

Lessons Learned About God, Life, and Man

1. **Where do you find happiness and fulfillment?** Do you have a penthouse, a million dollar job, dozens of accolades from your peers, is this where you get your identity and therefore the thing that brings you joy and peace? Maybe you're not tempted by such earthly desires. Have you given your life to full-time ministry: maybe you're a missionary, maybe you're an evangelist, or perhaps you work for a non-profit that brings the Gospel to the lost, is this you and the place where you find joy? Perhaps you're a preacher: you spend countless hours studying and teaching, all the while thinking that you're doing God's work, is that your identity and the source of your fulfillment? We would all agree that chasing after worldly success is idolatry. But so is chasing after ministry, if we turn it into the final goal and that which gives us our identity (3:2) and ultimately, gives us our joy and peace. The endgame and thus our source of fulfillment is not earthly success but neither is it ministry (3:5-6). The endgame and that which will bring us true joy is living life through Christ, the One who gives us the capacity to do ministry and not turn it into an idol, 3:1-11.
2. Did you know that God has performed a complete body transplant on you? 3:2-3. So who's living your life, the new you with the old tendencies or the new you who gives up all the old stuff so that you may cling to Christ's life and His way of doing things? 3:7-11.
3. It's hard to let go of the earthly things, especially if they've brought you wealth, position, and success, 3:2, 4-6—Paul before Christ, 18-19—us if we live life by our old tendencies.
4. If you align your life with Jesus', not only will you be able to see the worst of circumstances properly but you'll be able to find peace in the midst of them, 3:10 (1:12-18).
5. Did you know that there's a particular life that Jesus has waiting for you, 3:12.
6. Ministry is not the endgame in the Christian life; living the life Jesus reserved for us is. If we live that life, the regrets of the past won't be able to stop us because we'll be listening to God's voice and doing what He calls us to do in every situation, 3:12-14.
7. Sometimes we may hear something in a sermon or read something in Scripture that we disagree with. If we live our lives in tune with Jesus' life, then God will let us know if our disagreement is right, wrong, or unimportant, 3:15.
8. Those of us who are following the selfless footsteps of Christ in everything we do, should teach others how to follow Christ; we are to be the pattern they follow, 3:17.
9. Satan uses the bright and shiny things of this world to lure us away from our relationship with Christ, 3:18-19.
10. Our true home, our true identity is a heavenly one and one day our Lord Jesus Christ will return to finally end the battle of our flesh. One day, our flesh will never again defeat us, physically, emotionally, relationally, or spiritually because our Lord will subdue our weak flesh and make it conform to His glorious body, 3:20-21.
11. **Why should we refuse to give in?** Because we're united with Christ Jesus and have access to His Spirit and resurrection power, a power that can withstand any suffering, even death. Because Christ has set this marvelous life aside for us, a life that originates in heaven and one day will be conformed to heaven's glory. Therefore, we should make a stand knowing that it is the Lord's strength that holds us up, 3:1-4:1.