

# Set Free Update

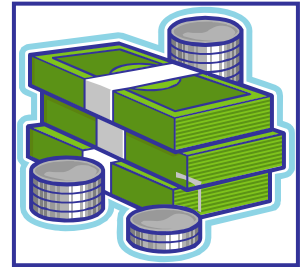


NOVEMBER 2007

## LIFE

### THE ULTIMATE SHOPPING SPREE

It's mandatory! No one can decline: rich/poor; young/old, male/female, happy/sad, educated/uneducated, sick/healthy, weary/energetic, busy or bored. No matter who you are or what your circumstance, if you are alive YOU'RE SHOPPING! Currency on this mandatory shopping trip is **YOUR LIFE!** This valuable currency is helpfully broken down in smaller denominations. You can spend it in various amounts, for example, decades, years, months, weeks, days, minutes, and even in a one-cent equivalent purchase power of seconds. You are continually shopping. There is no option to "save" any currency. Everyone's account is different and no one knows how much currency they have.



The options for "spending" are numerous, or so it would seem. Our environment is full of opportunities, bidden and unbidden. Continually we are faced with choices for "spending" our time. There is no reprieve; we are constantly spending from our "life account." In the context of all our "spending", some on transactions of our time we've chosen, and some on transactions of our time required of us, Jesus' question in Matthew 16:26 is a critical one, *"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"* What Jesus makes very clear is we can gain "everything"--success, beauty, education, wealth, health, power, influence, prestige, work, pleasure, etc. in exchange for our life and miss the *real treasure--a living and vital, moment by moment relationship with God through Jesus Christ!*

Among all the options for "spending" the choices really are only two. Jesus makes that clear when He said, *"If I [spend] to save my life I will lose it and if I [spend] to lose my life for HIM, I will find it."* (Matt. 16:25) The apostle Paul gives testimony to the truth of Jesus' word when he declares, *"But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ"* (Phil. 3:7&8, NIV). Jesus invites us to "spend" our life with HIM! In our continual "spending" from our "Life Account" He says to us, *"Come to Me all you who are weary and burdened...all you who are looking for the REAL TREASURE... Come to Me, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you...stay yoked with Me...and learn from Me...I will teach you...for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find REST for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light"* (Matt. 11: 28-30, NIV).



This is the heartbeat of Set Free Ministries, going with weary people to Jesus to take His yoke and enter His rest. Just like the four men who lowered their friend through the roof to Jesus, (see Luke 5:17ff) it is our privilege to come alongside people and bring them to Jesus. Equipped with the Word of God and prayer we encourage and assist them to take Jesus' yoke upon themselves and learn of HIM! What a joy to witness the Truth (Jesus) penetrate their heart, healing deep wounds, lifting heavy burdens, exposing lies, convicting of sin, releasing captives, assuring of forgiveness, giving grace to forgive, cleansing from guilt and shame.

What a sacred place, yoked with Jesus forever! What amazing grace, learning from Him continually, learning to walk ("spend life") as He did. (I John 2:6) As we "spend" our "Life Account" choosing to be yoked with Him, Jesus gently assures us of His favor, so we can REST because we ARE ACCEPTED! He assures us of His protection, so we can REST because we ARE SECURE! He graciously guides and enables us to do the works God "prepared in advance for us to do" (see Eph. 2:10), so we can REST because we ARE SIGNIFICANT! That's LIFE! LIFE ABUNDANT!

So... how is your shopping going? What treasure are you pursuing? Where are you investing your time, talent, and treasure...YOUR LIFE??? Thank you for "spending" your time to read this. God bless you as you seek Him; for you will surely find Him when you seek Him with all your heart (Jeremiah 29:13).

Written by Loie Bredeweg



## FROM DESPAIR AND PRISON TO HOPE AND FREEDOM

I had been taught as a youngster and truly believed that I was not worth anything. I lived a life of misery and loneliness, with a series of events eventually ending with me being on crack cocaine and incarcerated. I had been taught about Jesus but never really knew Him. I just knew *about* Him. I spent many hours buying and using crack cocaine with "friends", and after my money was gone my so called "friends" were also gone. Time and time again this happened, showing me that I was deep into bondage.



The Holy Spirit changed my life while I was in prison. Being a trucker, after I was released I hooked up with TFC (Transport for Christ) and they told me about Set Free Ministries. I have been meeting weekly with SFM since 2005 and the Lord has changed me from a lonely man on crack cocaine and without a purpose to a Spirit filled man with the purpose of serving God through operating "The Helping Hands of Jesus" ministry which I started in August of 2007. I know I am forgiven and can now live in the freedom of forgiveness and knowing that God thinks of me in Christ as a precious and worthwhile son.

When I first came to Set Free Ministries I truly believed that I could not pass "my" crack house--that my car would 'automatically' turn into the parking lot of that crack house. By the grace of God now I know I can, and most of the time I don't even think of the crack house as I pass it sitting in my car. I found my freedom by learning truth and walking in it, and was encouraged by SFM volunteers and the SFM small group called 'Follow Thru'.

I am truly blessed by being used of God in helping to supply food to the food pantries that help the needy with much needed groceries, food that otherwise would be thrown away by the trucker. So far we have served 6,186 families through 22 pantries and kitchens.

**PRAISE GOD I AM FREE and WORTHWHILE.** Now I ask people: "How can I be a blessing to you today?" I am richly blessed, highly anointed, adopted son of the most high God.



Ed Tripp

Written by Paul Taming

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