

How to Live
the
Abundant Life

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How to Live the Abundant Life
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Introduction

Why did I write this book? I believe most Christians have not attained the Abundant Life that Jesus described in St. John 10:10. The main reason for this is Churches are not adequately describing what it is and how to reach it. I am not talking about simply using spiritual clichés. I have heard and read enough hyped up catch-phrases to last me a lifetime. I wanted something real. This book is the result of my search for the overflowing life God promised us.

It is impossible to live the *Abundant Life* without love. Love is the core of Christianity and of God. It is the fulfillment of the Law¹ and the greatest of the virtues.² Every precept in this book and every work of our hands must be encapsulated in love. How can we possibly expect to please God without it? In view of that, I do not go over it in this book, because it is a given.

We are triune beings comprising of a soul, spirit and body. Since this is the case, we need to address all three of these areas in order to truly live. The Church naturally stresses the spiritual aspect of mankind. Therefore, I will primarily focus on the mental and physical components of living abundantly.

We must ensure that we take the time to address all three areas of our lives. Otherwise, we will never achieve the abundance Jesus spoke about.

This book uses an ample amount of scriptures fully laid out. So that you can see for yourself what the Bible says

and check the scriptures to ensure nothing is used out of context. I like to use the Word of God as the authentication for any assertion. Unless I can prove something in scripture it is merely my opinion. What weight should my or anyone else's opinion carry? It is only what God says that counts.

Only by living in cooperation with God's laws can we attain abundance in our lives. In order to rise to a level of abundant living we must go beyond simple obedience, we must understand God's law. If no one understood the laws of physics and aerodynamics, then we would have never been able to exploit them, to achieve flight. We would still be able to travel, but not as conveniently and quickly as we do today. This is why King Solomon states in Proverbs 4:7, "Wisdom *is* the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."

Without understanding, the Law becomes no more than a giant list of dos and don'ts. But, when we understand the principles behind the laws, we can use them to our advantage. This is what living the Abundant Life is about, applying God's Laws to improve and increase our quality of life.

Chapter 1

Cause and Effect

*While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest,
and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day
and night shall not cease.*

Genesis 8:22

Religions have many laws and commandments, but there is one fundamental law that governs the world. It is the law of reciprocity. Every living thing on the planet adheres to the law of sowing and reaping, without exception. Reciprocity is the law for all life on this planet, including humans.

This law did not come down from Mount Sinai with Moses, but it is just as important to us, if not more. Universal laws are invariable facts of the physical world. God put these laws into place at the inception of creation for our benefit.

“The law of gravity is not a commandment like *thou shalt not kill*, nor a legislative ruling like pay taxes. The latter two are written by man. They can be changed while the Law of Life is written in the fabric of the universe and cannot be broken.”³

Reciprocity in the Bible is known as sowing and reaping or seedtime and harvest. It is a universal law. Give and you will receive. It is not a matter of faith in God. You do not have to believe in Him to make it work. Just like the universal law of gravity causes objects with mass to fall to the ground when dropped, it applies to everything on earth. Sowing causes you to reap, unfailingly. If you want to live the Abundant Life, you must adhere to this one vital law.

The law of reciprocity is always in force. If we accept the fact that this law works, then we can use it to generate what we need. The principle of reciprocity is summed up in the golden rule.

St. Matthew 7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Jesus stated that reciprocity is the sum of the law and the prophets. In other words, the whole Old Testament is based on and can be condensed into this single decree.

We must understand that the Purpose of God's Law is not to restrict us, but to put us in the position to receive His blessings. This is why Jesus tells us to love our enemies and to bless them that curse us.⁴ Jesus is not trying to turn us into pacifists. He is trying to show us how to experience the *Abundant Life* God has given to all of us. If we repay people an eye for an eye, we will reap some unwanted consequences to our lives because of the principle of cause and effect.

Often, we get hung up on the Rules (Law), the dos, and the don'ts. The problem becomes, we can no longer see the forest, for the trees. If we step back for a moment and look

at the reasons behind the Law, then we can see every commandment is for our benefit.

I think we as Christians miss the real point of the law (Moses). Every ordinance and command is given because of sowing and reaping. In Judaism, there are 613 commandments that comprise the Law and every one of them was instituted to get us inline with reciprocity.

The Golden Rule:

Do unto others as you would have them do unto
you

The golden rule is based on the teachings of the Old Testament. It looks to the individual, in order to know how to treat others. The problem with it is you only have to treat people as well as you want to be treated. You might not feel that good about yourself, due to a poor self image. So, Jesus eliminates this loophole with His New Testament command to love. The platinum rule as I call it looks to Christ, as an example of how to treat people.

The Platinum Rule:

Love one another, as I have loved you

Whatever we do directly to someone, affects us indirectly. Why, because we are all connected by and to God. This is the basic concept of Karma. This interconnectedness is another reason why Jesus abridged the Law to the *Golden Rule*.

For example, the hand is not directly connected to the foot. If your hand decides that it does not like the foot very much and bangs it with a hammer, what happens? If the hand is

cut will the feet refuse to run? This should also be our response to each other. Paul said, “So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Romans 12:5). How do individual members of our body know how to function together? The head controls everything. Christ is our head and He will cause us to respond to each other (If we are sensitive to the Spirit).

What we do affects generations that are yet unborn. For example, if I become an alcoholic and subsequently have children, my descendants may be genetically prone to addiction. Failing to see our connectedness is one big reason individuals and companies continue to pollute the earth.

Cause and Effect can work to our benefit or to our harm. Obedience to God’s Laws makes it work to our benefit. Remember the Law was not designed to restrict us, to the contrary. If we walk after the Spirit (The Law within us), then the principle of Cause and Effect will allow us to receive the maximum benefit God has provided. In other words, we will live the Abundant Life Jesus promised us.

Cause and Effect can work to your benefit or to your harm
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I think sometimes we paint a picture of God as this benevolent entity who sits in heaven answering our individual prayers, like in the movie *Bruce Almighty*. However, God is wise and all knowing. Even with our limited understanding, answering prayers individually would be a grossly inefficient method to meet the needs of the world. So, God created the universe and everything in it to conform to the primary law of Cause and Effect. This is the principal means to get our needs met.

In the book of Genesis, it states that everything can only produce after its own kind.⁵ This is another important aspect of reciprocity. You cannot plant apple seeds and harvest oranges. Likewise, you cannot sow hatred and reap love. Faith filled words produce positive results. Fear filled words produce negative results. Solomon points to this concept in the book of Proverbs.

*Proverbs 18:21 **Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.***

But, faith is more than just saying the right words. We cannot attain the blessings of God, simply by suppressing ourselves and speaking biblically correct; although that would be an excellent starting point. We must align our thoughts, words and actions.

*St. Matthew 18:19 Again I say unto you, That **if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.***

This is the known as the Law of Agreement. Agreement does not just apply to groups of people, but it is also applicable to our thoughts, words and actions. If there is disagreement, the results may be less than desirable. There are, in fact, only three possible outcomes. One you get what you desire. Two you continue to get what you do not want. Three everything cancels out and you do not produce any results.

It is important to note, sowing and reaping is not a one for one proposition. It is a one to many, relationship. The

biblical definition of reaping implies a harvest. If you sow a single apple seed and it produces a tree, you will not just get one apple. Understand that God is a God of abundance. This law was set in place for our benefit, but if we sow the wrong things it could be catastrophic to us. This is why God implores us to live holy and righteous lives.

**If you want to live the Abundant Life, you must
adhere to the Law of Reciprocity**

Sowing and reaping applies to finances, relationships, business and anything else you can think of that needs a successful outcome. God wants His creation to be victorious in every area of life. The law of reciprocity was set up to ensure that everyone would be fulfilled and successful, without exception.

The fall of man caused us to experience the bad side of reciprocity. Prior to the fall, man was sinless and knew only good. Therefore, he could never sow bad seeds nor could he reap their harvest. Once we became familiar with evil, we began to reap a harvest that set the course of humanity on fire.

After the fall, God gave us laws to realign us to receive the blessings of reciprocity. However, the law was unable to change man's new dual nature of good and evil. Even with the law man was still a sinner.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

Jesus through substitution died for us and we conversely live through Him. Now as believers we have the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us. The Spirit can override the flesh. According to the apostle Paul, “If we walk according to the Spirit, we will not obey the lust of the flesh.”⁶

The written law was unable to stop mankind from sinning because it is external to us. However, the Holy Ghost is God’s law written upon our hearts. Through the Spirit, the law is now internal and able to keep us from sinning.

The Holy Ghost puts us back into proper alignment with the law of sowing and reaping. As Spirit lead believers we should be continuously reaping a harvest of good things. We should be the most blessed people on the planet. This is supposed to be our testimony and how we draw others to Christ. People should be running to us to find out our secret to success. Sadly, for most of us, this is not our testimony.

Christians should be the most blessed people on
the planet

This is why Peter said, “that the time is come that judgment must begin with us, the Church.”⁷ God’s judgment of the Church is not to condemn it, but to align it to the Word. So, that the blessings of God will be upon us and overtake us.

Deuteronomy 28:1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

Deuteronomy 28:2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

Deuteronomy 28:3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

Deuteronomy 28:4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

Deuteronomy 28:5 Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.

Deuteronomy 28:6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

The blessings described in Deuteronomy chapter 28:1-14 come from obeying the commandments of God. The voice of God (Holy Spirit or the Word) automatically puts us in harmony with the law of reciprocity. But, what happens when we do not heed God's voice? According to Deuteronomy 28:15-68, we will receive the exact opposite of blessings. The list is extensive, 54 verses describing the curses in contrast to 14 verses detailing the blessings. It is not that disobedience yields a larger harvest than obedience, but God wants us to see clearly all the ramifications of sin.

Even with the Holy Spirit, Alexander Pope's famous quote rings true, "To err is human; to forgive is divine." We will still make mistakes. Does this mean that we will suffer the negative effects of reciprocity? Fortunately, Jesus also handled that for us, by giving us grace. Grace is more than free and unmerited favor. It means to pardon. It stops us from receiving the full harvest of our disobedience.

We will not always be able to use grace like a get out of jail free card, but it lessens the consequences of what we have to reap. All of these things should allow us to see the true nature of God. The Lord is full of love and compassion towards us. When we truly comprehend how much God loves us. It becomes clear that the only reason anyone would reject the gospel is because they have been blinded to the truth. The law of sowing and reaping is for our benefit, God has provided a way for us to get whatever we need in life.

Let me digress for a moment. The Bible at its core is a self-help book. So, before we look at all the other components of achieving Abundant Life, we should first look at ourselves. This is precisely why Jesus gives us the following instructions.

St. Luke 6:37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:
St. Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.
For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

In this passage, Jesus talks about judgment, condemnation, forgiveness and giving. All of these things have one thing in common. The measure you use will be measured back to you. This is the core of cause and effect.

A lot of people have the mentality of doing just enough to get by in life. Unfortunately, after we get saved many still have this mindset. The problem is just doing enough to get by, will limit God's abundance to barely surviving. Instead

of recognizing this for what it is, we will normally blame someone or something else for our lack.

Why is this true? Our brains are wired, so to speak to give us a distorted picture of ourselves, due to personal biases and idiosyncrasies. This often results in us becoming blind to our own faults.

So who do we blame for our lack? More often than not, we blame the Devil. Everything becomes an attack of the enemy. So, we pray. We have every pastor, evangelist and prophet, lay hands on us. The results are the same and we are left frustrated. If the problem is due to cause and effect, then no amount of praying, praising, shouting, declaring or speaking in tongues is going to change the situation. We must see ourselves and change our actions. Stop doing just enough to get by and go the extra mile. This is why the apostle Paul admonishes us to give our all in whatever we do.

Colossians 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

Adhering to this mindset alone will revolutionize your life and cause you to experience abundance. True success cannot be attained without this trait. Be passionate in whatever you do in life. Give it all you got and success will follow. This is not a fluke, God designed it this way. This is the intent behind Solomon's observation.

Proverbs 18:16 A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.

There are many gifted people in the world, who do not achieve much. Why? Possessing a gift serves as a clue to what you can do. However, you must work and develop

the gift, in order for it attract success to you. If you do not combine Proverbs 18:16 with Colossians 3:23, then you are wasting your talents. This is reminiscent of the old joke, “How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, practice, practice.”

Talent alone is not enough. The world is filled with talented people. The first step to getting what you really desire in life is a relentless work ethic. Take a look at any champion or highly successful person and observe how much they hone their craft. Remember, the measure you use will be measured back to you.

Hard work without talent is a shame, but talent without hard work is a tragedy.

Robert Half

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