



Page I

*September 2018*  
**THE GOOD LIFE**  
**Part Three - I Shall Not Lack**

Greetings, church! Our prayer here at Living Logos Ministries is that you are both tasting and seeing the Lord's goodness in your life today!

First of all, I wanted to take a moment to thank all of LLM's partners—those who support us both in prayer and also financially. Your support is truly helping us get the good news out there! So, I wanted to just say that we appreciate you. I also pray that the Lord causes you to reap an abundant harvest from your seed sown into our ministry. Amen!

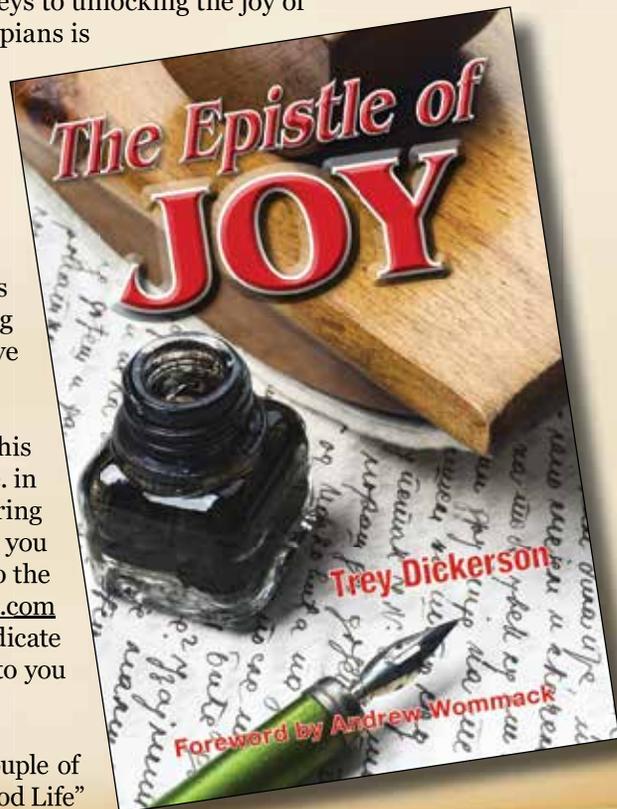
This month, I have a very exciting announcement to make: I am pleased to say that we are in the final stages of completing my next full-length book, entitled **The Epistle of Joy!** This book contains what I consider to be a goldmine of truth and is a masterpiece on the subject of joy & happiness!

Now the reason I have written this book is because people spend their entire lives in search of this coveted virtue—joy. But as I explain in the Epistle of Joy, there was a man who understood the staying power of abiding joy, the apostle Paul, and this man of God understood how to “rejoice always.” But not only did he walk in joy himself, but he also passed on to us the keys to unlocking the joy of the Lord in our own lives. And Paul's letter to the Philippians is his crowning achievement on this subject of joy—being deemed by many as his “Epistle of Joy.” Therefore, the content of the Book of Philippians is full of this fruit of the Spirit and contains the directions for joy unspeakable for every child of God. As my editor said, our book—Epistle of Joy—is a real “joy ride!”

So, needless to say, I am super excited about making this book available very soon! Although I have been working on it for some time now, it has truly been a labor of love and a work of joy for me to write.

I am planning on making it available in November of this year—both in a soft cover copy and also electronically (i.e. in an e-book format). So, if you are interested in pre-ordering your copy, we wanted to go ahead and make it available to you for a gift of any amount. You can either mail in a check to the address below or go to our website @ [www.treydickerson.com](http://www.treydickerson.com) and simply donate online. Either way, just be sure to indicate that your gift is for The Epistle of Joy, and I will send it to you once we receive them in November.

Now, let's move into this month's teaching: In my last couple of Living Logos teachings, I have been talking about “The Good Life”



that the Lord has prepared for each one of us. We have been studying this by camping on the first verse in the 23rd Psalm, and we have learned some very important truths regarding the Lord being our Shepherd. If you have missed either of these teachings, you can visit our website and get up to speed. But this month, I want us to move on to the second half of Psalm 23:1 where David said, “I shall not want!”

First of all, what David is basically saying here in Psalm 23:1 is, “Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want!” In other words, both the Lord being His Shepherd and David knowing that the Lord was His Shepherd was what caused him to be able to make such a concrete statement like— “I absolutely, positively will never lack!” (We will get more into this at the end of today’s teaching)

### **WHEN SHALL I NOT WANT?**

But when it comes to some “believers,” you would think that Psalm 23:1 said, “**Thou shalt not want!**” In other words, they don’t believe a Christian ever needs to desire or want things. And while covetousness is certainly forbidden in a Christian’s life, that does not mean it is wrong for us to believe God for His prosperity—particularly, if we desire to use it for His glory.

And I encourage you to check your heart on this one truth—because, in my experience, there are those out there who when they hear promises like this, will give you a “Yeah, but…” Yes, they will give a laundry list of “Yeah, buts” in their unbelief—giving you all the reasons why they believe this is not true all the time. For example, many Christians out there will say they believe this statement, “I shall not want,” but what they do is automatically attribute these promises to spiritual things. And while it is certainly true that we lack and want for nothing in regards to spiritual things, notice that this Psalm is not titled, “A psalm of David when he was singing about spiritual things…” In fact, when David wrote this psalm, he was referring to the things of this life, not the next life! Therefore, he was referring to how the Lord, His Shepherd, would never leave him hanging in any area of his life, which included material things.

You see, the Jewish culture didn’t believe like much of the church does today. They never believed that all of God’s promises are just referring to spiritual, heavenly things. They actually believed God desires to bless His covenant people in this life. And guess what? As a general rule, they are blessed in this life! God’s blessing is upon the Jewish community and they are generally successful people according to the world’s standards.

But the church tends to make the mistake of separating natural things from spiritual things—only applying God’s promises to eternity. However, the truth is, God cares about the whole man—spirit, soul & body—and He wants to provide for us in every area of our lives. Amen!

Now it is important for us to recognize why the Lord is against us lacking and wanting for anything. Sure, he wants you to have the desires of your heart and He cares about your own individual needs. But I believe the biggest reason the Lord wants you to prosper in natural things as well as spiritual things is so that you can be a blessing to others and that He might establish His covenant on the earth through you. We have all heard those people who say, “Well, I’m alright. I don’t need any more.” But that is selfish thinking though—because they are only worried about having enough for themselves. If you are okay with your current financial condition, praise the Lord! But believe God for all that He has for you so that you can have it to give to others who are in need! Amen?

I'm of the persuasion that when we start thinking about how we can be a blessing into His kingdom and be used to give more to His cause, then we are positioned to have the seed to do so. Didn't the apostle Paul say, "*He supplies seed to the sower*" (2 Corinthians 9:10)? So, if we do not have seed to sow, then one possible reason might be that God doesn't see us as a sower. Amen or "oh, me"!

## DEFINING "WANT"

Now, this word translated "want" in Psalm 23:1 literally means— "to lack, to be without, to have a need, to diminish or decrease." Therefore, we could translate this phrase "I shall not lack" like so: "I shall not be without" — "I shall not have a need" — "I shall not diminish"— or, "I shall not decrease." Amen, to that! Let me give you a couple of examples of where this word for "want" is used in the Scriptures and how some of these definitions are used.

It is used the first time in the Old Testament in the Book of Genesis to describe how the water "decreased" after the Flood (see Genesis 8:3). So, if Psalm 23:1 says, "I shall not want," then that means we shall not decrease.

Did you know that we serve a God who believes in increase? Psalm 115:14-15 says, "*May the Lord give you increase more and more, you and your children. May you be blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*" Now the context of this verse is the blessing that is upon His people. You see, this what the blessing does: it increases people and things—ultimately making that blessed object the head and not the tail, above only and not beneath, etc. The blessing of the Lord always takes us higher, further etc. It always will eventually increase that blessed person or thing!

For example, in Isaiah 9:7, the Lord describes to us that His kingdom is an ever-increasing kingdom. Jesus taught us this throughout His parables—that the kingdom of God is growing, increasing and abounding. In 1 Corinthians 3:7, we are told that neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but God who gives the increase. In other words, people are not our source for growth, God is. But so many people fail to understand this. I thank God for men and women who have contributed to my growth, but we must keep a sober opinion that if we are growing, it is God who is giving the increase, not man. Amen?

Now somebody might say, "Yeah, but what about John the Baptist? Didn't he say that he must decrease and Christ must increase?" Sure, he did, but that decrease was a specific part of God's plan for Jesus' ministry to gain more influence. On top of that, we should all strive to have Jesus increase in and through our lives: more of Him and less of us. So, we are not talking about increasing just for the sake of having "more for our four and our store." No, we are talking about increasing for the glory of God and that Jesus might be made known in and through our lives.

Another word that we saw for the meaning of this word "want" is "to diminish": You know, in the world, everything seems to diminish. Our new car will lose that new car smell and new car shine. Our new home will eventually grow old and lose its excitement. Everything seems to diminish. But not in the Kingdom: in the Kingdom of God, things don't diminish, they increase.

Proverbs 4:18 says, "*But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.*" This verse is describing the rising of the sun: As it rises, everything gets brighter and brighter, and then when it gets to a certain point, we have the "perfect day" (i.e. the full light of day). This is to be the life of the righteous and the blessed. Things get brighter and brighter to us—not gloomier and gloomier! Therefore, we ought not say things like, "If I didn't have bad luck, I'd have no luck at all." Rather,

we should say, “Why do I need luck when I am blessed!?! I shall not diminish nor decrease because I am blessed! My path grows brighter and brighter!”

## NOT LACKING ANYTHING

Now, this same word translated “want” here in Psalm 23:1 was also translated “lack” in other places. For example, it was used this way in Psalm 34:9-10 where David said, *“Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.”*

Now when he said that there is no want (or lack) to those who fear Him, this fear of the Lord being described here is not the being afraid of God kind of fear. We are told that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). So, the fear of the Lord is an integral part of not lacking because it is the foundation of wisdom, and wisdom is certainly a big part of not lacking.

But the point I want you to get is this: when David described the young lions lacking and becoming hungry, he was not referring to baby lions; this is a reference to lions that are in their prime. In other words, even these young lions that are at their peak of strength and can hunt better than at any other point of their lives can go without. They can have days where they don’t catch their prey and eat. What this should teach us is that we need to guard against that subtle deception that if I just have it all together naturally speaking that I will not lack. No, we live in a world—in an economy—that even if you make all the right investments and are the perfect steward of your money, you can still lose everything. This is why we are told in verse 9 that the “fear of the Lord” leads us away from lack. Why? Because respecting God’s way of doing things and trusting Him in this area is what will guard us from experiencing the lack and suffering hunger that even the “young lions” of this world will suffer. Amen?

However, we are told in the latter half of verse 10 that those who seek the Lord—those who put their full confidence and trust in the Lord—will not lack any good thing. Not lacking any good thing is a promise from God for all of His children as we put Him first, reverencing and seeking Him first.

This word for “want & lack” is also used in Exodus chapter 16 to describe how when God rained manna down from heaven that everyone had exactly what they needed. The ones who gathered much had nothing left over and the ones who gathered little had no lack (Exodus 16:18). It was also used in Deuteronomy 2:7 & 8:9 to both describe how the children of Israel “lacked nothing” during their 40 years in the wilderness and how the land of promise was a land where they lacked nothing.

So, what this teaches us is that there are varying degrees to “I shall not want”: There is the not lacking in the wilderness to where they always had just enough manna and where they were certainly sustained, their clothes not wearing out and their feet not swelling (see Nehemiah 9:21). But mind you now—the wilderness was not where God intended for them to live for those 40 years. In fact, them walking around the same mountain for that long was a result of unbelief, disobedience, etc. However, they still saw the miraculous provision of God and had their basic needs met consistently. Don’t tell me that our God is not a merciful and gracious God!

But there is also the not lacking in the Promised Land which is where there was not just enough provision, but where there was more than enough provision! This is the land of the blessing, where the increase abounds and where God intends for us all to live.

You know, if I were to ask you if you wanted to experience either miracles or blessings in your life, which one would you choose? Most Spirit-filled believers would likely vote for miracles, and why? It is because miracles seem more fun and they sound more exciting. But did you know that the majority of the miracles that the children of Israel experienced were while they were in Egypt and the wilderness. In other words, miracles were experienced the most in adverse, unpleasant circumstances. My point is—miracles usually come on the heels of crisis'. So, if you are praying for more miracles in your life, just be prepared to have some alarming situations that require miracles. No, saints, the best place to live is in the blessing because, while miracles bail us out of tough situations, the blessing will prevent tough situations.

Yes, God wants us to live in the blessing of the Promised Land, not the miracles of the Wilderness. Sure, there will be times where we will need miracles and where it seems as though we are in a wilderness, but that is not where we are intended to live. The miracles of the wilderness were not God's best then, nor are they now. He wants to abide in the blessing of Canaan! Amen!

And just because we are looking at mainly Old Testament examples here, do not make the mistake of thinking as many do that it was different under the New Covenant. Yes, there are lot of people who are under the deception that Jesus was poor and, therefore, wants us poor. But that's not true. How many poor people do you see having their clothes auctioned off? How many broke people do you see having a treasurer? No, we see in Luke 22:35, Jesus asked His disciples, *"When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?"* Their response was— *"Nothing."* So, Jesus' disciples never lacked! And why? Because the Lord Jesus was their Good Shepherd. Therefore, they did not lack any good thing! Amen!

## **BECAUSE THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD**

And that is a point I want to leave you with today: Us not lacking is always on the heels of Him being our Shepherd! In other words, if the Lord is not truly our Shepherd—that is, if we are not hearing His voice, being led by Him, etc.—then we won't see the fullness of His provision. Yes, we are responsible to hear and know His voice and also to be led by Him as His sheep, because if we refuse to heed His instructions and follow Him, we are the problem, not God.

Let me give you a few Scriptures that verify this:

In Luke chapter 12, Jesus made a promise to ensure His disciples that they never need worry, but that God will always care for them. In verses 22-30, Jesus exhorts us, His disciples, not to worry about what we should eat or how we will be clothed, etc. He tells us not to have an anxious mind about these things because our Heavenly Father knows what our needs are. Then, in verse 31, He says, *"But seek the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added to you."*

Now Matthew's account of this says to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness: This is important to bring out because it is not as lucrative for us to seek the kingdom seventh, fifth or even second. No, we are commanded to seek the kingdom and His righteousness *first*. And as much as most Christians would like to think they are already doing this, I can assure you that most are not seeking first the kingdom of God. Yes, they might seek the kingdom of God to some degree, but the vast majority of Christians do not

Page VI

seek His kingdom first—that is, above their own basic necessities, their own desires, etc.

And as we've made the point of already, God does care about your needs and wants to give you the desires of your heart, but He has called us to care more about His kingdom's cause than any other thing.

Now we are still talking about living the good life because how many of you know that experiencing the good life comes by laying our lives down for the greater good of the kingdom. This all needs to be said because experiencing God's best is greatly determined by seeking first His stuff above our own. Amen?

King David said in Psalm 37:25, *"I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread."* Hallelujah, this means that you can live to a ripe old age, and you will not see the righteous forsaken by the Lord or that righteous person's children begging for bread! Now someone might be thinking, "I think I have seen this, pastor." Well, let's define who's the righteous. It is worthy of noting that verse 26 goes on to say that he is ever merciful and lends; and his descendants are blessed. So, here David is assuming the righteous deeds accompanying the righteous man or woman. But my point is that this person is a GIVER, being ever merciful and lending.

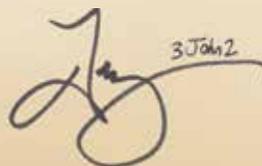
You see, this is what makes Philippians 4:19 a reality in our lives as well: Most of us are familiar with this verse which says, *"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* However, people like to just claim that promise, but many fail to understand the context of it. What is the first word in that verse? It's "And"—which is a conjunction, correct? Well, the premise for God supplying all our need is what? Us seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness based on Matthew 6:33 but also based on this verse because the church of Philippi gave generously to Paul in his need (see Philippians 4:13-18). But when we DO claim this promise and ARE walking in generosity, we are blessed "according to His riches in glory," which is in proportion to how amazingly rich God is!

Saints, we need to live our lives seeking to be a blessing to God's kingdom with everything—including our finances. And one thing I can assure of is when you do this—you cannot out-give God! He will bless the work of your hands and your seed sown! You shall not lack! And why? Because you have made the Lord your Shepherd! Amen!

Well, I hope that this teaching has ministered to you this month, and if it has, we ask that you would contact us through the information below and let us hear from you. It is always encouraging to hear from our readers and know that the truths we share are making a difference in people's lives.

Until next month—Maranatha!

Victoriously,



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