

S.A.I.L.N.G. - FINDING PURPOSE, MEANING & FULFILLMENT IN LIFE'S TURBULENCE



Service Accountability Integrity Loyalty Non-Competition Godliness

Life is full of ups and downs, depressing days and happy birthdays, failures and successes, loss and triumph, pain and gain. Most people in this world spend most of their time trying not to think about or consider the “*whys*” of life. Why are some rich and others poor; why are some gifted with talents and others destined to be fans of the former? Why do some suffer at an early age while others seem to have roses coming up for them all the time? Circumstances in life flow up and down like a rollercoaster. And without a proper harness or restraint to give us some stability then we get tossed to and fro like a ship battered by the open waves. There are 6 important character traits that we must develop in order to maintain our stability as life's furious winds blow. Using the acronym **S.A.I.L.N.G.**, we must understand that developing these characteristics is no easy task as it takes much courage & faith in order to launch out into the *deep* (Psalms 42).

- 1) Read Psalm 42, and list 5 emotions that you sense in the text:

- 2) Look at all the 'question marks' in Psalm 42, list some of the questions that you have asked God at times:

SERVICE/SERVANT

One of the main key's to remaining stable in life during times of turbulence is servanthood or service. Most people would rather be at the top than be at the bottom serving people. "**How can I get mine?**" remains the quest of the successful American. The truth is very uncomfortable for most people, but here it is: The last shall be first and the first shall be last, in order to be great you must be a servant ([Matthew 20:16-23](#)). Why is serving so important? Because the person who is being served is dependent on the one who is serving. So the person who serves others is a person of power and influence but they may not be given many verbal or institutional accolades. Having a servant's heart helps you to maintain your focus when things in life do not go your way, because you will always realize that even though you are at the back of the line right now, you are really at the front because serving is a great equalizer ([Matthew 6:24](#)).

- 1) Have you ever felt as if you are behind in life or not where you want to be?

- 2) Read Matthew 6:25-34. What does the Lord teach us about how to view life and things that happen?

- 3) What is the connection between Verse 25 and Verse 34 of Matthew 6?

- 4) Now read Matthew 6:19-24. What is the connection between this passage and the verses 25-34?

Accountability

Quite possibly one of the most hated attributes that a human can develop, accountability remains to be the elusive character trait for most people. Who wants to take the blame for things that go wrong, or who wants to be held responsible for fixing things that go wrong??! But the problem with shunning accountability is that when you do not hold yourself accountable & when you are not willing to allow others to hold you accountable, your life will have no stability because it will be out of control.

Accountability starts with one phrase: ***'It is my fault'***, but that is just the beginning. Once you have admitted guilt then you also have to come up with a strategy to clean up the mess that you made. Most people ignore the mess they make and allow problems to fester & rot. This is why you see a **50%** divorce rate in America, families that have out of control children, disconnected communities and zombie-like consumers staggering through retail chains. Not being accountable hinders your spiritual growth by blinding you to the need for true 'repentance'; for true repentance means acknowledging that you are going the wrong direction and making a full 180 degree turn to go in the right direction(Luke 3:4-15). Without **'counting the cost'** of the decisions in life and learning to be accountable for your actions, you can never have true fulfillment nor purpose (Luke 14:27-28).

- 1) Read Luke 13:25-35. The first 3 verses (25-27) of this passage must be taken in context of the last part of the passage, verses (28-35). What do you notice about the examples that Christ gives in the last part of the passage (v. 28-35)?

- 2) These verses talk about accountability as a Disciple of Christ, why do you think God wants us to be accountable in order to follow Him?

- 3) What are some of the common excuses that you make in your life?

Integrity

Most people in today's world have NO integrity... but what is integrity? Contrary to what you may have been taught; integrity has nothing to do with getting everything right & never doing anything wrong. Integrity is 'foundational' to your character and spirit. This means that if you make the wrong decision, if you have no integrity then you will not be able to recover from the consequences of this decision because your 'foundation' is faulty. Just like a house that has cracks in its foundation, there can be **no** renovation projects started in that house. We have to be rooted & grounded in the faith in order to have integrity; "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand" (Matt. 7:26). Taking no stance and being "agnostic" or "ignoramus" as it pertains to faith exposes you to the turbulent situations in life that will end up **driving you crazy!** You

will be tossed to & fro like a ship on the seas with no anchor (Ephesians 4:14; James 1:1-8). Integrity is integral to having stability and joy in life.

1) Read James 1:1-8. Why would someone that is double minded also lack integrity? _____

2) Read Proverbs 11:3. What does integrity have to do with being confident and staying focused in life?

3) Read Proverbs 19:1. How valuable is integrity?

4) Read Proverbs 20:7. How important is your personal integrity to your family?

Loyalty/Faithfulness

How many people in your life can you count on or depend on consistently? Probably not many... the attribute of loyalty/faithfulness/dependability is self-explanatory in regards to being a characteristic that will help you. Loyalty begins with being a person who believes in this phrase: "***It is better to give than to receive***" (Acts 20:35). The Hebrew word for 'faithful' is 'aman' which means: to nourish. We can only be loyal & faithful when we have a giving heart. Most people are so afraid of loss that they go through life with a closed fist. But a closed fist will only yield violence or pain but being a person of loyalty/faithfulness with cause you to have rich friendships, a good reputation, and a true meaning in life (Proverbs 11:13; Proverbs 13:17; Proverbs 20:6).

1) When you are a loyal person you develop the reputation of being "dependable". Read Proverbs 22:1. Why is having a good "name" or reputation important?

2) Read James 4:17. What are some of the consequences of living by your "own rules"?

3) What are some areas in your life that you could use more faithfulness or dependability?

Non-Competition

Our society teaches a “dog-eat-dog” dogma; we see college students using “drugs” in order to obtain an intellectual edge over their class-mates; neighbors watching each other plunge into banker-based homelessness; and religious institutions sit like vultures waiting for the next group’s building to be foreclosed on. Wall Street sings from the mountain tops that competition is the harbinger for prosperity and economic recovery! The main thing that you can take away from any Hollywood zombie movie is that when people stop caring for one another then the apocalypse has arrived. (The word ‘**zombie**’ is a Haitian word that actually means: someone who is under a curse to have their mind controlled by another.) Competition starts with the mind, and when you think that your fellow brother or sister wants to see you fail, you have already begun to lose. Our minds have to be **renewed every day** in order to prevent the psychological damage caused by the American culture of competition (**Romans 12:1-2**). This takes a lot of time, effort, desire & proper habit building. In order to have richness and meaning in life we must understand that the race is not won by the fasters or strongest individual but to the individual that **perseveres, sustains, & endures** (**Eccle 9:11; Hebrews 12:1**). This cannot be done if you are trying to pound your neighbor into minced meat. The truth of the matter is this: loving your neighbor will always give you more value in life than eating your neighbor. (**Mark 12:30-31**)

- 1) What are some things that you would like to do for a neighbor or a fellow brother/sister in Christ that you have not done?

- 2) Read Luke 6:38. This verse makes it apparent that when you give to others, other will give to you, do you believe this? Why or why not?

- 3) Read Acts 2:38-47. In this passage it says “and had all things in common”, why do you think The Holy Spirit would compel people to give and share with one another?

Godliness

1) When you think of “Godliness”, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?

2) Read 1 Peter 1:3-20. What does ‘godliness’ in life represent?

3) Read 2 Peter 1:5-10. What is the connection between godliness and consistency in your spiritual life?

Here is where the rubber meets the road when it comes to life. This last attribute is one of the most important to develop in order to be able to navigate life. Godliness is one of the main attributes that we must add to our faith in order to live right (1Peter 1:3-6). But what is godliness? To make it simple, godliness can be described as “**worship**”. ‘Worship’ means to have your heart in a state that accepts, agrees with, and loves righteousness & truth. Worship or godliness means that internally, you recognize truth and you think positively about The Lord’s commands. Godliness is like **weightlifting**; as you continue to exercise faith and continue to infuse proteins/nutrients into your body, you GROW “spiritual muscles”. The “muscles” allow you to be content and faithfully in any depressed economic situation (1 Timothy 6:6); to use self-control and restraint when temptations & lusts present themselves (1 Timothy 6:11); to learn patience by gaining **knowledge & understand** (2 Peter 1:6); and to keep your tongue and your thoughts holy/pure before The LORD (2 Peter 3:11). Once you grow in godliness and develop it, the spiritual value that you have gained will give you true fulfillment and meaning! **Without** the constant infusing, applying and revering of The Word of God, meaning, purpose and fulfillment are just figments of the imagination. For Our Lord said “**These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might REMAIN in you, and that YOUR joy might be FULL** “ (John 15:11)