

## God, Golf, and The Good Life

### Definitions

*Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his labor—this is the gift of God. (Ecclesiastes 5:19-20)*

Some years ago, I was in Fort Lauderdale, sitting at the bar, eating dinner, and reading a book. A gentleman sat beside me and asked, “What ya reading?” I often did this so I could answer, “It’s a book debunking false ideas regarding Christianity.”

After a puzzled look, he said, “Explain!” “Nothing would please me more,” I said. On this occasion, my book was about “The Good Life.”

After outlining the general idea of the good life from a Christian perspective, he interrupted and said, “Well, I can tell you one d\_\_\_ thing. It must be more than yachts, country clubs, multiple homes, multiple marriages, jets, fine dining, single-digit handicaps, expensive wines, and sex—cuz, I have all that and I am miserable.”

Here is the perennial problem: it’s not whether we are chasing the good life; it’s only a matter of which version we are chasing. This gentleman drank the Kool-Aid of “wine, women, and song” and lived with a chronic ache in his soul.

No need to mention names, but I spent a reasonable amount of time with one of the PGA’s brightest stars before he died. With many victories and more than a few “seconds” in Majors, this guy “had it all.” Sadly, he died lonely and embittered. The “good life” had escaped him.

To avoid early misunderstandings, what we want to explore is not the debauched versions of the good life depicted in The Wolf of Wall Street or the superficial depictions we see on the glossy pages of Vogue.

Skip a rock across the ages, and we quickly discover the answers are as diverse as they are endless. Ask an unfettered Capitalist, and his answer might be, “The man who dies with the most toys wins.”

The answer will vary as widely as the number of people queried. After all, not everyone’s version of the good life includes pickleball. I cannot imagine defining “the good life” in a way that excludes the game of golf. Clearly, though, the good life requires more than this!

The Big Question is: Is there something that cuts across all generations and cultures about which we can confidently say, “Leave that out and you’ve missed the point of existence?”

Suggesting that Jesus has the final word about what constitutes the good life is, according to the skeptic, a fool’s errand. Far too many people think of Jesus Christ as the ultimate “party-pooper.”

Nothing could be further from the truth. How could the one who said, “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly,” be so utterly misunderstood?

According to Ecclesiastes, God gives the power to make wealth and accumulate possessions, and gives and withholds the power to enjoy them. What could be more tragic than having some or many of the earth’s pleasures, yet lacking the gift to enjoy them?

**Prayer: Jesus! Open our eyes to the “good.”**

**READING:** Ecclesiastes 1:12-2:1-26;  
(Optional - Read All Of Ecclesiastes)

1. You’ve played a great round, enjoyed your favorite beverage with the guys, had a nice dinner with friends, and now you’re home, sensing that “something is missing.” Why is that?

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2. After reading our text, what is the author eager for us to grapple with?

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3. Application: From time to time, we need to take inventory—an inventory of our souls. Are we sufficiently stocked in the right categories?

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