

## 10 Ways to Deal With Life As We Know it

We find in this life that there is such a fast paced way to live it that we CANNOT slow down enough to really 'live' the life...

As we have discussed before the society that we live in sets us up for failure every day...if we are late getting up, everyone is late; if we drop the kids off late, they are late; if we get to work after 8:00 we are late...before 9:00 a.m. on any given day we have 'failed' and we bear that inside and keep going on the fast track to the next task at work or at home, to the next lunch break, to the next line of traffic, to the church service, back home in time to stress over homework or dishes or laundry...

I WANT TO SCREAM!!! Do you ever want to scream?

I want to say; 'give me some peace' ....'I need some rest' ...'I need a vacation' ....'I need some help' ....I need....I need....

We 'need' because we keep running and we never fill the void deep within us...we desperately want to 'deal' with life...

**Psalm 91:1-5...He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day.**

Let's all stop and take a breath and make some plans...

What do we plan to do to make every day special, inviting, filled with love and grace? We each have the opportunity to welcome God into our lives each day, spend time with God, and tangibly feel God's spirit in our thoughts, conversations and actions. Encouraging ourselves to cherish the pleasure of knowing God in everyday ways is a joy, and recognizing that one simple fact is the basis for creating a closer relationship with God.

Here are ten simple ways you can use to start creating a closer relationship with God. To learn to 'live life' in a way that brings some good along with the chaos...

**Pray** - Prayer is simply carrying on a conversation with God, the same way you communicate with anyone else you love. Not sure about that? Consider how you talk with your spouse, your parents, your friends or your children. What do you want to know about them? What do you want them to know about you? Prayer helps you explore your relationship with God. Just like any relationship, learning to know and be known by God takes time - a lifetime in fact. Make time each day to visit with God. Share your thoughts and listen for God's words for you. You may like to keep a prayer journal or dedicate a portion of your existing journal to your visits with God. Not quite sure where to begin?

Decide what is important to you and mention it to God. Work on the 'relationship' with God just like you would work on your relationship with a spouse, parent or child.

**Study** - Reading is becoming a lost art, but you can integrate a bit of this wonderful activity into your life in ways that work for you. The Bible, Newspapers, magazines, devotionals, essays, web articles, novels, short stories, political commentaries, biographies, poetry can all shape themselves to fit into the twenty minutes you lie awake in bed before you are ready to fall asleep, or the half hour you spend watching a television show you really don't like that much anyway.

Why study? It's a big world that God has created to share with us. While far too easy to stay cloistered in our routines, mental stagnation is the next step into the abyss that drags our spiritual lives right over the cliff. Making the effort to expand your world to include more of God's creation expands your image of God, which makes it a whole lot easier to see God in action. Being open to study and learning keeps our minds open to God's presence and purpose.

**Worship** - Praising God, thanking God, giving God your attention is an important part of feeling closer to the One who creates, redeems and sustains us. Worshipping God, honoring God, connects us to God's ongoing work in the world and refreshes our souls. Worship is a gift to yourself that only God can give you. Our level of commitment lets us know where our level of worship is...

**Enjoy Life** - "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10)." Jesus' words from John's gospel remind us that life is not a war, a contest or a race. Life is a gift, a pleasure and a journey designed with you in mind. Having been created in God's image, it is time to celebrate. God created us with love and delight, and wants to give us the desires of our hearts. Enjoying life is another way to feel closer to God.

**Journal** - Journaling gives us back our focus, helps us pay attention to the details of life and sort through the muck and mire to get to what really matters. Whether journaling random thoughts, descriptions of daily events, conversations or memories, prayers or feelings, putting pen to paper about our lives and our world puts those experiences into perspective in a way no other activity can. Spending a few minutes a day jotting down your thoughts can also help you see patterns in your life, those that may be causing challenges and those that are nurturing you. Journaling most assuredly can guide you to see and understand how God is working in your life in ways you would not otherwise have noticed. God is in the details, and in journaling, the details will be right in front of you to think about.

**Fellowship** - Spending time with friends, family and our church family adds richness and depth to our lives, just as God intended. We were created as individuals, but also for community. Paul's first letter to the Thessalonian church shares these thoughts: "We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers constantly, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 1:2-3)."

We are all in this together, sharing space and sharing our lives. God's gift of fellowship shares the importance of who each of us is and how we each contribute to God's purpose as a whole. Whenever we gather in fellowship, we remember that God is with us, indeed, with all of us.

**Serve** - While fellowship reminds us we are a part of a larger purpose, service is the gift we give to that purpose. What are your favorite things to do? What are you passionate about? Chances are, with prayerful thought, you can find some great ways to share God's loving spirit with those around you in ways that tap into your gifts to serve. Serving is giving the best you have to offer to God's community, which is all of us. When we each serve with our individual gifts, God is always there to celebrate with us.

**Just listen**-Close your eyes, hear what is going on around you, and BE wherever you are. Our world is heavily invested in visual images as a means of communication. Taking our focus off the major attention-getters and intentionally placing it in another direction can awaken all of our senses to who God is in our lives. God is really ALL around us; we just can't hear Him. Where else can you hear God? Close your eyes and listen. Turn the tv off; the computer off; sit outside and listen for God...listen to your children play without yelling at them...

**Reflect** - Meditation and reflection on your relationship with God will dazzle and delight you! Why? Giving yourself permission to appreciate that God created you, God loves you, God redeems and sustains you every moment of every day of your life is exhilarating. You belong here, nestled in the strength and beauty of God's love because you are a part of God's creation. How does that make you feel? Think about it. When you think about it you will ALWAYS see the fingerprints of God all over your life...He is ALWAYS present with us...we just don't take the time to sense that...

**Act** - "Whether you know it or not, you live by what you believe." Living by what we believe is more than following a routine of calendar appointments that make others think we look like we believe in God. How does God's love show up in your life? How does God's grace inspire you to act? Actions sometimes do speak louder than words because actions show us and those around us that we mean what we say.

Can we deal with 'life as we know it' and survive??

Of course we can! With God's help and love ALL things are possible. He 'EXPECTS' us to live in a victorious, happy way...

Let's take some of these tips and apply them to our lives and see if we can not ever have to visit this 'burning issue' again...

Psalm 91: 14-16..."Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Here is the bottom line on the 'burning issue' of living life in today's world...when our love for the Lord outweighs our crazy life; He (God alone) will put everything in place for us to live a life of deliverance and honor...