

# LIVING REAL LIFE

1 TIMOTHY 6:19

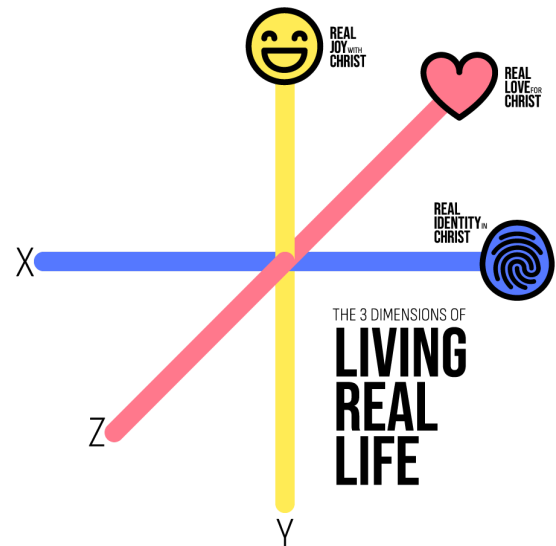
## CHAPTER 2 THREE DIMENSIONS



### REALITY HAS THREE DIMENSIONS

Every physical object exists within space along coordinates defined by an x, y, and z position. Just like the x, y, and z axes of our physical reality, there are three dimensions to LIVING REAL LIFE:

1. **IDENTITY** - This dimension recognizes that our minds perceive and analyze who we are. The horizontal axis describes our IDENTITY that is expressed along this horizontal plane of human existence in our values and priorities. When our IDENTITY is **IN** CHRIST we are LIVING REAL LIFE. This is to LOVE the Lord our God with our mind.
2. **LOVE** - This dimension recognizes that from our heart flows the evidence of what we value. The diagonal axis describes the depth of our LOVE that is expressed along this diagonal plane of what we obey and worship. When our LOVE is **FOR** CHRIST we are LIVING REAL LIFE. This is to LOVE the Lord our God with our heart.
3. **JOY** - This dimension recognizes that in our spirit we delight in that which we love. The vertical axis describes the height of our JOY that is expressed along this vertical plane of relationship. When our JOY is **WITH** CHRIST, in this vertical relationship with Him, we are LIVING REAL LIFE. This is to LOVE the Lord our God with our soul.



It is these three coordinates that describe your "position" in REAL LIFE, where CHRIST is at the center. This is what Paul preached in the Areopagus in Acts 17:28 when he affirmed the Greek poets who wrote "In Him we live and move and have our being". We are all somewhere on the spectrum, along each of the three axes, and God's desire for your life is to bring you to the absolute center where CHRIST is, and where LIVING REAL LIFE will extend for eternity with Him. In

this LIFE, we fluctuate in our position, pursuing the center, but as we drift away from the center, LIVING REAL LIFE becomes more difficult.

In fact, if your life can not be described by these coordinates, then you are in fact not LIVING REAL LIFE. They are the FOUNDATION of TREASURE that Paul is speaking about in 1 Timothy 6:19. This is a FOUNDATION where CHRIST is the Chief Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20, 1 Peter 2:6), the Treasure worth selling everything for (Matthew 13:44), the Pearl of Great Price (Matthew 13:45).



## **REAL IDENTITY IN CHRIST**

The culture of our day compels youth to discover their "true authentic" self. But in an astonishing contradiction, the culture dictates both what this version of self must look like in quality and value, resulting in a uniformity that is neither authentic nor unique.

What this amounts to is a generation of youth who are thoroughly dissatisfied with who they are, with who God made them to be, and living out identities that are not tethered to reality. This is not real life, and is in fact a rejection of self, and a rebellion towards God.

LIVING REAL LIFE is to embrace a liberating and satisfying IDENTITY in Christ, as described in His Word. Just as we are all made unique, the spiritual DNA of one who is in Christ reveals a custom purpose and value for each youth, established by God's sovereign plan for His glory and His people.

## **REAL LOVE FOR CHRIST**

LIVING REAL LIFE is to believe that the outward expression of our inward transformation is LOVE for CHRIST. We aim to equip our youth with the tools provided in God's Word to assess the quality and quantity of their love for Christ on a personal level.

According to Jesus, the greatest commandment is to "*LOVE the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength*" (Mark 12:30). Therefore it is our sincere belief that as the greatest commandment, anything less than LOVE for Christ with ALL of our being, is our greatest offense against Him.

In humility, we acknowledge that we fall short of this standard daily, and when we are quite honest with ourselves we realize that we are actually unable to attain this perfect standard. Perfect love for God has only been achieved by Jesus Himself, in eternity past, in His life on earth, and beyond into the unending glory of heaven. Only the perfect love of Jesus meets this highest standard of God's command, and is our only hope, as the merits of Jesus are given to those who believe. (2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:9)

Love for God is only made possible by the regenerative work of the Spirit, and the ongoing transformative work of sanctification in our walk with Jesus. However, even as born-again followers of Christ, our LOVE for Him can be threatened by competing idols and dishonorable relationships.

LIVING REAL LIFE is to LOVE Christ practically, according to the parameters outlined in God's Word. We believe that each individual's expression of love for Christ is unique, depending on God's design for them in Christ and the spiritual gifts they have been given as children of God.

## **REAL JOY WITH CHRIST**

LIVING REAL LIFE is to cultivate deep and abiding JOY with CHRIST , which is unparalleled in its transformative power for the Christian life. It is those who find their JOY with CHRIST who can apply their knowledge of God to their everyday lives. This is only made possible by the transformative and regenerative work of the Spirit in salvation resulting in a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17) . This results in a personal relationship with Christ, a relationship of JOY.

Without this, one can attain a theoretical and theological understanding, but lack the necessary strength and conviction to live out their beliefs. As the Bible reminds us, "the JOY of the Lord is our strength" (Nehemiah 8:10).

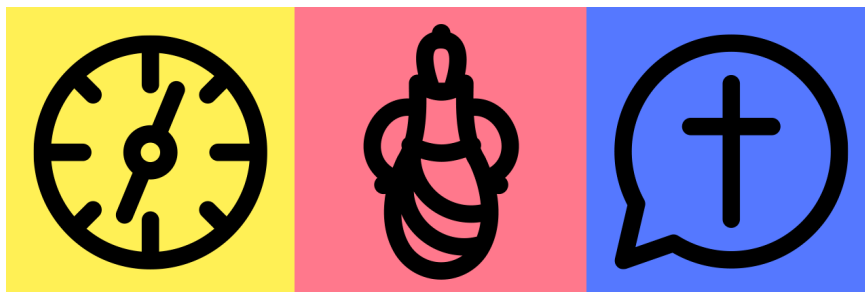
Those who simply know what to do but have never tasted the sweetness of a relationship with Christ struggle to abide in the vine as Jesus taught in John 15. To them, the obedience that flows from abiding in Christ (John 15:10) is not fuelled by JOY with CHRIST but rather religious obligation, duty, and the expectations of others, and is a heavy and legalistic burden.

The light yoke that Jesus spoke about in Matthew 11:29-3 is the burden lifted when our obedience is as an expression of our delight in God and walking with Christ. For this reason, gospel transformation and the "complete joy" that Jesus promised to those who abide (John 15:11) is the pursuit of LIVING REAL LIFE.

## REAL IMPACT

LIVING REAL LIFE within these three dimensions has REAL IMPACT which is seen in our:

1. **WALK** - The REAL LIFE of JOYOUSLY walking with Christ is the very motivation for obedience. As a fruit of the Spirit, JOY empowers a walk filled with conviction in spite of the pervasive shallowness of this world, purity in spite of temptation, and courage in spite of being the minority.
2. **WORSHIP** - The REAL LIFE of serving Jesus from an overflow of LOVE for CHRIST. A real life that is not content to simply sing songs on a Sunday, but understands worship is a lifestyle, a daily offering of service to God that is holy and acceptable.
3. **WITNESS** - The REAL LIFE of confidence in your IDENTITY in CHRIST. A life that is thankful for who God made you to be - unique and special according to His purposes, and resulting in bold proclamation of the Gospel in both word and deed.



## **REAL WALK**

Building a life on the solid FOUNDATION of Jesus Christ, provides the stability to withstand the storms of life, and a WALK that is *"worthy of the calling to which you have been called"* (Ephesians 4:1)

This kind of stability is described by Paul in Ephesians 4:12-13 as maturity. Paul then contrasts it with the immaturity of remaining as children in verse 14 using an illustration of an unanchored boat. When encountering a storm this untethered boat is *"tossed and blown about by every wind of doctrine"*.

LIVING REAL LIFE is to mature in your WALK, with a stability that is found in Christ, a REAL LIFE that holds strong during the storm, a spiritual alertness that exposes the *"cunning and craftiness of people"* (Ephesians 4:14), and a wisdom that is full of faith, unshaken and un-tossed (James 1:6).

Similarly, our conviction is that God's Word, as our source of truth and light, is indeed a *"lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path"* (Psalm 119:105). And so, we pass on to our youth tools and techniques to understand God's Word, to interpret Scripture, to *"rightly divide the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15). The technical term for this kind of Bible study is hermeneutics, and while that may sound complicated, our prayer is to make it accessible with some easy to remember steps, and even a bookmark as a reminder.

God's Word is indeed the Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17) and it is *"alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12).

For this reason, we are reminded that all Scripture is given to us for *"training in righteousness"* so that you may be *"complete, equipped for every good work."* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

It should be remembered that this kind of training goes against both our culture and our flesh, and so a FOUNDATION of JOY with CHRIST, the Word who became flesh, is essential.

## **REAL WORSHIP**

Another REAL IMPACT of LIVING REAL LIFE is an increased heart of WORSHIP for the Lord.

Jesus was anointed with the most expensive perfumes of the day, both on his head (Matthew 26:6-13) and feet (John 12:1-8) upon the recognition of his worth. Acts of sacrificial WORSHIP are the ultimate expression of our LOVE for Jesus. It demands that we use the word love as a verb, not as a noun, but as an action word.

To that end, our understanding is that WORSHIP is an all-encompassing lifestyle of living as a sacrifice to God, and the IMPACT it makes in our lives touches every part of who we are, what we do, and why we do it.

LIVING REAL LIFE is to grow in their appreciation for who God made them to be, for who He is and what He has done for them in salvation, and experience a LOVE for CHRIST that overflows into this kind of WORSHIP.

## **REAL WITNESS**

Lastly, LIVING REAL LIFE impacts your WITNESS.

In the "Great Commission" of Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus prioritizes our purpose and mission in LIVING REAL LIFE. In His words, our full-out gospel WITNESS endeavor is to "*make disciples*" who are baptized and obedient to Christ.

While many youth struggle in fear and uncertainty about their faith, facing many challenges on many fronts, LIVING REAL LIFE is to step out into the battle, take up the shield of faith, in protection against those arrows of deceit that Paul describes in Ephesians 6:16, and "fight the good fight" (1 Timothy 6:12).

The IMPACT of LIVING REAL LIFE is a humble confidence in Christ, and a profound understanding of our IDENTITY in CHRIST. Because of this, LIVING REAL LIFE is an exuberant and joyful proclamation of Christ in word and deed. Our words are always seasoned with salt (Colossians 4:6), and LIVING REAL LIFE does not make our WITNESS proud or arrogant, lest we ourselves become a stumbling block to the GOSPEL in our interactions with peers at school, co-workers on the job, and unsaved family at home. No, we are a living epistle (2 Corinthians 3:3), a testament to what LIVING REAL LIFE truly means.

It is within this framework of IDENTITY in CHRIST, that we discover that beautifully written letter, a letter that is alive, written by God himself on our hearts, filled with GOSPEL truth and written according to God's purposes for their lives and a meaningful impact in the lives around them.

Jesus also likened our WITNESS to that of salt. He said, "*You are the salt of the earth*" (Matthew 5:13-16) and this is the living epistle of our lives that "*shines before others*" the glory of the Father through the transforming power of the Gospel and the work of Jesus in our lives. This is LIVING REAL LIFE. This is sharing the TREASURE of JESUS with the world.



## REAL METAPHORS

Along each of these three axes of IDENTITY in CHRIST, LOVE for CHRIST, and JOY with CHRIST, God's Word describes three very distinct metaphors that speak to this greater REALITY. Each metaphor portrays something that should not be alive (stones, sacrifices, and letters) but in fact is alive in CHRIST. They are each dynamic and multifaceted, with layers of intentional and fascinating parallels to help us understand the mysteries of LIVING REAL LIFE.

### LIVING STONES

*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **1 PETER 2:4-5***

Peter described the REAL LIFE of the believer using the illustration of a stone. But not just any stone, a living stone, built up into a dwelling place for God Himself, a holy temple for a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5).

Peter's name in fact means stone, and the conversation he had with Jesus in Matthew 16:18 would have been fresh in his mind. A conversation where Jesus established the foundation of the church, the most holy declaration that Jesus is the "Messiah, the Son of the Living God" as Peter confessed. And while Peter's name means stone, it is the rock of Peter's confession, Jesus Christ who is the foundation, the very Chief Cornerstone (1 Peter 2:6).

For that reason, LIVING REAL LIFE seeks to explore what exactly it means to be built on Jesus. What living real life looks like for those who are built on the solid rock of Jesus, immovable, unshakable, a life that can withstand storms and hardships, as described in the parable of the wise man who built his house upon the rock (Matthew 7:24-27).

But also, what does it mean to be the dwelling of God, the mystery described by Paul in Colossians 1:27 that has been made known to us, namely, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." This is the joy of life with Christ, walking in fellowship and communion with Him, in a relationship that youth seek, but will not find outside of Christ.

## **LIVING SACRIFICES**

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ROMANS 12:1*

Paul described the REAL LIFE of the believer using the illustration of animal sacrifice. But not just any sacrifice, a sacrifice that continues to live in spite of being sacrificed. The resulting life is one of ongoing "true and proper" acts of worship (Romans 12:1).

And so, flowing from our LOVE for Christ, as the TREASURE that He is to those who believe, this study seeks to explore what the real life of worship looks like.

In it we will be providing teaching, training, encouragement and opportunities to explore various acts of worship including :

- Adoration
- Discipline
- Creativity
- Obedience
- Service
- Intellect
- Devotion
- Sacrifice

This is the REAL LIFE that "loves the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." (Mark 12:30-31)

It is understood that as youth make the transition from child to adult, they have only just begun to understand, experience and engage in their own expressions of worship, independent from the worship routines and the hand holding of parents. And so, we encourage our youth to take ownership of their acts of worship, and as living sacrifices, not settle for a life simply in the pan, but one that is in the fire.

## **LIVING LETTERS**

*And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.* **2 CORINTHIANS 3:3**

Paul described the REAL LIFE of the believer using the illustration of an epistle, or in modern terms: a written letter. But not just any letter, a letter that is alive, written on our hearts by God himself (2 Corinthians 3:3).

It is within this framework of IDENTITY in Christ, that our youth will discover that beautifully written letter, filled with Gospel truth and written according to God's purposes for their lives and a meaningful impact in the lives around them.

This is because Jesus likens our WITNESS to that of salt. He said, "You are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13-16) and this is the living epistle of our lives that "shines before others" the glory of the Father through the transforming power of the Gospel and the work of Jesus in our lives.

Our prayer is to explore and mature in our IDENTITY in Christ for a great WITNESS for Christ. And the two are intricately linked, for it is the very thing that defines one's identity that both preoccupies one's thoughts, priorities, speech, and testimony before a world that does not know Christ.

## **A FRAMEWORK FOR REAL LIFE**

Altogether, 1 Timothy 6:19 provides a FRAMEWORK where LIVING along the axes of REAL LIFE has REAL IMPACT in our WALK, WORSHIP, and WITNESS. To better help us understand the marvelous mystery and depths of LIVING REAL LIFE God has given us the METAPHORS of REAL LIFE. We see in these METAPHORS a REAL LIFE built on the FOUNDATION as LIVING STONES with CHRIST as the cornerstone, a REAL LIFE resulting in REAL WORSHIP of CHRIST, our TREASURE, as LIVING SACRIFICES, and a REAL LIFE testifying to the REAL LIFE as LIVING LETTERS, in our WITNESS.

This is most simply described in this diagram:

