

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabile.org.

Date: November 21, 2004

Title: Learning to Live Triumphantly in Life

Text: Pss. 115:3; 135:6

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2004

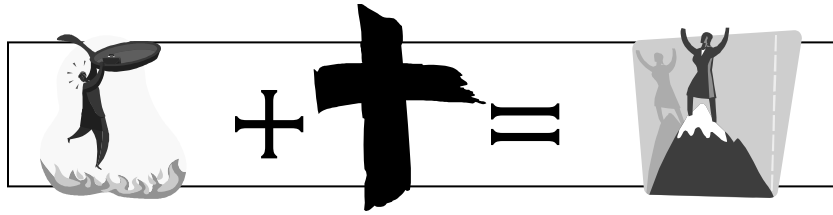
Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.

6

LEARNING TO LIVE TRIUMPHANTLY IN LIFE

(Pss. 115:3; 135:6)

But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases (Ps. 115:3).



Understanding that all relationships can only thrive as they are embedded in positional truth will assist in making them survive. Problems are a part of every relationship. If we have no relational problems in our marriages, then either one is not necessary or one is a corpse. Life is problematic and marriage is no exception. As I continue to meet with people, I am always drawn back to ten bedrock truths.



God is in control of the details.

But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases (Ps. 115:3).

Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps (Ps. 135:6).

Know God is in control. This forms the ultimate bedrock truth on which all of life revolves. The “problems” we face are part of God’s eternal purpose for our life. He writes the story and has written into the story both transgression and condemnation. Fortunately, He also includes redemption.

Although we might struggle over God’s involvement in the details of our lives, it is encouraging to realize He is intimately and personally involved in every area of life. There is no part of life that God has not woven into something bigger and more beautiful. Often His involvement is providential through secondary causation. Secondary causation simply means He acts indirectly and in ways that are almost imperceptible to the

human eye and logic. Often with secondary causation, He uses natural means to accomplish His purposes. No matter what we must see God above all things. Think of Isaiah 6. It was in the year King Uzziah died that Isaiah saw the Lord “high and lifted up.”

When surrounded by terrible times, we must not allow ourselves to focus on the circumstances. We cannot change our circumstances, but we can have rest and peace when we learn to focus on Him.



There is a purpose behind all the details that make up an individual life (Rom. 8:28).

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28).

Because God is in control, the events of life are part of His eternal purpose (Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28). Never think that somehow the events of life and the choices made are isolated or unconnected. Life is a continuous chain from start to finish and the various events within it are the individual links.

Because God is in control of each individual life, there are no wasted moments or events. God is working in us and through us His perfect will. This includes the heartaches and the sorrows. Do not be deceived into thinking otherwise.



Life is problematic (Rom. 3:23; 6:23).

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

As long as we are abiding in our flesh, we will have woe. **Failure**, however, **is not fatal**. Do not focus on what appears to be the problem. Chances are what you think is the problem is a fruit and not the root. It is foolish for us to think that life will ever be problem free. No matter who we are, how much we possess, or where we currently live; if we cannot be happy with who we are in Christ and what we have in Him, then nothing this side of heaven will give us any rest.



God never makes a mistake or has an accident.

We are not mistakes. We are not accidents. Our choices have consequences. The consequences can be immediate and far-reaching, yet somehow God is working all things out for His glory and our good (Rom. 8:28).

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28).

What we might deem as a “waste” God is using to manifest His glory and grace in us and through us to those around us.



Perspective is everything.

If we focus on our spouse or ourselves, we have missed it by the proverbial mile. If we see God as being in control and we keep our eyes on Jesus, then our problem becomes an opportunity for grace to be seen (Heb. 12:1, 2). Listen to the following observation by Michael Wells in his work, *Sidetracked in the Wilderness*:

The enemy would never have us fighting the battle where the front lines actually exist; he will always bring something to our attention that has **nothing to do with the real issue.**¹

There is another problem with not fighting the battle on the proper line: We can unknowingly aid the enemy in his work to destroy other believers. When someone is acting in a way that is displeasing to the Lord, and we continue to bring it to his attention, what are we doing? We intensify the problem by helping the enemy place the person’s eyes on something other than the solution. If we want a loving husband, a loving wife, an obedient child, honest employees, a respectful employer, a faithful friend, a spiritual pastor, what must be done? The only hope that we have is to place their eyes on the Savior who can deliver them from vexing behavior. None will find deliverance anywhere else [except] in Christ.²

It is only as we focus on Him that we can have contentment in the midst of our most grueling trial. Often in relationships we want something other than what we have, yet what we have is what God wants us to have. What we want is not something we will have this side of heaven. Again, it is a matter of perspective. How do you view the problem?



God's grace is always sufficient (2 Cor. 12:9), and He will always provide a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13).

And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me (2 Cor. 12:9).

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it (1 Cor. 10:13).

Do not ever think that what we face is the end. Our life and its circumstances are points in a line leading us to God. Discouragement, despair, and depression are different points on the same line. We must not allow ourselves to dwell there.



Declare your dependency on Him through prayer (Mark 9:24).

Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "**I do believe; help my unbelief**" (Mark 9:24).

Prayer is **not an act of discipline as much as a declaration of our dependency** on Him. Prayer says, "God, I need you." God has chosen to work through prayer in the accomplishing of His will. Lean heavily on Him through this channel of grace.



Read His Word (Ps. 119:11).

Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You (Ps. 119:11).

God's mind and perspective is clearly stated in and through His Word. God gives wisdom freely, but we have to read His Word in order to hear His voice.



Be thankful for who He is, for what He has done, for what you have, for who you are, and for where you are at.

...always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ to God, even the Father (Eph. 5:20).

...in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thess. 5:18).

Ephesians 5:20 and 1 Thessalonians 5:18 reveal to us and through us the fruit of gratitude. If we choose not to be thankful, we will become bitter, angry, and critical.

What is true for us is equally true for the other individual.



There is always hope, healing, and wholeness in the finished work of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 2:14).

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place (2 Cor. 2:14).

Never believe the devil's lie that all hope is lost. There is always an end to every trial encountered.



CONCLUSION

Do not view these ten truths as a “magic formula” or a kind of “good luck charm.” They are simple truths God wants us to know. Learn to rest in what you know to be true. Do not allow your experiences to shape your theology. Interpret your circumstances by your theology. Remember, Jesus Christ is enough.

DO NOT ALLOW YOUR
EXPERIENCES TO SHAPE YOUR
THEOLOGY.
INTERPRET YOUR
CIRCUMSTANCES BY YOUR
THEOLOGY.
REMEMBER,
JESUS CHRIST IS ENOUGH.

¹ Michael Wells, *Sidetracked in the Wilderness*, 179

² Michael Wells, *Sidetracked in the Wilderness*, 180