



Your Life in 2024

January 7, 2024

Your *view* of life will *shape* your life.

1. Life on earth is a test.

Throughout the Bible God constantly tests people's character, faith, obedience, love, integrity, and loyalty. Words like trials, temptations, refining, and testing occur more than 200 times in the Bible.

Every time you pass a test, God notices and makes plans to reward you in eternity.

James 1:12 — "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial [testing]; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

Two tests that most Christians fail regularly are tithing and keeping the Sabbath.

Malachi 3:10 — "Bring the whole tithe in the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows."

God says to put Him to the test by tithing (giving 10% of your income to the work of the Lord). Test Him and watch Him come through for you as you trust Him to make 90% go further than 100%.

The second trust test that most Christians fail is keeping the Sabbath.

Psalms 103:14 — "For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust."

God knows our limitations. He knows we need rest, and He has designed us to need that rest on a regular basis. Fatigue is not God's plan for your life.

There is another reason why God wants us to keep the Sabbath. When God fed the Israelites manna while they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, He told them to gather for six days and rest on the seventh day. He wanted Israel to learn that six days of gathering would provide enough for seven days of living. God is teaching His people to trust that He will provide for them even when they aren't working.

With tithing, if we give 10%, God promises that He will make 90% go further than 100%. The same is true for the Sabbath. If we keep the Sabbath and rest on one day, God promises that He will make six days of work be more than enough for seven days of living.

2. Life on earth is a trust.

Our time on earth, intelligence, opportunities, relationships, and resources are all gifts from God that He has entrusted to our care and management. We are stewards of what God has given us. This concept of stewardship begins with the recognition that God is the owner of everything and everyone on earth.

Psalms 24:1 — "The earth is the LORD's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it."

We never really own anything during our brief stay on earth. God is the owner of everything, and we are simply the managers of those things. God expects us to manage what is His in a responsible way.

In the parable of the talents, a businessman entrusts wealth to the care of his servants while he's away. When he returns, he evaluates each servant's responsibility and rewards them accordingly.

Matthew 25:21 — "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'"

At the end of your life on earth, you will be evaluated and rewarded according to how well you handled what God entrusted to you.

3. Life on earth is a temporary assignment.

The Bible repeatedly compares life on earth to temporarily living in a foreign country. This is not your permanent home or final destination; you're just passing through. The Bible uses terms like alien, pilgrim, foreigner, stranger, visitor, and traveler to describe our brief stay on earth.

God says we are to think differently about life from the way unbelievers do.

Philippians 3:19-20 — "...For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

If you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, then you are a citizen of heaven—right now.

John 14:2 — "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

The Bible says that we are Christ's ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). Realizing that life on earth is just a temporary assignment should radically alter our values. Eternal values, not temporal ones, should become the deciding factors for our decisions.

In God's eyes, the greatest heroes of faith are not those who achieve prosperity, success, and power in this life, but those who treat this life as a temporary assignment and serve faithfully, expecting their promised reward in eternity.

Hebrews 11:13 — "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."

Hebrews 11:16 — "But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them."

1 Peter 2:11 (MSG) — "Friends, this world is not your home, so don't make yourselves cozy in it. Don't indulge your ego at the expense of your soul."