

Experiencing the Abundant Life in Christ

Malachi 3:12–14 (NKJV)

¹²And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land,” Says the Lord of hosts.

¹³“Your words have been harsh against Me,” Says the Lord, Yet you say, ‘What have we spoken against You?’

¹⁴You have said, ‘It is useless to serve God; What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, And that we have walked as mourners Before the Lord of hosts?’

- *These verses reflect the misconceptions that Israel had regarding God’s faithfulness.*

1. Have you ever had almost the same thoughts as Israel did in the above verses?

“And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land” - *This statement reflects God’s heart and purpose for Israel and in a way can also summarize God’s purpose and desire for each of His children.*

- *“Your words have been harsh against Me,” – Just as Israel murmured and complained against God, we as believers can be guilty of doing the same thing.*

2. If you are comfortable enough, please explain a “murmured” moment.

- *‘What have we spoken against You?’ – We can respond just like Israel did and be unaware of our unthankful and unbelieving attitude.*
- *There were three things Israel believed about God that were untrue:*
- *“It is useless to serve God” – It is a waste of time to serve God, let us do what we want and enjoy life.*
- *“What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance” – To obey God’s commandments hinder us from enjoying life.*
- *“we have walked as mourners Before the Lord of hosts” – To walk before the Lord leads to a life filled with sorrow and hardship.*

John 10:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

- *In this Scripture we see two aspects of salvation that Christ is offering each person:*
- *“I have come that they may have life” – Justification – Freedom from the penalty of sin – Being born again in our spirits.*
- *“and that they may have it more abundantly” – Sanctification – Freedom from the power of sin - our souls being conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.*
- *Many who come to Christ experience the first part of salvation – justification but fail to take hold of the second part of salvation – sanctification and the overcoming life that brings forth the freedom of abundant living.*

3. What is the definition of justification?

-deliverance from the eternal penalty of sin.

4. What is the definition of sanctification?

-delivers us from the power of sin on a daily basis.

“and that they may have it more abundantly” - the Greek word translated abundantly is περισσός perissos and it means, “remarkable, abundant, exceptional, extraordinary” and it comes from the Greek root word that is used to describe a flower that goes from a bud to a full blossom.

- *A beautiful picture of John 10:10 is a life that does not just contain life but it is like a bud opening up and blossoming into a fully developed flower with all the beauty and fragrance that the plant possesses.*

We have the fullness of Christ in our reborn spirits but that life needs to blossom into our souls for us to be able to fully enjoy and benefit from all that God has done for us.

- *There are at least two things that stand out about the promise contained in John 10:10:*
- *Christ has much more for us to experience and enjoy than we currently have.*
- *For us to experience the abundant life it is a process just as a bud slowly opens to reveal the true beauty and fragrance of the flower it contains.*
- *The purpose of sanctification is to develop the glory of Christ’s life that is in our reborn spirits into our souls.*

5. The above states what the purpose of sanctification is. How do we develop the glory of Christ's life that is in our reborn spirits into our souls?

- *Carnality robs us from being able to experience Christ's life in our souls.*

6. Each one of us please take the time to explain what carnality looks like to you.

The Bible reveals to us the multifaceted abundant life that Christ desires for us to experience.

Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

¹³Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- *We are to abound in hope.*

7. What does abound in hope look like?

-like a blossom that opens into a flower. **Howards email thoughts:** My thought is a hope that is so full that it is unquenchable and of course our ultimate hope is that we will completely fulfill God's will in our lives and will enjoy being with Him for all eternity. Christian who have suffered great persecution are able to endure and over come when their hope in the Lord is abounding even though they face very dark circumstances.

1 Corinthians 14:12 (NKJV)

¹²Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

- *We are to abound in the spiritual gifts.*

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NKJV)

⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

- *We are to abound in the work of the Lord.*

2 Corinthians 1:5 (NKJV)

⁵For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.

- *We are to abound in both Christ's sufferings and His comfort.*

8. What does abound in both Christ's sufferings and His comfort look like?

2 Corinthians 4:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

- *We are to abound in thanksgiving.*

9. When we are told we are to abound in thanksgiving how do we operate in this and can we immediately operate in this?

2 Corinthians 8:7 (NKJV)

⁷But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.

- *We are to abound in everything!*
- *We are to abound in faith, words, knowledge, diligence and love.*
- *We are to abound in the grace of God which is sufficient for all things.*

10. What is one of the definitions of Grace that Howard is teaching us?

-God working in us and through us to accomplish his purposes.

2 Corinthians 9:8 (NKJV)

⁸And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

- *We are to abound in good works.*

Philippians 1:9 (NKJV)

⁹And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,

- *Our love is to abound more and more in knowledge and discernment.*

1 Thessalonians 4:1 (NKJV)

¹Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God;

- *In summary we are to blossom more and more as we walk before God in a manner that is pleasing to Him so we can be that sweet fragrance before Him.*

11. What should our goal in life be?

-to abound in the Lord.

12. HOW DOES GOING FROM A BUD TO A FULL BLOOM TAKE PLACE?

1 Peter 1:23 (NKJV)

²³having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

- *The life of our reborn spirit is described here as an incorruptible seed.*
- *In our spirit the fullness of Christ dwells but to our soul it is like a seed that needs to grow and develop in our soul so that the full life of Christ can be experienced by each one of us.*
- *We see two aspects of our salvation: our justification and our sanctification.*
- *Imputed righteousness – this means when we received Him versus imparted righteousness. imparted– when we walk in the spirit*
- *Affirmation – When we first received Jesus he unconditionally received and accepted us. versus Aspiration. – Now that God has affirmed us we now want to move on and be obedient because he has accepted us.*
- *“In Christ” versus “In the Lord”*
- *Positional versus Experiential (Behavioural).*

Comparing positional with experiential.

Ephesians 2:6 (NKJV)

⁶and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

- *“made [us] sit together” is in the aorist tense which means a “snapshot event” something that has taken place in a moment of time.*
- *When we received Christ as Saviour, God caused us to be seated with Christ at that instant and that took place in our reborn spirit. - positional*

Revelation 3:20–21 (NKJV)

²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

²¹To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

“If anyone hears My voice and opens the door” and “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne” show a connection between responding to God’s invitation to fellowship and being an overcomer and being able to sit with Him on His throne.

- *Positionally through faith in Christ in our reborn spirits we are seated with Christ in Heavenly places but through our life of obedience to Christ (behaviourally) we will experience the reality in Heaven of being seated with Christ on His throne.*

1 Timothy 6:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

¹²Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

- *There is a fleeing and a following. Flee from the lusts of the flesh and follow after the Lord.*
- *We are called to fight the good fight of faith.*

13 . What is the purpose of this good fight of faith?

- *We don’t fight the good fight of faith to be born again (justified) but we do fight the good fight of faith to lay hold of our inheritance that belongs to the sons and daughters of God.*

- *We are to lay hold on eternal life and in this context it is speaking about the abundant life that Christ has promised us.*
- *Paul is challenging Christians to take hold of the eternal life that is in our spirit and actually experience it in our soul life.*
- *We are to do something with this eternal life and not just let it sit there as a light that is hidden under a bushel.*

John 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish (aorist tense) but have (aorist tense) everlasting life.

- *The moment you put your faith in Jesus Christ you have been saved and you immediately possess eternal life. This is what has happened in your spirit.*

John 6:53–54 (NKJV)

⁵³Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

⁵⁴Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

⁵³Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

- *“unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man” – The Greek word for “eat” used here is φάγομαι phagomai and it means simple to consume or eat.*
- *In verse 53 the verbs of both “eat” and “drink” are in the aorist tense which means something that happened at a specific moment of time with the result that it produced life.*

John 6:53 (DARBY)

⁵³Jesus therefore said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Unless ye shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of man, and drunk his blood, ye have no life in yourselves.

- *If a person has never had an experience where they have put their faith in Christ and partook of Christ’s sacrifice then they have not been forgiven and redeemed and are devoid of life and salvation and they are still under the judgement of condemnation.*

⁵⁴Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

- *This next verse actually says something quite different than the preceding verse.*

- **“Whoever eats My flesh” – The Greek Word for “eat” is τρώγω trōgō and it means to gnaw, munch, crunch:—as one would chew on fresh vegetables.**
- **The verb for both eat and drink in this verse is in the active present tense and thus signifying continual ongoing action.**
- **“has eternal life” – The result of someone who continues to partake of Christ daily is that he has eternal life and the verb in the Greek for “has” means to possess, to take hold of” and it is in the active present tense.**
- **Thus if we are continue to abide in Christ daily then we will be able to take hold of eternal life daily and thus live the abundant overcoming life that Jesus has promised us.**

John 6:54 (ESV)

⁵⁴Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

- ***This verse speaks about a continual action that produces an ongoing result. As we continue to meditate and abide in Christ and all He has done for us, we will be possessing and experiencing that eternal life that He has given us.***
- ***We can see all three aspects of salvation in John 6:53-54***
- ***“Unless ye shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of man, and drunk his blood, ye have no life in yourselves” – justification – freed from the penalty of sin – a one time event that occurred in our spirit.***
- ***“Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life” – sanctification – being freed from the power of sin – an on going process occurring in our soul whereby we enjoy the abundant life of Christ daily.***
- ***“and I will raise him up at the last day.” - glorification – being freed from the presence of sin at the resurrection – a future event that occurs in our bodies.***

14. For us to really understand what we can experience we need to be able to answer the question, “What is Eternal Life?”

John 17:1–3 (NKJV)

¹Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

²as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.

³And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

- *Eternal Life is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ His Son*
- *The Greek word “to know” used in this verse is γινώσκω ginōskō and it means the type of knowledge that comes by experiencing someone or something.*
- *When we as believers in Jesus Christ spend time with the Lord in prayer and in the Word we can truly experience that abundant life but when we are not abiding, the peace and joy of the Lord begins to seep away.*
- *The definition of damnation is the exact opposite of eternal life.*

15. What is one test that will show us how well we are walking with the Lord?

- how much are we worrying, or being bothered by things, or how easily do we get upset.

2 Thessalonians 1:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

John 6:28–29 (NKJV)

²⁸Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”

²⁹Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

- for us the work of God is trusting Him.

- *The Work of God is related to Eternal Life.*
- *Eternal Life is to know God.*
- *The Work of God is to trust the One Whom we know.*

Hebrews 6:12 (NKJV)

¹²that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

- *It is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises of God.*
- *If we fail to be faithful and obedient to God then we will become like ancient Israel that complained that the Lord's ways are difficult and without joy or reward.*

Titus 3:7 (KJV)

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

- *The verb "should be made" in the Greek is in the subjunctive mood which is the mood of possibility and potential, but it may or may not happen depending upon our response.*
- *Every heir is a son but not every son will become an heir.*
- *Through faith in Christ we are made His children but through obedience we are made heirs.*

Revelation 2:7 (NKJV)

⁷"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." '

- *To eat of the trees of life means more than just being saved but to be able to taste and enjoy the eternal life we have received.*

Revelation 2:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

- *The crown of life is to be able to experience and exercise the authority that accompanies eternal life.*

Romans 6:23 (NKJV)

²³For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- *The gift of God, which is eternal life, is received by putting our faith in Christ and results in us becoming children of God.*
- *The reward of eternal life is received by living a surrendered life to Christ and results in us become the heirs of God and experiencing all the benefits of being His children.*

- *God does not love us any less if we are defeated but we are not able to experience and express His love.*
- *When we walk in carnality we grieve the heart of God.*

1 Corinthians 3:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- *The Greek word for "suffer loss" means "to do damage to, to sustain damage".*
- *If we do not take hold of eternal life and learn to abide in Christ we will find that at the Judgment Seat of Christ we will incur eternal loss – the loss of the inheritance that Christ has prepared for us.*

16. How much eternal life have you taken hold of?

- *There may be some here who have never received the gift of eternal life and today is an opportunity to put your faith in Christ.*
- *There are some here who have received Christ as their Saviour but they are living unfilled lives. Today is an opportunity to make a decision to really begin to take hold of eternal and live your lives more fully for Christ.*
- *There are some here who have experienced some aspects of that abundant life Christ promised. Today we can give thanks for what the Lord has done but also seek Him so our lives can be even more yield to Him.*