

## **Afraid Of Deprivation? Come To Jesus For A Full Life!**

Fear of Deprivation - Lesson 1

One of the things that keeps us chasing our addictions is the urge to “have it all.” How has that actually made your life more limited and poorer?

Look at some of the things the Bible says about “missing out” and “having it all”:

**Philippians 4:11-13 – I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.**

**John 10:10 – “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”**

**2 Corinthians 4:8-9 – We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.**

**Mark 10:29-30 – “I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields--and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.”**

**2 Corinthians 12:10 – That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

**Isaiah 43:1-2 – But now, this is what the LORD says – he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”**

- Some people are afraid of sobriety and afraid of a relationship with Jesus because they think it will mean “missing out” on some good things in life. Ever feel that way? What were you afraid of “missing out” on?
- Maybe we tell ourselves that we want to “have it all,” but the truth is that there are some feelings and situations we desperately want to avoid experiencing. Like what?

- Jesus promises a “full life.” We generally think of experiencing pleasant things when we hear that promise, but it also means experiencing some of those things we’ve been using our addictions to avoid. What do you see God promising to do for you in those experiences?
- Have you already started to experience “life to the full,” including the stuff you used to be so scared of? How has Jesus helped you with those fears?

## Don't Live In Fear Of Being Deprived!

### Fear of Deprivation - Lesson 2

A lot of our crazy behaviors have come from a fear of “missing out”. It was hard to stay faithful to one person, for fear that a better relationship might be waiting for you out there. It was hard to stay away from bars, for fear that they might be having a better time in there than you were having. We’d get frustrated with how long it was taking to make enough money to get the stuff we wanted, so we’d take criminal shortcuts, like robbery or selling dope.

God understands. And he actually wants us to be completely satisfied and happy. He promised us paradise – in heaven – and he paid to make it happen through Jesus’ death on the cross:

*Luke 23:43—Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth: today you will be with me in paradise."* [Jesus’ promise to a man dying on a cross next to him]

- What’s your idea of “paradise”? (Think: What would be my dream vacation? What would my dream home be like? What was a time in my life when I was really happy?)
- Have you been afraid to dream too big about heaven, for fear that your dreams weren’t religious enough? (Have you had some unpleasant ideas of what heaven would be like?)
- How does it make a difference to you to hear Jesus *promise* you paradise?

The Bible doesn’t talk about heaven being somewhere far away and a long time from now; the Bible tells Christians that they’re as good as there:

*Philippians 3:19-20—Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven.*

*Colossians 3:1-3—Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

- Does it change your stress levels to think, “I’m practically in heaven already”?
- Does it change your priorities to think, “I’m practically in heaven already”?
- What else changes when you start thinking, “I’m as good as there”?

### **GOD’S PROMISES ARE UNCONDITIONAL, EXTRAVAGANT, AND ALWAYS KEPT! THAT INCLUDES HIS PROMISE OF PARADISE!**

- been using our addictions to avoid. What do you see God promising to do for you in those experiences?
- Have you already started to experience “life to the full,” including the stuff you used to be so scared of? How has Jesus helped you with those fears?

## Jesus Is Lord Of My Losses

Fear of Deprivation - Lesson 3

“Most of us have been unwilling to admit we were real alcoholics. No person likes to think he is bodily and mentally different from his fellows. Therefore, it is not surprising that our drinking careers have been characterized by countless vain attempts to prove we could drink like other people. The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker. The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death. We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed. We are like men who have lost their legs; they will never grow new ones.” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, chapter 3: “More About Alcoholism”)

Real life always includes losses. Recovery means admitting the loss of being able to drink; it means saying goodbye to alcohol. Death, divorce, aging – it all means loss. So does moving, marriage, having kids – pretty much any change in life means losing out on something.

Part of our problem has been that we sometimes try to hold onto everything and avoid any loss. And when we lose out in spite of all our efforts, we sometimes get full of resentment and self-pity, instead of going to Jesus to help us deal with our feelings.

- Jesus understands what loss feels like:

“Jesus looked at him and loved him. ‘One thing you lack,’ he said. ‘Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’ At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.” (Mark 10:21-22)

“From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. ‘You do not want to leave too, do you?’ Jesus asked the Twelve.” (John 6:66-67)

“Jesus wept.” (John 11:35)

- Paul talked about how to live with loss:

“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:11-13)

**What are some unhealthy ways I've used to try to handle my losses?**

**What has Jesus been doing to help me deal with my losses?**