

**What does the New Testament tell us about the meaning of life?
In other words, what are God's core values?**

Love God.

How?

We choose to put Him above even our own lives (John 15:13). This is a conscious choice. Life becomes worth living when we have someone to die for. We choose to trust (same word as believe) His son Jesus Christ by following His lead. So we take up our crosses and follow Him (Matt 16:24).

Love each other.

How?

Regard one another as more important than yourselves. Do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. (Phil 2:2-4; Rom 12:10; I Cor 10:24, 33). We need to make unity more important than our semantic arguments or our pride (Eph. 4:1-6, et al). To bring to someone the gospel of Christ is one of the greatest acts of love. Indeed love should be the motive.

Pray.

We are to just honestly maintain communication with God, in submission to Him. We should thank Him, honor Him, bring to Him our enemies, friends, family, ourselves, and our leaders. We should do it frequently both privately and collectively, but always sincerely. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit carries the brunt of this burden for us. (Matt 5:44, 6:6-13; Mark 11:24; Luke 6:28, 11:1-8; Luke 21:35; Acts 8:22-24; Rom 8:26; Eph 5:19-21; I Thes 5:18-19; I Tim 2:8; James 1:5-6, 5:13-18)

Forgive.

We must learn to forgive. And when we look at the model of the forgiveness of Christ, we cannot find an excuse (Matt 18:23-35). In light of that, we find that His ongoing forgiveness of us is conditioned on our willingness to forgive others (Matt 6:14-15). Moreover, we are told to keep forgiving the repentant brother without limit (Matt 18:21-22).

Be Honest.

The Truth must be met with the truth.

Hebrews 10:22	Let us approach with true heart.
Philippians 4:8	As many things as are true
John 4:24	Worship in spirit and in truth.
John 8:32	Truth shall set you free.
John 16:13	Spirit of truth will guide you in truth.
I Corinthians 13:6	Love rejoices in truth.
Ephesians 4:15	Being truthful in love.
Ephesians 4:25	Put away lies, speak truth (Colossians 3:9).
Ephesians 6:14	Let your loins be girded in truth.

Be Patient.

No one likes it, but patience is one of the core values God is intent on teaching us. There are four key Greek words that convey the concept, all in different ways.

The most common word;

ō**Hupomeno**ö, means öremain underö or hang in there.

ō**Hupo-phero**ö is similar, but means öbear underö (*the load.*)
(*Both of those tend to be used for circumstances.*)

ō**Macro-thumia**ö is usually translated ölongsufferingö and usually applies to relationships with people.

ō**An-echo**ö likewise, refers to öholding upö or öenduringö people.

I've counted some 40 powerful verses using one or more of these words. Here are some of my favorites.

Using **Hupomeno**: Matt. 24:13, Luke 8:15, Rom. 5:3,4; 8:25; I Cor. 13:7; Col. 1:11

Using **Hupomeno** with **Macrothumia**: I Tim. 6:11; Heb. 12:1, 7; James 1:3-4; Rev. 2:2-3; Rev. 13:10.

Using **Hupophero**: I Cor. 10:13, 1 Pet. 2:19.

Using **Macrothumia**: Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2 (with Anecho), Col 1:11; 3:10-15 (with Anecho); I Thes.5:14.

Using **Anecho**: Matt 17:17; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:10-15.

Have Openness:

See yourself as a servant, a learner, a follower.

- ❖ Success in the kingdom of Christ comes when we let go of our rights to normalcy, to ambition, to earthly happiness. Strive to do it yourself and you'll be last. Follow him and win (Matt 19:29-30).
- ❖ You want to be a top dog? So did James and John. Jesus made them an embarrassing example of what NOT to do. In the world, ambition for leadership usually works; in Christ's kingdom, it's a symptom of spiritual cluelessness. The faith-crushing cross and the glorious, risen Christ would ultimately help them get it. It wasn't about them, after all. Nor us. (Mark 9:33-35, Mark 10:35-45).
- ❖ In God's incomparable system, those who think they are a cut above are blinded by their arrogance. His real kingdom on earth is seen by those grateful for the cross (I Cor 1:18-30, 8:2, 10:12).
- ❖ Look at the Pharisees; fully equipped in intelligence, zeal, knowledge of Scripture, leadership skills, position, and authority; the consequences of their arrogance are nearly unspeakable.
- ❖ When we are pitying the sinners, let's remember the Pharisee who was so grateful to God for his better state than the sinful publican, prostrate and weeping. Only one went away justified (Luke 18:10-14).
- ❖ Our insecure egos crave a good title. It promises an air of importance and deludes us to think we're above the norm. Jesus, himself, didn't mince his words. Don't be called great leaders and teachers, we're all brothers, following the real teacher, the real master. (Matt 23:7-12).
- ❖ Be content to be a disciple. It means a learner. Our privilege on this earth is to be continuously learning about the glory of God's ways and the limitations of ours; how to be loving God and to be loving each other. In this way we can avoid conforming to this age, but instead be transforming (Rom 12:2).
- ❖ Let's strive to overcome the need to prove to ourselves and our fathers and brothers that we are valuable. Isn't the image of God good enough? Let's just accept our value and follow Christ.

What are permanent values?

Joy (John 3:29; 15:11; 16:20, 22, 24; 17:13), Faith, Hope, Love (I Cor 13:13).

And probably the rest of the fruits of the spirit: peace, long-suffering, usefulness, goodness, openness, self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

How does God teach those?

Apparently through hassle and stress. (Romans 5:3-5; Heb. 12:4-11; I Pet. 2:18-24; James 1:2-4).

Our part:

What can we do to participate in this process? What part do we own?

Moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, Godliness, brotherly kindness & love.

2 Peter 1:5-9

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁵ Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶ and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, ⁷ and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins.