

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit



July – December 2001 Newsletter Issues

By

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Dear Friends,

The [Carpe Diem cum Spiritu](#) (Seize the Day with Spirit) is my weekly inspirational email newsletter. This volume includes the archived issues for the year 2001 published from July through December.



I believe that all are called to live a [Life Full of Spirit](#) ~ fully alive, energized, inspired and living courageously with integrity and character.

Great achievements (no matter in which area of your life they occur) are possible when balance and fullness of spirit are maintained. You have unique talents, abilities and creative potentials, which you try to utilize in some purposeful way to make a difference and get a feeling of satisfaction from life. The power of purpose is the energy that carries you forth in life and gives you direction. Maintaining a balanced life allows you to accomplish great things without depleting your self in the process. A highly motivated, inspired attitude can accomplish almost anything. Imagine your life full of that kind of spirit.

As a Personal Life Coach, I coach people to help them make the changes in their lives that they desire so that they may live with more of that kind of spirit. I help individuals to live their lives with a deeper commitment and conviction that is true to their values, talents and God-given abilities. I truly do want them to live their [Life ~ Full of Spirit](#).

I hope that you enjoy these short reflections and put them to use in your life. Also, please feel free to forward this e-book on to others you think might enjoy it.

Thank you.

[God Bless you.](#)

Mike

**If you would like to receive my weekly newsletter by email,
or to find out more about Life Coaching,
please visit my web site at:**

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Get To Know Mike

I am a life coach and counseling psychologist. I was in the US Air Force for five years. I have also worked with children and families. All my life I have helped people and it is wonderful to be able to do so.



I am married and have two children. I enjoy reading, watching movies, camping and the outdoors. I am a handyman and like the challenge of building and fixing things. I have been a draftsman in home construction and in a factory setting. I have been a fast food store manager, school maintenance man, school bus driver and self-employed. I am interested in computers, electronic technology and all aspects related to building construction, including solar energy and earth contact housing. I have been active in the Boy Scouts for over 13 years. I am an Eagle Scout.



I am active in my Catholic parish and am on the school board of the Catholic school that my children attend. I spent two of the most rewarding years of my life at Conception Seminary College (1984-86). I was a volunteer child-care worker at Covenant House in NYC (a crisis center for homeless and runaway children).

As you can see, I have been called to travel in many different directions so far in my life. But, it is interesting and challenging to see how my life continues to unfold. Through it all, one of my greatest enjoyments has always been in working with "ideas" and helping others "create" with their ideas. Creativity is a wonderful thing and it is truly wonderful to share in it with others.

My Life experience helps me be a great Life Coach

My varied life experiences help me to connect with other's ideas, challenges, struggles and gives me a deeper understanding of their personal experience.

My idealistic thinking coupled with my grounded, realistic, hands-on practicality help me to see both the bigger picture as well as the details. It gives me a unique ability to think abstractly in creating hopes, visions and dreams, and then turn them into concrete, detailed, very practical, organized and planned strategies to get the job done.



I have been blessed with many talents, abilities and skills, which have made me keenly aware of that struggle in our lives of discovering our 'true' purpose. I take great pleasure in sharing in that discovery process with others. I also have a sometimes, very dry, sense of humor. I have often found that some of the most important things in life are very subtle.

My Personal Life Mission

I enjoy inspiring a person to step into their greatness. I believe we all have greatness hiding within, just waiting to bust out and do wonderful things. It is a great pleasure to help someone to do that and see the wonderful changes that unfold in their life.

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My newsletter is sent each week to a list of subscribers who have requested it. My purpose is to provide a brief inspirational thought that is useful to people who are interested in change, growth and living a great life Full of Spirit. Carpe Diem!

Finding Independence

July 4, 2001

He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. Luke 10:2-4 (NAB)

Happy Independence Day!! Today, we give thanks for the great country in which we live. (My non-American readers please feel free to celebrate your freedom today as well).

The above passage proclaimed a different message of independence. The Lord sent out his followers to spread the message, the good news. He sent them out independently and unburdened. They were to carry no money, no food, no extra clothes - you might say they packed lightly. In fact, they were to skip the packing all together and the only thing they were to carry with them was the word and the spirit of faith. Now if that is not independence, I don't know what is.

When you and I pack lightly, we still have everything packed except the kitchen sink. We worry about what we are forgetting. What if we get there and find we forgot something that we just can't live without? It sounds like we are living a life that is heavily burdened. We get weighed down by all kinds of things that are really excess baggage that should have been left behind.

Your most important mission in this life is to live your life to the greatest extent possible. You have been sent out to be a harvester. Your life has been filled with blessings that are just waiting for you to get a round to picking up and putting to use. We get so busy in the gathering process that we forget to stop to enjoy that which we have gathered. We get stuck in the routine of trying to gather as much as we can, whether we need it or not. Life becomes a race to gather more than any one else. That is dependence, not independence.

Well today we celebrate our independence. We have more independence than many people in the world. But many of us don't feel free, we feel trapped by our obligations, responsibilities, etc. That is because you have chosen to trap yourself. You are free to make choices and have been making some poor choices along the way. I bet you have heard yourself and others say, "I had no choice." Not true. Not true. You always have choices. Frequently, you may not like any of the choices that you are aware of, but you have choices nonetheless. And if you could free your mind of the 'trap' you have gotten yourself stuck in - you would find that there are other choices available that you haven't become aware of yet. There are usually more choices out there than you are considering. So you really do have more freedom than you think. It is time to start using it more wisely.

Take a moment to look around. I bet you can see several things that you really don't need, and yet, there they sit. These things I don't need: _____.

Now stop and think for a minute what you would be free to do if you were not spending so much time gathering those things that you really don't need. I could do this instead: _____.

You have arrived at a choice point. These are my choices: _____.

What am I going to do? (Hint: if you don't like any of your choices, you probably have not thought of all of them yet. Think some more, ask someone, get an outside opinion, etc.) Now, take action.

Jesus wanted his disciples to go out and spread the word, to fulfill their life purposes. He sent them out to **Live their Lives ~ Full of Spirit**. You see, that is all he sent them out with ~ a **fullness of Spirit**.

He said not to worry about taking anything with them, everything would be provided along the way. You too have been sent out to **Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit**. Whatever your purpose is in this life, the appropriate tools have been provided. All you have to do is pick them up and use them, leave the rest, they have been put there for someone else to gather for using to fulfill their purpose.

God Blesses you!

Searching

July 11, 2001

"For this command that I enjoin on you today is not too mysterious and remote for you. It is not up in the sky, that you should say, 'Who will go up in the sky to get it for us and tell us of it, that we may carry it out?' Nor is it across the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea to get it for us and tell us of it, that we may carry it out?' No, it is something very near to you, already in your mouths and in your hearts; you have only to carry it out." Deuteronomy 30:10-14 (NAB)

This passage is from the time of Moses when the tribes of Israel were wandering in the desert and searching for something to tell them how to live their lives, a commandment to guide them. So many millenniums have passed in the interim and yet we are still wandering and searching. Even in these modern times with all its many technological advances, we are still searching for guidance, something to lead our lives by, still questioning, still wandering.

The answers lie within your heart and within the words you speak and you have only to carry it out. These words still ring with authenticity, with authority, with simplicity of truth.

When you lose something, you look everywhere for it and you will always find it in the last place you look. Of course you do, because you stop looking when you find it. The problem is that you frequently look first in all the wrong places and it is usually where you least expect it to be.

This is especially true when you are searching for that special purpose, meaning or value to your life. You might search for prestige, or wealth, or expensive homes and possessions. It is almost like we believe that we will truly possess more of life if we have more possessions. Yet frequently it seems that the more things we have, the more we long for something that we do not have and the less we actually possess of Life itself.

What lies within your heart? What is most important to you? If you could only have 5 things in life, what would they be? No really, what would be 5 things that you would not want to live without? Search your heart to see what really is most precious to you in your life.

It is these most precious things which lead you forth. From them springs your purpose, your mission, your meaning and values in life.

Simple right? Maybe in principle but certainly not in practice. You have a complicated busy life that includes many different areas of emphasis, such as: work, home, family, spiritual, financial, personal, leisure and social. How do you make sense of it all? How do you balance the demands, obligations, responsibilities, wishes and desires?

How indeed? And yet the answers lie within you. The underlying values and principles that guide your life as you wander through these areas and wonder about these areas is already there inside you. The process of living really has not changed much down through the ages. We each are endowed with certain "tools" with which to live our lives and we spend our lives trying to figure it all out and make the best of it. Sure the world in which we live has changed drastically since the time of Moses. But we as people are still basically the same.

We search, we wander, we wonder... Seize the day and fill your **Life with Spirit**.

God Blesses you!

Choose the better part

July 18, 2001

She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her." Luke 10:38-42 (NAB)

Last week we were searching and wondering. This week we again are seeking and questioning the choices and better parts of our lives.

I am sure you have noticed that people seem to be able to argue and complain about anything and everything that happens in life. It gets to be a drag sometimes. In the above passage, Martha was really bugged that her sister Mary was getting to have all the fun while Martha was doing all the work. Sound familiar?

Maybe your reaction was one of indignation. Mary should share the load with her sister, it is not fair that she makes her sister do all the work. But Jesus' response was that Martha worries too much and Mary had made the right choice - so be still and leave her alone.

Well, isn't that an eye opener? Does that mean we should all be lazy and let someone else do all the work for us? Sounds good to me, but that is missing the point.

So what is the point then? It is simply that we must make good choices that serve us well in fulfilling our life purpose. Sure there is plenty of work to be done. Simply do what must be done and leave the rest alone. There is no need to get all anxious and bothered and turn yourself into a worry wart. That accomplishes nothing and drains all your energy away at the same time and you will get nowhere. Also, just worry about yourself, that is usually a big enough job all by itself.

Mary had plenty of work to do and she did her part. At the moment of this passage she was recharging her batteries. She was relaxing and nourishing her spirit. She was taking a moment to ponder the direction her life was heading towards and deciding if her life was still on its proper course. She was evaluating her progress and goals so she would not be just spinning her wheels. She was allowing herself to take a brief moment of respite, of peace and reflection so that she could realign and prepare herself for her next steps in life. What is wrong with that? Nothing. Everything is right with that!

Okay, now it is your turn, Martha... or is it Mary? Which are you? Are you currently bogged down in the pettiness of Life and getting nowhere and missing the boat? Or, are you taking good care of yourself along the way and making sure you take pit stops to renew your spirit, to fortify your reserves, to **Fill your Life with Spirit** ~ and to make sure that you are still on course. Or, maybe you are flitting back and forth between the two like a moth at the porch light?

Yes that is me, all of that! Great, that means you are normal. It also means you should practice a little more at allowing yourself some of that quiet time to recharge your batteries. It might mean that you should do some scheduling of tasks and responsibilities so you spend less time spinning your wheels and you use your time more effectively. It might mean that you need some practice sharing the load, many of us try to do it all by ourselves. And you know what? Most people are perfectly content to allow you to do it all by yourself. But remember, that is a choice you make and nobody else (you make the choice to not share the load).

So take a moment to examine some of the thousands of choices you make in a typical day ~ are you choosing the "better part"? I hope so, and don't let anyone take it away from you.

God Blesses you!

Ask and you shall receive

July 25, 2001

And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Luke 11:9-10 (NAB)

Knock, knock. In the above passage, the joke is on you if you don't knock on the door. These are wonderful words because they remind us that we normally have to ask first if we want an answer. It is a gentle reminder that people are not mind readers. If you want something, you have to ask for it.

It is also a wonderful reminder that blessings are abundant. Ask and you shall receive, knock and the door will be opened to you.

We run into road blocks and obstacles each and every day of our lives. How frequently do we forget to knock so that the door will be opened, so the roadblock is removed? I think, we forget to knock or maybe are afraid to, or don't want to bother anyone, or are too busy, or are afraid of rejection, or something.

But you know what? If you don't take the first step, you will never have the opportunity to take the second step. You certainly won't get anywhere. Oh sure, we do get blessings and surprise gifts without asking for them first. But usually, we have made the need known or said something about it. We have taken that first step and been answered. Sometimes we have asked for it so long ago that we have forgotten.

What are you seeking in your Life? Have you found it yet? Maybe you haven't found it yet because you are not really looking for it. You have to acknowledge to yourself, announce it to yourself that you are seeking something. It is hard to look for something when you don't know you are looking for it or what you are looking for.

That's a familiar feeling. I have been looking for something most of my life and much of the time I wasn't sure what it was I was looking for. So I've knocked on doors, asked questions and I've gotten all kinds of answers and received all kinds of things. And yet, still I wonder what it is I seek.

You know, part of life is the seeking. I am sure you have had several coaches in your life who have helped point you in a certain direction, or answered the door when you knocked, or gave you input to questions you have had. That is part of life, too. We are all on a journey, full of surprises, full of questions, full of unknowns, full of blessings, full of helpers along the way.

If you are feeling stuck today, maybe you need to ask for some input from someone, or knock on a few doors, or start searching in a new direction. Maybe this is another one of those instances when you could use a little coaching from the sidelines of life.

Rest assured, if you take the first step, you will receive. It may be a surprise, it may not be what you were expecting, it may take longer than you expected. But ask and you shall receive, seek and you will find, knock and the doors will be opened to you, because ...

God Blesses you!

Renewing your Spirit

August 1, 2001

Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry. Stop lying to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator. Col 3:5, 9-10 (NAB)

This passage is referring to all those things that hold you back from **Living your Life ~ Full of Spirit**. We each have strengths and weaknesses, positive attributes and negative ones, talents and lack of skills. We have things that help us and those that hinder us. We have aspects of ourselves that get in our way of accomplishing what we are capable of.

You have aspects in your life that renew you, refresh you, keep you going and help you be productive. What are they?

Perhaps some of them are: prayer, meditation, quiet time, friends, a wonderful partner, children, a talent such as music, art, speaking, writing, etc. Perhaps you are renewed in seeing the fruits of your labors, seeing the house that you are building take shape, or a piece of furniture, or repairing a car, etc. - you can see the work you have accomplished. Maybe it is seeing a child learn and develop and see their world opened up for them with new possibilities. Perhaps it is reflected in your cooking, or sewing or a craft of some kind. Maybe it is reading or exercising or taking a bubble bath.

There are many ways that your talents, knowledge and skills take shape in this world and help to renew you and refresh you. Maybe your friends, family and social relationships renew and refresh you. Maybe your sense of purpose and life goals draw you ever forward with a new excitement, eagerness and refreshment.

Take a moment to identify those unique ways of renewing and refreshing your own spirit that are present in your life. Think for a moment, of all those many things, how often do you make use of them? How often do you make time for them in your life?

Now take a moment to look at those things that are always seeming to get in the way, that hold you back, that drain the energy from you, that get you down, that block you from moving forward. What are they?

Maybe there are certain people that you worry about, or that are offensive towards you, or are difficult to work with, or who are always negative, whining and complaining. Or maybe it is those tasks that you just aren't very good at and find yourself struggling with to complete. Or maybe it is a job that doesn't suit you very well and you get stressed out and always feel drained. Or maybe you have some great talents that you aren't using, because you allow too many other things to use up all your time. Or maybe it is some important task you have to do but don't look forward to so you procrastinate and waste time. Or maybe it is bills or deadlines or all the commitments you have made.

Spend a little time to really identify those things that hold you back. I know you don't want to, I know it is not fun, I know you are busy. But that is no excuse. Do you want to stay stuck or are you ready to do something about it?

After you have identified them, it is time to be a little creative. Some of those things, commitments, etc. can be let go of and gotten rid of. You really don't need them, stop doing them, get rid of them. Look at your list and identify the ones that fit in that category. Some of them can be changed or modified. You can do them at a different time of day when you have more energy or when it better fits your mood -reschedule it. You can get help from someone to make it easier or more fun - find someone to ask. Find a coach to help you and to encourage you. You can pair it with something else as a reward or to help it go easier so that you have something to look forward to.

So look at your list and creatively manipulate it into shape so that it better serves you. Also remember that first list of things that renew and energize you. That is an extremely important list. You must do some of them several times throughout the day. They are what keep your batteries charged so you don't wear down. Sprinkle them throughout your day to keep your spirit maximized. My guess is that most of these positive things are at the bottom of your list, and that frequently you never get around to them.

That's the wrong place for them to be. Put them at the top of your list. Yes, the top. Sure you can. If you are really that busy, you are probably spinning your wheels a lot. Put your energizers at the top of your list and do them, and you will be surprised at how much more productive you will become. You see, then you will be living your Life with a little more ~

Fullness of Spirit.

God Blesses you!

All Things Begin with Hope

August 8, 2001

Brothers and sisters: Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen. Because of it the ancients were well attested. Hebrews 11:1-2 (NAB)

What do you put your faith into in your Life today? What do you believe? What do you hope for in Life?

What does it matter? **EVERYTHING!**

Another scripture passage reminds us that if we but have faith of the size of a tiny mustard seed, we could move mountains. You will accomplish nothing in your life if you don't have even the tiniest hope of achieving it. You will not attempt even the simplest task, one so simple you could do it in your sleep without thinking, if you do not first believe that it is possible. No, you would fail miserably.

You see, we live our lives on possibilities. We attempt that which we think possible, even if we believe it only remotely. If we have but the smallest of hopes that something can be done, we might attempt to do it. But with the tiniest of hopes, of faith, of belief, of assurance, of possibility ~ yes, we can achieve mountainous tasks.

You are on a journey, but do you have any idea where you are going? Maybe you are just going through the motions like a ship adrift on the oceans, drifting here and there with the currents and nobody is steering. Sometimes that is okay. Enjoy the trip.

Take a moment to put your life under the magnifying glass. What are your hopes, your dreams? What is it you wish to achieve in your life today? Where are you stuck today? Where are you blocked from achieving something which you desire?

What gets in your way? What holds you back? Maybe you are too busy, or never get a round to it, or don't have enough money, or enough of some other resource, or maybe you need some help (the task requires more than one person), or maybe you require some tool that you don't have, or maybe you procrastinate too much, or are too tired, or ...

In the above passage we are told that faith is hoping for something but the only evidence that it is real is our belief that it is. We like tangible things, we like to see it, to touch it, hear it, smell it, taste it ~ and then there is no doubt that it is real. But that doesn't work for many things that you and I accomplish each and everyday of our lives. Because frequently, it is not tangible until we produce it or accomplish it. You can't see it until it is done, then it is real. Up to that point, it is merely a possibility.

It is possible to accomplish something if you but take the time, gather the necessary resources and then do it. Take a look at it from the other end of the spectrum ~ from the end of the real accomplishment waiting to happen. There was a time when it was said that people will never be able to fly. Yet, it is a reality today that every day thousands of people fly all over the world. This reality was just waiting for someone to hope for such a thing, and to then find a way to make it happen. The possibility of flying was always there. Now we can see the plane, touch it, hear it, etc. and we know that it is real and we can see it fly through the air. But, it started with a hope, with a dream, with a belief and faith that such a possibility could really happen. It was always there waiting for someone to realize it.

So just maybe, if you are stuck or being held back from something today ~ maybe you need to check out your "hope" chest. Is your chest empty of hope? Without the realization of hope ~ there is no faith.

Faith exists in the knowing that our hopes, even though they are not tangible yet, are nonetheless, real possibilities just waiting to happen, or realities that are just not tangible yet. So grab your "hope" chest and maybe a friend or your coach, or your "life" tool box and begin to change some of those possibilities in your life into something you can sink your teeth in to.

Take a step to **Fill your Life with Spirit.**

God Blesses you!

Faith: Divisive vs. Unifying

August 15, 2001

Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Luke 12:51-53 (NAB)

Isn't Faith a wonderful thing? We think of faith as being unifying, but it is actually quite divisive and disruptive of community.

I don't think it was Jesus' intent to disrupt and tear apart communities of people, or to break up families, or anything like that. However, he did intend to disrupt our thinking and to break apart our beliefs, and to break us out of the ruts we get stuck in day in and day out. He meant to change our perspective, our view points, our rigid thinking and to expand our horizons so that in fact, we would have the possibility of becoming more unified. That we could live our lives within stronger families and stronger faith communities.

We were given brains to think with and that is what separates humanity from the rest of the animal kingdom. Jesus is telling us to use those brains we have been given. We get stuck in ruts of thinking of things in dichotomous terms, all or nothing, right or wrong, right or left, up or down, etc. But do you know what? Our lives and the world in which we live is more complex than such limited thinking allows. It just does not fit very well in this environment in which we find ourselves.

That is where the division enters in. We live most of our lives within the "gray zone" between the endpoints of the dichotomy. The complexity of life lies within the gray zone. Sure, once in a while, reality fits in one end point or the other, but most of the time, reality lies somewhere in between.

We can live quite well within this complex ever changing environment when we are able to be flexible and adaptable and fit ourselves within the gray zone. In other words, we excel when we break away from our limited thinking in which we see things in terms of there being only one approach to whatever it is we are considering - that there is only one "right" way for it to be done. Diversification allows for more possible solutions.

Therein also lies the divisive power of our faith, when we begin to limit the complexity and the richness of our faith to a "one size fits all" mentality. How many of you really believe that one size fits all? Have you ever gotten one of those articles of clothing that is supposed to fit everyone to fit you comfortably? I doubt it.

Such an irrational approach to life or to your faith is equally ludicrous and will be more divisive than unifying. Diversity of thought allows for a gray zone in which to find unification, and yet we use it to become more divided.

Take a look at your own life. What is one thought you have had so far today, or one thing you strongly believe that creates more division in your life than peace or tranquility? It is more disruptive than community or relationship strengthening?

For example: I might think "why should I bother to write my thoughts down to share with other people in this world?" What difference could it possibly make? The most likely result of such thinking would be to stop writing. Because to follow this line of thought entails the expectation on my part that I have to make a big impact or it is not worth doing. Since I cannot "see" this impact, it must not exist, therefore I am wasting my time. I don't like to waste my time, so I stop writing.

What is the reality? Well once in a while, for an individual here and there, my words may have great significance for them. Will I know that? No. Once in a while, it has absolutely no significance, which of course, results in them canceling their subscription. But most of the time, each individual lies somewhere in the gray zone between these two endpoints. It has some meaning to the individual person and they may or may not do something about it that has some lasting effect in their lives. Will I know about it? No. Is it worthwhile for me to continue to write and share my thoughts? Yes, I believe so. I have hope that something worthwhile is happening when I share my thoughts. My awareness of that hope and belief means I have faith that something is happening in the gray zone out there. Therefore, I persist and I hope that more unifying is happening than disruption.

Now look at that thought you identified. What impact is it having in your Life? Do you want to do something about it?

God Blesses you!

Discipline: The ups and downs

August 22, 2001

Endure your trials as "discipline"; God treats you as sons. For what "son" is there whom his father does not discipline? . . . So strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees. Make straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be disjointed but healed. Hebrews 12:7, 12-13 (NAB)

Life is full of trials and tribulations, ups and downs. They frequently distract us from the things that we really would rather be doing. We would be very happy to just do without them and be on our way.

Of course, then our lives would get rather mundane and boring if we had no surprises to keep us on our toes. You know all those ups and downs really do give us something to do with our time. Just think of all the time you would have on your hands if you weren't constantly bogged down in some problem or difficulty of some kind.

What would you do with all that extra time? Well there is not too much that you can do about getting rid of all those obstacles that come your way. That's Life. But you can do a lot to prepare yourself for them and do yourself some big favors in approaching them differently than you have in the past.

You have quite a few talents, strengths, abilities, skills, knowledge, etc. and all these are at your disposal to be used however you see fit. But most of us are poor managers of our resources. We use them poorly and probably don't even know that many of them are even there to be used. It is like having a garage full of tools but never using them - such a waste.

So part of our problem is that many of us are poorly disciplined. When the going gets rough, we give up instead of get going. Or we make feeble attempts to fix the problem or try to avoid it or hope it goes away. Sometimes we even tackle it head on and really give it a run for our money. Then we probably stop. But you know what? There is a high probability that it will likely revisit you some time in the future. Have you ever noticed how things seem to run in cycles or repeat themselves? So while you are at it, a little more discipline might be called for to do a little something extra to prepare yourself for the next time it comes around.

What might that be? Maybe a note to yourself just so you remember what you did this time so that you don't forget the next time around. Maybe consult with someone else and make sure you have help available for the next time around or get a few new ideas to try out. Maybe you could exercise or eat better or sleep better or do something to improve your health so you will be more up to the task the next time around. Maybe you could clean up your schedule a bit so there aren't so many useless things cluttering up your days. Yes, there is lots of wasted time in our schedules, clean it up. Maybe you could put some energizers into your schedule. Put some time for yourself in there to recharge your batteries, to refresh yourself, to keep yourself motivated and inspired.

There are lots of things you can do to prepare and improve your self so that you are more "fit" and "disciplined" to be able to handle whatever Life throws your way. But rest assured that there are plenty more obstacles still coming your way. Rise to the challenge and really sink your teeth into life, you will probably enjoy it much better.

Try a new approach for the next obstacle that comes your way. Think of it as a gift of Life. Think of it as an opportunity for you to polish up some of those blessings you have been given to get you through life. Tackle it with eagerness and a chance to shine. Embrace it with the knowledge that you are truly alive and be grateful that you have been blessed with such a big chunk of LIFE.

God Blesses you!

Powerful Humility

August 29, 2001

What you should do when you have been invited is go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host approaches you he will say, 'My friend, come up higher.' This will win you the esteem of your fellow guests. For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled and he who humbles himself shall be exalted.

Luke 14: 10-11

Have you ever sat in the corner or out of the way, just because you wanted to be noticed and wanted some attention? Did it work? Sometimes we just want to be on the fringes and not be noticed. There are a lot of individuals in society like that. But frequently such individuals have a huge desire to be noticed, to be recognized, to be acknowledged, to really matter to someone else.

It is part of being human to have the desire to feel good about oneself and to also feel that we are important or that we "matter" to someone else. Does that mean we are exalting our selves? No, but it means we are struggling with what our own personal value really is to ourselves and to the rest of the world.

Don't you feel good when someone notices that you have done a good job or worked hard on something? I hope so and you should, because then you are recognizing that you have done something of value.

We frequently minimize our own accomplishments, value and worth. When we do that we are de-valuing our own sense of worth, shunning our blessings and talents, and de-powering ourselves from doing the work we are fully capable of. We are giving power to a sense of shame and worthlessness that then holds us back. Is that what was intended when we were given those talents and skills in the first place? Not on your life!

I think there is both good and bad humbleness. One serves us well and the other holds us back and blocks us from our life purpose. There are two kinds of the bad humility, one is false humility and the other is too little humility (which results in that self-serving exaltedness that tends to hurt others).

What I am driving at is that we need an appropriate balance of true humility in our lives. False humility is when we think we are being humble, but we really are just putting ourselves down unfairly and getting in our own way of accomplishing our given purpose in life. In other words, we are not giving ourselves due credit of our own value and worth.

At the other extreme, some get an inflated opinion of themselves that lacks humility and gives themselves more credit and value than they warrant. They also tend to step on peoples toes and walk over others in fulfilling their purpose in life, and grant themselves great value in the process of doing this. That of course, hurts others. It also tends to hold back and block such individuals from really accomplishing the fullest extent of their capabilities. A lot of people are fooled in this regard, but if you look closely behind all the fluff and buffoonery, you will see that such persons aren't really accomplishing as much as you first thought.

And then there is true humility that has an appropriate balance of the two extremes. Such a person is not under-valuing nor over-valuing their own importance, value or worth. They are comfortable in recognizing and acknowledging their accomplishments without inflating anything in the process. They are not needy of others' recognition and praise and are able to feel appropriately good about themselves.

That is true humbleness and it frees one up to be able to fully utilize one's talents, skills, intellect and all the blessings at one's disposal. Every action is truly valued in the proper amount and enables them to truly **Live their Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ with the right kind of spirit. How do you measure up?

God Blesses you!

Half Baked Purpose

September 5, 2001

Who can know God's counsel, or who can conceive what the LORD intends? For the deliberations of mortals are timid, and unsure are our plans. Wisdom 9:13-14 (NAB)

There is a purpose for every act. Every human being has a purpose to fulfill in their lifetime. We each chase after this purpose in our lifelong journey.

What purpose does your life serve? An excellent question, but do you know the answer? I certainly don't because I probably don't even know you. But nonetheless, I can help you search out the answer.

One approach is to consider the talents, skills, abilities, knowledge base, etc. that you have at your disposal. As you begin to identify those personal traits of yours, what ideas and possibilities come to mind? How might you utilize these gifts and what purpose might they serve?

Another approach is to consider those activities that you really love doing. What warms your heart when you do it? What excites you and you find yourself being impatient to begin? What fills you with a great sense of satisfaction upon completion of the task?

Still another approach is to examine your hopes and dreams. What is it that you have always dreamed about doing? If you could do anything, what would it be? Now I know that in your mind, you think it is only a dream and it is not really possible. But in my mind, the impossible is possible until every avenue has proved it impossible. Sure some things seem highly improbable, but who am I to say they are impossible?

It is true that in my own mind, my own hopes and dreams seem as impossible to me as yours do to you. Why is that? Because the deliberations of mortals are timid and their plans are unsure. We give up too easily. We put our creative powers to work thinking up all the reasons of why something is not possible and get so discouraged that we never get around to working on all the reasons why it is possible.

Perhaps the same thing happens when we are so busily searching for our unique purpose in life. We are so busy eliminating the things that are not our purpose, we never really quite get to the possibilities that give us the answer we are looking for. So we journey through life feeling somehow empty, somehow lost, somehow feeling like something is missing, that surely there is some meaning, purpose, value or something that I am just not seeing or understanding.

I believe that much of one's purpose is found in the searching itself. The journey provides meaning and a sense of direction.

So begin by identifying your strengths, your skills, abilities and talents-those blessings you have been given. Identify those things that you truly enjoy and get great pleasure and satisfaction in accomplishing. Identify those hopes and dreams that are possible in other minds but your own. From these ingredients come forth your purpose.

Like bread dough that begins to rise before being ready to be baked, your possibilities of purpose lie dormant with seemingly little hope or promise. Yet they begin to slowly rise, expand and take shape, slowly rising and slowly baked during the journey of life until ready to be fully savored and enjoyed.

Fill your Life with Spirit ~ Spirit Filled Purpose-fullness.

God Blesses you!

Tragedy and Baby Steps

September 12, 2001

"This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So to them he addressed this parable. "What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? Luke 15:3-4 (NAB)

You, like so many in this country and so many all around the world, are likely feeling confused, shocked, dismayed, angry, sad, etc. over the tragic events of yesterday. Such feelings are normal reactions to such tragic events. I also realize that some of my readers are not American but you still share in the tragic experiences that happened in New York City and Washington D.C. yesterday.

As members of God's family, there are no boundaries to separate one from another. Yet in the reality of our daily lives, there are many boundaries, obstacles, ideologies and differences that we allow to separate us. This has always been true throughout human history, and sadly, will likely always be true in future generations.

We can marvel at all the technological advances, developments and progress we have made in our present world and truly we have some amazing things to marvel at. Yet, with all the tens of thousands of years to work at it, we still cannot live together in peace. We cannot find a way to share our marvelous talents, intellects, God given abilities and blessings and use them to the mutual benefit of our larger world family. We have not even progressed to the point of being able to do this effectively in our own personal families.

The above passage gives a note of hope and reassurance. It points out to us that when we have lost something of value to us, of course, we stop everything and look for it and rejoice when we have found it.

A tragedy has disrupted our ordinary lives. However, we must search for and find that sense of purpose that has been momentarily lost and rejoice when we find it and press on with our lives. We are reminded that there will always be tragedies to be dealt with and that as a people united across our artificial boundaries, we will rise to each challenge and prevail.

Turning now to your own personal life, I suspect that some of the challenges that you were bogged down in at the beginning of this week, seem more trivial now. Yet, they are real challenges to be dealt with and I know you will. Take a moment to look at some of those challenges you are stuck in right now and also examine what resources you have to bring to bear on them. You will likely find that you have more resources available to you than you initially thought. You also have 'people' resources available to you that you perhaps have been reluctant to rely on or to seek out. When you turn your back on such resources, you are only making it harder on yourself and your family. Doesn't make much sense does it, but we all do it.

No matter what difficulties you may be struggling with right now, no challenge is too big to at least try. Look at the 'impossible' challenge of NYC and you will see Herculean efforts achieving some results, though the process is agonizingly slow. The steps necessary to succeed may require millions of baby steps and take much time, but success lies somewhere on the future horizon and is inevitable.

You must also begin to meet the challenges in your life by taking necessary baby steps to overcome what might seem 'impossible' to you as you begin to tackle it. But seek and you shall find and perseverance will pay off.

I assure you, that you too, can I assure you, that you too, can **Fill your Life with Spirit**, one baby step at a time. If you are willing to seek that which is lost, you also will have cause to rejoice when it is found.

God Blesses you!

Time for Healing of Spirit

September 19, 2001

Beloved: First of all, I ask that supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be offered for everyone, for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity. ...It is my wish, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands, without anger or argument.

1 Timothy 2:1-2, 8 (NAB)

I hope and pray that you are beginning to put your life back into some sense of normalcy again after the tragic events of last week. Remember that you must return your life to normalcy, NOT as if nothing has happened, but in spite of what has happened.

All people throughout the world have been profoundly touched by these events. Much anger and thoughts of vengeful actions permeate our days. Fears of war, of retaliation, of hate crimes against the innocent, fears of the uncertainty abound. The need for healing is paramount.

In the above passage we are reminded to pray for not only our leaders, but for everyone. I am not aware of any religion that does not promote basic tenets of justice. We must remember that justice is not about anger and revenge, but is about seeking truth and rightfulness in all of our actions.

It is time to refocus on the 'rightfulness' of your own actions in each and every day of your own life. How are you faring? Your anger is a normal emotional reaction to these tragic events. However, what you do with your anger is a choice that you freely make. I pray that you make wise choices and that your resultant behaviors will be full of rightfulness. That is the challenge we face each day of our lives regardless of what events fill those days.

For those who may be struggling with coping with these tragic events, I have made available on my web site an ebook that gives some thoughts about coping with tragedies. I invite you to read it or to download it and share it with others who might benefit from it. I have also archived the newsletter issues from last year in an ebook that you can enjoy and forward to friends.

These are times of sadness, sorrow, uncertainty, grieving and of Spirit. It is our inner Spirit that carries us forth in good times and in bad. In the bad times, we rely heavily on that spirit to carry us forth to the good times again. At all times we should cherish and enjoy that spirit and maintain it healthily.

The healthy spirit is maintained by sharing your care and love with others. It is done in praying, and in quiet solitude. It is done in talking and listening to other persons. It is done by listening to your own heart and mind. It is done by sharing your time and your life with children. It is done in laughter and smiling. It is done in the eating, sleeping and excellent self-care with which we nourish our bodies. It is done in our work and our play. It is done in the gifts of time, talents and treasure that we share with our fellow humanity. It is done in the 'rightfulness' of our thoughts and actions. It is done in the zeal of living our lives according to our beliefs about truth, justice, love, peace, family and community. It is done in our normal every day lives.

It is time for Healing. In spite of these events, you can still **Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit**. I pray that you will be successful.

God Blesses you!

Compete Well for the Faith

September 26, 2001

But you, man of God, pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Compete well for the faith. 1 Timothy 6:11-12 (NAB)

We hear over and over again that the world is Different now. There is a new mission now -- The pursuit to stamp out terrorism in the world. This is indeed a worthy cause and hopefully will be conducted with the values quoted above. The mission should be conducted well with the competitive virtues of the Faith.

Some say the world will never be the same again. Not so. Some things change and some remain eternally the same. The world's history is full of multitudes of vicious acts and untold cruelties, and it is said that 'history repeats itself.' I believe that is so.

But also within our history banks have been deposited repeated acts of good will, of righteousness, of rightfulness, of devotion, of faith, of love, of patience and of gentleness. I for one am very glad to have such worthy histories repeat themselves now and in the years to come. Just look at all the good will and acts of kindness and generosity that have been born from the evil acts of two weeks ago. It is sad that it takes such evil to birth such good will.

It is time to recover from these violent acts and to go on with our lives. For some this will be more difficult than for others, but we all share in the process. We, everyone throughout the world, walk this journey together, hand in hand, with differences and commonalities, with different languages but the same words, with different faiths but the same purpose. We each strive to live the Truth in our own lives and to journey down the road in accord with our own beliefs, values, spirituality and purpose.

So I ask you, what is your mission in your own life? What is it that you journey down the road towards? What is it you seek? Perhaps you know an answer to these questions and perhaps not. Who really ever knows the answers to such questions? Well, you do! You have some idea what you hope to achieve in your life and how you hope to live your life. Yes, it changes over time and that is expected. So, what is it you are seeking right now?

Perhaps it is safety and security for your family. Perhaps it is a safe world for your children and their children and future generations to live in. Perhaps it is to do your very best to live your faith each and every day of your life and to share it with those you meet. Perhaps you seek success in the world, by what ever scales you measure that by. Perhaps you seek faithful friendships, relationships and fellowship.

All of these and more fit within my battle cry of **"Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit."** I hope it will become your battle cry as well. If one truly strives to do that in their life, then surely how could they go wrong? If one strives for the values and virtues in the passage above, then their pursuit is a most worthy one indeed. With such resources and tools as these, then one can surely compete well for the faith.

God Blesses you!

Hidden Treasures

October 3, 2001

Beloved: I remind you, to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control. 1 Timothy 1:6-8 (NAB)

It is amazing what wonderful gifts God has given to each of us. They are given with a Spirit full of Power, Love and Self-control. Many such gifts lie dormant within you just waiting to be stirred into life.

In some ways children are very lucky. It is okay to dote on them and to encourage them and to promote the giftedness that arises from their ever present curiosity about the world and Life. They approach life with an innocent zeal and flame of eternal hope. They are inspired by the simplest things. They thrive on the love and acknowledgement they receive. They truly live their life **Full of Spirit**.

What happens to that? Where does it go? For many, It goes underground. It gets hidden away some place deep within. Our greatest personal treasures get locked safely away where they will never be hurt and where they also will never do anyone any good.

Well if you could peel away those protective layers, one by one, what would you find? If you took your Windex and started to clean away the murky grime from the windows into your heart and mind to catch a glimpse at the flames of the eternal spirit of Life within you--what would you see?

Would your spirit-vision see the beauty of the gifts therein? Would you see the love and the care? Would you see the talents-musical, artistic, gifts of speech? Would you see the love for words and knowledge? Would you see the smile and love of laughter? Nothing warms the heart faster than a joyful smile. Would you see the dreams and hopes for the future? Would you see the creative spirit that sees a world of possibilities? Would the traffic light for your spirit be green, yellow or red?

The human brain is such an amazing organ with truly astounding capabilities. What would our lives be like if we used more of those dormant capabilities to truly live a life ~ **Full of Spirit**. Even the most brilliant of people in our histories tapped into only the slightest fraction of their immense capacities. What a waste of our God-given talents.

Life is all about relationships. We think of people when we talk about relationships. People hurt people so we become very protective and guarded about relationships. But relationships are not just about people. Everything in life is about relationships, about how two entities relate to each other. Sure it is about how people relate to other people. But is also about how we relate to life, to ideas, to nature, to creativity, to our beliefs, to our talents, to our strengths, to our weaknesses, to our hopes and dreams, to about anything and everything that fills our days.

It is no surprise that so many live such empty lives. There is such fear of being hurt, of being rejected, of being alone or left out - that we treat all relationships the same. We distance ourselves from anything and everything that we think might hurt or harm us. In a world of uncertainties-that covers just about everything.

Oh to find that eagerness of the child again. To tap into that curiosity that soaks up everything within reach. To be engaging and willing to try new things. To be willing to explore and eager to learn. To sleep soundly at night knowing the next day will be filled with new wonders, joys and excitement.

I have heard it said that anything you truly enjoy doing is not really "work". It is my wish that you do not have to work at working or at living your life. Rather, that you will find all the various tasks that fill your days to be enjoyable and **Full of Spirit**.

I assure you that you indeed have been gifted with talents, abilities, powers, and yes, a truly gifted Spirit of Life. The flame is not out, it has just been banked and is waiting for a breath of fresh air to bring the coals leaping back into Life.

God Blesses you!

Healing the Leper Within

October 10, 2001

As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" And when he saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." As they were going they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. Luke 17:12-16 (NAB)

Have you ever felt like a leper, outcast, rejected, scorned by others, with no place to turn? I am sure you have felt rejected or felt that you were not totally accepted by someone or by some group of people at some time in your own life. Perhaps you have rejected your self--we are frequently our own worse critic. But for those 10 people in the above passage, it was their way of life--they were ostracized and held not even a toehold within normal society.

Did they deserve such treatment? They were thought to be suffering their dire fate as punishments for their own sinfulness. We now know that they suffered from a medical illness through no fault of their own, an illness that we now have medical treatments for.

Not much has changed over the last 2000 years. We civilized and educated people still reject that which is unknown and strange to us. Even when we have the knowledge to understand and to make informed decisions, we still reject and fail to accept, we still treat others as if they were lepers.

In the above passage, one realized that he had been cured and returned to give thanks. I was struck by two thoughts. "One realized" - did the other nine not even realize that they had been cured? Perhaps. We walk through life so oblivious to what is happening around us and to us that it is possible that the nine did not even notice that they were cured. It is possible that they failed to notice such an obvious difference in their lives.

The second thought was that they just took it for granted and didn't bother to return to give thanks. We take so many things for granted that we don't even notice so many of the things that we should. Or perhaps their life experience blocked them from returning to give thanks. After all, for their whole lives they had been strictly forbidden to have any contact with other people. Perhaps they did not return to give thanks because of their "training" to avoid contact with others.

Now focus on the 'leper' within yourself. Focus on those times that for whatever reason, you have felt isolated or rejected. Consider those times when you have been hard on yourself, rejecting your own goodness, your own talents, skills, abilities, etc. Consider those times when you have felt unworthy.

Did you deserve such treatment? Probably not. Did you take it for granted and do nothing about it? Probably so. Did you continue to act and do the things that you had always done? Probably so. Consider some time when you were blessed with some gift, some talent, some skill, some understanding, some gift of love of caring or support. Did you go out of your way to say "thanks?"

10 lepers were gifted with healing and a **"fullness of Spirit"** - one acted on it. You too have been blessed with a **"fullness of Spirit"** -- are you like the nine or like the tenth who did something about it?.

God Blesses you!

Diversity Worth a Million Bucks

October 17, 2001

"There was a judge in a certain town who neither feared God nor respected any human being. And a widow in that town used to come to him and say, 'Render a just decision for me against my adversary.' For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, 'While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being, because this widow keeps bothering me I shall deliver a just decision for her lest she finally come and strike me.'" Luke 18:2-5 (NAB)

I think this parable highlights a sad but true fact of our human condition. It points out that the world is full of people who misuse and abuse the responsibilities that they have been given to uphold in service to others. It points out that our motivations for some of our behaviors are not motivated by what is right but by what is sometimes the easiest way to get someone off our backs. It also highlights that in spite of these circumstances, there are also people who continue to demand, to respect, and even to value truth and justice.

For some it is easy to give up hope in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles - what's the use? Others merely see such obstacles as a sign for further perseverance, prayer, and as a challenge for the need for change no matter what the odds.

Deep within each of us is planted the seed of eternal hope. If we did not have hope, we could not face even the easiest of new days within our lives. Each new day is filled with its own personal challenges and difficulties. Yet, we cope with them as individuals, as families, as friends, as communities, as countries, as people united with common beliefs. Yes, with hope and faith, we are not only able to face each new day, but enjoy them, continue to grow and even to thrive.

Humanity has been blessed in great abundance with the greatest of possible gifts: individual uniqueness. Each person is unique with various talents, skills, abilities, and strengths-and therefore, different from every other person in the world. Such vast diversity allows for achieving the seemingly impossible. What is not possible for me to do is well within the range of possibilities for someone else.

Along with this greatest of gifts comes the greatest of challenges: how to be united in our diversities rather than allowing our uniquenesses to separate us from one another. As individuals we are able to accomplish so much less than when we pool our resources with another. And yet, even within our own individual families, it is a challenge to be united in our diversities rather than divided by them.

What would you do if someone suddenly handed you a million dollars to do with whatever you wanted? Would you spend it? Save it? Buy a new house, car...? Travel around the world? Give it away? Hold on to it for dear life? Would you tell anyone or keep it secret? What would you do?

Well, you have been handed a million dollars. You have been blessed with a unique collection of talents, thoughts, skills, abilities, and so forth. There is truly no other person in the whole wide world that is exactly like you. Maybe you are thinking, "thank God" or may be "that's a shame." You are probably thinking, I'm not worth a million bucks. And yet to someone else who cannot do something that you do quite easily, to them it is worth a great deal. Have you ever thought, "I would give anything to be able to do that" -perhaps even give a million bucks?

Personally, I thank God that you are unique. We are each like a piece of a huge puzzle. Each piece of a puzzle is different, in size, shape, looks, etc. Yet, they all fit together to create a wonderful picture, a wonderful reality, something truly wonderful that no individual piece could ever make by itself.

So yes, I thank God that you are unique, and I thank God that there are so many of "you" out there, so that together, nothing is truly impossible, no challenge is too big, there is always hope, there is always a new day to accomplish what we did not have time to do today.....

God Blesses you!

the Power of a Compliment

October 24, 2001

Jesus addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. "Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. ... 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity-- greedy, dishonest, adulterous--or even like this tax collector. ... But the tax collector ... prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 18:9-14 (NAB)

Our human natures are so full of so many things: pride, humility, generosity, greed, honesty, dishonesty, kindness, rudeness, strength, weakness, insecurity, self-awareness... and isn't it amazing how we use and misuse these attributes each and every day of our lives.

How do you respond to a compliment? Are you comfortable giving one? Many of us are not comfortable with either one. We don't feel right giving a compliment because we see all the unfinished expectations. We want to deflect the compliment given to us because we are so aware of all of our own imperfections.

I wonder what would happen if we could accept our own weaknesses for just one day. I wonder what it would be like if all the unspoken expectations were voiced. I wonder what it would be like if someone noticed something you did well and told you they appreciated it and you said, "thank you" and really meant it, really believed the value you were to that person in that moment. I wonder what changes would occur in life if everyone gave 10 compliments each day.

Perhaps if we admitted our weaknesses, then we would be empowered to do something constructive about them. Perhaps if we knew what was expected of us, we would be more successful at living up to them. Perhaps if we knew we were valued, we would value and appreciate ourselves more. Perhaps if we just said, "thank you" we might start to believe it. Perhaps if we noticed and voiced the good instead of the bad, our lives would be more joyful and complete and the world would be an even better place in which to live. Perhaps, we would be **Living our Lives ~ Full of Spirit.**

Well, we all know that the world is full of greed, dishonesty, arrogance, and all those other attributes that we don't like. It is also full of generosity, honesty, humble integrity, self-awareness, love, caring, concern and all those other attributes we aspire to. We make choices every day of our lives that bounce us around from one side to the other. We are responsible for those choices and have to live with the consequences.

We place so much importance on what we do, on our roles, on our job titles, on our accomplishments, and there is value in the activities that we do. But we must remember that we are not what we do, but rather, the greater value is in how we do what we do. The greater value is what is inside of us, what makes us the "person" that we really are, those attributes and traits that make each of us unique.

Are you ready for a life changing challenge? When you get up in the morning and look in the mirror, start off the day by giving that person you see a compliment. Then as you continue your day, look for the chance to compliment someone else along the way. And when you receive a compliment (including the ones you give yourself), simply acknowledge them with a "thank you" and perhaps a smile.

Personally, I thank God that you are unique. We are each like a piece of a huge puzzle. Each piece of a puzzle is different, in size, shape, looks, etc. Yet, they all fit together to create a wonderful picture, a wonderful reality, something truly wonderful that no individual piece could ever make by itself.

Yes, I know this will be hard, just give it a try. I also know that you have the ability to succeed within you. Furthermore, I know that if you truly accept this simple challenge and act on it each and every day of the rest of your life ~ that some truly amazing changes will happen. **Your Life will be ~ Full of Spirit.**

God Blesses you!

Value the Positive Approach

October 31, 2001

When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house." And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over." Luke 19:5-8 (NAB)

How did the compliments go last week? I hope you took the challenge seriously. I have noticed that most people have a very difficult time feeling comfortable giving compliments, as well as in receiving them. On the other hand, we seem to be almost too comfortable or even to prefer to be negative, critical, judgmental and to jump the gun in sizing up the people we meet. You have probably heard the old adage, "you can't judge a book by its cover" and yet we do that all the time with people.

I know that criticism and judging can be positive as well as negative, but we seem to put extra emphasis and "value" on the negative variety. At least that is rather obvious if the television and media are any indication of what people are most interested in.

Sure negative stuff is more sensational and juicy and interesting. When was the last time you heard someone whispering in gossip about all the good stuff someone had done? When you hear someone saying, "I can't believe they did that" or "Did you hear about...", what usually follows is not a story about someone's positive attributes, but rather something negative.

What is the value that you hold dearest to your heart? Do you value the positive attributes over the negative? Do you shower your family, friends, co-workers, strangers, children... with kindnesses, praises, compliments and good will or with negative criticisms, judgments, nay-saying and the latest gossip you've heard?

If you are interested in **Living your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ then you will be far more successful if you pay more attention to the positive than to the negative. Shower yourself and other people with realistic positive thoughts, comments and conversation. What will grow and be produced from it will be truly beautiful and valuable.

But what we say is not the only important thing. More than 80% of the message communicated is imbedded in how the words are spoken, the voice inflection, how soft or loud, and the body language that goes with it. It is no wonder so many messages are misconstrued, misinterpreted or tuned out.

Have you ever noticed that when you listen to a speaker, that it is frequently hard to pay attention for more than 10-15 minutes if you are not actively engaged in the conversation? Have you noticed that if the person seems angry, that you quickly tune them out and distance yourself from them and their message? Have you noticed that if they are speaking too loudly that you also tend to distance yourself and tune them out?

It is human nature that we tend to respond to certain styles of communication in specific ways. If the message is spoken too loudly or is uncomfortable in some way, because of the topic, or because of an angry or hostile undercurrent, or the person is too showy or demonstrative - the listener tends to ignore the speaker, distance themselves, look for an escape or something else that is more comfortable to attend to. On the other hand, softness accompanied by either neutral or positive emotional energy promotes eager attentiveness and a desire to get closer and to listen more closely.

Check it out. Pay attention to your children, family, friends, co-workers and how they interact in different situations and how they respond differently to different styles of communication. You might be surprised by what you see. But remember, if you desire positive results, you should use a positive approach. If you want to **Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ you should pursue a realistic positive approach in all your endeavors.

God Blesses you!

Dare to Really Live

November 7, 2001

Brothers and sisters: May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting encouragement and good hope through his grace, encourage your hearts and strengthen them in every good deed and word. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 (NAB)

Where do you get the encouragement and support that keeps you going in your life?

I find it in fellowship with friends. In the wonderful sights of nature, the beauty of the leaves, the graceful shape of a tree, a deer sauntering across a field. In the hugs and laughter of my children, in their curious questions about life, in their joyful expounding upon what they have learned that day. The wonderful discoveries of children are things we take for granted. I also find it in the kind words of another, in the thoughts written on a page, and in my own thoughts and prayers.

Life is so much easier to live ~ **Full of Spirit** ~ and to enjoy when it is shared. We can receive encouragement and support from others and we can give it as well. The return when we give to others frequently far outweighs the amount of time and energy that we have put into it.

Last week we took a quick glimpse into communication styles and the power of the message that is embedded in other things besides the mere words spoken. Many find it difficult to offer words of encouragement because it is so hard to do comfortably. Our words get misinterpreted or turned around or maybe not even heard at all. Or our non-verbal body language and how we 'say' the words reflect so much of our own uncertainty and discomfort that the message is perceived as being insincere and is disregarded.

Can you relate to this? Has anyone ever been trying to encourage and support you - you know that was their intention - but they bungled it horribly? Or perhaps you were the person who bungled it? I think it is a common occurrence. Should we say, 'oh well' and just give up? Not on your Life!

Life is all about making mistakes, bungling things, and yet, finding the strength to persevere and try again. We are not truly living if we aren't trying new things and screwing some things up. Do you know how many attempts it takes to get something perfect? Just one. But it is preceded by a string of less than perfect attempts to get it right and followed by a stream of imperfect attempts to replicate it again. And that is what life is all about.

You have probably heard the philosophical question, "if a tree falls in the forest and there is no one to hear it, does it make any sound?" Here's my answer. If you get up in the morning and attempt nothing that day, did you really live that day? Yes, but did it really matter.

Does Life really matter to you? What are you doing about it?

You have been given an arsenal of support tools to help you **Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit**. You were given a smile, when did you last wear it? You have a laugh, when was it last heard? You were given a voice of encouragement, has it been heard lately? Your arms were made long enough to offer a hug or to reach out to touch someone, have you forgotten how? Your voice was given so that you could talk to others, your ears to listen, your eyes to see, do you use all three when you attempt to communicate?

I will let you in on a secret. No one likes to make mistakes. You might be saying, that's no secret, I already knew that. Okay, but what does it mean? It is the consequence of not liking to make mistakes that keeps you and I from **Living our Lives ~ Full of Spirit**. It is the lack of desire to attempt something unless we know we will succeed that keeps us from really living.

Here's a challenge for you - if you want to be perfect at something, be perfect at making mistakes. In the process of striving for that perfection, you will live a fuller more rewarding life than you ever thought possible.

God Blesses you!

Fear not - live LIFE

November 14, 2001

"See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them! When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end." Luke 21:8-9 (NAB)

I cannot help but be struck by the power of fear that is driving our world today. With the tragic plane crash in New York this week, many people quickly concluded that it could only be the act of terrorists. It was a tragic accident. It is amazing how quickly we jump to conclusions and get locked up in our own preconceived notion of things.

Fear is a very potent motivator. Sometimes that is good and sometimes that is bad. It can protect us from doing things that would be foolish for us to do. It can also keep us from doing the right things that would be quite beneficial for us.

Stop for a moment to consider how much of your own life is consumed with fear. Do you fear for your children's safety? Your spouse? Your self? Do you fear rejection? Failure? Success? Do you fear for your health? Of being alone? Of growing old? Of losing your job? Do you fear what your friend or neighbor thinks? Do you fear you will hurt someone's feelings? Or they will hurt yours? Or that you will say the wrong thing? Or make the wrong choice?

Fears are everywhere and they are real concerns. But they can also shut us down and prevent us from living our lives ~ **Full of Spirit** ~ and that is wrong.

We must be careful and cautious, but be reasonable about it. To act otherwise would be foolish. However, when we allow our fears to get the better of us and to take control of our lives, it is then that we are in the most danger of being hurt and of hurting others. Because in that moment, we allow the fear to stop us from doing what we think and know is right. We stop reaching out to others to offer a helping hand. We stop being fully present and available to the members of our families and communities. We allow a wrong to continue because we fear the consequences to our selves. We stop living fully the lives that we were intended to live.

The challenge is not to survive all the tragic things happening in our world, such things will always happen. The real challenge is to make sure good things happen in our lives. To make sure that we take control of our lives and live each daily fully with a good conscious, with courage, with integrity, with faith, with hope, with love ~ with **LIFE**.

Put the fear aside and make sure you take the time to share your love, your hopes, your faith, your time, your courage, your willingness, your presence with your family, friends and the people in your own little slice of the world. Harness the fear and anxiety so that it motivates you to do the things intended for you to do.

It is time to not fear those things which happen in the world, but to be concerned about the things you should be doing but are not.

God Blesses you!

If it Sticks

November 21, 2001

Brothers and sisters: Let us give thanks to the Father, who has made you fit to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light. He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Col 1:12-14 (NAB)

We should give thanks each and every day of our lives for the many blessings that are showered down upon us. If you are like me you probably forget to do this from time to time. It is so easy to take things for granted and over time we even begin to think that we are entitled to certain things and become indignant when they are not forthcoming.

In a sense, we each are entitled to certain things such as to live our lives ~ **Full of Spirit**. To live our lives full of hope, full of love, full of kindness, full of giving, full of courage, full of friendship, full of **LIVING**. Indeed you are entitled to these. But they come with a price. They are not free. They require you to embrace them responsibly and with full accountability for your own actions.

To live your Life ~ **Full of Spirit** ~ is not a passive endeavor. To have love, friendship, kindness, hope, faith, and generosity fully present in your life requires work and perseverance on your part. There is an old saying that you know when spaghetti is done by throwing it on the wall and if it sticks, it is done. Well that method is too messy for me, but it kind of fits for what I am talking about here. Love, friendship, kindness, hope, faith and generosity won't stick to you if you haven't done your part or if you are not ready.

Life is full of wonderful things that we are given freely and most of us take them for granted. Such as a sunny day, you don't have to do anything to earn the sunshine, but you have to do something to notice it, to enjoy it, to bask in it. Trees, flowers and grass are everywhere for your enjoyment, but it takes work to maintain them. As you busily drive down the street each and every day of your life, how often do you notice nature's beauty as you rush by? How about friends, in any given day you probably rub elbows with hundreds of people, but how many friends do you really have? How about in the love category, Loving is a two-way street, do you treat it as such or do you consider it a one-way thoroughfare?

I want to live my Life ~ **Full of Spirit** ~ but I forget sometimes. I forget that when I wake up in the morning that I will have thousands of opportunities to "smell the roses", to hope, to love, to be generous, to enjoy beauty, to use my blessings responsibly, and that I will literally pass by thousands of opportunities to live life more fully just because I don't notice them. I also know that I will get overly focused on a small handful of "problems" that will occupy more of my time, attention and energy than they deserve and distract me from more important things.

But I am also thankful, because I hope that I will have another day tomorrow to get up and try again to live my life a little bit better than I did yesterday. I am thankful that I have a friend here or there that gives me a word of encouragement when I am stuck in a rut. I am thankful I have numerous opportunities to share my talents, blessings, hope, faith and love, even though I don't always have the courage to do so. I am thankful that I have another opportunity to get "it right".

How about you, what are you thankful for today? I encourage you, with heartfelt spirit-fullness, to take a moment to consider some of the many blessings you have received just today, accept them humbly and responsibly, and when they stick, that is a sign that they are ready for you to do something with them (when they don't stick, it means they are still trying to get your attention).

God Blesses you!

Like Today is your Last

November 28, 2001

Jesus said to his disciples: "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away.
Matthew 24:37-39 (NAB)

Most of us go about living our lives like there will always be another tomorrow, but for each of us this will not be the case one day. Some people are stuck in the past, always looking back, seldom ahead to the future and seldom really living in the present either. Others live each day like it is their last. What is best?

To live your Life ~ **Full of Spirit** ~ you must do a little of each. You must learn from your past experiences but not dwell on them. You certainly must live in the present, but also have an eye to the future to give a little thought and planning for tomorrow. You must live your life like today is your last, but with the fullness of hope for another tomorrow.

To really have a blessed fullness within your life, you really must live today like it is your last. That means not leaving unsaid what could be better said in the moment, not postponing something that could be better done right now, not leaving something undone that you will later regret.

Now wait a minute, I don't have time for all of that. Sure you do! Prioritize. No matter how much or how little you do in your life, you have the same amount of time to do it in. You decide how you spend your time and what you accomplish. You can spend it wisely and fully or squander and waste it. It is your choice.

When I say live today like it is your last, I don't mean that you should go out and spend every cent you have and max out your credit cards or do all those things that you would normally not think of doing. No, I mean that you choose wisely how you will spend your time and you courageously step into your life and live it fully with integrity, spirit, zest and joy.

You live it honoring all those things that you value and hold most precious. You end the day laying your head down on your pillow with the immense satisfaction that you have lived a good day and eager to start again if you are blessed with another tomorrow. I think that if each of us lived each and every day of our lives with that kind of fullness of spirit, our lives would be very different and this would be a far different world in which we live.

But let us focus on something doable, the world will take care of itself if we each take care of our self. Think about all the things you would see if you had perfect vision and all the sounds you would hear if you had perfect hearing. Your senses would be overwhelmed. Fortunately our bodies filter out a lot of the extra stimuli so that it is more manageable for us to operate more effectively. But sometimes the most important sight or sound happens to be filtered out and we act on a less important stimulus.

That is what our lives are all about. Each and every day we have hundreds of choice points to choose and pick from. Each choice sends us in a specific direction down the path we trod. We are offered many possibilities along the way that lead us to yet other choice points and opportunities. It is a never ending stream of choices and events that we call LIFE.

It is my hope that you will take the time each day to make good choices, to **live your life Fully with Spirit**, and that at the end of the day you will rest your head on your pillow feeling great pride and satisfaction in all that you have done that day.

God Blesses you!

one voice with BIG results

December 5, 2001

John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said: A voice of one crying out in the desert, Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Matthew 3:1-3 (NAB)

It is that time of year again when all are immersed in preparing for the holidays, stuck in crowds and shopping lines, and having so much to do and not enough time to do it all. There's the Christmas cards to send out, the gifts to buy, the decorations to put up, the holiday plans to prepare for, the traveling, etc. High stress? You bet!

In the above passage we hear about a voice crying in the desert, "Prepare...." and we know that something BIG is about to happen. John the Baptist was a pretty seedy looking character, not someone that most of us would invite home for dinner. His appearance, message and lifestyle were striking and attention getting both in his day and still today. However, his message is an important one.

In the busyness of our daily lives, we never have time to do everything we want to do. Therefore, we must prioritize how we will spend our time and what things we want to make sure get done no matter what. That is an important undertaking. We have so many opportunities showered upon us that we frequently get lost or overwhelmed with all the prospects.

The bottom line is that each of us has to take the time we need to figure out what is most important to us and make sure we live our lives accordingly. I think we are also challenged to **Live Life ~ Full of Spirit**. In our busyness we quickly become drained and exhausted and lose our fullness of spirit. But in order to accomplish the many important tasks and purposes in our lives, we must maintain a fully charged Spirit-filled ness in our daily lives.

In our own individual ways, we each are a John the Baptist crying out our message to the world. Some of us are just as eccentric looking and sounding as the original Baptist and some are more subdued and non-descript, but we each communicate a certain message to our family, friends and associates with whom we travel through life.

Now is a good time to stop for a moment and look at the message you are communicating and make sure it is the one you want to be "known" for and remembered by. Do the values and principles you live by adequately reflect the message you want others to know you by? You see John's single little voice crying out in the desert was heard the world over and still echoes through time, and your individual little voice has equally as much power to be heard.

The message you deliver will impact others in ways you would never predict, understand or even be aware of. You will impact people and make "a difference" in lives and in ways that you will never know. Therefore, make sure you are living your Life with the **Fullness of Spirit** that you desire and that you are living your life in the way you truly are being called to live it.

God Blesses you!

Good for those who wait

December 12, 2001

Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You too must be patient.

James 5:7-8 (NAB)

Most things that we have that are of any value are worth waiting for, but few of us have the patience to wait. We want it right now. During this time of the year, many of us spend a lot of time just waiting (in the shopping lines, at the gas station, for Christmas programs to start, etc.) and most of us are not happy about that.

Have you ever stopped to think about how much time you spend in one day's time just waiting for something to happen? Now if you multiplied that by 7 or by 30 or by 365, then a picture begins to emerge that over the week or month or year, you truly do spend a considerable amount of time just waiting for things to happen.

Now think for a minute what you could do if you had some of that time back to use more productively. You would be able to accomplish so much more than you ever thought possible -- it would be almost like winning the lottery.

We hear the saying, "good things come to those who wait." Sometimes that is true and sometimes we just waste our time waiting for it to come true. Sometimes the good things we wait for never appear. Perhaps we are waiting for the wrong "good" things and therefore, don't recognize all the other good things that are popping up all over the place.

Patience is a virtue that does pay off. Without it, we frequently harvest things that we really never wanted in the first place. Impatience reaps its own rewards. But what do we do in a world where people want so much and have so little time to achieve it and don't have enough time to do everything they want?

One step in the right direction is to take back control over some of those precious moments spent in waiting. No, you cannot prevent having to wait, but you can do something more constructive with those moments. You could use them to plan ahead, to jot down ideas, to read, to say a prayer, or to converse with a nearby individual who is also waiting.

You might think that none of those things are on my "to do" list so why would I waste time doing it. Well you are right, it is your choice how you "waste" your time. I just think if a portion of my time is going to be wasted whether I like it or not, then the least that I can do is start using some of that time in ways that are useful to me.

If I spent five minutes praying and relaxing and thinking good positive thoughts, I might leave that shopping line refreshed and ready to do something constructive, rather than leaving it annoyed, negative, tense and worried. If I spoke to someone next to me I just might brighten their day and feel more connected and worthwhile myself rather than feeling alone and disconnected from the rest of the world. If I spent a few moments planning ahead, then I might not forget something later in the day that would waste even more of my precious time.

Who knows, if I chose to use my time in such productive ways, I might even think that I had not wasted my time at all and I might find myself feeling much better at the end of each day. I might be happier, more satisfied, more relaxed, more fulfilled and my waiting would have paid off in a very BIG way for me.

I would be **Living my Life ~ Full of Spirit.**

God Blesses you!

Dreams Change the World

December 19, 2001

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Matthew 1:18-2 (NAB)

This is an amazing story. In society at the time this was written, Mary would have been stoned or at best would have found herself homeless and cutoff from society. However, the world was changed forever by this simple event of an unmarried woman becoming pregnant and her fiancé listening to a dream.

How many times do you hear a little voice in your head telling you to do something or not do something? Do you listen? Or how many times would your life be changed forever if you had a dream and you listened to it?

The answer for most of us ~ several times each day. Yes, we each have those flitting little thoughts, those gut feelings, those intuitions, those little pearls of wisdom ~ each and every single day of our lives. But most of us, most of the time, ignore them soundly.

Now if we had only listened to them, our lives would probably take some profound twists and turns. But you know what, since we ignore them, our lives still take profound twists and turns ~ but perhaps not for the better.

Have you ever tried to have a conversation with someone who just wouldn't listen ~ your words just went in one ear and out the other. Now you know how God probably feels. Think of all the times He has tried to communicate some important message to you and you tuned him out. Think of all the times someone in your family, at work, a friend, etc. has tried to tell you something and you weren't listening.

Life is full of missed opportunities such as these. Life goes on, but what a different life it becomes for us when we miss such blessed opportunities.

I wish that each of you will dream of **Living your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ and that this coming new year you will hear, listen and see that dream come true. I believe that no matter what you do ~ your life will never be the same ~ but I dream, hope and pray for the best for each of you.

God Blesses you!

Full of Spirit

December 26, 2001

Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, ... And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, ... And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. Col 3:12-17 (NAB)

If you ever wondered what I mean when I say: **Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ the above passage says it nicely. This is the time of the year when we focus most closely on the importance and value of our family. It can be truly wonderful or it can be a very lonely and empty time of year.

As I said last week, I hope the new year is full of blessings for you and yours. I hope you answer the call of God's dreams to you and that your Life is Blessed abundantly.

I truly hope that you **Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit**. I hope that you know and are grateful that you are blessed with wisdom and understanding far beyond your meager comprehension. I hope that the way you live your life is a fitting example to others and that it shines out to the world that you indeed are **Full of Spirit**.

I hope that peace is the foundation of your heart and mind. It forms a stable energizing base from which to live one's life and helps one to navigate successfully all the twists and turns encountered.

I hope that love is the armor you wear because in it one finds the hope of perfection, the courage of perseverance and the joy of living one's life fully alive.

I hope your treasure chest is full of the virtues of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. With these you and your family are truly rich with gifts that will keep on giving.

Life is like a brand new car. You have been given a vehicle equipped with various accessories and everything you need to get you from here to where you are going. You have the keys and you are in the driver's seat. Where you go and how you get there is the choice you make.

God Blesses you!