

## Matthew 5:6

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What do you aim for in life? Are you a big picture person, with a firmly fixed goal that you strive to reach? Do you have small steps mapped out to advance you from here to where you want to go?

Or do you have no specific goals? Are you meandering, enjoying the view, taking one day at a time and coasting freely? Do you simply respond to the ebb and flow of life, without trying to change the world and notch a mark? Do you aim for freedom and flexibility?

Or are you somewhere in between, neither firmly grabbed by a fixed plan, nor floating in a *laissez-faire* lifestyle? Do you have a vague idea of what you want, and you have planned some things, but the rest sort of floats along?

Wherever you are in that range, what do you want from life? What motivates you the most? Is it getting rich? Is it living life to the max? Is it surrounding yourself with good family and friends? Is it being comfortable?

Our community mostly wants a well-off comfort... A nice life full of material things, surrounded by security to keep the comfort, under girded by insurance.

Yuppies are more intent on riches, but often as families grow parents desire comfort more than anything else.

And Christians are similar. Teenagers and young adults, full of zeal, often want to change the world, stop wars, feed the hungry, burn corruption, and let God's wrath and justice condemn the world and bring a new start.

Some Christian parents want a comfortable church, with many families, good role models, lots of kids' programs, a healthy vital social program and the comfort of not having to do too much while they enjoy some sanity in their week. Often the big plans come here, as people cannot do without some sense of belonging to a larger scheme.

Older Christians may concentrate on special areas, or on nestling in more. The familiarity of years of tradition brings some people great security and comfort, and it is hard to change, as change brings hardship. With greater wisdom, some things occur, but zeal is drained. Memories of the good old days paralyse some from doing much. And because they know that death is common, big plans are often replaced with smaller steps.

I've heard many many talks and read many books on planning, on getting a big vision, on integrating

the small steps and on avoiding the rise of comfort seeking, to keep the plan boiling. But in the Sermon on the Mount, I find a plan which is very simple and very precise. It is a plan which is available for new Christians, mature Christians, young or old Christians, and even for those who want to become Christians.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

God will bless us if we hunger and thirst for righteousness. He will bless us if we strive to be right with him. If that is our main goal in life, then He will bless us.

We will not be blessed if we hunger and thirst for riches.

We will not be blessed if we hunger and thirst for comfort.

We will not be blessed if we hunger and thirst for sex, a good time, or whatever. We will be blessed if we hunger and thirst for being right with God.

But how can we be right with God?

First, Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that we cannot make ourselves right with God by being good. It will not work. It will not fix up the relationship between us and God. It is like this:

A man was absolutely lousy to his wife. He often bashed her, abused her publicly, and always came home drunk. Eventually they divorced. He remarried. He turned into the most considerate, caring gentle man, who truly loved his new wife and could not do enough for her. He really was good to her. But each kind act to his new wife was a dagger in the first wife. Why was he not good to her?

If we try to be good, without doing it to God, for God and in God's strength, it is like we have divorced him and doing it for someone else, whether ourselves or another god.

So we need to make up with God, really be sorry for what we have done and ask him to forgive us.

Then, we are told in Colossians 2, that God does a big swap. As Jesus died on the cross, God took all our sins and nailed them to the cross. Jesus copped the punishment we deserve.

And then God took the righteousness of Jesus, His right living, His perfection, His never neglecting God, always doing what was right, and God gave it

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to us. So when we trust in Jesus, God sees our sins on Jesus, and His right living on us.

Hunger and strive for that, and you will be blessed.

But thirdly, Christians still sin. We still go wrong. We are not perfect. So do we sit back and say Jesus did it for us, let's goof off? And do not worry about it until we get near death? I know some people like that... do you?

But God says we WILL NOT do that if we trust him, because not only will we hunger and thirst for what Jesus did for us, we will also hunger and thirst for our better behaviour day by day. We will want to be more righteous, we will want to be more like Jesus, living the way God wants us to.

Do you hunger and thirst for that? Do you really want to please God, and live in a right way for Him? Do you want to be more like Jesus, with less mistakes, less hassles, less blunders?

If you do, you will be blessed and filled, for *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

But filled with what? It could refer to God's Spirit, who will fill us and help to change us to live like that. But it may just mean we will be filled with the righteousness we hunger for.

How do we know what is right way to live for God? The best way to know is to understand more of the Bible.

As you learn more, and put it into practice in your life, God will change you from the inside out. You will become more like Jesus, and you will want to be filled with righteousness.

So do not hunger and thirst for money, or for other things. Instead hunger and thirst for righteousness, and you will be filled.