



WHY LIVE?

September 2015

For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone.

Romans 14:7

“Why live?” was the question I had in the subject line of an email I sent someone years ago. I had asked the person to remind me why I should live. It was an honest question. I had truly forgotten my reason for living. Deep depression had taken that away.

This might seem like a good question to ask when we see no reason to go on living. However, couldn't it be just as valid a question anytime you've needed a purpose for your life? Haven't you ever asked, “What is life for anyway?”

Are you in that place? Many are.

The gist of this person's response went something like this: “The reason you live is so that you can give others a reason to live.” For me, a person devoted to her ministry of

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giving support to people with mental health issues, this answer spoke volumes. It clearly showed what God made me to do and what I needed to keep doing.

I don't know what happened to my depression after that. I'm sure it didn't lift immediately, but I had found a focus for my life again. I had found hope. This thoughtful answer from a good friend has stayed with me, reminding me that God has given me life with a purpose. I felt my life had value.

Joy came with the knowledge that God had given me life for more than just myself. Yes, joy in the midst of the depression. Joy to realize that life is not about me alone. My friend's answer meant a lot . . . To think that I was needed by others!

God had blessed me with a desire to willingly give of myself. What a gift!

You don't have to do the kind of work I do for this truth to be meaningful. We all have places where we work, live and play where we're valued. Everyone can be helpful to others. Everyone is needed by the loved ones around them. We're important to our parents, our children, spouses and friends. We don't live for ourselves alone; we live for the sake of these loved ones too. We are needed.

I remember subsequent times with deep depression when I was again reminded of this. Each time, it lifted me up more than anything else could. The idea of reaching beyond my darkness to fill the needs of others gave relief. Such a relief it was not to be thinking about my own miserable self! Such relief to reach beyond the person I had become!

Like all good messages, this one is not good for one person alone. It's good for all of us. It's especially good when we're dealing with depression. Our life is a gift and God has designed a purpose for it. We are loved and we are valued.

If you're feeling in the depths, don't define yourself by how you feel at this moment. A time will come when you find healing and be lifted up, ready to carry on.

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