

# GOOD LIFE 21

LIVING JESUS' VISION & VALUES



EXPLORATION GUIDE

*Trade the truck. Time for an upgrade!  
Paint the walls a brighter shade.  
Change the channel for a better show.  
Turn the page. It's a new chapter!  
Step through the door into more beautiful space.*

We are all longing and hoping. Might 2021 bring stronger, healthier, more confident days? If so, what can that look like, and how do we get there?

In the opening five weeks of '21, we'll explore what it looks like to step into a truly good life. We'll discover such good life based on Jesus' vision and values for us!

***Get ready. He has truly good life in store as we explore and trust him even more!***

Enjoy exploring these biblical passages, viewing videos, and reflecting on discussion questions!

God saw all that he had made,  
and it was very good.

***in Genesis 1:31***

... Jesus of Nazareth ...  
went around doing good.

***Acts 10:38***

*What would really good living look like in your life for 2021? Really good living. List everything that comes to mind, including your physical needs, spiritual practices, mental outlook, family, career, and community. Remember, it all matters to God. Really. That doesn't automatically mean you'll get it all. As your good Father, he knows what's truly best for you. Rest in that reality, content. But your abundant life, your genuine good, is truly his passion for you. And it's good to reflect, to dream, to reimagine what life could be with his leading!*

**Read Genesis 1:27-31.** What is dubbed "good" in this opening chapter of God's story?

The Hebrew term for "good" is *tov*. Scot McKnight explains:

*"So everything God created is tov. And when everything is spoken and accomplished, when all the intricate harmonies are formed, God's glory echoes through all creation: tov me'od. Very good! Very well done! Perfect! Harmony! What a masterpiece! All these English terms, and more, are found in the word tov."*

***A Church Called TOV: Forming a Goodness Culture***

**[Watch this video: "And It Was Good" by twelve:thirty media](#)**

*What most stirs you, inspires you, bothers you or otherwise motivates you from this video? What do you plan to do about it?*

**Genesis 1:28** says “God blessed them . . .” In the lines to follow, what does that blessing of good life entail? Reflect on the explanation and description.

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**Read Matthew 5:1-12.** According to Jesus, what does truly “good & blessed” life look like? List some of Jesus’ descriptors. What strikes you as significant and different compared to our normal understanding of blessed and good?

Place this in the bigger story context of humanity’s fall (**Gen 3**). Remembering that helps us grasp why Jesus does and says what he shares right here. Life does not always naturally look good or feel blessed. Good and blessed can be pretty upside down in Jesus’ kingdom economy. The Gospel stories show Jesus calling people to follow him so they learn from him, gain his heart-values, and start to live more of his own new, truly good life.

**Read Titus 2:11-14.**

According to Paul, what’s truly core, foundational for living a truly good life?

What might need to “go in the garbage”—get a bigger “no”—so you can be eager to do what is good? Get specific. How will you start discarding those things?

***Manor Church is passionate about Jesus' life, love, and work flowing through our lives, love, and work.***

Based on what we've seen in **Genesis 1**, **Matthew 5**, and **Titus 2**, what might be your own fresh, refined aspirations for a really good life in 2021? Be specific.

What most excites you about your own opp's in 2021?  
What would it take for you to get after such a good life?

***At Manor Church, we passionately value loving God, loving others, sharing his Good News, and doing good!***

Across the next four weeks, we will unpack each of these in light of the good life Jesus envisions for us! With each of these passionate priorities, what most excites you about our church's opp's in 2021?

What could your own personal, passionate engagement at Manor Church look like?

To love is, in the words of Dallas Willard, "to will the good of another"; it's not primarily an emotion.

Love is a desire for the well-being of another, so much so that personal sacrifice would not stand in its way . . .

God's love is a lot more like a parent's love toward a child than the "love" between infatuated teens.

**James Bryan Smith**

in *The Good and Beautiful God*

Name a certain food you think tastes so good, a delectable item you really love. Explain why.

**At Manor Church, we value loving God.**

**Read Psalm 34:8.**

What do you think it looks like to "taste and see that the Lord is good?"

What might it mean to be so "blessed" as a result, especially in light of last week's discussion of "blessed?"

**Read Matthew 22:34-40 + Deuteronomy 6:5 & Leviticus 19:18.**

What does this scene teach you about Jesus' values? Why do you think Jesus chose such a summary of what he thought most important?

**Read 1 John 4:9-19.**

*God's love is selfless, action-oriented, self-sacrificing, consistently and passionately for the good of others!*

Trace the thick thread of God's love across these verses. Make a list of your top 3 to 5 insights about God's style of love and how we're motivated:

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What should it look like for you to more deeply, personally love God in 2021? Be specific about 2 or 3 heart-and-soul, action-oriented steps you will take this year?

### **Digging in for deeper vision.**

Read in Matthew's Gospel, chapters 5-7 at least once this week. Ponder two or three themes that stand out for you from Jesus' values, especially those that reflect loving God and propel you toward loving him more deeply.

### **Recall from Week 1:**

#### ***Our vision and values***

Manor Church is passionate about Jesus' life, love, and work flowing through our lives, love, and work.

At Manor Church, we passionately value **loving God**; loving others; sharing his Good News; and doing good!

[Watch this video: Love God's Way](#)

### **Dream and imagine.**

*Write down what comes to mind. How might we more passionately express our love for God all together, the community of faith overall as Manor Church, in 2021? What might that look like?*

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*What might be the most loving thing another human has ever done for you?*

*Watch on rightnow Media. Don't have a free rightnow media account? [Email us](#) and let us know you would like access.*

### **Watch this video: Love Does Session 1**

*What most stirs you, inspires you, bothers you or otherwise motivates you from this video? What do you plan to do about it?*

### **Revisit both 1 John 4 and Matthew 22:34-40.**

Why do you think Jesus calls for such an others-oriented expression?

Name some love-blockers. What makes loving others so difficult? Really. Get specific about your own love-blockers.

What should Jesus' teaching look like in everyday expression?

## Look at John 13:35.

### Consider this:

We have seen that we were created for an intimate relationship with the infinite and personal God who loves us. He initiates this relationship, and we love him because he first loved us. Loving God completely is the key to loving self correctly (seeing ourselves as God sees us), and this in turn is the key to loving others compassionately. As we grow in our understanding of God's unconditional love and acceptance of us in Christ, we are increasingly liberated from using people to meet our needs.

**Kenneth Boa**

*in Conformed to His Image*

What should greater love for others look like in your own relational connections during 2021?

### **Digging in for deeper vision.**

Read in Matthew's Gospel, chapters 5-7 at least once this week. Reflect on two or three of Jesus' others-oriented themes that stand out for you from Jesus' values. How will real love for others be genuinely expressed through you?

### **Dream and imagine.**

*How might we more passionately express our love for others collectively, together as Manor Church, in 2021? Both within our church body and those in our additional circles of friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, and precious people 'round the globe?*

It is evangelism that helps people experience the good news in new ways.

It is evangelism in the power of God's Spirit, in the context of community, that is effective at speaking to people's questions today!

... Ask God to help you personally lead someone to Christ this next year.

**Rick Richardson**

in *Evangelism Outside the Box: New Ways to Help People Experience the Good News*

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When recently have you heard some truly good news? (for example, "There's a vaccine ready for COVID-19!")

What most often holds you back from sharing Christ's gracious good news with others? Why?

Read and ponder these passages about the Gospel:

**Luke 4:14-21**

**Acts 20:22-24**

**Romans 1:8-17**

**Romans 10:8-15**

How would you summarize the core truth in each of the above passages in just two or three sentences?

A friend from work says to you over coffee, "Okay. Listen, if I'm totally honest, I don't get it. What in the world is truly good about Christianity?" Based on Jesus' description above as well as the Apostle Paul's lingo, how would you describe the Gospel, the good news, in a way she/he would understand?

What makes the good news truly good in a robust, full-orbed sense? As you ponder your answer, think both "right now" and long-range, eternal.

**Digging in for deeper vision.**

Read in Matthew's Gospel, chapters 5-7 at least once this week. Reflect on two or three themes that stand out for you from Jesus' values. What's really good but really stretching for us to embrace? How is what Jesus shares truly good news?

**[Watch this video! 5 Tips on Sharing the Gospel](#)**

*What most stirs you, inspires you, bothers you or otherwise motivates you from this video? What do you plan to do about it?*

**Dream and imagine.**

*How might we more passionately express the gospel, both individually and all together as the community of faith called Manor Church, in 2021?*

We all have a tendency to rise to the special occasions of our lives, but God has created us to do our good works in the midst of the humdrum of daily living . . .

The challenge to us is to be alert for these opportunities and see them not as interruptions or inconveniences but as occasions for doing the good works God has planned for us.

**Jerry Bridges** in *The Fruitful Life*

### ***Our vision and values***

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At Manor Church, we passionately value loving God; loving others; sharing his Good News; and **doing good!**

*Think about two or three really good endeavors—a project, a special task or team—you've been a part of during your lifetime. What was your favorite one and what made it really good?*

Just like that original good and blessed intention back at Creation (Genesis 1), our salvation and gracious recreation into Jesus' image leads to us doing good. Really. We do good works.

Explore the following:

**Ephesians 2:8-10**

**Romans 8:28-29**

**Galatians 6:10**

**Titus 2:11-14**

What do these verses teach about the source and motivation for our good works as Jesus' disciples?

What is *God's* role in our good works?

What is *our* role in our good works?

**[Watch this video: Serve: Created to Do Good Works](#)**

*What most stirs you, inspires you, bothers you or otherwise motivates you from this video? What do you plan to do about it?*

Consider how God has wired you—your special gifts, passions, skills, training and background. Make a short list of the highlights:

How do you envision your own fresh endeavors to “do good” taking shape in 2021? What are two or three aims/goals you have for stronger serving and lasting impact based on the image of Christ re-formed in your own life?

What will it take, both in character formation and an action plan?

Ponder and then plot out two or three action steps you will take.

What will those steps look like? How will you take them?

Who do you need to join you in order to succeed in such good endeavors?

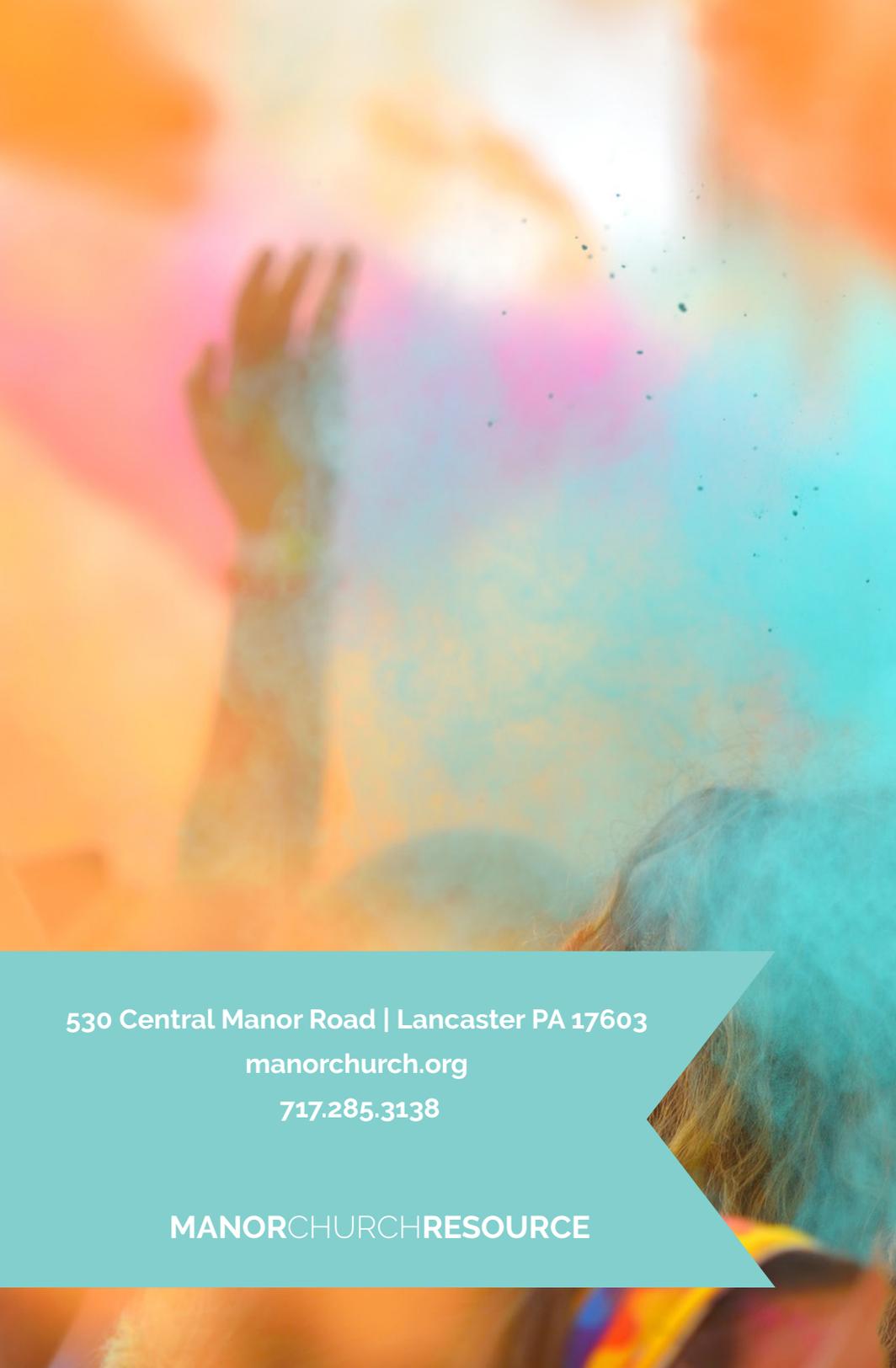
What other resources do you need in order to do such good?

**Digging in for deeper vision.**

Read in Matthew's Gospel, chapters 5-7 at least once this week. Reflect on two or three themes that stand out for you from Jesus' values, especially themes related to doing good.

**Dream and imagine.**

*Capture your ideas; write them down. How might we more passionately do good all together, the community of faith overall as Manor Church, in 2021? Describe it and also some of the details necessary for truly making it happen.*



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