

SIF

Suzhou International Fellowship



May 27, 2023

TRANSITION







- **Abandonment**
- **Betrayal**
- **Sickness**
- **Depression**
- **Lack**
- **Rejection**
- **Loss of loved ones**
- **Delay**
- **Failure**
- **Shame**
- **Disrespect**





Life's Strategy

A woman with long dark hair is laughing joyfully, her head tilted back and eyes closed. She is wearing a dark top and is surrounded by a field of bright yellow flowers. Her hands are held out in front of her, palms up, as if she is enjoying the moment. The background is a soft-focus field of similar flowers, creating a warm and happy atmosphere.

Maximizing Happiness

Happiness

- Things
- Activities
- Places
- People
- Work/Career
- Self-accomplishment

Wisdom

Psalm 90:12 NIV

Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a **heart** of **wisdom**.

Ecclesiastes 7:2-4 NET

It is better to go to a **funeral** than a **feast**.

For death is the destiny of every person,
and the living should take this to **heart**.

Sorrow is better than **laughter**,

because **sober reflection** is good for the **heart**.

The **heart** of the wise is in the house of **mourning**,

but the **heart** of fools is in the house of **merrymaking**.

Agency/Freedom



Deuteronomy 30:19 ESV

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore **choose** life, that you and your offspring may live



The Purpose for Freedom

Exodus 9:1-3 NET

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and tell him, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, “**Release my people** that they may serve me! For if you refuse to release them and continue **holding** them, then the hand of the Lord will surely bring a very terrible plague on your livestock in the field, on the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks.



**Serving God and not self is
what life is all about**

Joshua 24:14-15 ESV

“Now therefore fear the Lord and **serve** him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers **served** beyond the River and in Egypt, and **serve** the Lord. And if it is evil in your eyes to **serve** the Lord, **choose** this day whom you will **serve**, whether the gods your fathers **served** in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will **serve** the Lord.”

Colossians 1:16 ESV

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and **for** him.

2 Corinthians 5:13-15 NIV

If we are “out of our mind,” as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should **no longer live for themselves** but **for** him who died for them and was raised again.

Galatians 2:19-21 NIV

“For through the law I died to the law so that I might **live for God**. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

Live for God!



Jesus' Example

Matthew 4:8-10 NIV

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their **splendor**. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and **serve** him only.’”

John 8:50 NIV

I am not seeking **glory for myself**; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge.

Luke 2:49 NKJV

And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about **My Father’s business?**”



John's Example

John 3:25-30 NIV

Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification. And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him." John answered, "**A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.** You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this **joy** of mine is now complete. **He must increase, but I must decrease.**"

Matthew 25:23 NIV

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s **happiness!**’

Paul's Admonition



Colossians 3:23-24 NIV

Whatever you do, work at it with all your **heart**, as working **for** the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are **serving**.

1 Corinthians 10:31 NIV

So whether you eat or drink or **whatever you do,**
do it all for the glory of God.

Recap

Life's Strategy:

Maximizing Happiness

VS

Living for God

Choose wisely!