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Life Lessons, What Keeps Me Going for God - Part 3



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #331 ~

I recently retired from my work as a pastor / teacher. It is at this time in my life that I want to share a number of lessons God has taught me these past 50 plus years. And personally, I will continue to apply these lessons, for I have not yet retired from serving God on this earth – that only happens when I die or am raptured. In my last two posts, I looked at 17 different truths, but there's more to be said. So let's continue:

18. *"This is **eternal life**, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent"* (Jn. 17:3). This speaks of my relationship with God, and it's most important, for it's foundational to my entire life, this age and the ages to come. At the heart of this relationship is believing the truth about God: knowing who He is, that He's Creator, Lord, King, Savior, and Judge; knowing what He's like, that He's holy, powerful, loving, forgiving, sovereign, and good; and knowing His purpose, that He wants to raise up a people for Himself, ones who will worship and serve Him forever and ever.

Here are the key components of my relationship with God:
* Getting time alone with God on a regular basis – Luke 10:38-42
* Worshiping God – loving, praising, exalting, and thanking Him – Ps. 100
* Meditating on God's word, thinking about what it means and how it applies to my life – Ps. 1:2
* Trusting God, having faith in Him, believing Him and His word – Ps. 62:8
* Being humble, knowing God is my Lord and that I am His servant, recognizing my need for Him, calling out to Him, and thanking Him – 1 Pet. 5:5-6
* Obeying God – knowing and keeping His commands – John 14:21, 23
* Serving God – obeying God, working and fighting for Him. 2 Tim. 4:7
* Being aware of the spiritual battle and the devil's schemes – Eph. 6:10-13

19. *"David, after he had served the **purpose of God** in his generation, fell asleep"* (Acts 13:36). God has had a purpose He wanted me to fulfill, a reason why He created and saved me. This is seen in His plans for my life, the work He has wanted me to do. His purpose, His plans, His work hasn't been what the world, the devil, or my flesh has wanted, but what God wanted. His plans are seen in His truths, commands, and promises. For example, there's: Ps. 23:6 – God loves me; Mark 12:30-31 – love God and love people; Matt. 6:33 – seek God's kingdom; Matt. 24:14 – proclaim the gospel; Matt. 28:19-20 – make disciples; John 15:16 – be fruitful; Matt. 24:31 – Christ is coming back.

20. *"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in **serving Him"***(1 Pet. 4:10). God is my Master, my Lord, and I am to serve Him, to work for Him. He has wanted me to serve Him in a unique way, a way unlike anyone else, and my work is part of His overall purpose for the church and overall plan for the world. What a joy to be able to serve the Creator of the Universe, the Almighty God, the Lord of lords, the King of Kings, the Savior of sinners!

How has God wanted me to serve Him? How has He wanted to use me? What part of the wall has He wanted me to build? (Neh. 3)? It has related to my relationships, my family, the church, circumstances, my talents, and my spiritual gift. And we must know our gift(s), whether it's faith, serving, teaching, exhorting, leading, giving, mercy, etc. *"God has arranged the members in the body, each one of them, just as He desired"* (1 Cor. 12:18). How have I known what God wanted me to do, and how can you know? By knowing God's word, knowing His purposes, being holy, praying, getting counsel, being led by the Spirit, knowing the plans of my church, and thinking about the needs of others. Serving God and doing what He wanted me to do has been truly satisfying, motivating, and God-glorifying.

21. *"**I recount all the laws** that come from Your mouth"* (Ps. 119:13). I have learned the importance of knowing and remembering God's word. So what have I done?
* I have learned God's word from God Himself, and He speaks through the Holy Spirit, good Bible teachers, my wife, my friends, and good books.
* My morning routine is reading the Psalms, and an OT and NT passage.
* I keep memorizing verses, which has proved to be a great benefit to my life and God's work.
* I regularly review my favorite verses, my life verses, which will soon be written up in the articles' section on this blogsite.
* Most nights, I think of a verse as I go off to sleep.

22. *"… though he is dead, **he still speaks"***(Heb. 11:4). Learning from other Christians has inspired me to be godly – and their sermons and biographies are most instructive. I find that they loved God and loved His word, and wholeheartedly served Him, and persevered in the tough times – that is, they trusted God in their trials. And God used them to preach the gospel, teach His word, and meet needs in the church. I think of Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Edwards, Whitfield, Wesley, Spurgeon, Ryle, Taylor, Elliot, Lloyd-Jones, and many others. My favorite author is Iain Murray – his books are accurate, biographical, historical, and theological.

23. *“Keep yourself in **the love of God”*** (Jude 21).One of the main ways I’ve been able to keep going for God through the years is that He has helped me to abide in His love. God knows that I needed to continually feed on and be satisfied by His love, and He commanded me to do it. Here is how I have learned to do this:
* I keep reminding myself of the gospel, that God loved me, chose me, redeemed me, justified me, forgave me, reconciled me, and saved me from sin, death, and hell. The greatest demonstration of God’s love is that Christ died to pay for my sins even though I was an unworthy sinner. Rom. 5:8
* I have communion with Christians. This helps me to remember Him and His great love, and motivates me to thank Him for all He has done for me. 1 Cor. 11:23-26
* I have believed the different aspects of God’s love, that He has been good, kind, righteous, patient, forgiving, gentle, compassionate, merciful, and faithful. Col. 3:13-14
* I confess my sins to God and freshly experience His love. Ps. 51:1-13, 1 Jn. 5:5-10

* I have been satisfied by God’s love (Ps. 90:14). I have often started my day by thinking of His love for me *“… proclaiming Your love in the morning.”* Ps. 91:2
* I go over Bible verses on God’s love. *“The Eternal Love of God”* lists out over 100 verses from the Psalms on the love that God has for me and all His children.
* I take the time to meditate, to think about the love that God has for me. *“We meditate on Your unfailing love.”* Psalm 48:9
* I praise God for His character and for His works, for who He is and for what He has done. Ps. 9:1-2
* I have had consistent fellowship with Christians, which has given me opportunity to love them and for them to love me. Eph. 4:15-16, Heb. 10:24-25

24. ***“Do not grow weary of doing good****, for in due time, you will reap if you do not grow weary”* (Gal. 6:9). I’ve gotten weary and tired, and at times have wanted to give up. But God has helped me to persevere, to

not quit. How has this happened, and how can I keep living for Him until the end of my life or the end of this age?
* I have looked to God for strength, the strength He wants to give me so I can keep doing His work. *“He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak”* (Is. 40:28-31). *“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”* Phil. 4:13
* I have looked to Jesus’ example and how He suffered at the hands of sinners, He was in extreme pain and under great pressure but He didn’t give up – He persevered. Heb. 12:3
* God’s promises motivated me to keep going, for they told me it’s worth it to endure, that He will greatly and eternally bless me if I continue living for Him. Ps. 31:19, 2 Pet. 1:2-4

* God has work for me to do, a race to run, and to finish it requires endurance. I don’t stop running in the middle of a race – I keep going until I hit the tape. As Jesus said, *“I brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave me to do.”* Jn. 17:4
* God’s word gives examples of people who persevered, who kept going until their work was done, until God’s promise was fulfilled. There’s Noah, Abraham, Job, Moses, Hannah, David, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Peter, Paul, etc. *“Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, you might have hope.”* Rom. 15:4-5
* I have learned to take one day at a time. Thinking about all that I need to do in the days ahead is usually overwhelming, and it wears me out, and it makes me feel like giving up. You see, God designed 24-hour days for a reason and I have learned to focus on the work for that day. *“This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”* Ps. 118:24, Matt. 6:34

* A good runner paces himself, and if he doesn’t, he won’t win the race, and he may not even finish it. I’ve learned to pace himself, to not go too fast or too slow. (1 Cor. 9:24-27). Not only that, but I don’t have the strength and stamina I had in earlier years, and I need more rest. *“Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”* Mark 6:31

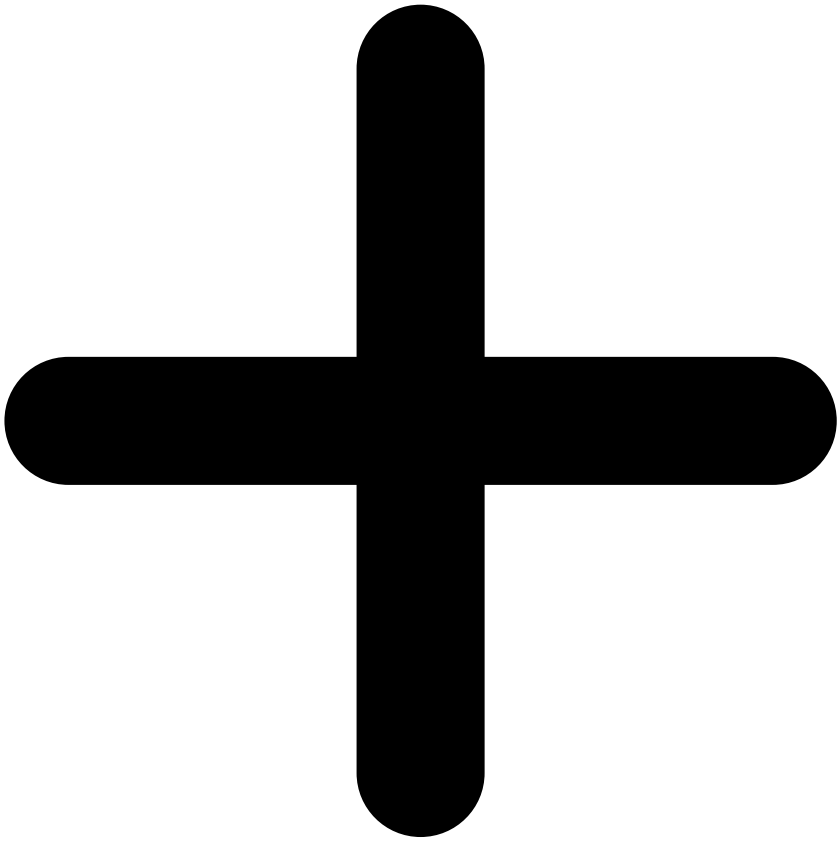
* I have fellowship with other Christians. And there are important benefits from spending time with them. There is love, prayer, comfort, wisdom, compassion, and encouragement, and these help me and motivate me to keep going. *“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.”* Rom. 12:10
* I try to stay healthy, to eat good food, exercise, and get the sleep I need. Ps. 127:2

25. I have learned **the importance of hope**. Having hope means knowing that God has excellent plans for me after my life on earth. It means knowing that it’s worth it to love God, and that working for God results in a fantastic future, in receiving eternal benefits and blessings. Let me sum up some of the key aspects of having hope. It means you are excited about being with Jesus, and about having no more sin, sorrow, weakness, or pain. It means you are looking forward to being perfect in every way, and being with people and in a place where there’s amazing love, wonderful worship, and perfect fellowship. It means you are expecting to be in heaven with other believers, and being rewarded, receiving a brand-new body, and reigning with Christ during the 1000-year kingdom age. *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”* Rom. 15:13

We have looked at 25 lessons that I believe are vitally important for you to learn if you are you to live rightly for God during your stay on earth. I’ve not learned these in a day or a week or a year, but over the course of many years, in a lifetime of being with Jesus and being in God’s word and being in good churches and being with godly believers. Might God help you to listen to Him and to learn from Him and to love Him and to live for Him in the way that He desires. *“Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, and I shall observe it to the end.”* Psalm 119:33

P.S. Learning from God is what you must do to live the life that He has planned out for you. I am so thankful that God has been my Teacher, the best Teacher in the world. If you have not done so already, then I

encourage you to read Life Lessons 1 and Life Lessons 2.



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