

## I Quit Title

Welcome

I've heard it all my life: A quitter never wins and a winner never quits!

There are times in our life when we need to persevere, when we need to push on and keep going.

In general, "don't be a quitter" is a good message for kids because usually it's easier to quit.

But there are times we want kids to quit doing some things:

"Quit hitting your brother."

"Quit drawing on the walls."

"Quit running while holding those scissors."

If you're doing something that could harm yourself or others, it's good to quit.

If we're doing things that negatively impact our lives, we need to quit.

If at some point during this series you realize that you are doing something that's hurting you or holding you back, our hope is that you will resolve to quit. In that sense, it's okay to be a quitter. It's good to say, "I quit."

Last week Pastor Chris told us about things we could be doing that could be sabotaging our life; when we do those things we are actually hating our life. He told us that we need to quit

hating our life. If you missed it, or you would like to review it, it is posted on our website and I encourage you to go check it out.

For those of you who were here, how many of you took his advice to heart? Raise your hands, how many of you have quit hating your life? How many of you love your life?

Good. Those of you with your hands up will want to pay close attention today.

Today I want to tell you to quit loving your life.

### **I Quit Loving My Life**

What?! Is that a typo? Nope. But last week we just told you to quit hating your life.? I know.

Quit loving your life. I realize that sounds harsh, but that's what the Book says. Let's take a look:

**John 12:25 NIV** Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

These are the words of Jesus. Anyone who loves their life will lose it. Anyone who hates their life will keep it. Jesus says quit loving your life.

Now this teaching doesn't sound out of character coming from the Messiah who tells us to "Love our enemies," to "Turn the other cheek," to "Bless those who curse us," and to "Pick up our crosses and follow Him." But it still sounds a little shocking...

It sounds like Jesus is telling us to hate our life. If we take this verse literally, it almost doesn't make sense. "If you love your life, you will lose it. But if you hate your life it will last forever." What?!

Clearly, there must be something else going on here, and we need to make sure we understand what Jesus is really telling us.

There is one other verse where Jesus tells us to "hate our life."

**Luke 14:26 NIV** If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.

Well, there you go. It's a good thing we didn't preach this message on Mother's Day, but this is a good verse to keep in mind since Father's Day is still coming up.

NO! I don't believe Jesus actually wants us to hate our family. He wouldn't command us to hate our mother and father because that would violate one of the Ten Commandments, and we all know that Jesus did not sin and was the fulfillment of the commandments. Jesus doesn't want us to hate anyone.

Instead, Jesus is telling us we cannot love our parents, our siblings, our spouses, our children more than we love God. The Gospel of Matthew puts it another way:

**Matthew 10:37 NIV** Anyone who loves their father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

I love my parents. But I love Jesus more. I love my wife. But I love Jesus more. God blessed me with a wonderful son, and I love him. But I have to remember to love God more, because the more I love God and the closer I follow Jesus, the better I'll be able to love my son and my wife and my parents. If I love God more than them, I will be able to love them more than I would otherwise.

And as my son grows up, I hope he loves Jessica and me, but I hope and pray that he loves Jesus more.

In the same way, Jesus isn't telling us to hate our own lives. I don't want anyone to leave here today thinking they should constantly be in a bad mood, hating their life, or worse doing things to make your life terrible so you will hate it. But we need to quit loving our life more than we love Jesus.

### **I Quit Loving My Life**

Now, while we're making sure we understand what Jesus is talking about, it's important that we define what He means by "life."

Our first scripture comes from John's Gospel: **John 12:25**, but then a few chapters later in John 14:6 Jesus says He is the life. "I am the way, the truth, and the Life."

But Jesus isn't telling us to hate Him, or that we shouldn't love Him more than we ... love ... Him.?

Here Jesus is talking about our old life, our earthly life, our physical life. Ultimately, God is the source of our life. We are

alive because of Him. But once we're born, until we learn the truth about God, we can come to believe that what we can see and hear and touch and feel is all there is to life. This is the old life.

Jesus offers us a new life, in Him. Jesus tells us we must be born again to see the Kingdom of God.

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. We are buried with Christ through baptism, that just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too may live a new life. John puts it this way:

**1 John 5:11 NIV** And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

**1 John 5:12 NIV** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

When we come to believe in Jesus Christ as our savior we can enter into this new life. And it is by loving and following Him that we live this new life. So we can't love this new life of faith in Jesus more than we love Jesus because He is the Life.

Meanwhile, we are still alive here on earth. We can be living a new life as part of God's Kingdom, but we are still living our earthly, physical life. We still eat. We still sleep. We still experience this world with its temptations and pleasures. We still live our day to day life. But we can't let the things of this world come before God. We can't let our earthly, physical life

take priority over God, because in doing so we are loving our old life more than we love Him.

If you love your earthly life, you will lose it. But if you love Jesus more than your old, physical life – if you love Jesus as your life – you will live a new life that will last to eternity.

Does that make sense?

It's important that we understand Jesus' teachings. If you have any questions about it, don't hesitate to ask.

You can ask us in person, or use our **anonymous text line 214-856-0550**

This scripture can be confusing. We want to make sure you understand it.

### **I Quit Loving My Life**

Again, I don't want anyone to go home thinking that Jesus wants them to hate themselves. Our life, the fact that we are alive, is a gift from God. God loves us, and He wants us to be happy. I believe the things Chris preached about last week are correct. We shouldn't hate our life. Just don't let the things of this life come before God.

We should appreciate the gift of life that God has given us. Don't hate your life.

At the same time, don't get too attached. Life in this world is temporary, God is permanent.

**Quit defining your life according to worldly things (things that are perishing)**

Now some of you may have seen the title of this message “I Quit Loving My Life,” and thought “Whew, that’s easy. I’m already there.” Maybe you don’t feel like you have a great life. Maybe you’re not enjoying life right now. Maybe you feel more challenged by last week’s instruction to quit hating your life.

I hope that changes, but listen up. You still need to pay attention today. Because even if you don’t feel like you have a great life, even if you’re not living your best life now, we can still be loving our lives in subtle ways.

“Loving your life” doesn’t necessarily mean you wake up every morning with a smile on your face, and say, “I LOVE MY LIFE!” We love our life when we define our life by the things of this world.

Jesus warns against this:

**Matthew 6:25 NIV** Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?

What is your life based around? Our lives should be more than food or clothes or a house or a job.

But we can tend to base our life on material things because that’s what’s in our face 24/7.

When we value our life and define our life based on the things of this world, we are loving the life that this world offers.

A man came to Jesus who had every reason to love his life. He is mentioned in three of the Gospels, and he is known as the “Rich,

Young Ruler.” Now let’s get this straight, he was rich, he was young, and he was powerful. Does that sound like a life that would be easy to love?

He came to Jesus asking how he could inherit eternal life. Jesus talks to him and they establish that he has been obeying the commandments. Then this happens:

**Mark 10:21 NIV** Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

Now Jesus is speaking in love, and he invites the man to follow Him. But what happens?

**Mark 10:22 NIV** At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

He went away sad. He was known as the “Rich, Young Ruler,” that’s how people knew him. That’s who he was. But Jesus says, “Your identity shouldn’t be based on your riches. It should be based on Me.”

He had every reason to be happy, but he goes away sad because his life is defined by his wealth and he can’t let go of that. He came seeking something eternal, but he can’t let go of something temporary.

You may not be rich, or young, or a ruler. You may not feel like you have an especially great life. But if there is anything in your



life that you are not willing to let go of for Jesus, then you love that part of your life in this world more than Him.

It could be anything. It could be a car. It could be a job. It could be a substance that you've come to depend on. It could be your morning cup of Starbucks. If there is anything that you are not willing to let go of for Him, then you love that part of your life more than Him. **You've got to realize, you're holding on to things that are perishing, and they are holding you back from the one thing that is eternal.** Even if you devote yourself to these things they ultimately won't bring you joy or peace or hope. They're all going to pass away.

Don't let these things define who you are. You are a child of God. You are loved. Jesus died for you.

You are so much more than these things. Again, they could be anything; they're not just material things.

It could be a relationship that's holding you back. Are you willing to let it go for Him?

It could be a grudge that you aren't willing to forgive. Are you willing to lay it down for Him?

It could be your pride. Are you willing to set aside the way you see yourself?

Are you willing to let go of the identity you've established to receive the identity He has for you?

Whatever you've got down here, it may be a fortune, it may be a title, or it may be the last thing you're holding onto just trying to get by. Whatever you've got down here, if it's not Jesus it is going

to pass away.

Are you willing to let it go for Him?

I'm not saying you have to sell all that you have, and take a vow of poverty. But check yourself: what do you base your life on? Is there anything that you wouldn't be able to let go? God knows your heart. Be honest with yourself. And if there is something that is holding you back from growing in your faith life, let it go.

That's what repentance is. We turn away from the things that are leading us away from God and turn back toward Him. Which one do you love more? God loves you more than you will ever know, and He will love you forever. That thing might be fun for season, but it's going to end. Do you love God more?

In a way, that's what baptism is. We lay down our old life and are symbolically buried with Him in the water, so that we can arise to a new life in Him. Do you love your life? Are you willing to lay it down for His?

In a way, that's what worship is. We're letting go of ourselves to focus on expressing our love for God.

It might look weird to put my hands up, or kneel, or whatever, but it's not about me. I love God. This is how I feel led to express my love. I surrender all that I am to Him.

**Psalm 100:1 NIV** Shout for joy to the Lord all the earth.

**Psalm 100:2 NIV** Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

That's how we worship Him when we gather here, but we also worship Him through the way we live our lives.

We worship Jesus through the way we live our lives for others.

### **Quit Loving Your Life and Start Loving Others**

If we love our own life, we'll tend to put ourselves ahead of others. If we love Jesus, we will put others ahead of ourselves.

Jesus repeatedly taught that we show love to Him by showing love to others: "Love your neighbor as yourself." "Whatever you do for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you do for Me."

We serve those whom we love. If we love our own life, we will serve ourselves.

But if we love God, we will recognize His love for others – everyone is made in God's image, For God so loved the world – and we will love and serve them as a way to love and serve God.

If we love Jesus more than our own life and self-interest, then we should seek to be like Him.

**Mark 10:45 NIV** For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Philippians chapter 2 instructs us on how we should imitate Christ's humility. It includes this passage:

**Philippians 2:3-4 NIV** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility **value others above yourselves**, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

This is good instruction, and we can see it lived out in the Bible. If you want to see a good example of someone who quits loving their life and begins loving others, look to Zacchaeus. 🎵 🎶 🎵

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector who had gotten rich off cheating people. He loved his life.

But then he meets Jesus. Jesus shows Zacchaeus compassion and love. His life as a crooked tax collector had been good...

**Luke 19:8 NIV** But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

Zacchaeus is willing to give up this life he had established. And in doing so he wanted to repay those whom he had cheated, beyond what he had taken. He wanted to show them love as Jesus had shown him love.

In truth, a life of following and serving Jesus goes beyond “loving others as ourselves.”

The night before He was going to be crucified, Jesus gave some important, last-minute instructions to His disciples. He tells them...

**John 15:12 NIV** My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

This is revolutionary! For hundreds of years the Jewish people had been trying to obey the commands of God, and they had been the same for hundreds of years. Now, in a garden, at night, Jesus

throws out a new one?!

“Love each other as I have loved you.” What does this mean?  
Jesus continues...

**John 15:13 NIV** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down his life for his friends.

We need to quit loving our life and start living His life.

\*\*\*MUSICIAN\*\*\*

### **Quit loving your life and start living His life**

If we love our life we will live our life. If we love Jesus, and our life is found in Him, we will live like Him.

**1 John 2:6 NIV** Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did.

This is no small thing. Jesus laid down His life for others, for us. We will never get there if we love our life.

You may have been going to church a long time. You may have read the whole Bible, multiple times.

But it's hard not to love your life and want to preserve it. It's hard to live as Jesus did.

In fact, one of His disciples unfortunately discovered that he loved his own life more than Jesus.

He had been with Jesus throughout His ministry. He had walked with Jesus and talked with Jesus, but then when Jesus is captured we find out who this disciple really loves. Of course I'm talking about... Simon Peter.

Peter had sworn that He would die for Jesus. But then, when Jesus is on trial for His life, Peter denies Him.

“Aren’t you one of His followers?” “Haven’t I seen you with Him?”

“Surely you are one of them.”

-“No, No, No! I swear I don’t know the man!”

Peter was scared. They might kill him too. Peter loved his life. And the proof is that later Peter has gone back to the life he had before he met Jesus. He’s fishing, and Jesus calls to him from the beach.

We will fall short at times. We will make mistakes and cling to our own lives rather than Jesus.

But He is willing to forgive us when we turn back to Him.

Jesus talks with Peter on the beach, and asks Him, “Do you love me more than these?”

Do you love Me more than your life? Then feed My lambs. Do what I would do. Live My life.

Do you love Jesus? I hope you do. Do you love His life more than your own? Again, it’s not easy to live as he lived, and to be willing to lay down your life for others. But that’s what we’re called to do. It doesn’t mean you necessarily have to die for someone else. We can lay down our lives in small ways every day, as we put others ahead of ourselves. If you love Jesus and He is the life in you, then you will truly love your life.

At the end of service every week we open these altars and invite everyone to come forward and talk to God.