

Try Something New!

New Experiences ... a Key to Abundant Living

We are promised by our Savior and Elder Brother that “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more *abundantly*” (John 10:10. The word *abundantly* means much more than you might have imagined. The Greek word is *perissos*,¹ which means in different contexts,

“what is above and over, superadded, what is superior and advantageous” (Romans 3:1)

“what is more” (Matthew 5:37, 47)

“superfluous” (II Corinthians 9:1)

We might think of several ways in which this “superabundant” and “superior” way of life alluded to by Christ is fulfilled in our lives. A few of them immediately come to mind.

1. The fruits of the spirit within us are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). These qualities within our character lead to the peace and harmony we seek when living amongst others, since people tend to mimic what they see in us, leading to friendship and cooperation. Jesus grew in favor with God and men because of His perfect execution of these gifts (Luke 2:52). By fulfilling the meaning of the law and the prophets — doing to others as you would have others do unto you (Matthew 7:12) — even when treated abusively by others, feeding your enemy when he is hungry and giving him drink when he is thirsty “... heaps coals of fire upon his head” (Romans 12:20).

2. Christ provided a profoundly excellent example of healthful living, showing us how to eat a wholesome diet (Leviticus 11:1-23; Exodus 20:15), keep physically in shape (I Timothy 4:8; Mark 1:16), think positive thoughts (Philippians 4:6-8), practice good hygiene (Deuteronomy 23:13), get plenty of sunshine and fresh air (Matthew 4:23), and be healed through His spirit (James 5:14-15). An abundant life cannot be achieved without excellent energy and health.

3. Hope for today, as well as for tomorrow, gives us motivation to carry through our responsibilities, and

Christ preached the brilliant future of the Kingdom of God, in which pain and suffering will be gone (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Revelation 21:3-9; Acts 26:6; Romans 8:19-23; 12:12).

Yet, even with this superabundance fulfilled through the spirit of God dwelling in us, in this life of the flesh within a world colored by Satan’s deceptions (II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2), we sometimes find ourselves bored or discouraged by repetitious routines. We sometimes cannot see daylight ahead while reaching towards the future, even though we know that future is bright beyond comprehension (I Corinthians 2:9). Is there something extra we can do to blunt the forces of evil that sometimes press in around us to open vistas of living with greater superabundance?

Enter New Experience

Psychologists have identified three basic needs within the lives of us all, needs that the Eternal has placed within us. They are autonomy, competence, and relatedness, all of which are closely interrelated.²



Autonomy. The perceived state of independence and self-determination, i.e., determining one’s own acts versus being coerced or compelled

Competence. The ability to exert control over one’s life, and to cope with specific problems effectively, and to make changes to one’s behavior and one’s environment, versus merely adapting to circumstances

as they are

Relatedness. The desire to feel loved and connected to others, while being meaningfully involved with the broader social world

I might add that the third point, relatedness, must first of all involve man's innate requirement of a deep relationship with his Creator, for we are made in Elohim's very image (Genesis 1:26-27), and He is love (I John 4:8). Thus, we must give and receive love to Him and to our fellow man, just as He does, to fulfill this inborn need. As our Father through Adam, He craves that we praise Him (Isaiah 43:21) and walk in His ways (Ephesians 2:10; I John 2:6), and have us as sons in His Kingdom alongside Jesus the Firstborn (Romans 8:29). This inborn need to be loved and connected to each other — which is essential within the fellowship of the saints — must begin with our connectedness to our heavenly Father. This in turn gives us understanding of how to be “meaningfully involved with the broader social world.”

But there is a fourth psychological need that has become more and more accepted by psychologists as critical in our day-to-day living: *new experience*, also termed *novelty* by some.³

Novelty [new experience]. Experiencing new and unusual things, a major determining factor in directing one's attention

This aspect of abundant living can easily be overlooked in our daily living. We are encouraged by health and fitness pundits to have predictable and healthy routines: going to sleep at a set time, not eating after 8 p.m., exercising at least three times a week, and getting an annual physical check-up. We might add to that our prescribed daily prayers, regular fellowship, programmed Bible study, and habitual meditation ... all of which are intensively critical to our spiritual walk, but which may become habitual to the point that we lose sight of the superabundance we need to experience in these vital exercises. We are told, “... you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 4:29). This is where new experience

comes in, to help us achieve seeking God *with all our heart and soul!*

It has been discovered in research studies into brain health and longevity that “anti-routine” — new experience — should be a regular part of our routines for a full, productive, and abundant life. Anything that is new to us, as long as it is not perceived as a threat, is preferred above the mundane ... and this is true for most mammals as well. Rats in a lab maze will always explore a newly opened section of the maze. Children will automatically gravitate toward a new toy, even when old favorites are nearby.⁴ Why is this?

God Has Programmed Us

New and novel things make us happy. This is the way the Eternal has designed the body, as revealed in many studies on the brain, where a rush of dopamine has been found to accompany fresh experiences of any kind. In one study, researchers showed partic-



A child will always gravitate towards a new toy when given a choice. The desire for new experience is built into us by our loving Creator for a great purpose.

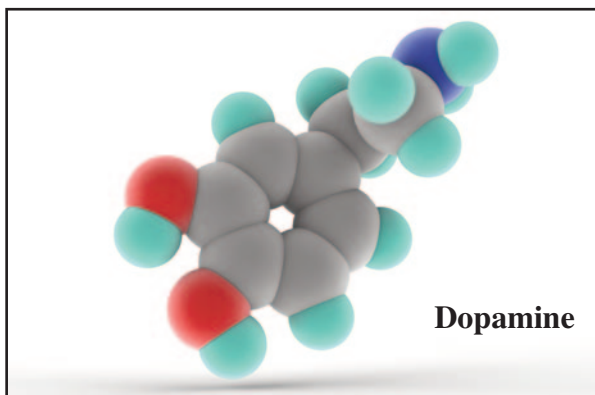
ipants a series of images that were very similar and commonplace, such as landscapes, house interiors, or faces. Then they randomly threw in an oddball image of some sort, like a horse or a sunset. By observing which areas of the subjects' brains were activated, they discovered that the “pleasure centers” of the brain, mainly in the midbrain, were activated when the oddball image appeared, which resulted in a flood of dopamine throughout the brain.⁵

It is nearly impossible to thrive — live an abundant life — without novelty or new experience; ask a prisoner who has lived in solitary confinement if this is not so. Whether studying Biblical or academic subjects, working at one's job, interacting with people, or experiencing other aspects of day-to-day living, new experience is essential. New experiences and information stimulate the memory centers of the brain, which are closely connected to its pleasure centers. That is why we remember out-of-the-ordinary moments or days of our lives, going way back

to our early years: being awarded for a science project, getting blind-sided in a football game by an opposing team, or exchanging a smile with a certain loved one in the school hallway. The many dull days are not remembered so well. The novelty of the situation cements them in our minds.⁶

The use of new experience is a major tool by which good teachers make boring subjects come alive. Novelty makes things interesting, and information easier to remember. Interest in a subject is hard to maintain if new and unusual things are not brought up. According to one source,

“We need that dopamine rush to keep us motivated to keep going if life — to learn, to work, to succeed, If we no longer feel this rush of dopamine, we will likely give up on that activity and look for pleasure elsewhere. Career success is also dependent on this, since people become bored and unmotivated if sufficient new challenges are not offered, and even our closest personal relationships break down if they succumb to predictable routines. Also, without novel experiences, creativity and innovation are practically impossible, since our brains are never challenged to consider new perspectives or to integrate new information.”⁷



Researchers have even devised a word to describe the desire to have new experiences: *neophilia*. This desire is directly linked to longevity; i.e., people who actively seek out new experiences throughout their lives are happier and healthier.⁸ Note the Fifth Commandment, which states, “Honor your father and mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you “ (Exodus

20:12; see also Ephesians 6:2-3). We may infer, therefore, that obeying the Fifth Commandment involves plenty of new experience in life, which is directly related to longevity. This does not mean, of course, that we will not experience our share of suffering along the way as well, for we read in Romans 8:16-17,

“The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (see also Romans 8:18-23; Philippians 1:29; I Peter 2:21; Isaiah 53:3: Jesus was “A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ...”).

We know that different people have different degrees of proclivity towards the need for new experiences, but everybody needs novelty. As people grow older the tendency to seek out novel experiences often declines, partly because their habits become strongly attached to routines that have been established over many years. Also, financial limitations, social pressures, and mobility issues can limit seeking after new experiences. However, if a person throws caution to the wind and seeks out new vistas the rewards of longer, more abundant living will keep his or her mind and heart in top shape. Memory and learning skills will be enhanced throughout old age.⁹

This does not mean that we ought to become addicted to pursuing after new experiences at the expense of the ordered structure of a spirit-led life. Our heavenly Father lists moderation as a spiritual gift (Galatians 5:21). Modern-day addictions to cell phones and computers, pornography, or video games must claim no part of our lives. Our addictions ought to be to prayer and the study of God’s word, to the pursuit of our Creator with our whole heart; those are healthy addictions.

The Driving Force: Vision!

While new experience is so critical to our spiritual well-being, there is a very closely allied quality we must possess, and that is *vision*.

“Where there is no *vision* the people perish,

but he that keeps the law, happy is he” (Proverb 29:18, KJV).

vision = chazown, “a vision, a means of divine revelation, or the message received by that vision.”

That vision for God’s elect is of everlasting kingship and priesthood alongside Jesus (Matthew 25:33; Mark 16:19; Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15, 18; Hebrews 1:3, 6; Revelation 1:5; 3:21; 5:10), and the building of a renewed Eden here on earth in which peace, righteousness, beauty, and joy for 1,000 years will exist (Romans 8:19-23; Revelation 20:4-6; 21:1-7).

The power of vision is exemplified in the life of all great leaders, three of which are mentioned here.

George Washington. This great American general of military and political forces that led to independence of the United States possessed a heart dedicated to the freedom of every citizen of the new nation. His vision was that of a nation of Godly people having been given the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit

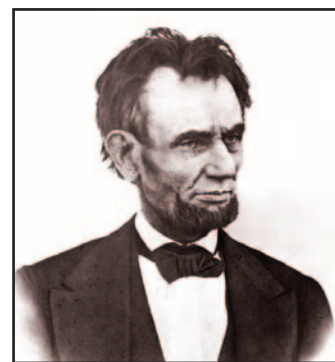


of happiness ... a new experience upon the face of the earth, perhaps the first such vision of a republican form of government since Israel was brought out of Egypt and given its new code of organization at Mt. Sinai. Washington’s novel vision

carried him through times of great distress, especially during the winter of 1777. During this dark period of revolutionary efforts, after several reverses against the British, Washington and his troops retreated to Valley Forge where he resolved to pass the winter. During his stay there he would often walk out to a thicket near the camp to pray, where he gained strength to sustain himself through the bitterly cold winter and misery of himself and his troops. At one point, during his prayers, he was met by an “uninvited guest,” who gave him prophetic visions of the future of the country. The country was to experience three major crises, which were interpreted to be the War for Independence, the Civil War, and then a final horrendous conflict in which all the world was united

to destroy America. At that time a heavenly army decked in light like a thousand suns arrived just in time to throw off the enemies. The messenger who led the celestial army bore the name “union” on her head. These words were told personally by Washington to an orderly, and subsequently passed on to Anthony Sherman, a soldier of the revolutionary army. This vision played a major part in the new experience that guided Washington until victory was realized. Read the vision at the end of this paper.¹⁰

Abraham Lincoln. Like George Washington, Lincoln desired through the agonies of the Civil War to, more than anything, preserve the union. This vision colored so much of what he did as president. In the midst of the war, the trials he faced were great motivators towards the new experiences that he faced. They moved him to search for competent generals



who would win battles against the South, eventually leading to his enlisting Ulysses S. Grant. John Burt in *Lincoln’s Tragic Pragmatism* pointed to Lincoln’s vision through 10 values that would unite the country. All of these are strong Christian values, typifying Lincoln’s dedication to Biblical principles. There were (1) respect for others, (2) symbolic patriotism, (3) freedom, (4) security, (5) self-reliance and individualism, (6) equal opportunity, (7) getting ahead, (8) the pursuit of happiness, (9) justice and fairness, and (10) critical patriotism. He used force in an absolute way for the single purpose of re-establishing the authority of the national government, which he considered to be a sacred trust. This vision of a united people that mirrored Washington’s vision was a powerful new experience that motivated Lincoln through all his years of the presidency.¹¹

Harold Bluetooth. I included this person here because he, like Washington and Lincoln, was a uniter of nations. His vision of a unified Denmark and Norway translated into new experiences that ignited his imagination and resolve to carry through his mission through thick and thin. I also chose to discuss him

because I am a direct descendant of him, and feel much like him that the brethren of the ecclesia must be unified, albeit by God's spirit rather than through the crucible of war. Harold and his family forged extensive alliances across Jutland and into Norway in the early to late 900s A.D., and in some cases won



territory through battles, including facing off with the Holy Roman Empire's Otto the Great. His vision of unity, and also of Christianity, even if he did not have a perfect vision of God, motivated him to abandon the pagan gods of his father, and seek a new pathway in life though his pursuit of new and novel experiences.¹²

Your vision for the future motivates greatly the new experiences you will want to pursue ... the new experiences that will release the dopamine in your brain so you will be rewarded by excelling in accomplishment and imagination towards Godly goals. In the process, God will do these things for you.¹³

1. He will give you an unshakable resolve to work towards that goal, no matter what setbacks you may experience along the way. Paul in Philippians 3:1-11 describes gaining the goal of Christ no matter the cost, and sharing in his sufferings. He then states in verses 12 to 14,

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected, but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Jesus Christ has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

2. He will open doors that are outside your control. Nothing really meaningful in life will come of us working alone — we need companions along the way — and God will bring those helpers alongside

you to reach that goal. As Colossians 4:3 says, “... that God would open to us a door by the word, to speak the mystery of Christ”

3. God will reveal specific instructions through His word to build toward that vision He has given you.

As Psalm 119:105 states, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” That means you must continually have your nose in His word.

4. In the process of reaching toward the vision He has given you, He will help you understand the sacrifices you need to make along the way ... and help you make them. Paul alludes to this in Romans 12:1-2.

What Can We Do?

New experiences. Novelty. They are so critical to motivate us along the pathway towards the vision of eternal sonship in the Kingdom of God. We need them so we will not let down, but, as Paul said, be ever moving onward and “... reaching forward to those things which are ahead ... toward the goal for the prize” (Philippians 3:14).

A recent poll preformed by the Barna Research Group, of people in traditional Protestant and Catholic groups — which does not directly apply to us in God's true ecclesia but still gives useful insights — revealed that in recent years 70% of teenagers stopped attending church fellowship. When asked for reasons of dropping out, most claimed that the church is irrelevant to their everyday existence.¹⁴ This fact hearkens back 2,400 years to God's statement in Malachi 1:13, where the attitude of the Israelites was one of boredom concerning sacrifices and spiritual



Getting out of a rut in your routine is a major reason to pursue new experiences. The novelty of newness will add joy, and lengthen your life!

things: “Oh, what a weariness!” was their attitude.

It is so easy to go to sleep and get into a rut ... or perhaps it is the other way around: we get into a routine and then go to sleep. We must recognize the major need that God has placed in our lives of new experience to help keep us alive, moving forward, realizing the critical importance of our calling, and wisely using our time. Here are some applications of new experience within our Christian walk, to amplify our spiritual tools.

1. *Prayer and meditation.*

- a. Try breaking up your prayer time into more than one segment, if you are accustomed to one prayer session. *Meditate* (*siychah*, “reflect on God, contemplate”) at times all day long.

“Oh, how I love
Your law! It is my
meditation all the
day” (Psalm
119:97).

“Evening and
morning and at
noon I will pray,
and cry aloud, and
He shall hear my
voice” (Psalm
55:17).

“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went to his home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days” (Daniel 6:10).

“Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour [3 p.m.]” (Acts 3:1; see also Acts 10:3, 30; in Acts 10:9, Peter prayed on the housetop on the sixth hour ... at noon).

- b. Pray and meditate in different environments,

not just in your “closet,” as Christ said in Matthew 6:6, but in other places where you are in private. One of the best places to pray in an inspired way is in a natural outdoors setting — a forest or prairie — where the astounding creation is all around you. How more inspiring can it be than to have your Creator speaking to you through the songs of birds and insects, the sighing of the wind, the earthy scents of flowers and soil, and the shapes and colors of trees, grass, blossoms, clouds, sunshine, and the cool, refreshing earth beneath your feet? At night the moon and stars will beckon you to thoughts of the planets, stars, galaxies, quasars, and nebulae that inhabit the vast reaches of space, showing the endless power of His hands.



Daniel’s habit of praying to the Creator three times a day can be a guidepost to our own prayer life.

“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed” (Mark 1:35; see also Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; Acts 6:4; Romans 12:12).

- c. Persevere in prayer even if it may seem difficult at times, giving God the glory and singing when times are good, and asking for deliverance when times are difficult (James 5:13). Pray without ceasing at times throughout the day (Matthew 26:37-44; Mark 14:33-41; Luke 2:37; Colossians 4:2; I Thessalonians 3:10; 5:17; I Timothy 5:5; II Timothy 1:3).
- d. Seek to know your heavenly Father more perfectly so you can converse with Him as a son does to his father. By knowing Jesus as the sinless person revealed in Scripture, you know the Father: “If you have seen Me you have seen the Father” (John 14:9). Strive to speak to God even as Abraham and Moses spoke directly to Yahweh on many occasions (as a sampling, Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-22; 18:1-33; Exodus 3:1-22; 4:1-17; 6:1-8; 7:1-5; 19:3-6; all of chapters 21 to 31).

e. Ask the Eternal to help you put energy and fervency into your prayers.

“But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him, if you seek Him with all your heart and all your soul” (Deuteronomy 4:29).

“Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. and you will seek Me and find Me, when you seek Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:12-13).

“I will praise You with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing praises to you” (Psalm 138:1).

“For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, night and day praying *exceedingly* that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?” (I Thessalonians 3:9-10).

exceedingly = *perissos* + *huper*, “super abundant or superior, above, beyond.”

“... who in the days of His flesh, when He [Christ] had offered up prayers and supplications, with *vehement* cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear ...” (Hebrews 5:7).

vehement = *ischuros*, “forcible, strong; from *ischus*, “force, might.”

“And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the Lord gave them rest all around” (II Chronicles 15:15).

2. Bible study. Push the boundaries of truth.

a. Search after new topics to explore. Some examples might be as follows.

What will you be like as a spirit ... your appearance, identity, and power?

What will the new age be like: the landscape, plant and animal species, atmosphere, climate, etc.?

How does Scripture tell you to become healthier: what to eat and drink, exercise, etc.?

Where did the Israelites cross the Red Sea?

Where is the true Mt. Sinai?

b. Deepen your understandings of topics you think you know well, but which understanding can be expanded.

How can faith or love be expressed in a more dynamic way?

What are your spiritual gifts, and how can you discover them?

How can you prove you are truly a part of the very elect?

Why has God chosen only a small remnant to be His sons today, and not all of mankind?



The study of God's word can be stimulating and highly rewarding if pursued through the application of new experience.

What was so special about Israel that God chose these people to be His holy nation, and not some other nations, like the Greeks, Chinese, or Hivites?

c. Find Bible study tools that will improve your understanding of the word of God.

Lexicons, commentaries, concordances, dictionaries, on-line sources, etc.

d. Experiment with changing the place you study to see if perhaps you might improve your comprehension of the truth in different environments: your bedroom, kitchen, den, or even outdoors.

3. Fellowship.

- a. Get together with different groups of the elect — even on-line groups — to gain different views on Biblical topics.
- b. In whatever group you fellowship, be brave and ask brethren difficult questions about life and the meanings of spiritual topics.
- c. Fellowship with brethren on different days of the week, not just on the Sabbath.



Fellowshipping in a home environment is an excellent new experience for encouraging the brethren to endure to the end.

4. Fasting. Fast regularly, whenever difficult problems arise that require answers. Fasting is a powerful way to gain new insights and understandings for any topic towards which your fast is addressed, and it is always accompanied by prayer (Acts 13:3; 14:23; I Corinthians 7:5).

“Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer” (Ezra 8:21, 23).

“But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to man to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:17-18).

“And He said to them, ‘Can you make the

friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days” (Luke 5:34-35).

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.” (Isaiah 58:6-8).

5. Work and hobbies. Incorporate new experiences and novelty into your life by pushing the limits of excellency in your work, and in the hobbies you pursue. If the work you are currently pursuing seems boring and you are unable to improve things, consider changing that job in lieu of another that offers better possibilities. If you do not have a hobby that excites you and captivates your attention, then find one and throw yourself into it in your spare time. Here are some possibilities.

a. Garden. Not only will you produce excellent quality food, but you will be out in the sun, in fresh air, getting exercise, and communicating with the miracle of growing plants and the colors, forms, sounds, and smells of the created world.

b. Collect things. The emphasis should be on surrounding yourself with things that remind you of the Creator. This might include rocks and minerals, artwork (paintings, sculptures, etc.), or various Bible translations, amongst many examples.

c. Learn a musical instrument, or sharpen your singing skills to praise God through spiritual harmonies (Psalm 33:2; James 5:13; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Revelation 15:2).

d. Create things and perform charitable deeds. Sew, spin, knit, crochet, or make clothes (Acts

9:36-41), work with wood, clay, or rocks, make cards, learn to paint, write letters or send emails of encouragement to brethren, etc., in particular for the purpose of helping others (Matthew 25:31-40; Romans 12:13; Hebrews 6:10; I John 3:17; Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Luke 3:11). Note especially the character of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:13-20, 24).

“She seeks wool and flax, and willingly works with her hands. She is like the merchant ships, she brings her food from afar. She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants. She considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good and her lamp does not go out by night. She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hand holds the spindle. She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies sashes for the merchants.”

e. Begin writing a journal each day to record your blessings, lessons learned, prayers, dreams, or anything that will help you develop a richer life. Studies have shown that journaling helps you achieve goals, gain self-confidence, become more creative, reduce anxiety, find inspiration, and strengthen memory.¹⁵

New experience is critical in daily living for everyone, and God’s elect are no exception. This study has revealed that new experiences can be incorporated readily into our lives to enrich us, granting a more abundant life (John 10:10) as Jesus Christ promised us ... if we will follow in His footsteps. He lived a life of superb abundance, though not without plenty of sufferings, even as we are crucified daily while living with such abundance (Galatians 2:20).

Try something new! Spice up your spiritual life and you will never regret the rewards this will heap upon your daily living. Let *perissos* be your formula

to escape the trap of sameness and living in a rut. Live in joy, peace, humility, and kindness to reap the rewards of abundant living. Follow the laws of healthful living to gain the zeal and zest that will enable you to try new experiences. It is well worth your effort, and in the end will lead to long life lived well.

Bibliography and End Notes

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"George Washington's Vision"

From Anonymous, George Washington's vision and prophecy about America, Signs and Wonders for Our Times, January 26, 2021, www.sign.org/articles.

This afternoon, as I was sitting at this table engaged in preparing a dispatch, something seemed to disturb me. Looking up, I beheld standing opposite me a singularly beautiful female. So astonished was I, for I had given strict orders not to be disturbed, that it was some moments before I found language to inquire the cause of her presence. A second, a third, and even a fourth time did I repeat my question, but received no answer from my mysterious visitor except a slight raising of her eyes.

By this time I felt strange sensations spreading through me. I would have risen, but the riveted gaze of the being before me rendered volition impossible. I assayed once more to address her, but my tongue had become useless, as though it had become paralyzed.

A new influence, mysterious, potent, irresistible took possession of me. All I could do was to gaze steadily, vacantly at my unknown visitor. Gradually the surrounding atmosphere seemed as if it had become filled with sensations, and luminous. Everything about me seemed to rarefy, the mysterious visitor herself becoming more airy and yet more distinct to my sight than before. I now began to feel as one dying, or rather to experience the sensations which I have sometimes imagined accompany dissolution. I did not think, I did not reason, I did not move; all were alike impossible. I was only conscious of gazing fixedly, vacantly at my companion.

Presently I heard a voice saying, "Son of the Republic, look and learn," while at the same time my visitor extended her arm eastwardly, I now beheld a heavy white vapor at some distance rising fold upon fold. This gradually dissipated, and I looked upon a

stranger scene. Before me lay spread out in one vast plain all the countries of the world — Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. I saw rolling and tossing between Europe and America the billows of the Atlantic, and between Asia and America lay the Pacific.

"Son of the Republic," said the same mysterious voice as before, "look and learn." At that moment I beheld a dark, shadowy being, like an angel, standing or rather floating in mid-air, between Europe and America. Dipping water out of the ocean in the hollow of each hand, he sprinkled some upon America with his right hand, while with his left hand he cast some on Europe. Immediately a cloud raised from these countries, and joined in mid-ocean. For a while it remained stationary, and then moved slowly westward, until it enveloped America in its murky folds. Sharp flashes of lightning gleamed through it at intervals, and I heard the smothered groans and cries of the American people.



George Washington at Valley Forge in 1777 experienced a vision of the future of the American Republic. Though not Scripture, that vision may hold evidence for America's future.

A second time the angel dipped water from the ocean, and sprinkled it out as before. The dark cloud was then drawn back to the ocean, in whose heaving billows it sank from view. A third time I heard the mysterious voice saying, "Son of the Republic, look and learn," I cast my eyes upon America and beheld villages and towns and cities springing up one after another

until the whole land from the Atlantic to the Pacific was dotted with them.

Again, I heard the mysterious voice say, "Son of the Republic, the end of the century cometh, look and learn." At this the dark shadowy angel turned his face southward, and from Africa I saw an ill omened specter approach our land. It flitted slowly over every town and city of the latter. The inhabitants presently set themselves in battle array against each other. As I continued looking I saw a bright angel, on whose brow rested a crown of light, on which was traced the word "Union," bearing the American flag which he placed between the divided nation, and said, "Re-

member ye are brethren." Instantly, the inhabitants, casting from them their weapons, became friends once more and united around the National Standard.

"And again I heard the mysterious voice saying, "Son of the Republic, look and learn." At this the dark, shadowy angel placed a trumpet to his mouth, and blew three distinct blasts; and taking water from the ocean, he sprinkled it upon Europe, Asia, and Africa. Then my eyes beheld a fearful scene: From each of these countries arose thick, black clouds that were soon joined into one. Throughout this mass there gleamed a dark red light by which I saw hordes of armed men, who, moving with the cloud, marched by land and sailed by sea to America. Our country was enveloped in this volume of cloud, and I saw these vast armies devastate the whole county and burn the villages, towns, and cities that I beheld springing up. As my ears listened to the thundering of the cannon, clashing of sword, and the shouts and cries of millions in mortal combat, I heard again the mysterious voice saying, "Son of the Republic, look and learn." When the voice had ceased, the dark, shadowy angel placed his trumpet once more to his mouth, and blew a long and fearful blast. Instantly a light as of a thousand suns shone down from above me, and pierced and broke into fragments the dark cloud which enveloped America. At the same moment the angel upon whose head still shone the word Union, and who bore our national flag in one hand and a sword in the other, descended from the heavens attended by legions of white spirits. These immediately joined the inhabitants of America, who I perceived were will nigh overcome, but who, immediately taking courage again, closed up their

broken ranks and renewed the battle.

Again, amid the fearful noise of the conflict, I heard the mysterious voice saying, "Son of the Republic, look and learn." As the voice ceased, the shadowy angel for the last time dipped water from the ocean and sprinkled it upon America. Instantly the dark cloud rolled back, together with the armies it had brought, leaving the inhabitants of the land victorious!

Then once more I beheld the villages, towns and cities springing up where I had seen them before, while the bright angel, planting the azure standard he had brought in the midst of them, cried with a loud voice: "While the stars remain, and the heavens send down dew upon the earth, so long shall the Union last." And taking from his brow the crown on which blazoned the word "Union," he placed it upon the Standard while the people, kneeling down, said, "Amen."

The scene instantly began to fade and dissolve, and I at last saw nothing but the rising, curling vapor I at first beheld. This also disappearing, I found myself once more gazing upon the mysterious visitor, who, in the same voice I had heard before, said, "Son of the Republic, what you have seen is thus interpreted: Three great perils will come upon the Republic. The most fearful is the third, but in this greatest conflict the whole world united shall not prevail against her. Let every child of the Republic learn to live for his God, his land, and the Union." With these words the vision vanished, and I started from my seat and felt that I had seen a vision wherein had been shown to me the birth, progress, and destiny of the United States.