

The Abundant Life Is Being All

There & Living In The Moment!

By David Lee Burris

The Abundant Life @ John 10:1-10

Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Are you happy with your life? I’m not asking if the things in your life are good. I’m asking about your state of mind about your life.



You Can Be There Without Being There

“During this time Rand's physician becomes increasingly suspicious that Chauncey isn't a wise political expert and that the mystery of his identity may have a more mundane *and moronic explanation*... While the President delivers a speech at Rand's funeral, pallbearers hold a whispered discussion over potential replacements for the President in the next term

of office and unanimously agree on Chauncey Gardiner as successor. Oblivious to all this, Chauncey pauses, dips his umbrella deep into the water under his feet, then continues on, while the President's heard quoting Rand: **'Life is a state of mind'.**”





James Thurber, in his delightful story, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*, tells about a man who is constantly day dreaming about a better life. One moment he is, in reality, driving down the highway, listening to his nagging wife, and the next he is in a fantasy world, commanding a ship at sea.

One moment, he is standing in front of a store window smoking a cigarette, the next he is again in his fantasy world, a hero smoking his last cigarette as he prepares to face an enemy firing squad.

There is a real contrast between Walter Mitty of the real world and Walter Mitty of the fantasy world. In his fantasies, Walter is heroic, brave, decisive, intelligent -- while in reality, he is meek mild person who is constantly hen pecked by a nagging wife.

Poor Walter Mitty -- anyone who reads the story can't help but feel sorry for him -- he wants so much to be something he's not. He wants so much to have something MORE out of life.

But Walter Mitty is not alone.

Many of us are so dissatisfied with life that we often find ourselves like Walter Mitty, dreaming of lives that are not our own, or like the woman of Paul Simon's song, who sits in bed and thinks of things that might have been. The tragedy of this is the universality of the problem. *In another of his songs, Paul Simon wrote,*

**I don't know a soul who's not been battered,
I don't have a friend who feels at ease.**

**I don't know a dream that's not been shattered
or driven to its knees...**

**When I think of the road we're traveling on
I wonder what's gone wrong. I can't help it,
I wonder what's gone wrong.**

For some many people, life isn't what they would like for it to be. Jesus understands that feeling very well. In our New Testament lesson, he made the bold declaration that he had come to change all of that. He declared that he had come to give ABUNDANT LIFE!

Abundant Life!

I doubt seriously that Jesus was talking about abundance of possessions, abundance of savings, abundance of money, abundance of clothing, abundance of cars – or in his time, chariots.

He was talking about the real things of life - a life that is filled with peace, love, joy, patience, and all of the other good qualities of life to such a degree that he never runs out. One never runs out of peace, because he has more than enough within his heart. One never runs out of patience, there is always enough love and joy. One is living the Abundant Life.

What an idealistic and unrealistic concept. When one first considers it, such a perfect life as this seems totally far-fetched and completely out of reach. Few people would dare say that they are living the Abundant Life. The sad fact is that many people, if they are truly honest, would admit to living just the opposite of an Abundant Life. They would admit to living an empty, unsatisfying, inadequate life.

Years ago, there was a movie with Steve McQueen and Dustin Hoffman. The name of the movie was PAPPILLION, and it was about a man named Pappillion who had been sentenced to spend the rest of his life on the prison on Devil's Island. During his time there, Papillion got into enough trouble to be thrown into solitary confinement for one year. There being so alone for so long, Papillion's mind began to play tricks on him. He began to fantasize.

Before long he could not tell fantasy from reality.

One night Papillion saw himself walking through the desert. There he came upon 12 men seated around a 13th man, who was sitting a little higher than the rest. This represented the Judge and Jury who had tried Papillion found him guilty of a murder, and sent him to Devil's Island. Papillion became very upset and went to the Judge and yelled out at him, "I'm innocent! I'm innocent of the charge that you convicted me of." The Judge looked down rather apathetically and said, "Yes we know. We knew all along. But you were guilty of something far worse than murder. You were guilty of living a wasted life."

Papillion barely hesitated before responding, "Yes, I'm guilty, I'm guilty of wasting my life. There is nothing more tragic than a person who wastes his life, who lives an empty unsatisfying, inadequate life.

Jesus came that we might have life, but only inadequately?

No.... that is not what....the Word of God says. It says that Jesus came that we might have life and that we might have it abundantly.

The Abundant Life and the Inadequate Life. Two very different life styles - one very opposite for the other.

And yet, many do not experience either of these two life styles. They do not experience the totally empty wasted life--Nor do they live the idealistic perfect, ABUNDANT LIFE.

They find themselves somewhere between the two, somewhere between the totally empty and the totally full life. Perhaps this is where most people are, living a life that is JUST adequate.

In the life that is adequate, there are many happy times. There are times of love. There are times of peace. But there are also times of depression, fear, loneliness, and confusion. This is perhaps the most dangerous type of life style, because it is possible to grow content---hoping that in the final analysis, the good times would outweigh the bad. And being content, a person might fail to reach out for something better, for something more than just adequate.

But what were those words again that I read from the Scriptures? "Jesus came that we might have life, so that at least we could have it adequately"? No, it says that He came to give us Abundant Life.

The abundant life. The life in which one has all of the fruits of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-discipline, and has them to such a degree that he or she never runs out. There is always more than what is needed.

Idealistic? Perhaps. Out of reach? No -- not for the Christian.

Jesus himself promised us this type of life to us, so we can all be sure and know that we can indeed live life in an abundant way.

And so the question is -- How can we begin to live life abundantly?

It is good at this point to take another look at the Scripture. Jesus was telling a parable of sheep being cared for and led by the shepherd. It is clear to us that Jesus was speaking of his followers as the sheep and of himself as the shepherd.

In order for us to receive the abundant life, we must become sheep of the shepherd, who is Jesus Christ.

This, of course means that we must first of all be Christians. In order for us to be Sheep of Christ, we must enter the way of life that we call Christianity.

Acting in obedient faith, we have eternal life, but not necessarily abundant life, especially if, after having received salvation, we continue to live, unproductive, undisciplined lives. If we are to receive the full blessings of our Christian lives, then we should let Christ be, in addition to our Savior our Shepherd: Answering his voice as he calls us and entering the gates of life which he opens. We need to become obedient sheep, committed sheep, trusting in our Shepherd, Christ. The abundant life CAN be ours, and it IS God's will for us to live it.

Now mind you, **the abundant life is not the idealistic life** that it may sound like. It will still be possible for tragedy to enter our lives. So, what then is the difference between living life abundantly and living life adequately?

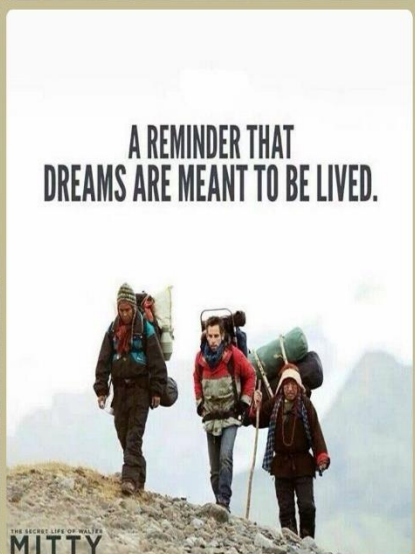
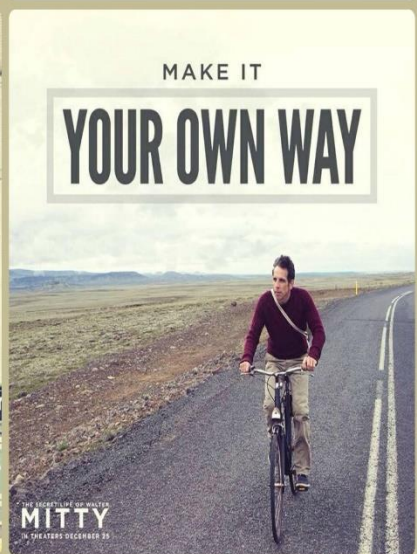
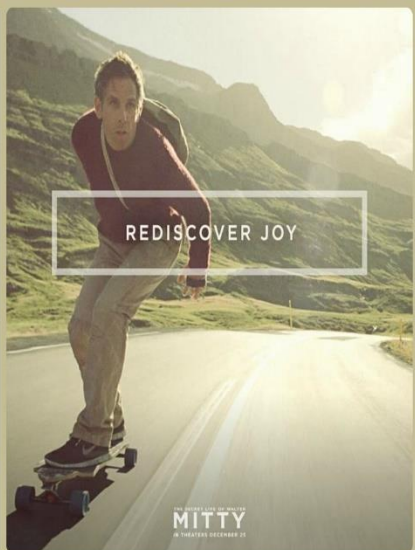
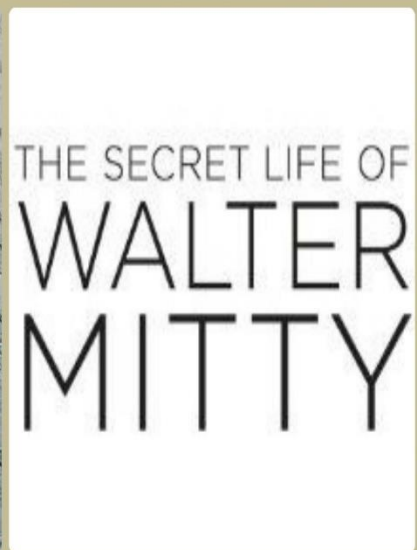
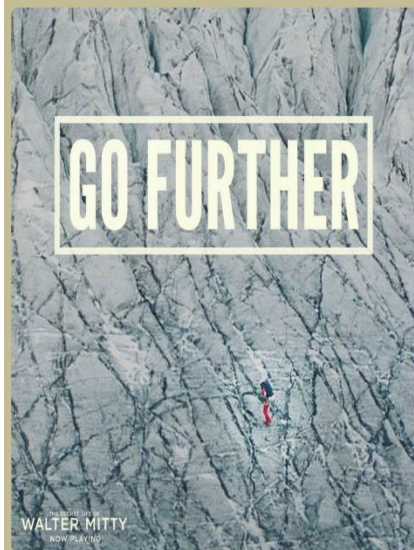
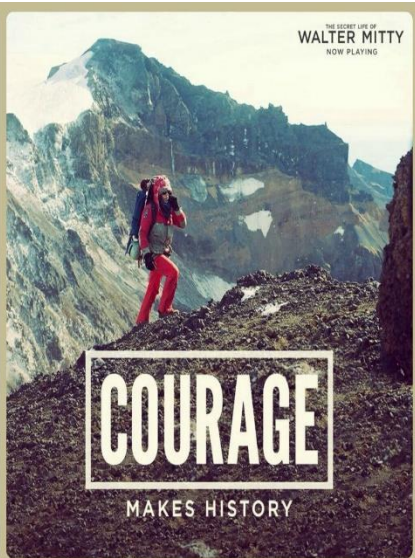
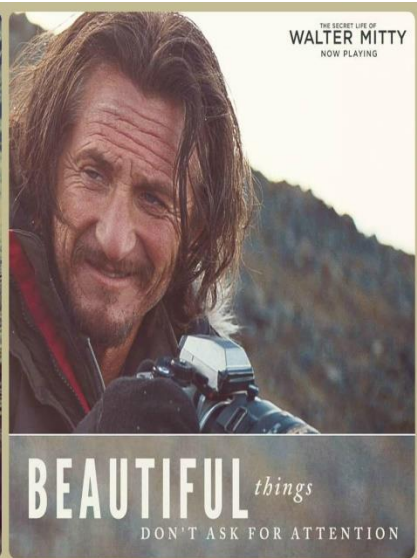
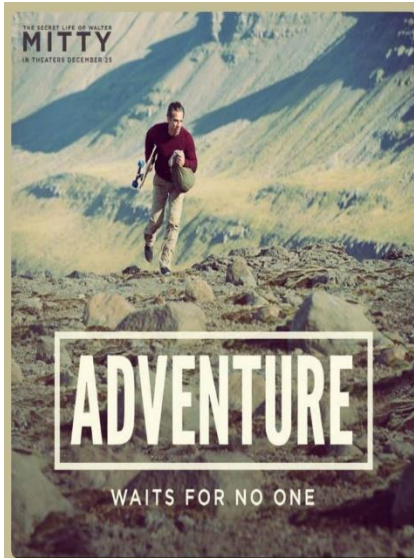
It's a matter of a way a person's able to approach life.

It has to do with a state of mind.

God does not always change the situation in which we live life. Very often, however, God changes us and the way we approach the situation.

The Abundant Life does not always make everything that is around us peaceful, but it does give us the ability to be at peace even during times of hardship and tragedy.

As Christians, we have eternal life. We have a quantity of life that continues into infinity. Let us also live an abundant life, a quality of life that God would have us to live. - Primary Resource *Maynard Pittendreigh*





Four Life Lessons From The Movie Version of Walter Mitty

#1 - We Are Only Hours Away from Beauty

His job was so important to him that he made it the only reason he was going to the wonderful places in the first place. Somewhere along the line, he began to enjoy the adventure and let go of his instincts to play things safe.

It wasn't that difficult for Walter Mitty to travel to those locations; maybe slightly harder than travelling to a more popular location, but still. We are only hours away from something beautiful.

We are literally hours away from a completely different way of living.

#2 - Courage is the Biggest Step to Happiness

Throughout the early parts of the film, Walter is too afraid to do everything he wants to do in life. Which is why he daydreams every fantasy he has and doesn't take the action needed to do it in real life.

He's reluctant to experience romance because of the **potential rejection he might face**, being the slight boring and inactive person that he is. There's a key moment in the film, and that's when he actually gets the courage to take the first step towards adventure.

#3 - Stop Dreaming, Start Doing

The major factor that the film revolves around, is that Walter Mitty is a shy guy who constantly has daydreams and tends to zone out for short periods at a time.

These thoughts of his are only dreams, and he doesn't seem to **make the decision to act** upon them. Which should make you realize that sure it's all well and good having a dream, but the more you time you spend dreaming means less time you spend actually working towards it. Don't get so caught up on the idea of your dream that you forget to actually begin working towards it. Stop dreaming, start doing.

#4 - Time is Easily Wasted

All that time Walter Mitty spent daydreaming was time wasted. Not only has time been wasted by daydreaming, but the shy way in which Walter has lived his life has meant that he lived a fairly average life.

He could have embarked on so many great journeys within this time, rather than let time slip away from him and continue to work the average and unexciting life.

Satan Tests & Human Trains to Restrain From Life's Potential

“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10: 10)

From the 70's book “Fully Human, Fully Alive” by John Powell:

“By way of a general description, fully alive people are those who are using all of their human faculties, powers, and talents. **They are using them to the full.** These individuals are fully functioning in their external and internal senses. They are comfortable with and open to the full experience and expression of all human emotions. Such people are vibrantly alive in mind, heart, and will.” (p.11)

“Fully alive people are also alive in their *minds*. They are very much aware of the wisdom in the statement ‘the unreflected life isn't worth living.’ Fully alive people are always thoughtful and reflective. Most of all, perhaps, these people are alive in *will* and *heart*.” (p.12)

Satan Blinders Sinful Behavior to True Christian Consciousness

“The 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.” (John 10: 10)

David Smitherman Walter Mitty Lecture Series @ Imhoff Avenue Church of Christ Port Arthur, Tx

Back when there really was an Imhoff Avenue Church of Christ in Port Arthur, Texas - David Smitherman as a rising young evangelist held a week-long gospel meeting themed as to this Walter Mitty State of Mind – a mindset that he passionately believed was deluding the brethren of the 1980’s. As a new Christian - only slightly younger than Brother Smitherman - I was very impressed & to this day I still remember his major points and the emphasis in the remarks concluding each night’s lecture.

Brother Smitherman continually contrasted the public image of heroism in Walter’s fantasies with his real-life emotional concealment and mortal fear of danger. Each night David Smitherman would select an Old or New Testament Biblically Heroic Figure of Christian Aspiration - modeling and measuring by way of that ancient high bar to today – contrast matching our modern performance to an insignificant if not an undesirable Bible figure.

Every night Brother Smitherman would bring his audience down to earth with words similar to these, “The greatest and most accurate indicator of how anyone would have reacted to any hypothetical Bible World circumstance – is streaming before their very eyes. It cannot be denied that what any individual’s situational response would have been back then is generally mirrored by their present opportunities and by what they are doing with God’s Word right now.”

