

**The Life of a Winner**

It's really simple once you see it. I mean God's perspective on life. Get wrapped up in yourself and you always end up a loser. But let the winner—Jesus Christ—teach you how to meet the needs of others and you'll not only never run out of work—you'll end up a winner. I'm Frank Eiklor. Today on More Than Talk—"The life of a winner".

**PAGE 1 - Chosen to Be a Light**

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:16

I stood alone near the bow of a ship as we sailed along the coast of Alaska. The night was cold and the wind fierce as I gazed out across the water. Suddenly, I saw it (more important, the pilot of our ship saw it!) - a single light beaming its welcome ray from the shore to us so that we could stay clear of the dangers that lurked. It took the darkness of night to appreciate the power of that single light.

And so it is with you. When Jesus walked on earth, He called Himself the light of the world. Now He lives within you and says, "You are the light of the world." (v 14) While it is true that we live in a world made dark by rebellion and sin, we are to stand out as bright lights to those who cry to escape the dark. Note that our text does not say, "..that they may hear your good words" but "that they may see your good works" and glorify the Father in heaven. Just what do they see in us that draws their attention? Truth in a world of lies. Humility and reality, not hypocrisy. Love and forgiveness instead of hate and grudges. Unselfish giving rather than selfish grasping. Love of neighbor, not love of self.

But just how do they know to glorify the true God of heaven rather than merely credit the good behavior of you and me? 1) A life of good works will cause questions, "Why are you so different?" that allow answers, "Because of what Jesus has done in my life since accepting Him." 2) A lifestyle that glorifies God will leave its own evidences even when questions aren't asked: heading to the house of the Lord, not taking His Name lightly, using "God bless you" often and sincerely, reminding others who tell you their struggles that you'll be praying for them, etc.

So today - and everyday - let's live out that chorus: "This little light of mine - I'm gonna let it shine."

My prayer: "Make me Your light in a dark world, Lord Jesus. Let me shine - and glorify God - before loved ones, neighbors and all who view my life."

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#### PAGE 2 - A World that's More than Just "Me"

"And the Lord said unto Cain, 'Where is Abel thy brother?' And he said, 'I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?'" Genesis 4:9

The sin of Cain has been the scourge of the world. Prejudice, bigotry and hate never disappear. But they can only rule when brotherly love abdicates the throne. Remember Kitty Genovese - the New Yorker stabbed to death in full view of many neighbors? No one screamed - no one called the police - no men rushed the attacker. The shameful standard reply came later from each onlooker: "I didn't want to get involved."

How different from the Indian Christian Sadhu Sundar Singh who, when warned not to risk his life to save a hurting man said: "God has sent me here to help my brother. I cannot abandon him."

The goal of all biblical teaching is summed up in loving God with all of one's heart, soul, mind and strength - and my neighbor as myself. The more one falls in love with Jesus, the more sensitive that heart will be to the needs and pain of others. There will be no Cain-like cop-out to God's query: "Where is your brother?" My answer will be, " Lord, my brother is any person, anywhere, with any need." Start with your family, then your street, neighborhood, job, city and world. You'll never run out of work!

My prayer: "Lord Jesus, You told us not to love with words alone but with actions. Fill me with such love for You that, like You, I'm drawn toward, not away from, hurting people"

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**PAGE 3 - Impossible, Unstoppable Love**

“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” Matthew 5:44

No one ought to command such incredible behavior unless he or she should first live it perfectly. Love a hurtful enemy? Bless the one cursing me? Do good to one who only offers me hate? Pray for God's kindness and love - not His vengeance - to fall on those who persecute and use me? That's exactly what Jesus lived, even as He was teaching what is essentially the heart of the Father. No one has suffered like Jesus. No one has, will, or can, endure the total hatred of Satan being released through willing human hearts as the Messiah was rejected, renounced and refused by most of His own. He, alone, can tell us what Heaven commands concerning our enemies. And He does tell us - in four-fold detail.

Who do you consider an "enemy"? Who is persecuting you? Or, maybe worse, just using you? (It is often easier to endure persecution from someone out of your inner circle who is opposed to Christ than to be used in sneaky or subtle ways by close friends or even loved ones!) How do you and I react to those content to build a wall between them and us?

There is only one way if we are to have the heart of Jesus. We will first find ourselves praying what another struggling soul prayed: "Father, help me to realize that nothing anyone has ever done against me compares to what I have done against You. You have forgiven me - help me to forgive others. And not grudgingly, but graciously." Then it will be time for Jesus' four square counter-attack against hate: 1) take Christ's love for that person (yours won't work!); 2) ask God to bless them with His love; 3) do something good for that person - a gift, a deed, a kind word, or even an apology; and 4) only after doing the first three steps can we now pray with the Holy Spirit's heart for the Lord to change them - and us - so that their hearts would be drawn to Jesus and our own hearts be made more like Him. Jesus turned us from His enemies to His friends. Through Him, we can do the same with others!

My prayer: "My Father, I know that there is no more accurate a gauge to check out my true love for You than how I react toward those who hurt, persecute or use me. Plant within me the forgiving heart of Jesus, and cause it to mature and flower."

**PAGE 4 - Look Who Wants to Walk with You!**

“And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” Genesis 5:24

In a world already on the slippery slide of compromise and sin, Enoch stood out like Mount Everest on a clear day. He walked with God for 365 years before the Lord hugged him to Himself in heaven: almost like God saying, "My precious Enoch, you've chosen to walk with me every day down those gritty streets. Come walk with me now on golden streets." If Enoch walked with God for 365 years, wouldn't the Lord be pleased if you were to dedicate the next 365 days - one year - to learning how to walk in intimate fellowship with Him?

How might a day go? It could start with a quiet hour - or at least 30 minutes - spent each morning in God's Word and prayer. Keep a simple record of scriptures and impressions that you receive - you'll be amazed at how you'll learn to discern God's voice from others. Through the day, let your thoughts turn often to the Lord - offering Him your love and asking Him to bless and work in people who come to mind. If married, don't forget family devotions - Bible and prayer - with your mate and children. And don't forget those frequent literal "walks" - where it's just you and your Lord taking time to grow more intimately acquainted. Put your name in that scripture: "And (Frank) walked with God..." Is there anything in life more important?!

My prayer: "My Father, what does it mean to truly walk with You? Take me, please, from the beginning baby steps on into the maturity of a deeper and deeper relationship with You."

**PAGE 5 - The One Investment that Has Never Failed**

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:21

Here is Webster on "treasure": "any person or thing considered very valuable...to value greatly; cherish." In the context of today's scripture, Jesus speaks of only two directions we can look to find treasure - the horizontal for the possible accumulation of money, and the vertical for the lasting riches of more of God Himself. First, let it be said that money is not the root of all evil. On the contrary, it is the root and branch of much good when used in God's will and for His purposes. It is the "love of money" that nourishes all evil and finally leaves those who thirst for only this world's gold lying with parched bones across the devil's desert.

There are two forces - two spirits, if you will, that say, "There is never enough!" One is the unredeemed human spirit that fosters and feeds on greed. A sign in a loan company window said: "Now you can borrow enough money to get completely out of debt." Isn't that a description of America? And too many Christians?

But there is another "Spirit" - the Holy Spirit of God - who says "There is never enough of God" for the one who thirsts for the lasting treasures of heaven. The Father, through the Son, wants to give you more and more of Himself. You are His treasure - where His heart is. You would have to be, for Jesus to leave all his pre-incarnate glory to come and die for you. Make Jesus alone your greatest treasure. Set your daily priorities to seek His face and search out His Word above all else. Let loving Him be your life - and making money just your living so you can have a life of serving Him - and give life to others (your church, missions, the needy and broken) through the living He provides. Where do your thoughts mostly turn? The answer is where your treasure lies. From this moment on, determine that "treasure" will be Jesus.

My prayer: “Work deeply within my heart, my Father, until I neither value nor cherish anything or anyone more than You.”