

How to Experience Life More Abundantly

By Tim Cosby, M.Div., CLC

"The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy, but I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly." Jn. 10:10

I'm a Life Coach. As a Life Coach, I am always eager to learn what keeps people from experiencing the abundant life they desire. Is there such a thing as more abundant life? Evidently, because it's the reason Jesus came. A coaching client was giving me a progress report on their week and described one of their obstacles as "uncertainty." I asked them what their life would be like if they could embrace their uncertainty. They responded: "Life would be fun!"

I do most of my serious thinking while mowing the lawn. Many great thinkers of the past have done their best thinking when they were involved with activities like this. I've read somewhere that this is a sign of unusual intelligence. Or maybe it was just unusual. My wife teases me because this high-functioning kind of intellectual behavior usually involves talking to myself, and answering myself. It should go without saying that if a person is going to talk to themselves they must also answer themselves, although this reality escapes many people. As I was mowing the lawn I asked the Lord, "Why does uncertainty have so much power over people's lives? And what is the lie that props up this insidious ulcer that eats away at the abundant life you came to give?"

In this short essay I want to suggest four beliefs we need to embrace in order to experience life more abundantly.

1. Embrace Uncertainty
2. Embrace our Finiteness
3. Embrace Trust
4. Embrace God's Goodness

EMBRACE UNCERTAINTY

What would your daily life feel like if you weren't feeding the ulcer of uncertainty? What would it look like for you to embrace uncertainty? Is that even possible? What does that mean? Uncertainty is a huge obstacle between you and your goals. In fact, some would say that it paralyzes growth in Christ. Do you want to grow in Christ? Then embrace your uncertainty. Here's what it looks like for me. You'll have to figure out what it looks like for you.

EMBRACE OUR FINITENESS

Ph.D in Control Freakiness

I don't know about you, but I'm a control freak. I have my Ph.D in the freakiness part. I am a member of Control Freaks Anonymous. Well, I was. Now you know so it's no longer anonymous. I have a view of how things should go, and when they don't go that way my control freakiness kicks in and one of the first things I do is step into the wrong time-zone. Actually I don't just step into it, I dive headlong into it. I start thinking, "What about tomorrow? Next week? Next month? What about three months from now?" And it doesn't take long for my frail, proud heart to climb the flimsy ladder of assumptions and conclude that I'm doomed. I'll never make it. And my

uncertainty begins to suffocate the abundant life God wants me to have and I begin to take control of the situation in my mind. (Key phrase: "in my mind.")

Resign as Manager of the Universe

This control-freakiness issue is a big problem for me and many others. There's one minor problem with my Manager-of-the-Universe plan of course: I'm not in control. But how would you describe the relationship between uncertainty and control? If you could keep things under control all the time you wouldn't have to deal with uncertainty, right? I saw a bumper sticker that read: "I resign as manager of the universe." I'm not sure how that person got the job in the first place because I thought I had that job. Evidently they reached a point where they realized that it wasn't really working for them. What would your life look like if you resigned as manager of the universe? How would those closest to you feel when you handed in your resignation? Sad? Relieved? Set free?

The first action step to a fuller life is to embrace uncertainty. The second step is that we need to turn in our fake credentials as Managers of the Universe and admit that we aren't God, and we can't really control anything. If we took steps in that direction our lives would begin to change, but what else do you think may be at the root of uncertainty?

EMBRACE TRUST

What do you think props up the myth of control? What lie slithers beneath the thin veneer of a spirit of control? When I began to ponder these questions I sensed the Spirit of God putting His finger on the issue of trust. I almost ran over the garden hose when this was pointed out to me. I heard a series of questions in my mind and I sensed that the Spirit of God was trying to get my attention: "What are you trying to control?" "What is it that you think I'm not managing well?" "Why are you struggling to trust me right now?" Stop and think for a minute about an issue you've been facing in your life and let the Lord ask you a question. He doesn't waste questions. Is God bringing to your mind an event or issue in your life where you have been struggling to trust Him? If God was really in that situation, what do you think He might be saying to you?

In order to step into a more abundant life, God is inviting us to embrace uncertainty, let go of the myth of control and embrace trust. When we embrace uncertainty, let go of control and embrace trust, I believe God embraces us. The lie is that we think we can control outcomes. The truth is that God can be trusted. When we decide to let go of the lies and embrace trust we are embraced by The Truth, Jesus. When we realize that He is reaching out to embrace us, it sets us free to embrace uncertainty. But I think there may be one more layer of lies feeding the ulcer of uncertainty and hindering our journey into a more abundant life. But first, allow me to tell a short story.

Get Out of Your Comfort Zone

At the young age of 55, I sensed that God was transitioning me into a new career path. I had been serving as a pastor in a wonderful community of faith and no one was asking me to leave. Except for God. One day I sensed the Lord asking me this question: "Will you trust me now? Will you trust me to step into something new, and put everything on the line to do it?" Eventually, I said, "Yes!"

In the early days of my transition into new territory (*terra nova*) I saw myself traveling a long and winding road that led to a river. As I stood at the river's edge I saw the road continue on the other side of the river but there was no bridge in sight and the river was deep and wide. On the other side of the river I could barely make out a sign that said: "*Your purpose and destiny.*" In order to reach the other side and follow the road I knew I would have to jump into the river. I had many good friends encouraging me to stay on this side of the river but I knew I had to cross over to the other side. I saw and heard scary monsters of uncertainty poking their ugly heads above the water and saying things like: "What if you fail?" "You'll never make it." "Who do you think you are?" "What about that regular paycheck?" "What about health insurance?" "What if you end up looking like a fool?" "What if you lose everything?" "You don't have what it takes."

But in the back of my mind I kept hearing the Lord's question to me: "Will you trust Me now?" When I landed in the river the cold water jump-started my heart and I immediately knew that this was the kind of adventure for which I was created. And, by the way, my wife and daughter and our extended family took the jump with me, and we're in this river together. Our whole church family seemed to be waiting for us on the other side of the river after we took the plunge. But don't think this is easy. This was no afternoon dip at the beach. And it won't be a walk in the park when you stare down the monsters of uncertainty and start living by the truth. But you won't believe the joy and freedom that come from taking the plunge and trusting God!

EMBRACE GOD'S GOODNESS

What else is at the bottom of this pit of uncertainty? Could it be that at the bottom of the pit of uncertainty, a slithering lie whispers in our ear: "Is God really good?" Could it be that believing the lie that God is not good is propping up our lack of trust? If so, why do you think that is? I know that sounds a bit trite, but think about it. Why do you think that the Christian story immediately gets off track with a story about two people doubting God's goodness? Because the goodness of God lies at the heart of his character, and you and I will never let go of the myth of control and place our trust in God unless we believe that He is good. And the most important thing for us to believe in the muck of uncertainty is that God is good. He's not just good, He is incarnate Goodness. He's the very essence of goodness. He can only be good! Jesus said, "*No one is good except God alone.*" And if He's good, you and I can trust Him. Will you? Do you trust Him now?

If you and I make the choices to embrace uncertainty, let go of the lie of control, embrace trust and believe that God is good, we will experience the freedom and joy of walking with God through uncertain times. Times may be uncertain but there is no uncertainty in God because He is above time. But we'll have to resign as controllers of the universe and decide that God is good enough to trust. We'll have to believe He is good and He is enough.

Embrace Uncertainty Now

So, what would it look like for you to embrace uncertainty today? What would have to change in your life? What lies would have to go? What truths would have to be embraced? What's keeping you from making that choice? What do you have to lose?

Find a trusted friend and ask them to pray with you about this. Write out 3 action steps that you could take this week to demonstrate you're going to embrace uncertainty, and invite your friend to hold you accountable to your action steps. Think about the benefits of teaming up with a friend to provide support, encouragement and accountability for one another so that you both can embrace uncertainty and step forward into a more abundant life. How could you take one step right now that would help you achieve this goal? When will you take that step?

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Terra Nova Coaching
2341 Lakehurst St. N.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49525
616-443-9190 timlifecoach@gmail.com
Click here to sign up for the Terra Nova Coaching Newsletter www.terranovalifecoaching.com