



A Profound Song by Gladys Knight and The Pips

Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me James Weatherly

I've had my share of life's ups and downs
But fate's been kind, the downs have been few
I guess you could say that I've been lucky
Well, I guess you could say that it's all **because of you**

If anyone should ever write my life story
For whatever reason there might be
Ooo, you'll be there between each line of pain and glory
'Cause you're the best thing that ever happened to me
Ah, **you're the best thing that ever happened to me**

Oh, there have been times when times were hard
But always somehow I made it, I made it through
'Cause for every moment that I've spent hurting
There was a moment that I spent, ah, just **loving you**

If anyone should ever write my life story
For whatever reason there might be
Oh, **you'll be there** between each line of pain and glory
'Cause you're the best thing that ever happened to me
Oh, you're the best thing that ever happened to me
I know, you're the best thing, oh, that ever happened to me

This song is so profound because it is so revealing – for the answer to the “**you**” is the defining issue and essence of a life, of our life – our life’s (or moment’s, if we change our daily) God. Who (worse “what”) will it be if someone should write our life story? Ouch!

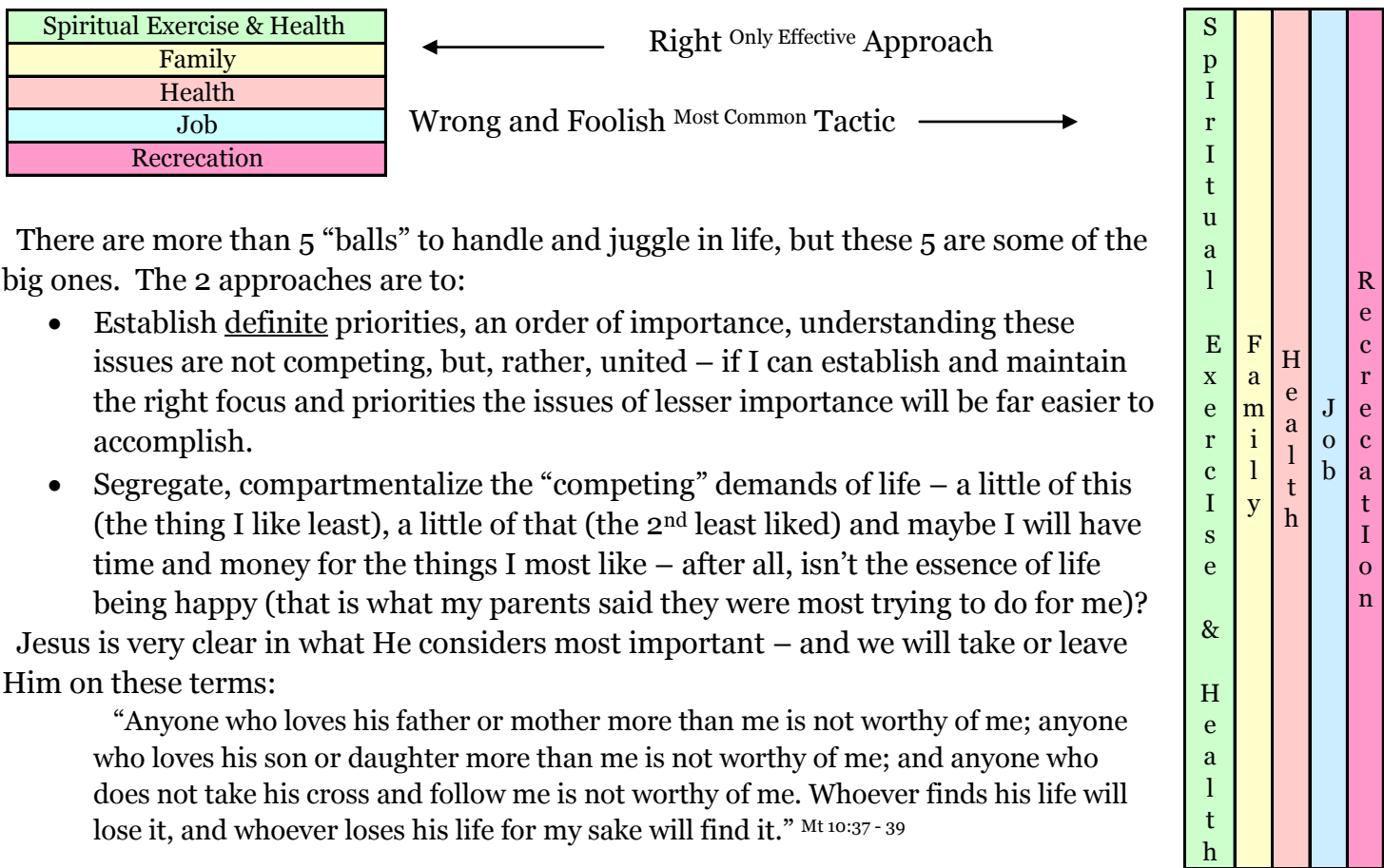
- Time? Many people will do anything, live in any condition or state just to live a little longer.
- Money? A prevailing thought is that if money will just be there everything else will take care of itself.
- Looks? This is certainly shallow and fleeting, but many spend most of their time and emotions on these surface issues.
- Job, spouse (or “soul mate” if tired of your spouse), children, drugs . . . there are many options.

Who has not seen people (it is often easier to see and learn from others than from ourselves!) in a crisis or near the end of life and it isn’t a pretty picture if they only then find the “best thing” in their life is letting them down.

The *Bible* says each of us will write (are now, in fact, writing) our life’s story that will be judged, by the real God, when we die. And not only does it warn that we will be judged, but ***clearly*** shows and tells us what God offers, requires, expects and demands if we are to be judged right (or righteous) before Him. Many think God’s help begins when we die, but between now and then we are just expected to do our best – this will be enough to please God (what else could He expect?). Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! The **you** that God offers, requires, expects and demands if we are to be

judged right (or righteous) is Jesus Christ – if He stands with and for us in life, He will stand with and for us in death . . . if He doesn't, He won't (we will be on our own).

A couple of comparative pictures may best demonstrate the right and wrong ways of making Jesus Christ the **you** as the **Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me**.



There are more than 5 “balls” to handle and juggle in life, but these 5 are some of the big ones. The 2 approaches are to:

- Establish definite priorities, an order of importance, understanding these issues are not competing, but, rather, united – if I can establish and maintain the right focus and priorities the issues of lesser importance will be far easier to accomplish.
- Segregate, compartmentalize the “competing” demands of life – a little of this (the thing I like least), a little of that (the 2nd least liked) and maybe I will have time and money for the things I most like – after all, isn't the essence of life being happy (that is what my parents said they were most trying to do for me)?

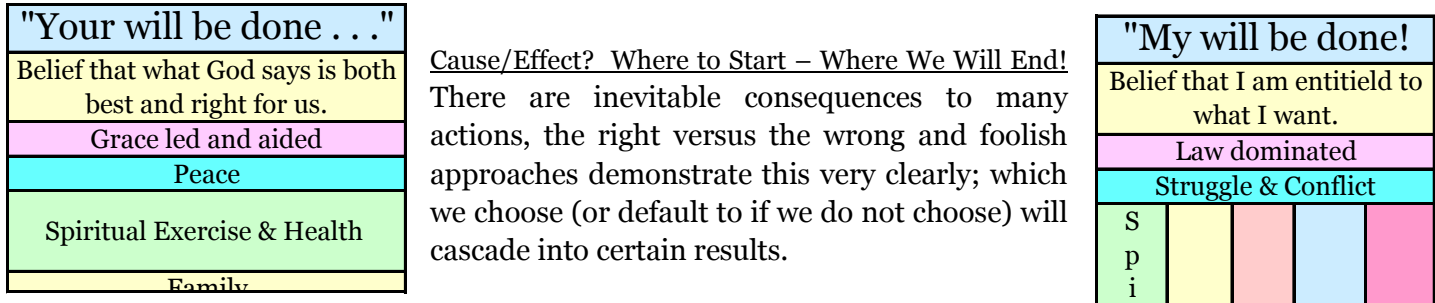
Jesus is very clear in what He considers most important – and we will take or leave Him on these terms:

“Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” Mt 10:37 - 39

The Practical Implications?

Good theories are only of value to the extent we can practically apply them in our day-to-day lives. A few people can earn a living in “pure” philosophy, but for the rest of us a little philosophy goes a long way!

Again, an illustration will best highlight the differences in the two approaches to life and its many decisions:



We are born with the nature that “I want . . . give it to me! Now!” and “My will and desires be done!” Supporting this mindset is the belief that I am entitled to A, B or C – and as we get older we may add “as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else” (which, at times, we can be very loose with judging this criteria). We will find, however, we are inevitably limited and restrained by economic, health, governmental, other physical, mental and emotional laws; no, we can't have everything we want

because we don't have the money, time, physical abilities . . . my will can only be done within the rigid constraints of one type law or another. And as we age the constraints, especially the physical laws, tighten more and more! Finally we find ourselves in a nursing home bed or die and are placed in a casket – no, my desires can only “rule” for a limited, very short, time.

Essentially, there is only one antidote or alternative to the prevailing, immature, life-view: to realize early, rather than late, the futility, pointlessness and dissatisfaction of my will (be humble in the face of huge and obvious obstacles) and seek to find God, His will and grace; we are no match for the challenges of life (and death), but just maybe there is a God that is and who will help us. To pursue this we don't have to accept the foolishness of the loud religious voices that proclaim we can and will get everything of God in a moment, right now, without any follow-up thought or effort. And equally wrong is the common, silly, thought that “faith in God” is just another set of rules and responsibilities on top of those we already cannot carry!

Just as there are many years between a child's dream of winning an Olympic Gold medal and standing on the platform with the medal around their neck – many cases of 2 steps forward/1 back, blood, sweat and tears . . . there are nonetheless signs all along the way that they are headed in the right direction – they don't (and shouldn't believe) they are making progress to their goal without supporting tangible evidence – to do so would be and is foolish. The same is true in beginning, testing, succeeding, failing, continuing, maturing . . . finding freedom in the place of bondage, and beginning more and more to realize this is an unbelievable, exciting, often white knuckled and scary . . . adventure of daring to believe there is a God, He is good, able to do what He wants, when He wants, He doesn't need us to do anything for Him and that He has a specific will, in all aspects of life, that is right, best and for us. I know, this is not what we hear from the big-mouth religious voices, but it is what we will find should we choose to read the pure Word of God – the *Bible*. “You mean the *Bible* we tell me everything I need to do in every aspect of life?” The *Bible* combined with prayer, rest, Church attendance, and the graces that attend it, hearing the Word of God preached, the sacraments, fellowship . . . are the “bridge” to everything we need to know and do in every aspect of life.



Where to Start – Where to Finish

Interestingly, the start and finish lines to success in this venture (sometimes adventure, but mostly mundane day-to-day, “same old, same old”) of life and death is identical: seeking, finding, doing, learning the greatness and goodness, beginning to love (rather than resist) “Your will be done!;” becoming satisfied, in fact delighted, with His will being done . . . because we have found man's (any man's) will is not only inadequate, but foolish and destructive!

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, 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.” Mt 11:28 – 30

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Jn 8:31 – 32

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Gal 5:1

Yes, in spite of the many (foolish) voices claiming otherwise, real Christianity is freedom – freedom (to the extent we accept the grace offered and available to us) from the competing voices of “My will be done!” to what is best for us in “Your [God’s] will be done.” Don’t pursue a religion that asks: “What can I do for God;” instead ask, “What does God offer me, for my good?” The reason? Because any god who needs any person to do anything for them is a pitiful little god.

We see this contrast in one of the scariest parables of the *Bible*, *The Parable of the Ten Minas*:

Jesus said: “A man of noble birth [obviously speaking of himself after his crucifixion and resurrection] went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’

“But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’ [this is a picture of everyone – all people – all, unless and until they are given the grace of faith to love rather than hate Him].

“He was made king, however, [God’s will is always done!] and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

“The first one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned ten more.’

“‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’

“The second came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned five more.’

“His master answered, ‘You take charge of five cities.’

“Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’ [this is the classic picture of a religious, but not Christian, person – they think of God as somehow needing them, requiring them to do things they don’t want to do . . . God is a royal pain in the neck! He may give a little now, and possibly offer a lot after we die, but for now He asks more than He gives; another demand on what is already in short supply, my time, money, etc.]

“His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’

“Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’

“‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’

“He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.’” Lk 19:12 – 27

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Gal 5:1

To close, with one simple example (there are many, many more day-to-day and practical cases). God says: “I don’t want you to work on Sunday – or whatever day you may choose for a ‘Sabbath’ [sabbatical – rest] day; I will supply everything you need and want to give you the blessing and benefit of one day off each week. Enjoy!” Now, if any boss offered to give us one day off each week we would be telling everyone about what a great job and boss we have! But when God does this many won’t accept it because they feel, what obviously blesses them, is a curse. “I guess that means he expects me to spend an hour going to church? I had rather work than have to do this!” Again, they miss the point that having the privilege of hearing the Word of God is a real blessing – helping me to better make sense of what I will encounter Monday, Tuesday . . . The root? Where we started:

There are really only two worldviews and mindsets: “My will be done!” or “Your will be done because I believe you know best and to the extent I understand Your will I have found through many, repeated, experiences that is good for me and to

my benefit and happiness –



You're the best thing that ever happened to me!”

