



Genesis 1.26-31

The good life. Have you ever dreamed of it, longed for it? Sure. I don't know anyone who hasn't in one way or another wanted to possess "the good life." Here's a question for you. What is it anyway? Really. What is "the good life?" It isn't that easy to answer, is it? People have written whole books about it. Peruse any bookstore and you will see any number of titles of cookbooks to self-help books that promise a path to "the good life." I have even purchased a couple over the years. In spite of writing about it, reading about it, even dreaming about it, we don't seem to be able to really put into words what it is. Sure, each of us can spit out what might make a good day, a good month, or even perhaps some good ways to spend life. Personally, my nose in a book and my toes in sand is pretty good. Really, when I dig down, there is something more substantive that I can't quite put into words, something I know is there. I just can't spit it out.

I think most of us could say pretty much the same thing. We know, deep down we have an innate sense that there is something good, a life out there, somewhere that is more substantive than anything we could ever dream or imagine. The trouble is, we just can't seem to find it. Maybe this is why we write and dream about it so much. We are searching, searching for something that exists, something we have lost.

In Genesis, we find what we struggle to put into words, a truly "good life." Life in the beginning was good, really good. People had purpose, meaning, and worth; purpose, meaning and worth found in intimate connection with God and other people. Life was lived in the body, but it was more than the body. Life transcended to the eternal. There was no hunger. No want. No worry or fear. And get this, people were free, really free to be what they were meant to be and do. This is life, the good life, the life we hunger and thirst for. This is the life God made us for, the life He gave us. It just isn't the life we live, not in the present at least. So what went wrong? If it went wrong, can it be corrected? Is it possible to once again truly possess life, the "good life?" I suppose this is what the story we are about to learn will unfold for us. In essence, this is the story of the Bible, a story of a God-intended good life and the possibility of its return. Why else would it start in this way? As we wait for the rest of the story, I am filled with anticipation and hope, hope that the life that was can be the life that is. Deep down I know, I hope, I long that once more life will be good, really good.

A fellow traveler,

Blake
Spiritual Formation Pastor

My Next Step

We encourage you to consider doing the following as a way of handing off faith to your family. . .

- **Reconsider the essence of life:** Life is more than we make it. Much more. Life was intended to be full of hope, joy, peace, and provision experienced in loving relationships with God and others. Deep down we know this and pursue it by substituting things of our own design for the life God intended for us. This week, take some time as a family to view a sunset or a sunrise. Watch it from beginning to end and absorb its full brilliance in silence. Afterwards, spend some time talking about the feelings and thoughts you had. Were you struck with a sense that you were part of something much bigger than yourself? Were you reminded of God's creative power and beauty? Or something else? Take some time and simply reflect, considering as a family who God might be and what the life He intends might be like. See if you can be open to allowing God to show you if there are areas of your family's life where you might be substituting things of your own design for the life He intended.

We encourage you to take one of the following next steps on your faith journey. . .

- **Seek to see God in others:** God created people as eternal spiritual beings of infinite worth. However, we do not often see them or ourselves in this way. Thus, our actions and attitudes toward ourselves and others are often not reflective of our true identity. This week, consider looking in the mirror every morning and simply saying to yourself, "I am an eternal spiritual being, a person of infinite worth made in the image of God." Consider also looking at others as you pass by them or interact with them and saying to yourself, "This person is an eternal spiritual being, a person of infinite worth made in the image of God."