

I Have a Life

Life With Horses

I used to have horses and I was wonderfully blessed to have God use them to teach me some valuable spiritual truths. One of the things that I quickly discovered is that you can't just keep a horse around, pay him little to no attention and then occasionally expect to saddle him up and have a great ride. It's not like having a motorcycle where you just push the button to start, hit the gas, use the breaks, turn left and right, etc. Horses are living creatures, have their own perspectives on situations and, quite honestly, would just as well prefer that we left them alone. If we want to have a relationship that works for both of us, we have to be committed to them and invest the appropriate time.

During that period of my life, I met a neighbor who was having problems with her horse and asked for my help. The horse would rear up and throw her off. The horse exhibited other behaviors that were not very "friendly". I agreed to help her but specifically warned that it would take a commitment of time, to which she agreed.

However, after the first few weeks it became clear that the owner did not really take the time needed for her horse. I questioned her commitment and she responded that she had a lot of other stuff she was involved in and they all took time. She made the statement "I have a life", as if that justified her part-time commitment to her horse. I am not judging this person. Everyone has to decide for themselves what they spend their time on. However, there are some things that you just can't do on an intermittent basis and expect good results. Owning a horse is one of those things.

Spiritual Life

The same is true of our spiritual life. We cannot fill our lives with a lot of time-consuming activities and occasionally perform some "spiritual activity" and expect God to understand that we "have a life". Jesus was very clear about setting priorities:

But seek first God's Kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)

(notice the word "first").

He restated this principle multiple times. For example:

No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for God's Kingdom. (Luke 9:62)

Stating that we “have a life” and don’t have time to spend on really following Jesus’ teachings doesn’t work. We are only lulling ourselves into a false sense of “spiritual security” when we think like that. Jesus warns us:

He who seeks his life will lose it; and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.
(Matthew 10:39)

Jesus declares:

I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

As followers of Jesus, saying “I have a life” should not mean that our lives are filled with activities that we have chosen for our own gratification. Instead, it should mean that we have given up our own self-focused lives in order to follow Jesus and allowed him to give us true, abundant life.

Unless otherwise noted, all quotes from the Bible come from the World English Bible translation (<https://worldenglishbible.org>).