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## Living the Ideal Life

How does our quest for the ideal life relate to the world in which we live? If we believe that the ideal life is a fantasy that we will never experience, then life will be filled with frustration. We will see everything around us as a potential impediment to our happiness and freedom. If what we see going on around us is "reality," then anything beyond that must be unreal. Actually, the Bible says that the "reality" is that which is beyond, and that which we now experience is but a shadow. I don't understand it either, but I know that it is true. There is more, and better, stuff waiting beyond what we can see and experience now.

My second-gearless scooter is a good - though limited - illustration of this. I can ride adequately, and get where I need to go. I followed Art to Tomahawk last fall, and was able to stay with him. We actually didn't spend much time around second gear. But, I could have challenged him a bit off the line with second gear. I look forward to getting it fixed one day, or maybe trading up for a better bike. The point is, the riding I can do now is but a shadow of the riding I could do with a fixed bike, or a better bike. Many of us are in the position of looking forward to something better, and we compare what we have to what we want as if it were a shadow compared to reality. Can we grasp the parallel? Some are already riding their reality, but many are still astride the shadow (sorry, Honda Shadow riders).

There are religious implications of this which are not found in the traditional religious systems. Much of organized religion acts as if it is the ultimate reality. Not! True reality is found in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man comes to the father except by me." It is here that the religion of Jesus was described. Jesus said that he was the Life; his life was the life that God accepted. Jesus Christ lived the greatest life that has ever been lived upon this earth. Almost all the world's religious systems acknowledge that Jesus lived an ideal, or exemplary, life. Even those who do not believe that he was the divine Son of God admit that he lived extraordinarily. This is the life we seek to attain. The question, then, is how to attain this life for ourselves. Throughout history, men have struggled and strained to live that kind of life, only to fail miserably. If you are like me, you may have tried your best to live a perfect, ideal life, and have given up the

quest as hopeless. This club has a lot of members. None of us can live this way for more than a short period of time, then we screw it up royally. Jesus addresses the question of attainment by saying that HE is the Way. Not only is his life the IDEAL life, but the only way to get it is through Him! God is not pleased or amused by watching our endless failures at finding the ideal. He has provided another Way - Jesus Christ. The reality - the Truth - is that if we will trust in Him, his ideal life will count for us, his sacrifice for sin will take our place, and his resurrection will be ours. God says that Jesus did everything for us. He fulfilled every requirement of the ideal life, and what he did will count for us, too, if we trust him.

We can now relate to the present world in reality, rather than shadow. We now see things framed in the Truth (Jesus said he was the Truth), rather than the false shadows of worldly and religious systems. We now have the answers about why God created us in the first place. We can tell the difference between freedom and bondage, and experience the ideal life in its fulness. Second gear never felt so good. It's the ride, you know!

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Pastor Sam Downey  
P.O. Box 557 Adams, WI 53911  
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