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A JOURNEY IN LIFE



PART 1: FINDING LIFE

BOOKLET 2: Wanting Life

Lim Liong

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BOOKLET 2: Wanting Life

Photograph on this page: This bluish butterfly was fluttering and hovering at this flowering plant.

Photograph on Front Cover: While the butterfly was positioned at the plant, suddenly this lizard appeared at the scene, moving towards the butterfly. The lizard wanted life for itself by eating the butterfly! The butterfly also wanted life for itself, and immediately flew off! (This photograph was taken a few seconds after the photograph on page 1)

What kind of life do you want? What do you do to find it? Are you like the lizard or the butterfly, or are you different from both of them?

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A JOURNEY IN LIFE

Dear reader,

This booklet is not for sale. It is made available as a gift to all who want to read it. If it helps to bring long-lasting meaning to your life, it has fulfilled its purpose.

It is written for those who are seeking for meaning and quality in life and who are willing to spend time and effort to find out so as to live in that way. A spirit of humility, honesty and sincerity is necessary if what is shared in these pages is to reach the heart and bear fruit for long-term benefit.

If it is meaningful to you, you are welcome to keep the booklet for long-term use. If you do not want the booklet any longer, please give it to someone else who wants it or return it to the one who gave it to you.

This booklet is part of the book, A Journey In Life, which is written in three parts.

In **Part 1**, we look at how we can find moral

and spiritual life and begin the journey of discovery and growth. It is written in simpler English so that children too may join in this journey. They may need some guidance from parents or adults, especially in thinking through the deeper issues of life. This part is written in the form of a series of **booklets**.

In Part 2, we consider the struggles, difficulties, pains and disappointments as well as the sense of fulfilment in the process of growing up morally and spiritually. The issues considered include overcoming the temptations of this world, the attacks of the evil one and the wrongful desires of the self-centred life. This part is presented in several **volumes**.

In Part 3, we ponder over the infinite potential of moral and spiritual excellence when the heart is pure and we see **God** in His transcendent glory. As we freely partake of the divine nature and deepen in the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, we transcend the petty self-considerations and the vanity of this world. This part is transmitted through various **compositions**.

A JOURNEY IN LIFE

PART 1: FINDING LIFE

In PART 1, we seek to find out the answers to questions about life.

What is life? Are there different kinds of life? What brings meaning to life?

Who is the Creator and Giver of life? Can I know Him personally and deeply?

What is death? What happens when I die? What is eternity?

What is the most important thing in life and what must I do to have it?

Why are there so many problems in life? How can I face problems the right way?

Why is it so easy to do what is not good and so hard to do the right things? How can I learn to be truly good in my heart?

Can I live a truly meaningful life of lasting value and a life that will not come to an end?

BOOKLET 2: Wanting Life

Chapter 1: Looking for Life

When I was a young boy, I wanted very much to find meaning in life. I sought to be happy, but within my heart there was a sense of loneliness and I knew that something was missing. Although at times I felt very happy, I was not deeply at peace.

I was looking for life but I could not find the kind of life that would bring deep satisfaction to my heart. During those days, I knew that some things were more meaningful. One thing that was precious to me was the relationship of love within the family. There were many of us in my family and I was very close to my family. Such a relationship of love brought happiness and meaning to my life. I was very sad and I cried when there were serious quarrels in the family.

One day, some of my school friends decided to camp for a few days at the beach. I found the time with them to be exciting as we stayed in small tents and watched hermit crabs

at the beach. However, within one day, I felt very homesick and wanted very much to return home. We were not far from home, yet I could not bear to be away for a while. I felt lonely as I was separated from my family. As a child, I often wished that my whole family would always live together and care for one another, as one happy family.

Animals also relate with one another. Is there a difference in meaning in the way we relate ?



God has created us such that we know that there is much meaning in life if there is love and kindness in our relating with one another.

When I was young, my older family members brought me to watch cinema shows from time to time. During such times, I was moved by the stories that showed love and concern for people. I felt very sad for those who were going through suffering and especially those who were badly treated by others. I was especially angry with those who bullied other people in order to get what they wanted. I wanted very much to be able to help those who were going through difficult times. In my heart, I knew that love and concern for others was very meaningful. If I could be good in my heart, I would find true meaning.

What are you looking for in life?

Have you thought about what it is that will bring more meaning to your life?

If you are able to get the things you enjoy in this world, do you think that you will be fully satisfied?

If in life you have no meaningful goal

You will find no meaning in your soul

Chapter 2: Why we do not find life

Why is it that I did not find life even though I wanted it so much? As I look back now, I see that much of what I had done in those days was based on what I liked, what was more enjoyable to me. I tried to be good, but I was often drawn to things which I found enjoyable at that time. I ended up doing many things that were enjoyable but not good for myself or for others.

My family was poor, in material things. At times I ate porridge with salted vegetable and salted egg, or porridge with sauce, and other simple food. Although these were quite tasty, I looked forward to more enjoyable food.

Once a year, I could enjoy a bowl of flour vermicelli with one duck egg and one chicken egg. My mother would prepare this for us on our birthdays every year. Another time of the year that I looked forward to very much was the Chinese New Year reunion dinner when there would be many delicious dishes.

As a young boy, I knew that if I had more

money, I could enjoy a greater variety of food. During school days, I was given five cents a day as pocket money and ten cents a day for bus fare. I often walked a long distance to school to save the money to buy food at the canteen.

In school, I found other ways to have more money to buy the food I liked. During those days, I could play the game of marbles quite well. There were a few of us who would gather in one part of the school grounds to gamble, through playing games with marbles. I was able to win often and so had more money to buy things that I liked. We had to be alert to look out for the school servant who would be looking for us, as we were not allowed to gamble in school.

I was so eager to have more money that I did not care that those who lost in the game would have less money for their own needs. I was in fact also influencing others to break the school rules when I gambled with them. I was drawing others towards being greedy in heart. This happens when enjoyment is so important.

In February this year, I spoke to a man who

was repairing cars for a living. He told me that when he was younger, he used to gamble heavily. He knew that he should not gamble, but he found it hard to stop. He lost much money, and because of what he owed to others, he had to sell his house. With all his money gone, he stopped gambling and was now happy that he could earn a simple living. He said, "If I have enough for daily needs, that is enough for me."

There are many ways that people gamble. They may gamble with playing cards or gambling machines, or bet on horse racing and other events. Others want to get money quickly by buying and selling shares, often borrowing money and checking on the stock market daily to know what to buy and sell, as prices go up and down.

When we gamble, we think of ourselves and what we want, and we do not care much whether it is right or wrong, good or bad. We become more and more self-centred and often unfair and unkind towards others.

Many may say that they do not gamble. If we look at the reason for gambling, the meaning

within the heart, we will find that it is basically because of a wrongful desire to own or possess. We want it because we like it, even when it is not good or right. This is called covetousness.

Gambling is an example of covetousness. When we are jealous of others who have what we do not have, it is also covetousness. When we are dishonest because of what we want, it is the same thing. Whenever we long for something that is not right for us to have, it is the spirit of covetousness.

When we live in this way, God will be angry with us and He cannot be close to us. We know that a close relationship of love and kindness among people is very meaningful. We can see then that what is most meaningful will be such a relationship with God, who is perfectly good and kind. When we go our own way, our hearts will not be pure and God will not be close to us. We will not have the life of God and we will then not be able to find the meaningful life that we are seeking for. The Lord Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5: 8).

When we do wrong, it is like a dark cloud that hides us from the light of the life of God



What we see then is darkness and blackness

When God created the first man and woman, He gave them the choice, whether they would follow Him and His ways, which are good, or go their own way. When they chose their own way, a change took place within their heart. They became afraid of God and wanted to hide from Him. Their heart had become ugly and they knew that God was angry with them.

The Lord Jesus explains that those who love what is good will also love the light from God and will come to the light, but those who choose what is not good will want to hide from the light of God (John 3: 19-21). Often, we are not so aware that this is what we are doing, running away from God and His light.

We may even try to find a way to comfort ourselves that there is no God so that we can continue to do the things that we like and not to worry about what He would do to us. At times, we choose to believe in a "god" that we are more comfortable with, one who will give us the things that we like, and all that we need to do is to please him by making some offerings to him.

During those days, when I was living for myself and seeking my own enjoyment, God was not real to me in my daily life even though in my heart there was some awareness of the presence of God. I enjoyed many things, yet in my heart I knew that there was no depth of meaning in my life.

The Lord Jesus says that what we

treasure will affect our heart. He tells us, "Where your treasure is, your heart will be there also" (Matthew 6: 21). When you seek for the things of this world, you make your choices with this direction in life. Your heart will become more and more set in this way of life.

The Lord Jesus asks this question, "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and to lose his soul?" (Mark 8: 36). If we live for the wrong things in life, it will hurt us in our own heart, our own soul, and there will be no beauty in our character. We will also go further and further away from God, who is perfectly good in character. He will not find it meaningful to be close to us.

If we want to find life, we must choose the right treasure we want, in our heart. This treasure will then become more and more a part of our heart and will affect the way we live. The Lord Jesus says, "For out of the overflowing of the heart, the mouth speaks. The good man, out of the good treasure, puts forth good things and the evil man out of the evil treasure puts forth evil things" (Matthew 12: 34, 35).

Many of us want to know God. We want Him to be close to us. We want Him to help us and give us the things that we think will bring happiness. We want to go to Heaven when we die and to live happily ever after, according to our fairy-tale ideas and desires.

We want all these, yet we do not spend time and make effort to find out what God really cares about, what is important and meaningful to Him. We do not seek Him to know what He wants to tell us, but we are upset when we do not get what we desire, and we complain that He does not care about what we want!

Where are you looking?

What is it that you spend your time thinking about most of the time? Where do you think you will be able to find the life that you are looking for?

Have you been covetous in your life? If so, what have you done to correct it?

*Living for yourself may seem so good
But you will die without spiritual food*

Chapter 3: How we can find life

Why is it that we cannot find life though we try so hard? How can our problem be solved? We have seen in Booklet 1 that we do not have life in ourselves. God created us and we need His help in order to have life. Most of us think of life in the sense of being physically alive, just like plants and animals. However, we know that this kind of life alone cannot bring deep meaning to us. With God's help, we will learn, in Booklet 3, more of the difference between physical life and moral and spiritual life.

Unlike animals, we have a spirit, which can understand what is good and bad, right and wrong; and we are able to choose which way we want to live our lives. We also know that there is a spiritual world that is different from the physical, and in this world, we can relate with God and know Him personally in our lives. When we choose to go our own way, our heart becomes impure and God is displeased with us and will not be close to us. He will also have to punish us where we have gone the wrong way because He is a God of justice and goodness.

At the same time, God cares for us very deeply and He wants to help us so that we can be forgiven and learn to become good. How can God forgive us, when He must punish all wrongdoing? How can God help us to be good when it is not meaningful for Him to be close to us, because, in our selfish ways, we are so displeasing to Him?

God tells us that the only way He can solve our problem is to send a Saviour to save us from the punishment that we deserve, as well as to help us to become good. There is no human being created by God who has not failed God and who can save us. All of us have done wrong. We cannot even save ourselves!

The only way is for God Himself to save us. He must become our Saviour. In order for God to save us, He must suffer on our behalf, bear the punishment that we deserve, so that we can be set free, if we are truly repentant and we want to change to become good. How can God suffer for us? How can He bear the punishment for us, when He Himself is the Judge?

God solved the problem by becoming a Man, so that as a Man, although He was still God, He could take our place to bear the punishment due to us. This Man is the Lord Jesus Christ. You may have heard of His name and you may have wondered who He really is.

Who do you think the Lord Jesus is? Does it matter who He is? What difference can it make to your life to know who He is?

Many things have been said about Him. Some think that He never existed, that He is just a character in a story made up by people in order to bring comfort and hope to themselves. Some say that He was a great man, a good man, a great teacher of many helpful truths. Others have known Him personally as their Saviour and Lord. Even angels and evil spirits have spoken about Him. God Himself tells us who the Lord Jesus is.

There was a Jew whose name was Flavius Josephus. He lived in the first century, that is, during the same century as the Lord Jesus when He was a Man on earth. As a historian,

he wrote about things that happened in the past. He was not a Christian, but he wrote about the Lord Jesus as a historical person who lived in the first century. In the book called "Antiquities of the Jews", he described the Lord Jesus as "a wise man", "a teacher of people", and "a doer of surprising deeds". He also wrote that the Lord Jesus was sentenced to death on the cross, and many years after His death, people who followed Him, who were called Christians, were still believing in Him.

The apostle Paul was a Jew who lived in the first century. He was very angry with the Christians, after the death of the Lord Jesus, as he thought that they were wrong in believing in Jesus as the Saviour that God had promised in the writings of the Bible. He used force to bring many Christians to prison. He thought that the Lord Jesus was an imposter, claiming to be the Son of God when He was only a man.

God was very kind to the apostle Paul, who was known as Saul at that time. When he was travelling to the city of Damascus, as he drew near the city, suddenly a light from heaven

shone around him. He fell to the ground and he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Saul asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The voice answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but rise up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." This is recorded in the Bible in Acts 9: 1-6.

When the Lord Jesus spoke to Saul, a light from heaven shone around him



If your heart is open to Him, the light of the Lord Jesus will also shine into your heart and show you how to find life through Him

As a result of this meeting with the Lord Jesus in this unusual way, Saul became sure that the Lord Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, that He was alive, that He was not an imposter, but He was indeed the Saviour of the world. Saul knew that the Bible had promised such a Saviour in the Old Testament. He gave himself fully to follow the Lord Jesus and changed very deeply in his life. He became the apostle Paul and wrote many letters that are found in the Bible in the New Testament.

The Lord Jesus helped the apostle Paul to change very deeply within his heart and enabled him to help many others to find forgiveness and life. The Lord Jesus could do this because He is not just an ordinary man. Indeed, He is God, who became Man, so as to help us. He overcame death, rose from the dead and spoke to Saul, the persecutor of the Christians, and Saul became the apostle Paul.

God Himself told the Jewish people many years before the Lord Jesus was born, that the Lord Jesus would come into this world and become our Saviour. He spoke through the

prophet Isaiah in this way. "For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulder. His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." This is recorded in the Old Testament of the Bible in the book of Isaiah, chapter 9, verse 6.

Isaiah also prophesied that the Lord Jesus would die for our sake, because of our sins, our wrongdoing. He wrote in Isaiah 53: 4-6, "Surely our sicknesses He has borne, and our sorrows He carried. Yet we considered Him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our wrongdoings, He was crushed because of our sins. The punishment for the sake of our well being fell upon Him, and by the wounds that He suffered, we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way and the Lord has caused the sins of all of us to fall on Him."

When the Lord Jesus was born, there were some shepherds looking after their sheep in the fields at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord

shone around them. They were very frightened, and the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring good news to you of a great joy, which will be to all the people, because today in the city of David, there was born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2: 10, 11).

Although the Lord Jesus was God before He came into this world as a Man, He was born as a Child, and He grew up in this world. When He was about thirty years of age, He began to teach the people the truths of the Kingdom of God, with authority and accuracy. With His divine power, He healed those who were sick. He drove out evil spirits from many people who were suffering from their evil power.

The evil spirits were very afraid of the Lord Jesus because they knew that He had the power to deal with their evil ways. At one time, when a man with an unclean spirit saw the Lord Jesus from afar, he ran and bowed down before Him. The evil spirit within the man cried out with a loud voice, saying, "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg of You by God, do not torment me" (Mark 5: 7).

He was afraid because the Lord Jesus had power to command him to come out of the man.

Even His enemies could not find anything wrong with His teachings. The religious leaders among the Jewish people were angry with the Lord Jesus because He spoke against their hypocrisy, in pretending to be good when in their hearts they were selfish and unkind. These leaders called upon officers to seize the Lord Jesus. When they came back without doing so, they were asked why they did not do what they were told. These officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man speaks" (John 7: 46).

The Lord Jesus spent much time with twelve disciples when He was a Man on earth. After the Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross and was buried, His disciples were sad and disheartened, as it seemed that there was no more hope. However, the Lord Jesus appeared to them after He rose from the dead and they were filled with joy. This changed their whole lives. They became very eager and confident and were brave in facing dangers to their lives.

One of these disciples, the apostle John, wrote about the Lord Jesus in this way. "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched, concerning the Word of Life - and the Life was made known and we have seen and bear witness and we announce to you the Eternal Life, which was with the Father and was made known to us" (1 John 1: 1, 2).

The apostle John wrote that although the Lord Jesus lived on earth as a Man, a human being, yet He was also God. In Him was eternal life, the life of God, which can bring true and lasting meaning into our lives if we trust Him and walk in His ways. He lived on earth, He died, He was buried and He rose from the dead and He is alive today to help us in our lives.

The Lord Jesus came not just to teach us the right way to live. As a Man, He also showed us by His life how we should live: to be pure in heart, living a life in full obedience to God and dependence on Him. Most important of all, He came to make it possible for God to forgive

us for all our wrongdoing and help us to become truly good and pure in heart, in our character.

As the perfect Man who never did anything wrong, He willingly took our place to receive the punishment that we deserve so that if we are truly sorry for our sins and we come to God, to obey Him and walk in His ways, we can be forgiven and receive God's life into our being.

The Lord Jesus overcame all temptations throughout His life, and especially at the Cross, when the spiritual battle was the greatest. It is now possible for us to become truly unselfish, pure and good because we can receive the life of the Lord Jesus so that His life of purity can become part of our lives, our character, if we choose to follow Him.

The Lord Jesus says, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit from itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. The one who abides in Me and I in him, this one bears much fruit, because apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15: 4, 5).

When we trust the Lord Jesus, walk in His ways, keep close to Him and depend on Him, we are abiding in Him, just as a branch abides in the vine. We can then bear fruit in our lives, developing a good character and being able to help others in the same direction of life.

Do you want to abide in the Lord Jesus and bear fruit just as the branch abides in the vine?



The apostle Paul, who was once an enemy of Christians, became an apostle of the Lord Jesus and gave his whole life to serve Him and to help others to find forgiveness and life. He

gave up everything that used to be important in his natural and self-centred life, in order that he might know the Lord Jesus deeply in his life.

In Philippians chapter 3, the apostle Paul said, "Whatever things were gain to me, I have now counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count all things as loss because of the very great preciousness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake, I have lost all things and I count them as worthless in order that I may gain Christ."

The apostle Paul developed a very good character and helped many people because he had learnt to abide in the Lord Jesus and the Lord Jesus was abiding in him. He was very thankful to the Lord Jesus, "who loved me and gave up Himself for me" (Galatians 2: 20).

God in His kindness helped me to come to Him to find forgiveness and life through the Lord Jesus. When I was in Secondary school, one of my friends invited me to a Christian meeting. After the meeting, he shared with me my need for forgiveness and said that the Lord Jesus

had died for my sake so that I could be forgiven. I knew that I had done many wrong things and I needed forgiveness. I prayed to God, confessing my sins, and I received the Lord Jesus as my Saviour. When I did that, I found a sense of peace that came into my heart. This was the beginning of a long road in the path of life. I have come to know the Lord Jesus more over the years and I am very grateful for His love and His sacrifice for my sake.

If you want to find life, you must first seek forgiveness for your sins so that you can come before God and receive His life into your heart. God can forgive you now because the Lord Jesus took your place in bearing the punishment for your sins. However, this will help you only if you are truly sorry for the way you have been living and you now want to change and follow God's ways. If you do not want to change, God's judgment for sin will still await you because the death of the Lord Jesus will then not be applied to you.

When you come to God humbly and honestly, in repentance, and seek His

forgiveness through the Lord Jesus, God will forgive you as well as give you His life through the Lord Jesus, so that you will be born again spiritually and become a child of God.

You will then be able to learn more and more how to become good. The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of God, will come to dwell in your heart, your spirit, and help you to know the Lord Jesus more personally as His life becomes more and more part of your life and being.

Why do we need help to find life?

Why is it that all of us need a Saviour?

Who do you think the Lord Jesus Christ is? What is your response to Him?

In darkness and despair we may grope

Until in Christ we find our Light and Hope

If you want to know more about the Giver of life and the different kinds of life, you could read:

Part 1. Booklet 3: Understanding life

P.S.

If you have not yet received God's forgiveness and you have now decided to come to God for forgiveness, you could pray to Him. You could tell Him you are sorry you went your own way and now you want to follow Him and His ways and ask Him to forgive you for all the wrong things you have done. You could thank Him for the eternal life that He offers you through the Lord Jesus and receive Him into your heart. The Lord Jesus died for our sake, bearing the punishment that we deserve because of our wrongdoing, making it possible for us to be forgiven and to receive the life of God now.

In order to deepen your walk with God, it is important to read the Bible and to pray to God regularly. It is also helpful for you to learn from other Christians with good character, who deeply love God. You could also take some time, prayerfully, to look for a suitable Christian congregation that is faithful to God, where the Bible is carefully taught and applied to daily life. Look for one where you can be helped to know the Lord Jesus more personally each day, relate meaningfully with others and grow in the quality of your character.

If you have difficulty getting information on the availability of this booklet and other booklets on this subject, *A Journey in Life*; for enquiries, you could write to the following address:

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PO Box 348
Singapore 912742

If you do write, please include your postal address (and contact number if you wish).

As the sun rises each morning...



...does the Light of Life shine within your

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