given this great opportunity to speak, allow me to share with you how I came up with my working definition of "commit", and what this entails.

A definition by the way that I believe has everything to do with a "comfortable living", the level of comfort versus discomfort. But be forewarned, my understanding of "comfortable" this morning is moving beyond the typical perspective taken by society. I want to understand comfort at a depth that we may typically not address or reach. So when I reference this "comfort level" in the context of "committing our efforts to the Lord" this morning, I am not simply talking about the level of your income, or its ability to meet all your needs and wants!

Neither am I referencing your ultimate satisfaction with what you do in life at this present time, often measured by the level of stress related to your place in life, that somehow comfort is proportionate to the levels of least resistance, creating the least amount of friction that we encounter on the job site or in life itself, avoiding those unwanted spaces on the board game? No, I am not satisfied with simply a “physical” proponent to comfort.

I want to go deeper...I believe we need to go deeper! I want to go to the depth of our soul to measure comfort...and ask ourselves how comfortable is my soul? What I'm asking here is beyond just the physical parameters of life, of your job, I'm looking for the “within” components, your spiritual awareness to what you do, the spiritual impact life and work has on your relationship with your Creator...lets not forget your spiritual reality carries considerably more significance than your physical reality. When I compare a 70-90 year existence to eternity, well there really is no comparison.

Thus to come up with an answer to the question of “How comfortable is your soul?”, I offer you two other foundational questions, that when answered truthfully will ultimately give us an indication of your souls present state of comfort, and if this comfort level is a good or bad thing, in light of God's expectations, in light of this need to commit our work to Him. Thus the two foundational questions are these...

- 1) What is your comfort level with Life?
- 2) What is your comfort level with YOUR life?

Now as a point of interest, please take note that “work” was always God's idea, it was not simply the result of “the fall”...man's choice to rebel against God. Genesis 2:15 which by the way is located before Adam and Eve ever sinned reads, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” It doesn't read that he created man so he could sit on a lazy-boy and watch the “Nature Channel” all day. Work wasn't a curse, he may have cursed the ground Adam had to work with, but He doesn't curse work, work was a gift that came with life, and as we just read, with expectations from God no less!

As Pastor Dave shared last week, it's not simply the game of life, but the gift of life, which as we read includes work, regardless of what that specifically ends up looking like. And within this “gift” of every breath we take, God obviously has some expectations, and a theme I see revisited throughout the Bible is not God's specific details of determining what we do, these options are innumerable, but rather the details of how we respond to what we do, and more importantly who ultimately gets the recognition in what we do, and let me give you a clue, its not you!

In fact the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:31 “So whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” So here lays a premise upon which we must answer these two questions, the expectation component from God...does He receive the glory?

Because how you answer these two questions will invariably give you a pretty accurate description of where you are at, on a spiritual plane, with your relationship with God and the impact level you are or are not allowing Him to have in and through your life at this

moment, plus the extent of recognition and glory God is receiving from your actions. Both answers will shed invaluable truths concerning how you view your life, but more specifically how you view God's role in your life.

Now seeing as how "work" constitutes such a very large portion of what we do with our lives, it is pretty much a given that our satisfaction levels in life will be closely correlated with our jobs. Now if you are presently in school, or don't have a job as of yet, the principles still apply, even if you're too young to work, don't tune me out simply because your presently not holding down a job...living life can be a job itself!

So the first measuring stick deals with your level of comfort with life itself...how comfortable are you with life as it exists today?

Now again, I want to move beyond simply our "physical" condition at this time, beyond financial stability or security, beyond physical limitations, or present feelings about your place in life...remember were going deeper. Since the bottom line is whether God is getting the glory, I often find myself asking; really how concerned is God with my physical results? Is His satisfaction dependant upon my salary?

Does God ultimately look at the positions we hold, the salary we receive, the rung of the corporate ladder we finally achieve, or the size of the project completed, or is their a depth to God's measuring scale that goes beyond the typical elements by which we humans derive success? You see I believe it comes back to God's expectations for us, and our understanding of those expectations.

Listen to the Apostle Paul's prayer for Christ followers, "I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Then he shares the apex of his prayer... "Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us." Ephesians 3:16-20

Everything in our existence friends is to be in correlation with God, His very presence is to energize us and bring us to life and awaken our souls...in fact God's intentions are even greater than our imaginations. We were created on purpose, with purpose and for a purpose...but sadly a majority of the world are missing out. We are walking blind, we are, as so many movies portray these days, the walking dead! Jesus in Rev. 3:1 says, "I know your deeds you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up!"

Let's be honest with ourselves, do we have a reputation of being alive these days? Erwin McManus writes, "Never again surrender to the thought, Well, I'm only human. There is no "only" before human. You are human – created in the image of God. No matter how bad things seem, never forget who you are and where you came from. It is a gift to be human. Human – what Jesus became when He took on flesh and blood. Human – what angels can never become. Human – spirit wrapped up in skin. Humanity – the ones for whom Jesus died. That's us, you and me."

It's like an alarm has been set off concerning life, it's ringing loud and clear, Jesus is pleading with us, "Wake up" but few are listening, and the end results include a society

living as though God doesn't exist, working as though making it through the day becomes our soul objective...do you think God intended a little more? Do you think our expectations are just a little low to the bar God has set?

In 1984 an Avianca Airline jet crashed in Spain. Investigators studying the accident made an eerie discovery.

The "black box" cockpit recorders revealed that several minutes before impact a shrill, computer-synthesized voice from the planes automatic warning system told the crew repeatedly in English, "Pull up! Pull up!" The pilot, evidently thinking the system was malfunctioning snapped, "Shut up Gringo!" and switched the system off. Minutes later the plane plowed into the side of a mountain. Everyone on board died.

Have you ever ignored a warning signal? Ever run out of gas? How about that inner voice in the back of your mind that lingers for a few moments just before you do something stupid? Been there done that! Now some missed warnings are quite harmless, but the airline pilot that ignored his warning system cost him his life and countless others... which I believe is a perfect parable of what is taking place in today's modern times, why we are missing the boat with God's expectations! There is a problem with life itself...and we need to address it!

You see it all around us, especially in the workplace, which simply reflects the state of life itself. You see I believe our culture is moving away from God and has declared war on guilt...the concept itself is viewed as medieval, obsolete, and very unproductive. If you feel too guilty simply see a therapist, whose task is to boost your self-image. In fact as one author put it, "Guilt is nothing but a neurosis." Several popular therapists characterized guilt as "...a usually groundless emotion that has the potential of taking all the fun out of life." Remember according to the board game, "...live life to the fullest and have fun."

You see advice coming from this "guilt free" camp shouts, "Quit being so tough on yourself! Stop pleading guilty.

It's not your fault." Even Ann Landers writes, "You did wrong and the guilt is killing you, too bad. But be assured, the agony you feel is normal...remember guilt is a pollutant and we don't need any more of it in the world."

I guess what their implying is...who needs guilt...it's simply too depressing anyways...so quit feeling bad! If you do something dishonest, if you steal time from your employer, if you pad the numbers a little, if integrity is sacrificed at the alter of the bottom line, if you're hurtful, tacky, selfish or just plain down right rotten, fight the negative feelings and think the opposite, think of yourself as...good. Don't pollute your mind with the debilitating thought that you might actually be guilty of something...that would just be plain crazy!

Is it any wonder than, that words like sin, repentance, contrition, atonement, restitution, redemption are viewed as outdated! So let me ask you this...if no one is supposed to feel guilty, how can anyone be a sinner? Maybe that's the idea! Sinner sounds dated anyways, archaic, even down right hurtful! Avoid such nonsense...in fact, let's add a twist to this old line thinking...here's a thought...your not guilty, you're simply a victim!

People are the victims, and we all know victims are not responsible for what they do; they are simply casualties of what happens to them. You're not guilty you're just sick! Here's where I'm going with all this...

We as a human race have been given an incredible tool, a gift, a very distinctive human attribute; it's why we are different from the animal kingdom, where we reflect the very image of God...it's called a conscience! We can contemplate our own actions and make moral self-evaluations. It is this innate ability to sense right and wrong, this includes everyone, even the most rebellious of humanity has a conscience.

How did the Apostle Paul put it, "Indeed when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness and their thoughts now accusing, now defending them." Rom 2:14, 15.

But herein lies the problem, our warning system is under attack, and is being set up for a malfunction. Many people today see the conscience as a bad thing, as a defect, robbing us of our self-esteem, but what they fail to recognize is that our conscience is a tremendous gift from God, hardwired into the framework of the human soul. It is our warning system telling us to "Pull up! Pull up!" before we crash and burn.

Now our conscience is not the voice of God or the law of God, it is simply a human faculty that judges our actions and thoughts by the light of the highest standard we perceive. When we go against it, or violate our conscience, it condemns us, triggering feelings of shame, anguish, regret, anxiety, disgrace and even fear.

The word conscience is a combination of the Latin words, scire (to know) and con (together). It is found more than thirty times in the NT. Basically conscience is knowledge together with oneself, in other words, conscience knows our inner motives and true thoughts. Conscience is above reason and beyond intellect, we may attempt to rationalize or justify ourselves in our own mind, but a violated conscience will not be easily convinced.

In the Hebrew they didn't even draw a distinction between conscience and the rest of the inner person, their Hebrew word for conscience is also typically translated heart. Thus when Pharaoh "hardened his heart" (Ex 8:15), the author was recognizing the callousness of his conscience against God's will. When Scripture speaks of a tender heart, it refers to a sensitive conscience. The upright in heart are those with pure consciences. When David cried out "Create in me a clean heart" he was seeking to have his life and conscience cleansed.

Yet despite such a tremendous warning system put in place, countless numbers respond to this call of warning, to their conscience by attempting to suppress it, overrule it, or silence it. We do this by shifting the blame, by putting the responsibility for our behavior elsewhere, a childhood trauma, a bad parent, or other causes beyond our control. Or we convince ourselves that our sin is a clinical problem, not a moral one, thus we rename sin as a disease.

In other words we are simply telling our conscience “to shut up Gringo.” Here’s the problem with this...it is possible to nullify the conscience, to take it out of the picture, through repeated abuse. The Apostle Paul spoke of people whose consciences were so convoluted, so confused that their “...glory is in their shame.” Phil 3:19 How opposite of what God asked of us, “Whatever we do, do it all for the glory of God.”

They were proud of their immoral and sinful actions; they wore their misdeeds as badges of honor, know anyone like that? You see both the mind and the conscience can become so polluted and defiled that they cease making distinctions between what is pure and what is impure.

One doesn’t have to look that far these days to see proof of this truth.

I love what Charles Colson writes in his book, “The Good Life” concerning his own experiences with his work, if you don’t know, Charles was a former presidential aid to Richard Nixon at the time of a political scandal known as Watergate, which brought down Richard Nixon’s presidency. Charles spent time in prison for his role, he writes, “I want to make it clear that I never did anything in the White House that I thought at the time was illegal...what undid me, was my blind self-righteousness. Once I had reflected, I knew at the deepest possible level that I had betrayed my own standards, but in the moment I disengaged whatever alarms my conscience might have triggered by the powerful presumption of my own innocence.”

Take your own work environment; how often does it become difficult to differentiate between Christian and non-Christian? My kids attend a Christian school and the reports I often hear would be no different had they been attending a secular school. The language used, the cheating techniques, the breaking of the rules, the sexual immorality. They say 83% of teenagers see moral truth as a pretense. The clear majority of Westerners believe we can make up our own rules for living, that truth is relative.

You see whether you’re a Christian or not, the conscience is at war with culture and sin, and within the Christian or secular worlds, many are losing! A lie exists today that states there are no absolutes only subjective truths that compete with one another.

Let’s face it, as we get older, our standards often are reduced...what used to bother us has become so familiar to us that we are no longer bothered by it, we become desensitized, and we call it modernization. Whether its swimsuit styles, humor, language, sexuality, or work ethics, it doesn’t matter...most of us assume this is normal...its progress...my question to you is...is it really...or is your conscience being eroded? Have we simply become “comfortable” with life and how it runs, so we stop objecting, stop fighting and like the Borg in Star Trek become assimilated? Resistance is futile! I’ll tell you what, there are a lot of people living life like its futile...why bother?

These days we call it “pushing the envelope” but how far do we push, and to what price are we willing to pay? Let’s not forget when Paul was addressing this problem in his day; he wasn’t speaking to the heathen, he was talking about folks who apparently had

a connection with God, Titus 1:15 reads, "In fact both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him."

Our conscience can take only so much, and after enough violation, the conscience finally falls silent...in other words we are now left flying blind...that annoying warning signal has been silenced, turned off. Charles Colson wrote, "The question I asked myself is whether I had an early warning sign of the trouble brewing. Did my conscience tell me anything was amiss?"

We may be turning off the warning system these days but the danger hasn't been turned off, in fact now the danger is greater than ever, the looming mountain range is upon us!

A Puritan author from the 1800's wrote, "The conscience is the soul reflecting upon itself." Are you digging deep, are you asking the tough questions?

If you find yourself this morning comfortable with where the world is headed, the slide of standards, morals and values by which so many choose to live by, than I believe God's glory is diminished, and we are not fulfilling what I believe God has placed us on this planet for. We live for a very brief time; people are dying everyday without the knowledge of God's truths. Our own children, including ourselves parents, are being seduced by the times, and God I believe is crying out..."wake up".

The Apostle Paul begged, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Rom 12:2) I tell my kids our minds are like the Sham Wow product, soaking up everything it's coming in contact with, is it any wonder than when we compare God's truths to the world's standards that we take in; we have such a deterioration of the conscience?

In Ephesians Paul asked, "Be imitators of God...but among you there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's people," (Eph 5:1) Not even a HINT!!! Hint...a small clue, a brief reminder, a smidgen of, a tidbit, a very small amount...so the shows we tolerate, the language we speak, the jokes we give, the work ethics we live...is it beyond a "hint?"

What we tend to forget is "The world we create in our heads is the world we will create through our actions." Bottom line, I believe there needs to be a holy unrest with life, people are missing out with eternal implications, and God's standards and truths are being diminished, a call for holiness was not a foreign request from Scripture writers, and it shouldn't become a foreign request for us! So how comfortable are you with life? Secondly let me ask you how comfortable are you with YOUR life?

You see as our world continues to grapple with ongoing resource issues, deterring of the ozone, lack of oil in the ground, food related concerns, I would have to agree with Erwin McManus when he stated "People are the most underused and undervalued resource on this planet...this planet is made better or worse by the people we choose to become."

Earlier I said God is more concerned with how we respond to the gift of life versus the game of life that we find ourselves in. In other words He is more concerned with how we

respond to the roll of the dice or the turn of the wheel and the circumstances we find ourselves in like landing on a space that reads, "Lose your job. Take new career card" or "You had a baby" or two or three or more!

I am reminded of the parable Jesus spoke of in Matthew 25 when he referenced the three servants that were given certain treasures from their boss to take care of when he was gone on a trip, and the one that took the harshest rebuke ended up being the one who simply buried his gift. Now if you notice it wasn't as if this individual was given the most to work with, but I believe in God's perspective that wasn't the concern here. It's not the amount of talent or gifts that God concerns Himself with; it's what we do with what we have been given.

We are all not CEO's, or Presidents of companies, or owners, and though we are not expected to create something out of nothing, we have been put in charge of making more of what we do have. In response to this man's fears driving him to bury his portion, we read his boss saying "Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Matt 25:28-29

Yes many of us in this world are not meant for a life of notoriety, but I believe all of us are meant for a life of significance. We cannot confuse fame with greatness! Fame has everything to do about...what we do for ourselves; significance is about what you do for others! So when it comes down to your place in life at this moment, how satisfied are you with yourself?

Or maybe a better question is where are you deriving your satisfaction from? Maybe instead of simply striving for a career in life, we should be focused on our calling! You see I believe every human being was created for a purpose, and that a large majority of us focus most of our efforts on a physical plan, we miss out on the spiritual one. Are we maximizing our God given opportunities regardless of the circumstances or job we find ourselves in?

There are so many Biblical stories and accounts of individuals that remind us that we do not get to choose the context from where we begin this game called life, I didn't get a chance to choose my parents, skin color, language or economic condition I was born into...I really didn't have a lot of input about the beginning of the game, but I have a lot to say and contribute towards the journey itself, its destination and how the journey shapes me.

Hear me...your circumstances do not determine your opportunities. In fact your circumstances do not equal your opportunity, because your opportunity is shaped not simply by your external factors but by the internal factors of who you choose to be and become. If we do not learn how to adapt to our place on the game board, our circumstances, our challenges, then we will fall into the rut of simply using them as an excuse, an obstacle from living the life God intended.

You either adapt or they become the boundaries of your life. Again God said the stick in which we use to measure success is the glory God receives, not our ultimate satisfaction. Now some may take this and say than I must become the best in the world

at whatever I choose. I would rather see it as becoming the worlds best you, some need a little more work than others! Bring your best and move forward, “whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

Have you ever noticed how people can have dramatically different views of the same moment in life! In the OT when 12 spies were sent out to scope the promised land, the two spies saw a future, hope, opportunity and victory, but ten saw despair, fear and defeat, it's the old adage of the glass being either half empty or full. We typically all know individuals who seem to see everything as a glass half empty, people filled with pessimism and cynicism, where optimism becomes a foreign concept.

People that somehow, somewhere had punctured a hole deep within their soul's, and when it comes to hope, they have an unstoppable leak, because they are incapable of holding on to a positive view of life. I'm reminded of Jack Nicholson's character in the movie “What About Schmidt” when he reflects on his life we find him lamenting, “I am weak, and I am a failure. Relatively soon I will die. Maybe in twenty years, maybe tomorrow, it doesn't matter. Once I am dead and everyone who knew me dies too, it will be as though I never existed. What difference has my life made to anyone? None that I can think of. None at all.”

Haunting words...possibly words that reflect where you are at this morning, words so opposite of those half-full people!

People filled with enthusiasm, excitement and hopeful anticipation, people who have the ability to even see failure as opportunity. Instead of responding with fear, or becoming paralyzed by their failures, they use them to grow. As one author noted, “One of the most important characteristics of people who achieve the extraordinary is they live a life of expectation – they expect the good to happen, they internalize optimism.” And when the good doesn't happen immediately, they still have that ability to remain hopeful, and they don't blame God.

You may not have realized this yet, but after an individual enters a relationship with God, you're not beamed up to some different universe or existence. This is earth my friends, not Avatar. We still live in the same world before we came to God, the same parents, the same boss, the same co-workers and siblings. We still have the same life that overwhelmed us before we came to God. The same marriage, the same challenges and limitations, the same skin, the same physical features, the same problems, weaknesses, and circumstances...but what has changed is the expectations.

Finding God means discovering new measuring sticks, living at a completely different level, so here's what is changing... or supposed to change...YOU! The way God changes your life is by changing you! God doesn't simply exempt us from our lives. In the “The Game of Life” board game, there is an opportunity for a shortcut, but as I see life there is no shortcut here, the game begins from wherever you are to wherever you are going.

Wherever I made my mess, that's where I start cleaning up, you don't start at the end...you simply keep the end in mind. A life of faith is a life of expectation, “...Now faith

is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Faith isn’t some formula that we create to guarantee success in life, especially according to our definition of success! It’s not about simply getting what we deem necessary in life from health to prosperity, faith is about confidence in God and His character, that He is good and true and beautiful, that He can be trusted, regardless of our circumstances.

Faith is about conviction, and living within the parameters He established. Some of us may find ourselves not on a path in life, but a rut! We have somewhere along the way confused comfort with peace, safety with wisdom, wealth with blessing, and existence with life.

Again as Erwin McManus writes, “A life of expectation isn’t so much about what you expect out of life but what you put into it. The former is about feeling entitled; the latter about living fully engaged.” In Hebrews we read about a list of the Heroes of faith, and after reading these names and reflecting upon their stories you realize that how long you live does not reflect how well you lived. The real question Erwin McManus writes is, “Were you alive when you died?”

The game of life isn’t about finding away to avoid those spaces on the board that bring pain and suffering or boredom or difficulty, it’s about stepping into the life God has called us too. What did James teach us, “Consider it pure joy friends when you face trials.” You see when we learn to enjoy life, we become free of our circumstances, we become released from the environment we find ourselves in, and we are no longer dependant upon the surroundings to bring joy and enjoyment, no that my friends comes from another source! We can’t avoid the difficulties of life, but we cannot let them define us. The less you enjoy life, the weaker we will be on our journeys, why...because the joy of the Lord is our strength. (Nehemiah 8:10) The strength of the living God becomes your strength when you enjoy God and he enjoys you.

So how comfortable are you with YOUR life? Are you living up to the expectations God has for you, or are you simply living, existing, burying your God given potential in fear of what God has in store for you, robbing not only yourself, or others, but God of His glory due Him through you?

Get to know God, His truths, His realities...and learn to live in the Joy of the Lord...He will be your strength.

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