



BREAKING THE ICE

What does it mean to you to be generous?

Describe a time where you felt someone was overly generous to you.

MAIN CONTENT

This week, Pastor Kevin started a new series in which we'll learn what it means to Live Well. In John 10:10, Jesus says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

1. What does a full life mean to you?

A full life should be the kind of life we want. Maybe it's a life full of joy, peace and hope. A life that feels authentic, content and fully satisfied. But this kind of full life doesn't necessarily mean a full calendar; it means having a full heart, soul, mind and strength.

2. How full do you feel when it comes to your heart, soul, mind and strength?

Sometimes we are running on empty and we need to be refilled. And that's ok. God wants to refill us. In 2 Peter 1:3, we see where Jesus wants to fill us with everything we need to live a full life. But in order to be filled up and live well, we need to recognize our need. Jesus says that those who are hungry will be fed. But He meant more than physical hunger. He wants us to be hungry for the life He offers us.

3. What needs do you have in your life that Jesus needs to fill?

We fill our lives with things that only temporarily satisfy. We buy things that temporarily make us feel better, we look to others to fulfill the emptiness and loneliness we feel, we zone out bingeing shows or playing video games to stop thinking about what's troubling us. When we use other things to satisfy us or fill a void in our lives, we aren't living the full life Jesus intended for us. If we want to live well we need to come to Jesus.

4. What does it look like for you to come to Jesus to fill the emptiness you have? Where is it difficult to go to Jesus to fill your needs? Where is it easy?

How do we live well in a life full of Jesus? One where we feel His spirit in us and feel connected to Him? According to Mark 12:28, we love God with our whole heart and love others.

Read Mark 12:28

When we love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength we live our lives well and fulfilled. Things may still be hard on the outside, but on the inside we will have peace and joy that only He can give us.

5. What does it look like for you to live a life where you love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? What habits would you have to add or change in order to love God in all these ways?

Our heart is the very center of who we are. So loving with our whole heart is an important factor in living a full life.

The Bible says everything flows out of the heart (Proverbs 4:23). Anger, frustration and love are all outpourings of our heart. What's in your heart overflows into your life. When you lose your temper, get angry and react to situations, that is in direct response to what's going on in your heart. We can blame it on our personality or a bad day, but deep down when we don't have the love of Jesus in our heart, we react out of hurt, disappointment, frustration or even anger that sits in our heart. We have to bring our hearts to God to heal them and let Him fill them with love.

6. How have you seen God's love transform your heart? What's in your heart that needs to be given to God in order for you to love Him and others better?

God's love can fill us up. It takes away all our guilt and shame if we let it. It's nothing we have to earn, in fact we don't really deserve it, but He freely gives it to us because He loves us. God's arms are open wide to us at all times to give us the love we want and need, we just have to accept it from Him.

To love God with our whole heart, we have to seek Him first. We put a lot of things first in our lives: a significant other, kids, jobs, a desire for fame, our need to be accepted, our finances, wealth, friends, school - the list goes on. When we give Him our first, we are saying, "You matter the most to me."

7. Do you give God your first? What does it mean for you to give God your first fruits?

A practical way to give God your first is to spend those first few minutes of the day with Him. Before jumping on social media or turning on the news, we can spend a few minutes talking to Him or reading the

Bible, learning more about who He is. Another way is percentage-based giving. When we bring a percentage of what we make to God, it shows Him we trust Him with everything we have. It's not a legalistic practice, but an expression of devotion. It's saying, "God, we trust You."

8. What practical ways can you give God your first?

Pastor Kevin said, "When He's first in your life, everything else falls into place. That's how you stay in the flow. Jesus said seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you". We don't do these things to earn God's love; He already loves us. We do these things because when we offer Him our first, we grow closer to Him. We want Him to have our first because if He's not getting our first, someone or something else is.

Another way to love God first is to do what He asks of us. This isn't out of obligation, it's because He invites us into opportunities to walk things out with Him. He always wants to be with us and help us through what He asks us to do.

The last way to love God first and live a full life is to tell God you love Him. We can go through our days without telling Him we love Him, but just like you want to hear you are loved, God wants to hear it as well.

9. When is the last time you told God you loved Him?

So, how do you live well? It starts with the love of God: loving Him and receiving His love for you. That's how you get filled up and that's how you live well. Bring Him your heart; bring Him your firsts. Make Him your first love and tell Him you love Him.

CLOSING PRAYER

God, thank You for loving us, for choosing us. Thank You for giving us the opportunity to choose You. Where we have chosen other things above You, will You reveal it to us? Where we haven't received Your love, will You show us? We offer our hearts to You and ask You to fill them with Your love. Show us where we give our first to anything but You. We love You. Amen.

ACTION STEP

+ When you feel tired, frustrated or angry this week, take note. Ask God why you feel those things and if there's something in your heart He needs to heal to help you respond in love instead of anger.

+ Take time to notice where you give your first minutes, your heart and your money. Are you giving God your first? If not, make a plan and act on giving God your first. This could mean giving Him time in the

morning in prayer and meditation or giving your resources (finances) to an organization that is doing good in the community.

+ Tell God you love Him at least one time every day this week. If you aren't there yet, ask Him to show you what keeps you from loving Him.