

# Living An Exceptional Life:

Simple Keys To Adding More Joy, Free Time And Beauty To Daily Life

By Cynthia Bailey-Rug

A lit candle with a bright flame, positioned in the lower right quadrant of the cover. The candle is yellow and appears to be melting slightly at the top. The flame is a bright yellow-orange color, casting a warm glow on the candle's surface.

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Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, King James Version, Cambridge, 1769.

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## ***Table Of Contents***

Introduction	i
Adding More Joy To Your Life	
Give God Top Priority In Your Life	2
Who Is Your Source?	4
'Tis Better To Give Than To Receive	5
Do All Things Excellently	7
Pampering	8
"Me Time"	10
Prizes	12
Adding More Free Time To Your Life	
Get Organized	14
Be Efficient	16
Adding More Beauty To Your Life	
Be Considerate And Thoughtful	18
Learn Something New	19
Keep Your Focus On The Task At Hand	21
Add Beauty To Your Home	23
Take In The Sensual Beauty Surrounding You	25

## ***Introduction***

Imagine this...

You completing your daily tasks with ease, arriving on time, even a few minutes early, to appointments, and having enough time at the end of the day to enjoy some private time with a good book and a glass of wine.

Sound impossible? It really isn't.

My purpose in writing this book is to show you a few simple changes that you can make to help you enjoy a more fulfilling, beautiful life, have more inner peace, and yes, even more time in which to enjoy this exceptional new life.

Does this sound like what you are hungry for? If so, then get comfortable and read on.

May this book bless you!

***Add More Joy To Your Life***

## ***Give God Top Priority In Your Life***

I have found the most important thing for a peaceful, joyous life is to spend quality time with God, and give Him top priority in your life.

Since meeting God in 1996, I have heard how important this is, but I did not understand it at first. I began to ask God what these things meant, and He showed me.

What quality time with God means is time spent reading your Bible, praying, listening to His voice- simply spending time in His presence. "In His presence is fullness of joy," says the author of Psalm 16:11. That joy infiltrates your innermost being, and then radiates to all areas of your life, affecting those around you. So do peace, patience, wisdom and more.

Giving Him top priority is rather self explanatory- do not do things which are dishonoring to God such as breaking His commandments, deliberately hurt people (physically or emotionally), and pray often, listen for His voice, and consult Him before making decisions.

Faith is a very powerful thing! If you do not believe me, research the subject of faith and wellness. Even the scientific community has found that people with a strong faith in God often are generally happier, live longer lives, have less health problems, and heal faster when they do face illnesses.

There is a tiny small catch however. To receive the fullness of the good things that God has for you, and spend eternity in heaven, you must believe Jesus Christ is the only Son of God who died so you may be saved. In John

3:16 Jesus says, “for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Believing is all you have to do. Do you believe? Then tell Him you believe His message, and want to know Him better. It is a decision I am sure you never will regret. I know I certainly do not regret making this choice!

Once you have done this, I recommend you get a copy of the Bible in a modern, easy to understand translation, like the Amplified or New International versions. Also, finding a Bible believing church to help you get started on your new walk with God can be tremendously helpful. Personally, I find the Christian cable channels to be wonderful ways of learning about God when church is not available

## ***Who Is Your Source?***

Expecting other people to be your source means that you expect other people to supply your financial needs, your joy, your entertainment, and more. That is a wrong mindset that will put a heavy and inappropriate burden on those you care about, and will set you up for great disappointments. No one human being can meet all of our needs: only God can do that.

People who expect others to meet their needs are miserable. They feel unsatisfied or disappointed in relationships, and those in relationship with them feel unnecessary pressure to perform things for which they should not be responsible, along with resentment for being the supplier, and guilt when they fail.

Are you one of the above-described people? If so, today is the time to change! Please remember that you are only responsible for yourself, no one else. And, no one is responsible for you except you.

God is meant to be your one and only source. Philippians 4:19 says, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." This is great news! God loves you so much, He wants to meet your every need! The best part is that unlike people, He never will disappoint.

## ***'Tis Better To Give Than To Receive***

When you see someone in need, and you have the ability to meet that need, do it! When you know you are responsible for adding to the happiness of others, it makes you feel good. It also may do more than just meet a need—your simple act of kindness may change someone's life.

You may be thinking, give what? I do not have anything to give. Of course you do! If you can, give money to a worthwhile charity or person of your choice, but there is more to giving than just money. You can give household items or clothing to homeless or battered women's shelters. Or possibly best of all, you can give your time. There are countless big brother/big sister organizations or children's mentor organizations looking for adults willing to donate a little time each week to a child in need of companionship. Soup kitchens in a nearby city may need help cooking or serving meals. Thrift stores may need volunteers to help stock shelves. Or, if you do not feel comfortable committing to a routine at first, you could visit nursing homes when your schedule allows. Many residents in these places have only infrequent, sometimes no visitors. There are so many dear, elderly people who would love a new friend to chat with. My parents often visit a local nursing home. It started when my grandmother was ill, and admitted to this place. After her passing, my parents continued to visit the patients they had come to know during her stay there, and occasionally take them small gifts.

Another facet of giving, I believe, is having a grateful heart. Being grateful for what you have makes you more compassionate, and more willing to

give. It also helps you to have a more content state of mind, and not to take people and things for granted.

Think for a moment about your life. For what are you grateful? There are so many wonderful things to be grateful for- good health, a comfortable home, your loving mate who comes home to you every night, your beautiful children, friends and family who are there for you no matter what. If it helps, write things down as they come to mind. You may be surprised with how many wonderful blessings are in your life once you see this list written down in front of you!

## ***Do All Things Excellently***

Do all tasks in your life to the best of your ability. What a feeling it is when you can look at something you have done, and proudly say, "I did that!" Of course, too much pride is not only bothersome to those who come in contact with you, but it can be hazardous to your mental health by setting you up for a painful reality check. But a healthy delight in yourself for a job well done is a good, satisfying feeling.

So many people do things haphazardly today, that most people have come to expect that from each other. But, when someone comes along who does not do just the bare minimum, people take notice. People are attracted to friends and future spouses who are like this.

Please do not take what I say out of balance. I am not saying get your self-worth from tasks that are complemented by others. Your self-worth should come only from what God has to say about you. I am simply saying that doing your best on whatever task is at hand is an important part of feeling satisfied with yourself, and therefore adding joy to your life.

## ***Pampering***

Nothing says, “You are special!” like pampering. Think about it- if your spouse prepared a warm bath and soft music for you when you came home from a long day, wouldn’t you feel special? Loved? Treated like royalty? Relying on others, even your mate, to pamper you is not a good idea, however, as fallible human beings can and do disappoint us. But, relying on yourself to pamper yourself guarantees that only what you want will be done, it also will be done exactly as you desire. It also puts no unfair pressure on others in your life.

Spoiling yourself simply feels good. It also silently tells others that you are worth being good to, and it helps to boost your self-esteem. Believe it or not, those two things will help to improve your relationships. People see you as someone who thinks you are valuable, which makes them see you as valuable too. When people see you as valuable, they will treat you well.

Pampering consists of whatever makes you feel special. It is little indulgences that feel wonderful to you. That can mean bubble baths, making time in the evenings to read your newest novel while drinking herbal tea, only using a special pen when you write in your beautiful journal, or anything. What makes you feel pampered? I often enjoy giving myself manicures, using a nice, quality moisturizer after showers, foot massages or even sitting outside on a spring day to read in the warm shade on the back patio.

Gentlemen, this message is for you too! Not only ladies need pampering, but men too! You work hard, and deserve to be good to yourself too. Too many

men do not take the time to pamper themselves, as they seem to think it is a “girl thing.” But gentlemen, why shouldn’t you feel good and treasured too? You are special, too you know!

If you have a husband or wife, think about doing thoughtful, pampering things for him or her. Women often seem to have a more natural instinct towards understanding pampering. If you are a gentleman reading this though, don’t despair! You can still help your lady to treat herself like the queen she is. Pay attention to what she likes. Bubble baths? Give her some in her favorite scents. Reading? Think about giving her a gift card to her favorite book store, membership in a book club, or a magazine subscription.

And ladies, the same goes for you- pay attention to what your gentleman likes. Coffee and the paper on Sunday mornings? Give him some gourmet coffee and a subscription to his favorite paper. Hot showers to start his day? Give him scented soaps or a quality shower massager to help him enjoy his morning ritual. Helping your mate feel pampered will make huge deposits in his or her “love bank,” and you will reap the benefits!

Pampering also can extend to your children, parents, friends and family. Do something for someone that makes them feel good, and they truly will appreciate you!

Whatever pampering rituals you enjoy, be sure you enjoy them often. You deserve nothing less than the best!

## ***“Me” Time***

Most people today seem just too busy. Many people are so busy, at the end of the day they cannot even tell you what exactly they did all day. How sad this seems to me. Wives and mothers in particular seem to be the busiest of all- giving to and doing for everyone all day long, with no time for themselves to relax and unwind. But men are not immune to this problem of busyness. Working fourteen-hour days then coming home to work in the yard, etc.

I think we all need to slow down and arrange some time for ourselves each and every day. “Me time,” as I call it, is very important. It refreshes and strengthens us. I try to arrange time in my evenings to knit, crochet, cross stitch or read, preferably by candlelight or in front of a roaring fireplace in the winter. Add a steaming cup of raspberry tea or a glass of a nice merlot wine and all the better! Something about this ritual makes me feel peaceful, comfortable, relaxed, safe and content. When a few days go by that I have not had time to indulge in my ritual, I feel it. I start getting tense and irritable.

If tense and irritable describe you too, maybe you too are in need of some me time. Look at your schedule- are you too busy? Are there activities you can cut back on? Eliminate? Do more efficiently? I encourage you to make those changes. Be creative- you will find plenty of ways to rearrange your schedule. Even if this means you start carrying a craft project or book with you to work on while waiting at the doctor’s office, or while waiting to pick up the kids from school. A little me time is better than nothing! Give yourself permission to indulge in activities that you enjoy, each and every day, you will

be glad you did, and so will those who get to enjoy the new, happier, more relaxed you!

What do you enjoy doing that you can indulge in often? Journaling is a good thing to start, if you have not done so before. A nice journal and special pen can be had fairly cheaply. Write out your thoughts, feelings, dreams, things you wish to accomplish, things you are grateful for. How about a new craft? Craft stores can be a very inspiring place. Many offer supplies and instructions for everything from quilting to woodworking to dollhouses and more. If you love to read, there are many used bookstores and new bookstores in every town. Used ones often offer the option to trade in your books for store credit, which works out well if you want to keep a fresh supply of reading material on hand. Ever thought of making homemade wine? There are catalogs and websites devoted to selling supplies and including instructions to get you started.

You are only limited by your imagination! Whatever strikes your fancy, do it, and do it often! Some “me time” on a regular basis may be just what the doctor ordered to help you enjoy your life more.

## ***Prizes***

I have found a really fun way not only to motivate myself, but also to enjoy life. I constantly reward myself constantly for things I have done, and I call these rewards my prizes. If I have spent a day working hard to accomplish some task, the next day, after this project is finished, I will take the day off. I sometimes will go shopping and get myself a little gift. My prize can be big or small, but usually, it is small, like a trip to the craft store for a new pattern or yarn, or a trip to a thrift store for something unique. Or, my prize can be as simple as relaxing all day with a good book or movies. The type of prize is not as important as there simply being a prize, because it lets me know I did a task, and did it well enough to deserve this little reward.

Prizes are also a good motivator, because you now have something to look forward to.

How often do you indulge in prizes? If it has been a while, now is the time to change that! You deserve to be rewarded for a job well done. What is stopping you? Do something good for yourself, and do it now!

***Add More Free Time To Your Life***

## ***Get Organized***

Easier said than done, you're thinking, right? That is not necessarily so. To start with, go through your home, room by room, putting those things you no longer want or need in a box to donate to a worthwhile charity or give to those you know need what you are giving away. Yes, this includes closets and drawers. This will undoubtedly take a while, but it will be worth every moment invested. Looking for things you need is so much easier when you do not have to go through years of clutter to find them. Life is simpler without a lot of useless, unnecessary possessions to manage. My grandmother used to say, "The less stuff you have, the less stuff you have to clean!" Now that I have grown up, I see what a good point she had!

Next, put things in a proper place. Think about where you plan to use each thing you put away, then put it in a logical, easy to find place. Bills go in the bills to be paid drawer or box, medicine into the medicine cabinet, tools in the toolbox, etc. Whenever possible, put things as close as possible to the area where they will be used.

Tend to other areas that need some organization in this same way like your desk at work, the trunk of your car, the storage shed in the back yard. Tackle these projects, one at a time, until you are easily able to find whatever you need, when you need it.

Do not think you have to do it all in a day. Investing just fifteen minutes per day can have your home, office, car, etc. in order before you know it.

I know what you are probably thinking. This hardly sounds like a way to add enjoyment to my life. But, you will be surprised how much organization in your life can add minutes to your day. Those minutes add up, and can be used for much more enjoyable activities once the tasks are completed.

There are also many books on this topic available in bookstores, and websites devoted to the topic of organization if you need some help getting started.

## ***Be Efficient***

Look at the tasks you have to complete daily. How can you do these tasks more efficiently? Get creative- you will be amazed at how much time you can save.

Does your child belong to a club? Arrange a carpool with four other parents, so instead of each of you driving your child to this club twice a week, you each drive once every other week. Does your car need fluids checked and oil changed? While the oil is draining, check the fluid levels. By the time you are done, the oil will be done draining, and the car will be ready for fresh oil. Little things like this can save a tremendous amount of time.

Create an easy to follow, efficient routine for keeping your home clean, so it does not become overwhelming. Maintaining a clean home is much easier than doing a deep cleaning only once in a while. And, an efficient plan will help you keep time spent on housework to a minimum. For example, spray your bathroom fixtures with cleaner, and then run the vacuum. By the time you are done vacuuming, the bathroom will be ready to wipe and rinse, and you will be finished with two chores instead of one by adding only a few minutes to your routine. If you think about creating a new plan to maintain your home, I am sure you can come up with many other ways to make it as efficient as possible. It just takes a little planning and common sense. I found <http://www.FlyLady.com> to be a very useful website in helping to inspire efficiency. Her website and emails are also extremely good for motivation when running low.

***Add More Beauty To Your Life***

## ***Be Considerate And Thoughtful***

Be considerate of the needs and wants of others. People need to feel cared for, and showing that their needs and wants are important to you will only enhance your relationships. You can give unexpected gifts just to say you care, surprise a busy mate with a homemade lunch at work, or clean the house for a friend with a recently broken ankle. Gestures like these will not only tell others you care, but make you feel good when you make them feel good.

I challenge you to think about others in your life today. Who recently mentioned a need that you are able to meet? What are you waiting for? Meet that need! If you cannot think of anything, then maybe you have not been listening closely enough. Most people are unaware of the fact they mention needs in their lives totally unaware.

I believe that being polite is also a part of being considerate. It is amazing how much simple words like, “please” and, “thank you” can change the tone of a conversation. And, chances are, if you are polite, others will be inspired to be polite with you in return. Manners are a simple but unappreciated facet of life we seem to have lost these days.

People often save their best manners for strangers or co-workers. I believe this to be a mistake, and we should be polite to those with whom we live. After all, those people are the ones we love- they deserve the very best we have to give.

## ***Learn Something New***

Learning new things is fun. It is so exciting to discover! Besides, you never know what learning may lead to- a new career, a new hobby, or even meeting a new friend or mate.

A while back, I started learning about the Victorian era. The beautiful old homes are what piqued my interest. They are so elegant and ornate. I started looking more and more into the time period, and have learned so much. My home now has Victorian touches throughout, especially the bedroom, that thrill me. And, I was inspired partly by this era's beauty rituals to make my own bath and beauty products and perfumes. For a while, I sold these items at craft shows and to friends. They became quite a hit! Many people besides me benefited from my knowledge.

I encourage you to take a chance. If you do not know where to start, look at the people in your life and find out what interests they have that you currently do not share. Do you have a friend interested in art? Then arrange a time to go to a museum together. Another friend interested in sports? Watch a game or race together. Another friend interested in cars? Go to a classic car show together. Even if you currently do not find their interests appealing, give it a try anyway. You may discover a new interest after all.

Personally, I am NOT a sports person. Ever since I met my husband, Eric, I have known of his devotion to NASCAR racing. He is a racing fanatic actually. If it drives in a circle, on dirt or asphalt, he is interested. I started watching races with him just to please him. It became an educational

experience for me. I learned two things: that watching cars drive in a circle for five-hundred miles can be quite hypnotizing and puts me to sleep in spite of enjoying the race, and the same channels that show racing also show other things I enjoy, like demolition derbies and monster truck rallies. I also discovered there are all kinds of things that race in a circle, including motorcycles, tractor trailer trucks, school buses, and vehicles towing campers. I discovered I really enjoy those things, and it all stemmed from being open minded enough to watch a NASCAR race so I could please my husband.

As I said, take a chance! Try something new and see where it takes you. The possibilities are endless!

## ***Keep Your Focus On The Task At Hand***

This sounds simple, right? But think about this for a moment- if you are driving somewhere, how focused are you on the ride? If you are like most people, you are not noticing the pretty gardens, the new home just built on the corner, or even the new store that is preparing to open next week. Most likely, you are thinking about things you should not be focusing on, such as how angry you are that your son got in trouble at school, or how hurt you were to be passed over for the promotion at work, or even how much work you need to do around the house when you get home.

Instead of focusing on these negative things, I challenge you to keep focused on the task at hand. If you are driving, take in the lovely scenery along your route (while keeping your attention on the road, of course!). If you are working on your car, why not thank God for providing you with it, as well as the knowledge to keep it running well? If you are cleaning your home, why not see it as tending to the shelter God has provided, and be grateful you have it to clean instead of live in the streets. The same goes for your job- if you enjoy it, focus on the pleasure of it, and thank God for giving you the ability to do it. (If you do not feel this way about your job, however, maybe it is time to find a new line of work!)

Keeping your focus where it belongs creates less stress, and we all need less stress! Stress is a danger to your health, both physical and mental. It can cause skin problems, digestive system problems, depression, anxiety and more. In fact, I believe many illnesses in people today are a result of stress. So, why not take measures to prevent stress where you can?

Another benefit is that by keeping your focus, you will be less likely to make mistakes that you need to go back and fix later. Few things irritate me more than having to redo a task I thought was complete! It is a waste of time, energy, and possibly money. Why waste time, energy and money on redoing something when those resources could be put towards a much better use??

## ***Add Beauty To Your Home***

Your home is your castle. Your home is where you go to unwind, to rest, to eat, to work on your hobbies, to be with the ones you love, and more. It is your sanctuary. Shouldn't this environment be treated as the special place that it is? Keeping your home clean and organized contributes to the relaxation aspect while there. It is very difficult to enjoy a dirty, cluttered, disorganized environment. Imagine your home full of things everywhere, with a dirty bathroom, things in places they do not belong, dirty dishes in the sink, and unmade beds. Now picture it neat, organized, and clean. Which version would you find more relaxing?

Periodically clear out belongings you no longer use to keep the level of clutter to a minimum. Less clutter means less to maintain, and less to maintain means more free time and less to worry about. Besides, when you donate your old goods to charity or give them to someone in need, someone else is going to benefit from those things that were just sitting around, cluttering your home. Knowing you are helping someone else is a very satisfying feeling.

Hang pictures on your walls that inspire good feelings. Pretty scenery, family pictures, still life paintings- whatever makes you feel peaceful and happy. Look at them often.

Lastly, be careful of those who you allow into your home. By allowing those who you are not truly comfortable with into your home, you are also allowing negativity into your sanctuary. I only allow those into my home who I know in my heart will respect my home and me. After years of allowing just

about anyone into my home, I realized how many uncomfortable feelings I was facing in my own home. It may sound odd to you, but I feel when someone you do not particularly like comes into your home, it affects the entire atmosphere of your home somehow. Tension or even resentment can follow, and can stay with you for hours or even days after that visitor has left. It can also cause arguments between you and your spouse or children. Allowing good, kind people who you love and who love you in return into your home, however, has the exact opposite effect. The good feelings follow their visits, and also can stay for a while.

## ***Take In The Sensual Beauty Surrounding You***

There is endless beauty to gratify the senses everywhere. The beautiful sight of a meadow filled with wildflowers in bloom. The charming sound of a whippoorwill singing on a warm summer night. The sexy feel of a silk nightgown or pajamas against your skin. The soft, luxurious scent of fresh roses. The taste of a good piece of chocolate as it melts on your tongue.

Start to slow down a bit and notice such things. These are some beautiful little gems that life has to offer. I believe God gave us such things for our enjoyment as well as our use. Our senses delight in pleasant things, thus making us feel content and secure.

Beautiful things are everywhere to experience. Look around you. What beauty do you see? Your child playing quietly who stops to smile at you, perhaps? And what beauty can you hear? Listen- maybe you will hear the song of a robin on spring day or the sound of rain gently falling on the roof of your home. Look for things to excite each of your senses. Sensual beauty is everywhere!

I would also like to encourage you to make your home sense-sational. Make it a paradise for the senses. Pretty bowls filled with potpourri to fill the air with a gentle fragrance, cheerful colors on the walls to please your eyes, pretty music or perhaps a pet canary to fill the air with soft music, soft fabrics on the furniture that are a thrill to the touch, and even maybe tasty chocolates in pretty foil wrappers for when a chocolate craving hits. A home like this is a delight in which to live, and for others to visit. One of the nicest complements I

have ever received was when a friend of mine told me how much she liked visiting my home and hated to leave because it felt so comfortable.

I have also extended this sense-sational idea to my car. I have a necklace hanging on the rearview mirror to remind me of the dear friend who gave it to me. I use strawberry air freshener, which I always have used since I got this car in 1992. The familiar scent is always reflective, reminding me of when I first got my beautiful car. I also always carry music ready to play in there if I get tired of what is on the radio. Little touches like these help make any driving I have to do a pleasurable experience, even when the traffic is less than enjoyable.

What can you do to enhance the sensual atmosphere around you? I am sure you can add ideas to mine to personalize your experience.

***Thank you for taking the time to read my book. I pray it has inspired you to make changes so you too can enjoy every moment of your life.***

***If you enjoyed this book, please visit my website to view my other books. [www.CynthiaBaileyRug.com](http://www.CynthiaBaileyRug.com)***

***May God bless and keep you!***