

LIFE FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Week #1 a 4-Week Series Inspired by the Eric Butterworth Book, "In the Flow of Life"

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So how many people ever had times where they were so tough and you struggled so much it felt like your life was a constant uphill battle? Anybody have any times like that? Like you wake up late and you're rushing, and you spill your coffee ... And then you can't find your keys and the traffic is tough ... And then you get to work after all that traffic to remember that you forgot something at home ... And then finally when you get home until the end of the day you find there's all this dog poop in your front yard and you don't even have a dog! It was a rough day!

And how many people have ever had the opposite kind of day? A day where you were in the flow, where everything was just humming along and things were falling into place? And things were so effortless and so easy, you wondered why every day didn't go as smoothly and doesn't go as smoothly.

Today, we are kicking off a series on Eric Butterworth's book, "In the Flow of Life." Butterworth says and believes that there is a constant flow of good moving through the universe and through each of us.

And he is inspired by a Greek philosopher named Plotinus, who was born in 205. So that's over 2,000 years ago. And here's what he said. He said, *"There is a mystical and metaphysical system centered on the idea that all existence flows from a single ultimate source called the One."*

So, do you believe -- as Butterworth and Plotinus -- that there is a divine flow in you? And that it is constantly moving? And that it is always moving in your favor? How many people believe that: that there is a flow constantly moving in your favor?

You know, Jesus said he came that we may have life and have it more abundantly. And having a life abundantly means that we are connected to the endless flow of good: the endless flow of love and peace and joy and wisdom and goodness. And we live and move and have our very being in that goodness.

Notice Jesus did not say he came that we may have a life of struggle, scarcity, and just barely getting by. He said that -- and the truth is -- that life is not meant to be a struggle. It is not meant to be a struggle. It is not meant to feel like life is against us.

In the Book of Jeremiah, it shows that life is for us, not against us. It says, *"For surely I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. 'Plans to prosper you, not harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.'"*

And that's saying that life is flowing in your favor. Butterworth says, *"If you can get into the flow of the universe within you, you will experience an immediate presence of God, and a progressive outforming of this flow will come to you in creative and dynamic ways in every phase of your life."*

"I am in the flow. of life."

Together: [with congregants] *"I am in the flow of life."* Take a deep breath.

"Life is always moving in my favor."

Together: [with congregants] *"Life is always moving in my favor."*

Butterworth says his goal is really to awaken us to this truth, and to help us align ourselves with that divine flow. And this divine flow that is constant is beautiful and wonderful, but the thing we need to avoid are ways that we block that flow in us. And there are two of them we're going to talk about this evening.

And the first one is that we look outside of ourselves a lot. You know, we look outside of ourselves for answers, for solutions, for peace, for happiness. Even though Jesus said, *"The kingdom of God is within*

you.” Even though Paul said, *“Christ in you, your hope of glory,”* and even though in the Old Testament it says, *“The Spirit of God dwells in you,”* we still look outside of ourselves ... even though everything is pointing in us.

You know, we look outside of the appearances to find inner joy and fulfillment. When we are told it is within, we're still looking outside of ourselves. We allow people, events, situations, the government, the stock market, how much money is in our bank account, and a whole bunch of other things to impact and affect how we feel. If we're happy, if we're up, if we're down, we allow the outer appearances to control and have more power than we do in our own level of happiness and fulfillment.

And when the appearances are challenging and difficult, sometimes those outer appearances trigger us feeling hopeless and powerless and fearful and negative. And so, we forget that the power is within us. We forget that we are powerful spiritual beings. And we lose our awareness of the flow. And we need to regain it by realigning ourselves by living from the inside out.

Butterworth says this. He says, *“We come into the world as living souls of infinite potentiality to be discovered and released, for life is lived from within-out.”*

Eric Butterworth tells the story of a man who was brooding at his desk one evening after getting his dismissal notice from a company that he served for 20 years. He was reflecting and feeling a sense of despair. First, how was he going to get another job at this age? You know, he was feeling challenged about the money he did have, how he was going to live off of that. And then the shock that he was no longer needed. He felt useless. He felt like he was washed up. And he was feeling down.

And sitting there, he noticed a spider was walking by, and without even thinking, he brushed the spider off. And then he noticed in amazement, the spider spun a little string and it caught it in him. And it just smoothly from the drop -- it did the strand and he landed on the ground and went on his merry way happily.

And then the guy looked at it and thought, *“If this little creature could do something like that -- bring forth something within himself to save him and just move on his merry way -- maybe that's in me, too.”* And so, he started tapping into his power within.

And then he started getting some insights. Like, he realized he might have done that other job for 20 years, but he knew that it was not his to do anymore. And he was inspired. And what came to him was to do the thing he loved the most, which was to write. And so, he didn't become a Hemingway, but he was able to actually sell. And several people bought, you know, different articles. And he even wrote a few books. And between the money he made there, he was more secure. Not only more secure, but he was actually more fulfilled than he had ever been.

First feeling fear that his job on the outside would ruin his life and his happiness to turning within and finding greater fulfillment than he had ever known.

There's a line in Scripture that says, *“Stir up the gift of God that is within you.”* And that's what he did. He turned within and stirred it up and it guided him to exactly something that would fulfill him even better than he imagined.

So, the first thing is: **looking outside of ourselves throws us out of the flow. That we need to turn within and live inside out.**

And the second thing that can block the flow in our lives is when we resist life.

Like, have you ever had something happen in your life that you didn't like and that you were upset and just ticked off about it? And you just spent all your time complaining of how bad and how wrong and unfair it was?

You know, the second way we block the flow is when we resist life and fight against things that happened that we didn't want to happen; things that changed or ended in our lives that we didn't want them to end.

You know, we spend sometimes a lot of precious time wishing certain areas of our lives were different than they were. We spend a lot of time complaining that they aren't the way we want them to be and wondering, *"Why? Why is this happening to me?"* Or, *"Why is this happening to me again?"*

Butterworth says that we all need to recognize that resistance -- and the way that we all resist life -- can actually become a source of our own suffering. And that we need to no longer fight against life, but we need to find a sense of peace and make peace with it through the power of just acceptance.

Acceptance doesn't mean that we approve -- that we like what happened. It means that we're going to stop wasting our spiritual energy fighting against reality. Acceptance means just being okay, and allowing how life is right now to just be how it is without trying to fight it or hate it or resent it.

As we reduce the amount of resistance in our lives, we actually ... it opens us to learn and to gain blessings and insights from those situations.

Lao Tzu said, *"The human spirit has its source in the divine fountain, which must be permitted to flow freely through man."* What he's saying: Don't resist. It's an important thing for all of us to not resist, but to face and embrace and align ourselves with the flow.

How many people believe that everything happens for a reason? We all do. However, we resist life a lot. So clearly, we're not always thinking there is a reason. Or we sometimes don't want to know the reason. Because if we did, we wouldn't push away those difficult times. We wouldn't be fighting against the reality of life.

Because in a way, if everything happens for a reason -- and I would believe that reason would be good -- every time we resist life, it means we're pushing our good away. We are blocking the good and the blessing and the lesson that those things are meant to have to us in our lives.

And so now let's look at how do we align with the flow? How do we get back in the flow?

And the first thing is to **BUILD OUR PRAYER CONSCIOUSNESS.**

Jesus, when he was describing how to pray, he said, *"When you pray, enter thine inner chamber and speak to your Father, who is in secret."* And so, what it is saying is to turn within: enter that inner chamber. You know, go deep inside to connect with that Spirit of God within. That in all things, every time, turn within. You're having a legal problem, turn it within. Health problem, turn within. Relationship problem, turn within. That there is nothing in life where turning within to quiet our mind and connecting with God's source -- even to calm us down or to give us guidance in what to do -- that it will not benefit us. It will benefit us in all those situations for guidance, for clarity, for inner peace.

Jesus said, *"Seek ye first ..."*

How many people believe that prayer is the most powerful energy we can create? And how many people believe it, but know that you could be praying a lot more than you currently do?

I'll bet every one of us has said the line, I was just too busy today to pray. Deepak Chopra has a great answer to that. He said, *"If you're busy to pray once, pray twice."* And I think it's a powerful message for you guys. It's a priority!

If it's the number one way to resolution -- the number one way to get clarity and peace and our inner resources -- why would we not turn to it consistently on the big things and on the smaller things?

"Seek ye first his kingdom and all these things will be added unto you."

And the other one I like ... Make it a priority is what that's saying.

And the second one is to be sincere and to seek God with all your heart. In the book of Jeremiah it says, *"If you seek me, you will find me if you seek me with all your heart."*

So, as we seek God with all of our hearts, we feel a sense of connection and oneness and that flow just begins to move in and through us. You know, I believe we should practice every day.

I love that line, *"Be still and know that I am God."* Every day we should just be still. And to know that I am God is about unifying our hearts and minds with the Spirit of God.

I love what Psalm 37 says: *"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."* Delight yourself in the Lord!

Sometimes I wonder: Are you feeling delight when you pray? I mean, I think sometimes we think of prayer like broccoli. It's like we don't really enjoy it, but we eat it because we know it's good for us. But delight yourself in the Lord. Prayer should absolutely be a joyful experience. Why? Because we are connecting with the Power and the Intelligence that created the universe, the sun and the stars. That Intelligence created us. And to unify our minds in that Intelligence should be a joyful experience. An experience -- like it says in 37 -- that we should delight in!

Eric Butterworth says that, if there was a battery that needed recharging, and you just plug it in to the wall, that the battery is not saying, *"Hey, over here! Over here! Hey, you missed a spot!"* It's because when we're plugging into the Source, it just fills us.

And so, in meditation, we really don't need to ask for stuff. We just need to open ourselves to unify our heart and our mind with the fullness and the goodness and the Allness of Spirit. We don't need to ask for details, because once we are filled with the Presence, that all that we need is already within. All that we need will come forth.

You know, the more we connect and look within, the more we open ourselves to the flow and to become a greater channel for light and love and goodness in us, in our families and communities and our world.

Butterworth says that the question that we all have to ask is: What am I allowing to flow through me most these days? What flowed through you most? Was it love? Was it joy? Was it peace? Was it whining and complaining? Was it generosity? Was it ideas? Was it courage?

Or here's a better question: What quality do you want to allow to flow through you more all day tomorrow? What quality would you like to flow? We are in the flow. We have the power to direct that flow. And the question is: What do you want to flow through you more in your life?

When we become channels of these divine qualities, we participate and align ourselves more in the flow of life. So, that's building your prayer consciousness.

The next one is to **TRUST**.

Proverbs says this: *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding; but in all ways acknowledge Him and He will make straight your paths."* And so, it's really trust in the Lord and don't lean on your own understanding.

I love this because it's saying, look; trust and know that, as much as you think you know, there's something even greater that is available to us. There's wisdom and guidance and intelligence even greater. And can you just trust that? Not worrying or forcing anything. Can you trust that there is a Higher Intelligence beyond your knowledge, but you're smart enough to know to trust it? To trust that you're loved. Trust that you're supported. And trust that even though you can't see it, there are solutions, there is wisdom, there are answers available.

And so, how much do you trust God? How much do you trust yourself? How much do you trust life? How much do you trust that chair you're sitting on to support the entire weight of your body? Now, wouldn't

it be cool if we trusted God as much as we trusted that chair? Because I think we trust our chairs a lot! And it's to literally know that you will be supported; to literally know that you're cared for.

So, trust is a must if we want to open and align ourselves to the divine flow.

And so we ... And the thing is, we always want to know everything. But trust is a beautiful thing. It's to trust that, even though you don't know, you still believe that it's there. And you still have a space open for something greater and better, even if it's beyond your understanding at this moment.

Okay, and the final thing about being in the flow and increasing the flow –I'm just going to group these -- and that is to ask, listen, and act. **ASK, LISTEN AND ACT** to move that flow within ourselves.

Jesus said, *“Ask and you shall receive.”* Asking is powerful stuff. Asking is the power to call forth and to shape the good that we want to experience and bring into our lives. Asking is about claiming. It's about clarifying.

And then the next thing with asking is to ask: What is the next step for me? What is the best move in this particular situation? Show me. Guide me. Reveal it to me. Because you want to ... Asking helps open a channel and open a space for the wisdom of Spirit to come forth in us and in our lives.

And so, when we receive the guidance that we get, we need to listen and we need to act. You know, maybe the guidance we will hear would be to start something that we postponed before; maybe to ask for help; maybe to listen more; maybe to rest; maybe to move in a completely new direction. You know, maybe when Spirit and guidance comes to us, maybe it comes as an idea, a feeling, a Scripture. Maybe some person will come to us and say a line that will make sense to us. Or maybe we'll simply experience peace.

One of the things that is important, though, is: when you're asking for a sign, don't ask for fireworks and stuff. It's that usually, if you trust, it'll come forth in a way that'll make sense for you. That you'll know what it is.

Like, for me, I feel something in my gut. When I know something is right or wrong, I get something in my gut. I know people who get it in different ways. They get some kind of image. They get all kinds of different ways. But it'll be right for you. But you need to keep honing it. Keep asking. Keep listening. Keep acting. And it will increase the flow of good in our lives.

You know, it's important for us to cooperate, and to put this guidance in action to increase the flow. Because it's about circulation and increasing good. You know, life flows. Love flows. Forgiveness flows. Generosity flows. Ideas flow. Energy flows.

There is a universal flow that is constantly moving in our favor. And we need to not block it by looking outside ourselves or resisting it but, instead, connecting with the Source; trusting that there's even greater things still to come; and then ask, listen, and act to circulate the good to help us stay in the flow.

“I am in the flow of life.”

Together: [with congregants] *“I am in the flow of life.”*

“Life is always flowing in my favor.”

Together: [with congregants] *“Life is always flowing in my favor.”*

And one more time: *“I am in the flow of life.”*

Together: [with congregants] *“I am in the flow of life.”*

God bless you.

