

ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA AND THE GOOD LIFE

An Analysis
and a Christian Response

ELF 2023

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Wealth..? Fame..? Happiness..?

**What is
a good life?**

Making friends..?

Facing challenges..?

Caring for others..?



Disney 100

Photo: Disney.

THE GOOD LIFE

- KEY MESSAGES

- My dreams & my will
- Be kind, but be true to yourself
- Follow your own heart
- Don't give up - you'll get a reward
- Have courage, have faith
- You deserve to be happy



Collage: Mairna Mare, Pinterest

21st century girl, I do what I like
21st century girl,
I'm taking you for a ride
21st century girl, yeah,
I'm gonna live it up, just live it up

21st century girl, a beautiful life...

I set the boundaries,
the rules don't own me

Willow Smith, 2011



Photo: Spotify



LET IT GO

Photo: www.disney.no

*No right, no wrong,
no rules for me.
I'm free.*

THE STORY ABOUT
ELSA AND ANNA
DOES NOT END WITH
THE MAIN MESSAGE
IN THE LYRICS
«LET IT GO»!



“WALT IS A MAN WITH A MISSION
- IN THE DEEPEST SENSE OF THE WORD.
THE MISSION IS TO BRING HAPPINESS TO MILLIONS.”



(QUOTE FROM DISNEY-BROCHURE, 1966)

PHOTO: WWW.DISNEYDREAMING.COM

I'M NOT SO SURE THAT DISNEY CREATES THE VALUES
AS MUCH AS IT REINFORCES VALUES
THAT ARE ALREADY OPERATIVE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY.

TONY CAMPOLO



WILL & JADEN SMITH (2006)

Cp. The Choice of Heracles / Hercules

- We are all pursuing happiness - that is 'the hoped-for' destination on everyone's road, whether you choose vice or virtue.



Photo: Unsplash



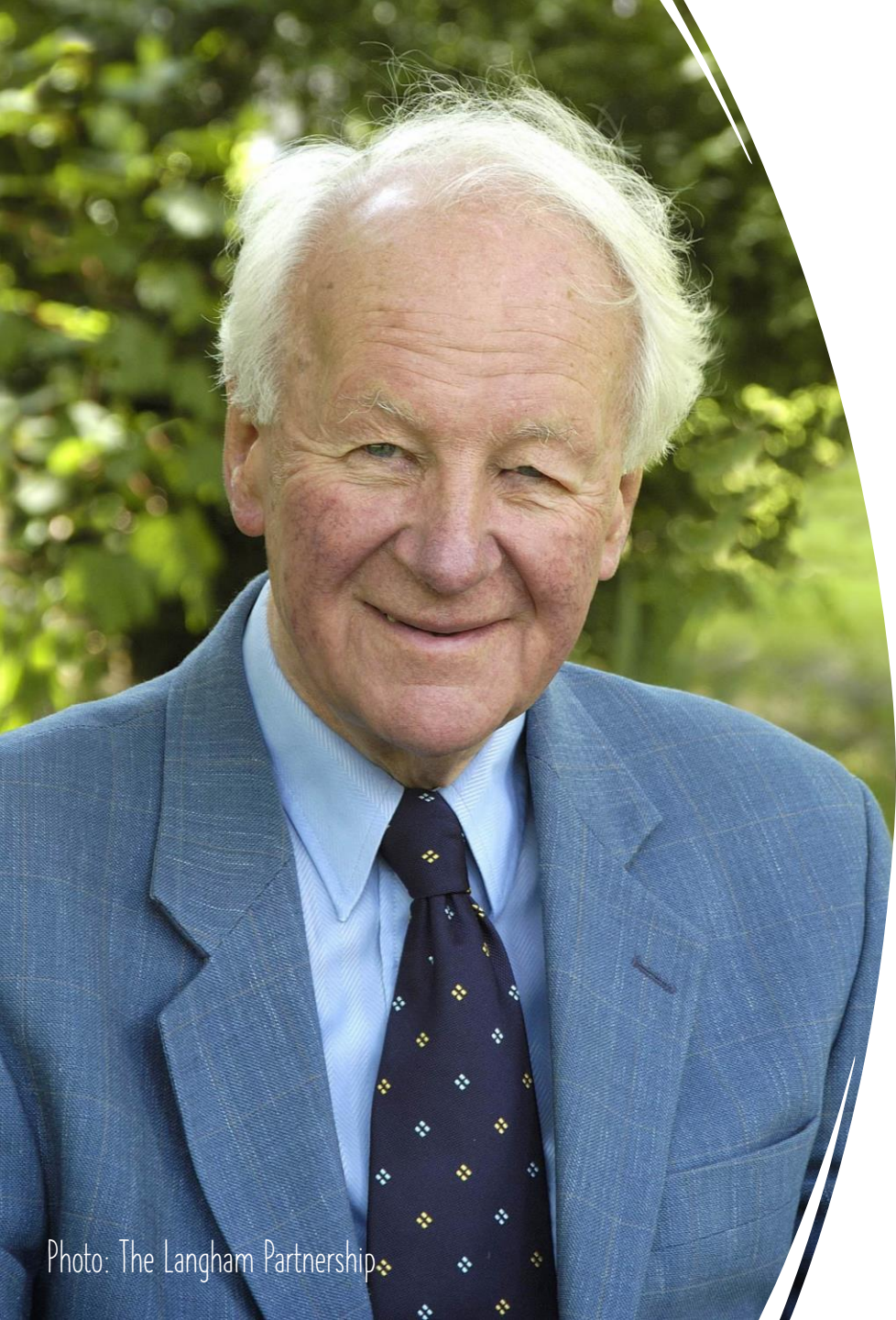
- All stories teach, whether the storyteller intends them to or not.

Philip Pullman



Photo: Sony Pictures

EAT PRAY LOVE



A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

- Double listening - to the Word and to the world
 - These voices will often contradict one another, but our purpose in listening to them both is to discover how they can relate to each other. Double listening is indispensable to Christian discipleship and Christian mission.

John Stott, *The Contemporary Christian*, p 29)

TWO PREDOMINANT MYTHS

- The Life of Excess
- The Life of Simplicity

Both linking HAPPINESS to THE GOOD LIFE

THE WESTERN VIEW OF HAPPINESS:

FROM 'BE GOOD' TO 'FEEL GOOD'



'BE GOOD'

- Eudaimonia (Greek)
 - «eu» - «good» & «daimon» - «spirit»
- Cp. Aristotle and virtue ethics

'FEEL GOOD'

- Hap (Norse)
 - «luck»
- Cp. «happenstance» and «perhaps», thus 'slippery'

FROM BESTSELLER
TO MOVEMENT

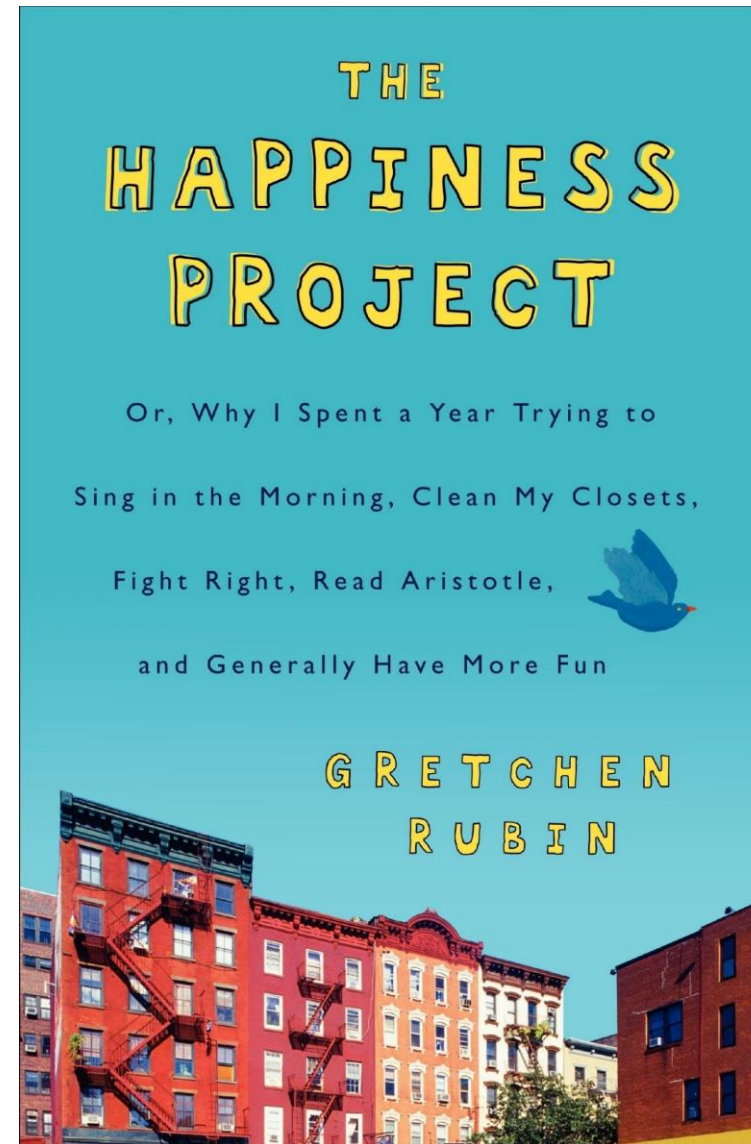


PHOTO: HARPER PAPERBACKS

POPULAR FRIDGE MAGNET



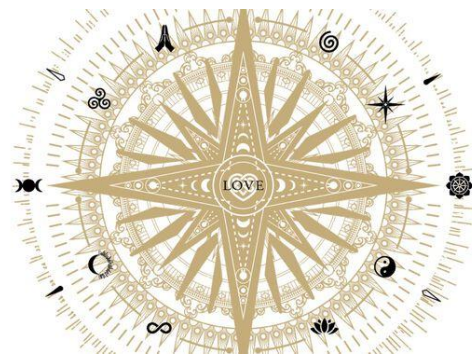
PHOTO: PRIVATE

EXAMPLE FROM THE ADVERTISEMENT INDUSTRY:

RITUALS HELPS YOU SLOW DOWN,
TO FIND HAPPINESS
IN THE SMALLEST OF THINGS.
IT IS OUR PASSION
TO TURN EVERYDAY ROUTINES
INTO MORE MEANINGFUL RITUALS.



PHOTO: RITUALS.COM



PHOTOS: RITUALS.COM



Photo: Unsplash

DOUBLE LISTENING WITH A WORLDVIEW APPROACH

AN INTEGRATED WORLDVIEW APPROACH - A DEFINITION



Photo: IVPpress.com

- A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as *a story* or in *a set of presuppositions* (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.

James Sire 2004

«WAY OF LIVING- WHAT'S BEING SAID AND DONE»

AN INTEGRATED
WORLDVIEW APPROACH
- A TOOL FOR ANALYSIS

- VIEW OF ETHICAL VALUES
- VIEW OF HUMANITY
- VIEW OF REALITY
- VIEW OF FAITH (TRUST/SEARCH FOR MEANING)

«WAY OF LIVING- WHAT'S BEING SAID AND DONE»

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Photo: Unsplash

THE GOOD LIFE, OFTEN 'FEEL GOOD'- HAPPINESS AT ITS CORE

Seen through the emphases on:

- IMAGE
- PERFORMANCES
- RELATIONSHIPS
- POSSESSIONS
- EXPERIENCES
- EXPLORATIONS - SEXUAL
- EXPLORATIONS - SPIRITUAL
- SELF-DETERMINATION

INDIVIDUALISM AT THE VERY HEART

«THE DISNEY GOSPEL»

... is all about me. My dreams.
My will. 'When you wish upon a
star, your dreams come true'.
The Disney Bible has but one
verse, and that is it.

Mark Pinsky



"When you wish upon a *star*,
makes no difference who you are
Anything your heart *desires*
will come to you."
- Jiminy Cricket

Photo: Pinterest.com

Disney · PIXAR



Photo: Disney PIXAR



I WAS BORN TO PLAY

Photo: Disney PIXAR

soul
live every minute



Photo: Disney PIXAR

MOVIES FROM THE LAST DECADES

The characters very often
search within
in order to find
identity, meaning and happiness
= THE GOOD LIFE.





WALT DISNEY WORLD.®

HAPPILY
EVER
AFTER

Good evening - dreamers of all ages

PHOTO: DISNEY.COM

COMPARE

EXPRESSIVE INDIVIDUALISM



30
ADELE

EUPHODESIGN
ARTWORK BY
EUPHODESIGN

WHAT ABOUT US?

If anything becomes more fundamental than God to your happiness, meaning in life and identity, then it is an idol.

Tim Keller



Photo: derekzrismawwy.com

THE ACTS 17 MODEL

- IDENTIFYING AND UTILIZING
POINTS OF CONTACT

- IDENTIFYING AND CHALLENGING
POINTS OF TENSION

IMAGES OF HAPPINESS IN MEDIA STORIES - POINTS OF CONTACT

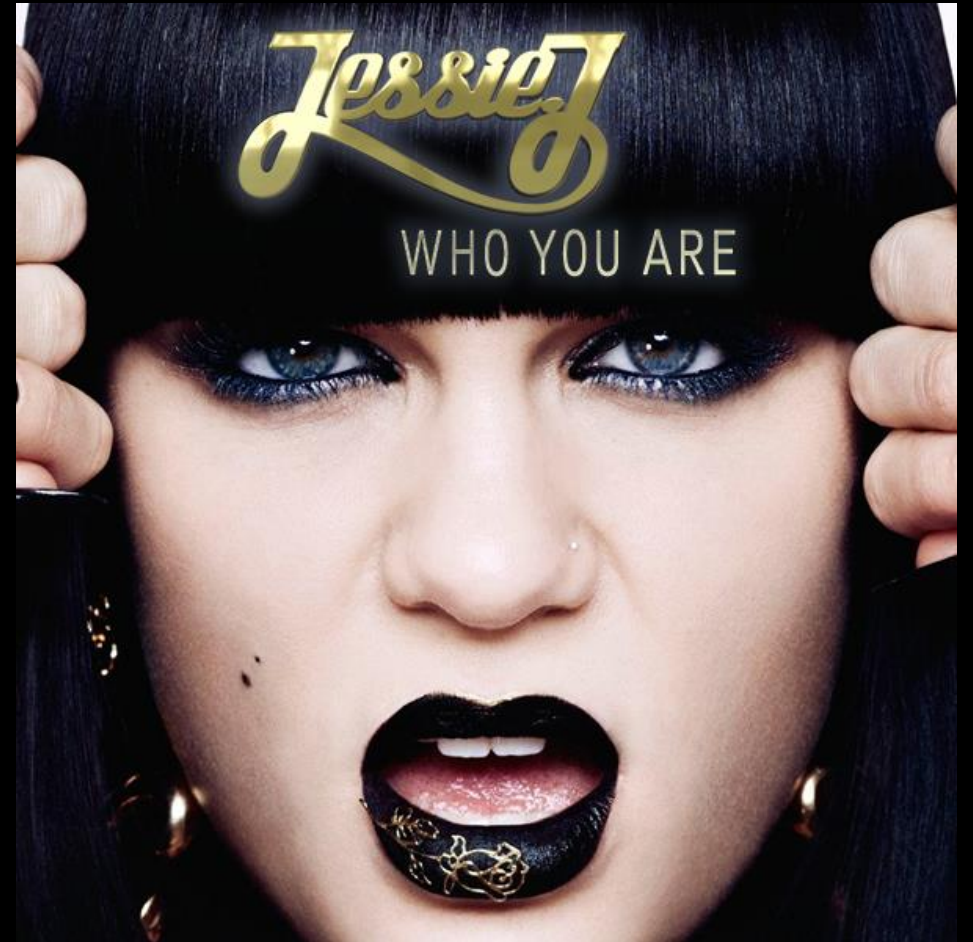
- Expressions of deep longings for
 - true identity
 - real community
 - deep joy
 - authentic freedom

THE OPEN HAND:

Affirming deep longings - and the invitation to explore how a holistic biblical worldview fulfils these longings

I stare at my reflection in the mirror
Why am I doing this to myself?
Losing my mind on a tiny error,
I nearly left the real me on the shelf.
No, no, no, no, no...

Don't lose who you are in the blur of the stars!
Seeing is deceiving, dreaming is believing,
It's okay not to be okay.
Sometimes it's hard to follow your heart.
Tears don't mean you're losing, everybody's bruising,
Just be true to who you are!
(Who you are) [x11]



GREY'S ANATOMY



- No one believes their life will turn out just kind of ok. We all think we're going to be great... Great expectations of who we will be, where we will go, and then we get there [..] The dream is this, that we'll finally be happy when we reach our goals.

(Photo: abc.com)



FINDING IDENTITY AND MEANING IN RELATIONSHIPS OR PERFORMANCES?

Photo: Bob D'Amico /American Broadcasting Companies

- What if you had it all
But nobody to call?
Maybe then, you'd know me
'Cause I've had everything

Photo: JBCrewdotcom



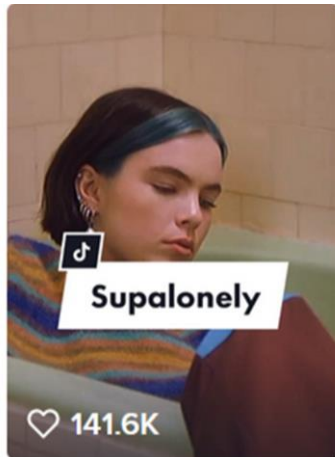
#lonely

#imlonely

#loneliness

#alone

#alonelife



TikTok



I got everything I wanted
Not what you'd think
And if I'm being honest

It might've been a nightmare
To anyone who might care
Thought I could fly
So I stepped off the Golden,
Nobody cried
Nobody even noticed
I saw them standing right there
Kinda thought they might care

Dawson's Creek



Photo: sonypictures.com



Photo: warnerbros.com

modern *family*



Photo: peacock.tv

RUSSEL BRAND ON MEDITATION AND HAPPINESS IN INTERVIEW AFTER MEETING WITH DALAI LAMA 2012

- You start to realize that all other forms of happiness are temporary, conditional, transient, illusory forms of happiness. Sexy happiness, druggy happiness, new jacket happiness.



Photo: russelbrand.com



SKAM

Photo: NRK

IMAGES OF HAPPINESS IN MEDIA STORIES - POINTS OF TENSION

- The key longings reflect underlying perspectives / traces of worldviews:
 - consumerism / materialism
 - individualism / subjectivism

THE CLOSED FIST:

Challenging contemporary views / lifestyles of happiness and the underlying idolatry with the biblical Gospel.



Photo: people.com CREDIT: MILLER
MOBLEY/E!
ENTERTAINMENT

A BIBLICAL
PERSPECTIVE ON
'A GOOD LIFE'
- SUMMARIZED
IN THREE KEY
EXPRESSIONS

The image of God -
we have been created with dignity, to reflect God's goodness

The indwelling love of Christ -
we have come to Christ in faith, receiving forgiveness for sins
and a calling to love God and others

The imitation of Christ -
we are called to a life of purpose and service, reflecting the goodness of Christ

Christians and non-Christians alike experience dashed dreams, ruined relationships, failures, regrets, and discouragement. Daily disappointments leave everyone wanting something more.

Faced with all this, a distinctly Christian vision of "the good life" is being "in Christ". This is the most liberating and fulfilling experience any human could have!

"This volume is a real accomplishment—
ultimately an apologetic for the Christian life."
Timothy Keller

D I S C O V E R I N G

T H E

G O O D

L I F E

+

The Surprising Riches Available in Christ

T I M S A V A G E

The indwelling Christ - that's our blind spot as Christians...
But the good news is that there is more! It can be found not in the things of this world, not in science or nature or possessions or money or religion or pleasure, but in Jesus Christ. Nothing else will satisfy your heart. Works of self-giving love in a self-grasping world are supernatural works. They are miracles. And they are symptomatic of the Christian life.

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D I S C O V E R I N G

T H E

G O O D

L I F E

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The Surprising Riches Available in Christ

T I M S A V A G E

When we become bearers of Christ's love, we become beacons of Christ's love. When we experience Christ's love, we exhibit Christ's love. Love cannot be held in. It is like a river in flood bursting its banks, like a pent-up geyser blowing its top. Love cascades out of the Christian and into the lives of others.

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Timothy Keller*

D I S C O V E R I N G

T H E

G O O D

L I F E

+

The Surprising Riches Available in Christ

T I M S A V A G E

- An apologetic for the Christian life in response to a culture dedicated to seeking personal fulfillment but finding that very thing more and more elusive.

(Tim Keller)

"This volume is a real accomplishment—
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T H E

G O O D

L I F E

+

The Surprising Riches Available in Christ

T I M S A V A G E

ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA AND THE GOOD LIFE

- *What did you recognize from your context?*
- *How do you deal with these challenges?*