

## 1 John 4 : 9 – 12

*‘Dear friends, since God loved us, we also ought to love one another ...’*

### **How do you measure your life?**

What gives your life meaning and purpose? What are the things you live for? What drives and motivates you in life? What in your life now would you never want to lose, never want to have taken away from you, never want to live without?

We all go through life doing lots of interesting and exciting things. Some of our achievements may blow us away as we look back on them. We accumulate so much in our journey through life – our dream home maybe, a flash car, great holidays overseas, even a retirement package that is the envy of everyone.

But have you ever stopped to think about it? The bottom line is all of this is simply **‘stuff!’** Don’t we all go through life hoarding up so much stuff?! Stuff that we can’t take with us! Who will get your stuff?

### **Have you taken a wander through a cemetery recently? Among the tombstones!**

It’s not our favoured venue for a stroll, is it? I get to do it a bit. It happens to be an occupational hazard, ... and a solemn reminder that one day I am going to end up in a place like this!

I have yet to come across a tombstone with an epitaph that reads something like this ...

**‘In loving memory of Jack – three times premiership player of the Brisbane Lions’.**

Very few tombstones list the achievements of the deceased person.

### **But what I find repeatedly are words that read like this ...**

**‘In loving memory of Jack – devoted husband of Jill’**

**‘the cherished and loving father of Bill, Henry, Esther and Joan’**

Even the late and the great Sir Donald Bradman said that his greatest partnership in life was with his wife Jessie. My tombstone will certainly not record that I was a: *‘Pastor of the Lutheran Church!’*

**Do you get it?** In death, we don’t measure life in terms of the **‘stuff’** of life. We value and measure life in terms of our: **‘relationships’**. **Especially our relationships with our loved and loving family members!**

### **Have you discovered the interesting truth that this is exactly how God measures life?**

He made us in his own image for a relationship with him. A relationship that begins, grows and is nurtured in this, our earthly life. A relationship that through the love of God in Jesus will last forever!

**He blesses us with relationships with others.** It is only through vibrant and healthy relationships with others that we find joy and fulfilment in life.

In a paraphrase of Psalm 1, the Word of God tells us: (Psalm 1:1-2)

*‘How well God must love you — you don’t hang out where Sin lurks,  
you don’t slink along Dead-End Road, you don’t go to Smart-Mouth College.*

*Instead your thrill is in God’s Word, you chew on Scripture day and night. You’re like a tree  
replanted in Eden, bearing fresh fruit every month, never dropping a leaf, always in blossom.*

### **We really experience life in its fullness when we are in a living relationship with Jesus.**

A lot of people don’t believe in or turn to God because they think he is a wowser. A kill joy! He wants to deprive us of all the fun in life. The pity is they have never tried life with God through Jesus,

But nothing could be further from the truth! Jesus even said: *‘I have come that you may have real life, a life that lasts forever, more and better life than you ever dreamed of!’* (John 10:10)

**Just consider how prayer can enrich your relationship with God and others.** Are you regularly praying with and for those you love? If you aren’t, do yourself a favour and make time to do it ... every day.

I can guarantee it will make your relationship with them so much better. Because you can’t be praying with someone one minute and then be cursing them in the next!

Prayer fills us with God’s presence and the power of his love. It is His love that inspires and empowers our relationships with others. So if you want to be building better relationships with others, begin by making time to pray with them and for them. You will be surprised with joy at the outcome.

## **Professional development is important for our Holy Trinity Lutheran College staff.**

We regularly meet to explore how we can be doing our respective tasks better in a rapidly changing environment. One of those days was held only Friday week ago. The focus of the day was **Restorative Pathways**. It was all about building and maintaining healthy relationships within our College community.

What a great way for us to get our hearts and minds on the job as another year begins. We are intentional about the pathways we follow in shaping sustainable relationships as we move into the future.

Relationships that are for the good of everyone – the team of staff, the students who pass through our College, and the wider College community.

Relationships that will honour God and fulfil the mission of our College to: *'feed his precious lambs'*.

## **But isn't this also a great personal goal for every one of us?**

So what could you be doing to build healthy, sustainable relationships in your home? In your relationship with your spouse, and your children? In your work place and wherever you chill out?

- **Is there a relationship that is being neglected?**

Make the effort to reconnect and do your best to establish a pattern of getting together that will serve to rebuild that relationship. Pray for God to lead you into a better future.

- **Is there a relationship that needs mending?**

Humble yourself. Be the one who takes the first step to bring healing. Offer your sincere apology if it is warranted. Extend your forgiveness if it is timely. Welcome God's loving and forgiving power and presence into that situation.

- **Do you notice someone doing a good job?**

Personally thank and applaud them for what they are doing, in a genuine way. Affirm the special gift they have. Remember that no one ever goes backwards with encouragement.

- **Do you see someone struggling?**

Pray for them, and even with them if you can. Ask how you might be able to help and then offer to be there for them. Keep in touch and follow up on how they are going.

## **Let us all nurture and grow in our relationship with Jesus.**

**May we always be looking for ways to strengthen our relationships with everyone we meet.**

In this way we will surprise others ... and ourselves with joy.

For we will be making God's love come to life and we will be helping to make it complete ...

**Let your love for others and your relationship with them be to the glory of God!**

**For God in Jesus is already loving you with a perfect love.**