



Spring Into LIFE

by Sandra E. Cox


The scene was quite appealing, bringing a visible smile to my face. What appeared to be “Dad,” walking on his hands behind the toddler on the beach, both laughing. But it was the words accompanying this advertisement that really caught my attention, “Spring into Life.” The product it represented—spring water.

After contemplating whether or not I would be able to walk on my hands after drinking this water, I thought about how our lives should be living advertisements for Jesus. He is the Truth, the one whose living water so completely quenches our desire that we will never thirst again.

So why do so many Christians poorly advertise the life Christ offers? Perhaps our poor and some-

times false advertisement is a result of not really drinking from him. As Christians we profess to believe in Jesus and a saving faith. The next step after believing faith is living faith, living in a way that reflects our belief.

Many times the belief that Jesus is living water exists, but the act of faithfully drinking him in does not. We sip, but never fully consume. How can we truly drink in



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the water of Jesus, the water that springs us to life?

Faithfully drinking in Jesus, the living water, can be represented by the acrostic L.I.F.E. (easy to remember, huh?). Each letter in the word life reveals a characteristic of what it means to truly drink him in:

L = Love

I so appreciate the fact that when Jesus was asked by his disciples what the greatest commandment was, he did not respond with a parable. In fact, it is one of the few times Jesus answers the question immediately. The most important

commandment? Love God. The second is just as important, love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:34-39).

I fail so often in the love department. When I think of all the ways I sin, the most prevalent is when I stop putting my love for God first. In fact, when I stay focused on keeping him first in my life, everything else seems to fall into place, and my tendency for falling into sin radically decreases. How amazing it is to see our lives being filled with more joy and peace. If only we could just remember the primary rule, to love God.

I also find that too often I allow my love for others to fall down on my list of what is important, even though Jesus said this was equally as important as the first and greatest commandment. I am too slow to love and too quick to judge. I will defend a theological argument, an interpretation I believe in, or debate a doctrinal issue, almost to the point of causing division until the Spirit gently reminds me I have not mastered love yet.

When I drink in the truth of love and all its complex flavors, I experience life. When I refuse to be sidetracked, I become a wonderful advertisement for Jesus, expressing love, not division.

I = Intimacy & Involvement

Drinking in Jesus creates intimacy. As our relationship grows, I desire to spend more time with him. Life is more full when I am wholly involved with him. As believers we have faith in Jesus, but do we really enjoy an intimate relationship? You know that overwhelming feeling of excitement you have when you are dating someone for the first time? You simply love being together, learning more about one another. This is what Jesus intends for us! His desire for us is not just belief in him, but a growing relationship with him.

How do we grow intimate with the Son of God? The same way we do with anyone, we spend time together, sometimes face to face, sometimes on the go, but always together. In fact, think about a relationship you have had that has grown apart, why has this happened? Probably because you stopped spending as much time together, either by choice or by circumstance, but either way the relationship dwindled. When we spend time with God—in the Bible, in prayer, in listening to the still, small voice within us—we experience life! The excitement of a growing relationship with Jesus never gets old!

Not only can we grow intimate with the Creator of the universe, but we can also be involved with him and he with us. God is inter-

ested in every aspect of our lives and he is just longing for us to include him. He would love for us to talk with him about our joys, sorrows, hobbies, pleasures, disappointments, etc. He is the greatest best friend we can ever have. When Christians lack fervor in life, it is not because their Savior or the life he offers is boring, but because they are not involved with their Savior. Include Jesus in your life. When the Living Water is by your side, when you frequently drink him in, your life is refreshed and energized!

F = Freedom

The living water Jesus offers us also brings freedom from religion. Too many believers have been missing out on life because of their enslavement to the “do’s” and “don’ts” of religion. When I was younger, I attempted to live according to the standards well-meaning Christians set for me. I tried and failed repeatedly. I finally gave in to thinking that I was just not wired to be spiritual. I would go to church, but I could not expect much more.

Later, my spirit dry and parched, I discovered my need to truly drink from Jesus. I realized my discouragement had been a result of trying to meet religious rules and standards, rather than just coming to Jesus as I am and allowing him to fix me. Religion, disguised in the name of Jesus, tells us to fix ourselves, however, we cannot fix ourselves without his help.

John 3:16 is so often quoted: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Yet how often do we hear this followed up by the very next verse: “For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him.” Religion condemns, Jesus came to free us from condemnation.

The freedom Jesus offers involves breaking loose from the bonds that entangle us. You know that habitual behavior that you keep on doing, but you want to stop doing?

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As long as you are attempting to get rid of that on your own, you will never shake it. The mere dependence on the “I can do it,” guarantees you will not. Jesus said, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed.” (Luke 4:18).

He can break our chains. It will usually not be immediate; in fact it will not be until we can fully and completely give over to him whatever binds us. When we do, he sets us free! Talk about a walking advertisement for the life Jesus offers!

E = Embrace & Empowered

Our advertisement for the living water hopefully goes beyond the enjoyment expressed in our spring water ad. More people in this world would take a closer look at Jesus if our lives reflected the results of our truly drinking him in.

A prominent false belief or teaching is that Christians should always be happy. The truth is we will not always be happy—how absurd! But we will always have joy—big difference. With the Living Water in us, we can embrace whatever life brings our way—the mourning, the illness, the disappointments—because we know that God always has our backs! The assurance that he is truly in charge allows us to be empowered for all of life.

Jesus said that in this life we will have trouble (John 16:33), so we should not be surprised when those troubles come, nor should we pretend that the Christian life is easy and happy. Jesus also said, in the same verse, “But take heart! I have overcome the world!” It is not the trouble that should surprise us, but the fact that we are not tapping into his power during these times. He promised trouble, but he also promised power: “God’s way is not a matter of mere talk, it’s an empowered life!” (1 Corinthians 4:20, *The Message*).

Spring water, though refreshing, cannot really guarantee us a springing into life anymore than it can guarantee us the ability to walk on our hands. However, God’s word promises that when we drink in the living water that the Son provides, we will experience not only a life with spring, but one of joy, peace, freedom, empowerment, intimacy and the ability to truly love.

How do we drink this water? We begin by simply asking—ask Jesus to become a part of our lives. Take some time to look at how you are growing in your relationship with Jesus. Are you spending time together? Are you talking and listening by being in his word? Do you include him in all parts of your life or just the safe ones? Have you accepted his help of breaking free by truly giving him that thing you no longer want to do? Do you allow him to regularly love you and thereby you are able to love others? Are you truly drinking him in?

This full life of joy amidst trouble, freedom not bondage, empowerment and intimacy, is not an instant, overnight accomplishment. So do not get discouraged. Just keep drinking him in, always being thankful for the living water that only he can provide. □

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