

Extra Virgin Grace

The Olive Tree vs. The Fig Tree



RYAN RUFUS

PRAISE FOR EXTRA VIRGIN GRACE

“Fresh, oh so fresh to read a book full of the revelation of God’s Grace and goodness. A word in season that will impact those who read it, and will turn hearts towards the message of Extra Virgin Grace, the heart of our Father. Great job Ryan!”

- WILL GRAHAM, CEO
ANDREW WOMMACK MINISTRIES-EUROPE
WWW.AWME.NET

“*Extra Virgin Grace* is one of those precious books that cause you to love Jesus more once you’re finished reading it. Ryan shows himself to be one of today’s finest practical theologians. Masterfully utilizing the lens of grace, he leads us to a place where we can gain application filled clarity on the finished work of the cross and our righteousness in Christ. I’m certain that this book will become part of my arsenal in raising up pastors, leaders, and church planters all around the world.”

- LUCAS MILES, PRESIDENT
THE OASIS NETWORK FOR CHURCHES, USA
WWW.OASNET.ORG

“Ryan has hit a home run again with his latest book *Extra Virgin Grace*. It brims with razor sharp insight into the beauty and fullness of life lived in the freedom of the New Covenant. For those who have lived under years of mixed law and grace, this book will clear any cobwebs in your thinking and thrust you into Spirit-led glory-filled New Covenant life to the maximum! Along the way, Ryan kills a few holy cows that have

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kept believers for years in a fog of condemnation and confusion. This is truth that will really set you free!”

- FINI DE GERSIGNY, LEAD ELDER
JUBILEE CHURCH, AUSTRALIA
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“Ryan Rufus is among a fresh new company declaring the radical, scandalous grace of Christ’s cross. Enjoy the following chapters as His pure, sweet oil of grace pours through you. Feast on the abundance of His table.”

- JOHN CROWDER, PRESIDENT
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“This book is a smorgasbord of grace and a feast for the hungry. It provides a sweeping study of many topics that are often misunderstood. If you want a grace-based perspective of the Beatitudes, true holiness, eternal security, discipline and walking by the spirit, read this book.”

- PROF. PAUL D. ELLIS
ESCAPE TO REALITY, NEW ZEALAND
WWW.ESCAPETOREALITY.ORG

“This book is a one-of-a-kind. The insights are inspiring, the ideas are important and the impact is intense. A very revealing, renewing and refreshing book. It brings the “amazing” back to grace!”

- PS. PAUL P. HERNANDEZ, NATIONAL DIRECTOR AND SENIOR PASTOR
FREE MISSION PHILIPPINES INC.
WWW.FREEMISSIONPHILS.COM

Praise For Extra Virgin Grace

“This is an absolute must read for those who desire certainty and full and complete assurance of God’s love. Every sentence needs to be read, not just selected chapters. If you are already a grace based person, please don’t think you know it all. This book will open the eyes of your heart even more. If you have any chains left they will fall away.”

- ROB RUFUS, LEAD ELDER
CITY CHURCH INTERNATIONAL, HONG KONG
WWW.CCIHK.COM

“This book gave me a fresh insight and helpfully explained many of the wonderful mysteries about grace. It reminded me to stay teachable and keep learning all I can about the amazing person of grace. The publishing of this book could not have come at a better time for all those serious about correctly dividing the Word of Truth. Well done Ryan!”

- STEVE WHEELER, LEAD ELDER
HIGHWAY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, SOUTH AFRICA
WWW.HIGHWAY.ORG.ZA

“The Scriptures declare that ‘beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news’. With this book, Ryan has shown us good looking feet. His work brings practical clarity to the proclamation of peace, good tidings, salvation and the reign of God. He joins an ever expanding crowd of New Covenant ministers lifting up voices full of joy. *Extra Virgin Grace* makes plain and beautiful God’s abounding grace for us.”

- GREGORY HASWELL, LEAD ELDER
NORTHLANDS CHURCH, USA
WWW.NORTHLANDSCHURCH.COM

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“Ryan has the awesome ability to remove the unfortunate effects of something I like to call ‘Christian Tunnel-Vision’. This is when well-meaning people can’t see, hear or think in ways beyond the images of God that religion and legalism have rooted in their minds. The light Ryan sheds on the topics in this book will help shatter many of those false images of God which religion created and at the same time reveal to you sides of grace and truth you might not have even considered!”

- CORNEL MARAIS, FOUNDER
CHARISMA MINISTRIES, NEW ZEALAND
WWW.CHARISMAMINISTRIES.ORG

“This powerful yet controversial book offers you an eye-opening look into the magnificent revelation of God’s grace. I love Ryan Rufus’ pursuit for God’s truth and the call upon his life to bring revelatory freedom to the captives that have been bound by years of religious bondage. Within these pages you will be challenged, inspired and offered spiritual food for thought. I’ve personally discovered that as we embrace God’s grace we will see His glory... *Extra Virgin Grace* offers you an opportunity to encounter the life-giving presence of Jesus Christ in a new and dynamic way!

- JOSHUA MILLS
AUTHOR OF “SIMPLE SUPERNATURAL”
AND “POSITIONED FOR PROSPERITY”
WWW.NEWWINEINTERNATIONAL.ORG

“Master expositor and dynamic teacher Ryan Rufus invites you on a Scripture-filled journey to encounter the fullness of God’s grace. So

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many of life's toughest questions are answered in this book. Read it to soak in the purity of the gospel and relax in Jesus like never before.”

- DR. ANDREW FARLEY
BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF “THE NAKED GOSPEL”
AND “GOD WITHOUT RELIGION”

New Nature Publications
"Building a culture of grace"

Extra Virgin Grace

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Do Christians Still Have a Sinful Nature?
Sanctification by Grace.

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DEDICATION

To my heavenly Father, thank you for a great inheritance.

To my earthly father, thank you for the investment in my life of your
love, wisdom and friendship.

To my four beautiful children, get ready to run with the flame.

To my future grandchildren, you've got a whole lot of good stuff
coming your way!

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FOREWORD

As I read “Extra Virgin Grace” I kept laughing with astonishment and joy. This high impact book is written by my son and very close friend Ryan. There is no greater pleasure for a dad than to witness the exponential increase of legacy in your own life time. In this book Ryan has seen further than me and I have been enriched by his insights. I love the grand sweep. The bold convincing comparisons that the Law Covenant was a brief and temporary parenthesis, serving a specific purpose, within God’s eternal grand scheme of grace which sings out Heaven’s joy from before time, throughout time and for all eternity!

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This is an absolute must read for those who desire certainty and full and complete assurance of God's love! Every sentence needs to be read, not just selected chapters. If you are already a grace based person, please don't think you know it all. This book will open the eyes of your heart even more. If you have any chains left they will fall away.

This book does what it needs to do. Intellectual preaching from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil has flooded this world and drowned entire nations in religious lies. These wholesale deceptions that have grossly misrepresented the true loving nature of God require and demand to be confronted with concentrated pure grace clarity. This book does that. Any sincere seeker will find the truth in these pages extremely emancipating.

The grace revolution is accelerating. The Earth is groaning for this message. Liberation is spreading faster. Heightened awareness of God's infallible goodness is counter flooding this Earth. Where lies have abounded, now truth much more abounds!

Well done Ryan.

All my love,

Dad

Rob Rufus

Pastor, City Church International

Author and international conference speaker



INTRODUCTION

In this book I set out to expose the ugliness and futility of self-righteousness, the defilement of “boasting in the flesh”, and to reveal the virgin-beauty and superior glory of pure unadulterated grace. The result? Supernatural peace and empowerment for life!

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

– 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

We haven’t become a form of God’s righteousness. We have become *the* very righteousness of God. This revelation is one of the most important life transforming revelations that you, as a believer, can ever have.

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It will humble you and give you confidence at the same time. It will change the way you relate to God. It will make you bold. You'll begin to think and act like a true child of God, like royalty, with authority and power. And most of all, unwavering, as you realize that your righteousness and sonship are not based on the fluctuations of your imperfect performance but on the unchanging nature of God's perfect righteousness in you.

My conviction is that free people will free people. Therefore the greater the freedom we come into the greater the freedom we'll be able to bring others into. The essence of freedom is to know that you are 100% set free from the law and are 100% righteous in Christ - 100% of the time. Bondage is to believe that you are still under the law and not always righteous.

Get ready to be armed with a key that will unlock many difficult Scriptures and distorted doctrines. What is this key? It is the key of discernment between the gift of righteousness and self-righteousness. It is the understanding of the difference between the biblical theme of the Olive Tree and the Fig Tree. It is ultimately your conviction of Extra Virgin Grace.



CHAPTER 1

THE OLIVE TREE VS. THE FIG TREE

WHAT WAS ADAM AND EVE'S GREATEST SIN?

Was it rebellion or selfishness? Was it sexual immorality or greed? Was it hatred and violence? No. It was trying to be more like God! They were deceived into believing that if they ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that they would then become more like God. That doesn't seem like such a bad sin though does it? Isn't most of the church today trying to be more like God? Aren't we supposed to be

doing that? Aren't we all required to be trying to be more Christ-like? Surely that's a good thing, right? Actually it's a sin! To think we can be more like Christ by our own efforts is the self-righteous sin of unbelief. What an insult to the Cross to think that we can make ourselves more godly by our own personal discipline and effort. The honest truth is that it's a gross ignorance of our utter inability to be like God. Christianity is not about trying to be Christ-like. It's about receiving God's gift of righteousness and walking by faith in it. It's about believing that we have been transformed by the Spirit of God, in our spirit, into Christ's likeness and have become the righteousness of God in him. But doesn't God want us to try to be more righteous? No! He wants us to rest in his perfect righteousness that has become our righteousness. This is the key to Christianity and yet so many miss it because they're all focused on trying to be more righteous, holy and 'Christ-like'.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S GREATEST SIN?

Too many Christians are still eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which is the knowledge of God's righteousness and trying to attain it by human effort, rather than eating from the Tree of Life, which is resting in Christ and his gift of righteousness.

A FIG TREE?

People have debated for a long time what kind of tree the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was. Somehow we came to believe it was

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an apple tree. Perhaps because the Latin word for apple and evil are the same word. More likely because of the Temperance Movement in the USA during the early nineteen hundreds that sought to prohibit the buying and selling of alcohol and especially apple cider. People everywhere were getting drunk on apple cider believing it was healthier for you than water and so poor little apples became the target of an apple tarnishing campaign. It was an effort to deter people from partaking of the “evil apple cider”. Artworks came out depicting the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil as an apple tree. That’s just pure genius! The best guilt trip I’ve ever heard of. But there is nothing that points to it being an apple tree in Scripture. Rather there is another tree that is highly likely to be the one.

I believe that it was a fig tree. There is a subtle theme throughout Scripture that, when seen, makes sense. The first mention, of course, is straight after Adam and Eve ate of the tree and realized they were naked. The Bible doesn’t say they went frolicking through the garden looking for the most stylish leaves to cover themselves with. No, the horror of their sudden awakening caused them to reach out for the nearest covering. The Bible says that they covered themselves with fig leaves. That’s probably because they were standing directly underneath a fig tree when this all went down.

THE PURPOSE OF THE FIG TREE

Adam and Eve tried to be more like God by eating from the Tree. But when they ate from it they discovered just how unlike God they re-

ally were. Now get this: God hadn't cursed them yet, as that only came later, and yet they felt guilty, shameful and unrighteous straight after they ate of the tree. I believe this shows that they were created in the likeness of God yet in their own righteousness and not God's righteousness. They had a clean slate but they didn't have God's righteousness. That's why when they ate of the Tree they fell. If they had God's righteousness they wouldn't have been able to fall. (Important point here: God's ultimate intent is that we would become Christ's righteousness and therefore never be able to fall.) Adam and Eve then tried to use the very tree that had uncovered their unrighteousness to cover themselves back up and somehow make themselves more righteous. That's called human effort and self-righteousness!

I believe this was the whole point of the Tree: To show mankind that relating to God through our own righteousness is futile. There's only one way to relate to God and that's through his gift of righteousness. You'll probably wreck your brain though trying to figure this all out, but seeing this simple little revelation by faith could possibly change your life.

Since Adam and Eve, mankind has been trying to relate to God through their own righteousness and goodness. Yet it's only when we see how unrighteous we truly are that we are ready to receive God's righteousness. Only God can make us righteous and that can only come through Christ. But before we can receive his perfect righteousness we have to be able to see our imperfect righteousness. That's why God put the Tree in the garden and it's the same reason why God gave the law!

THE SIMILARITY OF THE FIG TREE AND THE LAW

The fig tree was not there to make man more righteous, but simply to reveal that he didn't have God's righteousness. Similarly, God never gave his law to make man more righteous but to reveal that man does not measure up to God's perfect righteousness.

What the fig tree revealed is the same as what God reveals through his law.

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

- ROMANS 3:20

The purpose of the law is to reveal man's inability to relate to God through his own righteousness. Man needs God's gift of righteousness. To then try and use the very thing that was given to reveal unrighteousness to become more righteous is just as effective as trying to cover yourself with fig leaves!

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Look at the similarity between the fig tree and the law:

THE FIG TREE

- Commanded not to eat
- Caused sin to increase
- Brought awareness of nakedness and shame.
- Felt shame
- Tried in human efforts to cover sin and shame.
- Hid from God and felt no confidence before him.
- Consequence was death and curse.
- Revealed the need for a better righteousness.

THE LAW

- 10 Commandments
- Causes sin to increase
- When broken brings an awareness of sin and flesh.
- Ministry of condemnation
- Priests offered animal sacrifices to cover sin.
- Removes confidence to draw near to God.
- Consequence is death and curse.
- Reveals the need for a better righteousness.

JESUS COMPARES ISRAEL UNDER THE LAW TO A FIG TREE

In Luke 13:6 Jesus tells a parable to the Pharisees and compares Israel (under the law) to a fig tree that had been planted in a vineyard. It was going to be cut down and thrown into the fire because it had not produced fruit. He was subtly trying to show them that law keeping is just as useless as trying to cover yourself with fig leaves since neither can produce the fruit of righteousness in your life. And if you do rely on that then you will eventually be cut down and thrown into the fire. He was trying to show them that all around them, and right in front of them, was a vine. That if they gave up self-effort and by faith drank from the vine, which is Christ, they would become perfectly righteous.

Then in Mark 11:13 Jesus sees a fig tree without any fruit on it and he rebukes it and curses it!

“And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, ‘No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever.’ And his disciples heard him.”

It seems like a major over-reaction in which the poor innocent fig tree gets it bad. But Jesus was actually making a huge point here. He was saying that self-effort in order to be righteous is *fruitless*. That it's a deception that mankind must not eat of. If they do it will lead them into death and destruction!

There is another tree he wants us to eat from. It's the only tree that has the power to make us righteous. It's the Tree of Life, and it's Christ – the Olive Tree.

THE OLIVE TREE

I believe the Tree of Life that was in the Garden of Eden was an olive tree and I believe it represents Christ and his gift of righteousness. Why? Because Christ is the author of life and he is the olive tree that believers are grafted into. He is the olive tree and he is life.

JESUS IS THE OLIVE TREE

“For if the firstfruit (Christ) be holy, the lump (us) is also holy: and if the root (Christ) be holy, so are the branches (us). And if some of the branches be broken off (Israel under the Law), and thou being a wild olive tree (Gentile), wert grafted in among them (Jews in faith), and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree (Christ); Boast not against the branches . But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.”

- ROMANS 11:16-18

JESUS IS LIFE

“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

- JOHN 14:6

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“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

- JOHN 11:25

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”

- JOHN 1:4

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

- REVELATION 22:1

“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

- JOHN 7:38

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

- JOHN 17:3

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; ²(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)”

- 1 JOHN 1:1,2

“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in

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him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”

- 1 JOHN 5:20

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

- 1 JOHN 5:11

JESUS IS THE TREE OF LIFE!

He is the Olive Tree. We are in him. He gives us life. He is the only one who can make us righteous and give us eternal life. We are to eat of him, the Olive Tree and not of the Fig Tree. We are to boast in his righteousness and not our own. All our righteousness comes from him.

WHO ARE YOU BOASTING IN?

If we're boasting in our own righteousness it's a good sign we're not in Christ. There is a scripture in Romans 11 that scares Christians and sounds like you can be cut off and lose your salvation. But when you see it through extra virgin grace you'll see what it really means.

“For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. ²²Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”

- ROMANS 11:21-22

The Olive Tree vs. The Fig Tree

The whole context of this passage is about faith. The reason why the natural branches (Israel) were cut off was because they went under the law, which is unbelief resulting in works-based righteousness. The reason why the Gentiles (wild olive tree) were getting grafted into the Olive Tree was because of faith in Jesus. Now the whole point of Paul writing Romans 11 was to tell the Gentiles not to boast in themselves (branches) but to boast in Christ the Root (verse 18). If you are boasting in the branches it shows you don't have faith in Christ but in yourself. That means you're not a true branch! You're a false branch. The graft hasn't taken. You can go to church and sing the songs and talk the talk and look like a branch that's in the olive tree, but if your faith is in yourself and not in Christ you're in danger! It's not saying you can lose your salvation. It's saying that you never were saved in the first place and are in danger of hell fire because you are deceiving yourself, thinking that you're saved by your own efforts.

The whole point is, *whose righteousness are you boasting in? Christ's or your own? Are you in the Olive Tree and resting in Christ's righteousness or are you still eating from the Fig Tree and trying to be more like God?*

*“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:
31That, according as it is written, He that glorieth (boast), let him glory in the Lord.”*

- 1 CORINTHIANS 1:30,31

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Jesus has become our righteousness for us. We had nothing to do with it. Therefore all we can boast about is him.

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; ²²Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe”

- ROMANS 3:21,22

“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

- ROMANS 3:27

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, ⁹And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:”

- PHILIPPIANS 3:7-9

THE OLIVE TREE VERSUS THE FIG TREE

Now it's possible to be in the Olive Tree but to still eat from the Fig Tree. It's called a mixture of law and grace. Much of the church is in this state. They believe in Jesus but are also trying to be more holy and acceptable to God in order to earn his love and blessings and avoid his

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punishment and curse. Much of the church is confused as to whether or not the church is still under the law of God or not. Some emphatically say that we are. Others say that we're not, yet will still put their congregation under performance to earn God's blessings and avoid his judgment. That's just as much law as the Ten Commandments. All of God's love and blessings are available to us through Christ's perfect performance and righteousness on our behalf. He took all the punishment and judgment that was coming to us and gave us all his righteousness. That either happened or it didn't. The Bible, many times, shows us it did and that's what I believe. That's what I walk in. I'll never go to the fig tree to try and cover my shame. I'm in the Olive Tree of Life where he removes my shame and gives me his glory!

Adam wasn't allowed to eat of the Tree of Life after he had eaten from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Otherwise he would have lived in that unrighteous state forever. It's only once Christ had died and rose that we could be grafted into him and eat from the Tree of Life! Once we're in the Olive Tree we're not to continue eating from the Fig Tree. Many Christians and preachers try to get you to eat from the Fig Tree. They abuse certain scriptures and distort them into saying things that they don't say. They're trying to get you to be more holy and righteous and more like God. We need to rest in the Olive Tree and know how to interpret Scripture through extra virgin grace.

I believe the key to solving many difficult scriptures is about knowing how to discern between self-righteousness and the gift of righteousness. The rest of this book is about equipping you to do that. I'll only

cover a few scriptures and topics, but let this arm you with a better discernment between what's of the Olive Tree and what's of the Fig Tree that you might walk in total freedom and help many others into it.

CONCLUDING THOUGHT

The Bible starts with a tree that brought death and curse to mankind and whose leaves could not cure the nations. It finishes with a tree, the Tree of Life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, which breaks the curse and brings eternal life.

“¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.”

- REVELATION 22:1-5 (NIV)



CHAPTER 2

RE-DEFINING WHAT RENEWING THE MIND IS

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. ²And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

- ROMANS 12:1-2

Renewing the mind? We've heard that term so much as Christians but have you ever stopped to actually think what it *really* means? '*Renewing*' the mind? What does the word 'renewing' mean here? How does it take place? Because you can't talk about how it takes place until you really know for sure what 'renewing' first means. Otherwise you will be aiming at the wrong thing.

Everyone tells us that it just means to get your mind to line up with the Word of God or the Bible and that the more you study the Bible and get revelation on it the more your mind will be 'renewed'. I'm not so sure that's really accurate. I've never been fully satisfied with that kind of 'renewing the mind' theology. Not that I don't believe in it, I just don't think it's totally complete. I mean, if we're honest, Romans 12 doesn't really tell us what renewing the mind is, does it? We've just assumed what it means. Furthermore, not once does it say that the means of renewing the mind is actually the Word of God. It just tells us that the result of renewing the mind will be transformation so that we can know the perfect will of God. So even though it doesn't say exactly what renewing the mind is, it does reveal that it's obviously very important. But what exactly is it?

The key word here is the word 'renewing'. Why say 'renewing'? The word *renewing* implies that something was new, then became old and now must be made new again.

Greek: *anakainos*- to make new, *ana*, back or again, *kainos*, new, not recent but different. (W.E. Vines) (i.e. back to new or new again.)

Re-defining What Renewing The Mind Is

Is the Bible saying here that our mind was once new, then it became old and now needs to be made new again? If so then what on Earth does that mean?

Here's what I think it means:

It has to do with the state of mankind's mind during the creation of the world, the Fall, and then the redemption that comes through Christ. Man's mind was once new before the Fall. Then it became old because of the Fall, and is now being renewed back to the state of before the Fall, through the finished work of Christ. But again, what does that really mean?

When Adam and Eve were first created, they were created 'in the spirit' and lived 'in the spirit'. They were created in the likeness of God as *spirit* beings, and God clothed them with flesh and gave them a mind. This means that their spirit was in charge and ruled over and through their mind and body. Their mind and body was subject to their spirit. It means their consciousness was found in their spirit which then had influence over their mind and body. Their control center for processing truths and thoughts and making decisions was located in their spirit. They were fully spirit conscious and fully God conscious. They could easily see between the spiritual and the natural realm as well. They were led by their spirit to follow after God. They walked *with* God in the cool of the day. They spoke *with* God and heard him clearly. They could even see him. They also interacted with each other and ruled over the garden and all from the spirit through the mind and body.

They were, of course, created with a *perfect* mind and a *perfect* body. That is a mind and body that had no corruption or impurity in them. However, it is very important to realize that it was not their mind and body that had the control and led them it was their spirit! They walked in the spirit and their mind and body were subject to the rule of their spirit, and operated in subjection to their spirit. This is key to see and understand.

How did the devil seduce them into sinning against God? He did it by luring them away from their spirit consciousness and into mind and body consciousness. Genesis 3:6 reveals that Adam and Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was pleasing to the eye (the body) and good for gaining wisdom and knowledge (the mind). The devil got them away from their spirit to make a decision by their mind. They should have stayed in the spirit. They would have been fine if they did! Their spirits agreed with God, were subject to God, perfectly obeyed God and had the nature of God in them. But they went into the natural realm of the body and the mind and ended up sinning.

The spirit realm is higher than the natural realm. Hebrews 11:3 reveals that the natural realm was created out of the spiritual realm (the visible out of the invisible) making the spiritual realm far superior to the natural realm. Adam and Eve walked in a superior realm of the spirit in ascendancy over the lower realm of the natural. But when they sinned they fell from that high place. They went from being ‘in the spirit’ to being ‘in the flesh’. They went from having their spirits leading to having their mind and body leading. Adam and Eve were the first people in

history to be born again. Unfortunately it was in the negative sense. They passed from spiritual life to spiritual death. They lost their God-consciousness and became self-conscious, natural world-conscious, mind-conscious and unspiritual. With their spirits now detached from God, they then related to God through their minds. Their minds now came into ascendancy and dominated their lives. Their minds moved from being new to becoming old. When their minds were new, they were subject to their spirit. When their minds became old, they became subject to the corruption of the natural world and got out of right order by no longer having their spirit ruling and leading them. Before, their spirit kept their mind in health and order and subject to spiritual things. As long as they walked in the spirit they could know the mind of God and the will of God. When they fell and went into ‘the flesh’, they became unspiritual and unable to discern God’s perfect will. Their mind (and body) then became subject to the decay, degradation and the degeneration of the natural world, now under God’s curse, subject to the deceptions and lies of the devil.

We see then that the state of fallen mankind was spiritual death and therefore a darkening in their *minds* against God and consequently in their behavior. Mankind’s consciousness moved from perfect spiritual to corrupt natural. Ephesians 2:3 shows the state of mankind after the fall, which was also our state before salvation and our old state of consciousness:

“Among whom also we all had our conversation (thoughts and behavior) in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires

Extra Virgin Grace

of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

- EPHESIANS 2:3

Now when we get born again our spirit is made alive to God in and through Christ Jesus and it rises into that high place of ascendancy with Christ, and in fact the highest place of ascendancy, which is to be seated in heavenly places in Christ. This causes our spirit to come back to that place of ruling and reigning with full dominion and authority.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

- EPHESIANS 2:4-6

So then, if our spirits have been made alive with Christ and have come back into that high place of ascendancy, then why don't all Christians walk perfectly by the spirit in the perfect will of God? It's because they are still operating by the old mind – the mind that is not subject to the spirit. They aren't renewing their mind properly. They still have a 'mind-dominated consciousness' rather than a 'spirit-dominated consciousness'.

Renewing the mind is simply learning to surrender your mind to your spirit and allowing your spirit to lead. It's about your mind being renewed back to the place it once was before the Fall, where it was in subjection to the ascendancy of your spirit! Your mind was once new, be-

came old through the fall of mankind and can now be renewed back to the place it once was because of the power of the finished work of Christ!

A renewed mind is a subjected mind. It's a surrendered mind. That's getting back to the place you once were. Like Adam in spirit domination with his mind subject to his spirit. His mind didn't make the decisions, his spirit did. Transformation is about becoming spirit led. You could paraphrase Romans 12:2 like this, "Become spirit led by the surrendering of your mind that God's will can manifest through you."

Your spirit is awakened to God and can know the mind of God and the will of God. The more we are transformed to walk by the spirit, the more we will walk in the perfect will of God and not the pattern of the corruption of this world.

Transformation by the renewing of the mind is about shifting your control center back to your spirit so that it has ascendancy. Renewing the mind isn't just about programming your mind with scriptures or even building your mind up with truth. It's about *shifting* the 'spirit of your mind' or you could say, '*the control center of your whole being*' back to the *spirit* so that you become so spirit conscious that you walk by your spirit on a daily basis and even a moment by moment basis. Your spirit will influence your mind because your spirit knows truth. Jesus is truth. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth who dwells with your spirit. The mind of Christ is absolute truth. When you live by your spirit in fellowship with the Holy Spirit then you will walk in absolute truth. You will be able to process and distinguish between what is truth and

what are lies. You will “Prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

The goal of renewing your mind is not to have a perfect mind but to have a mind that submits perfectly to your spirit. Adam and Eve had a perfect mind. It’s important to see that even with a perfect mind the enemy was still able to seduce them into disobedience to God. Even if we had a perfect mind it wouldn’t mean that we would automatically always walk in the will of God or operate in power and love and never sin. But if your mind was perfectly submitted to your spirit (that has become one with the Holy Spirit) you would automatically walk in the will of God, have perfect intimacy with him, and always operate in power and love and never sin. This is what we’re aiming at in this life as we endeavor to walk in the spirit more and more rather than trying to have all our ducks in a row in our mind.

Does this mean that we bypass our mind so that it becomes inactive? No. In fact that’s impossible. Your mind is always active. We must just learn to get our mind in the right place. When we do that then our mind serves us and is a blessing to us. God created our mind. God gave Adam and Eve a mind. Our mind is great. It’s amazing! The mind is an incredible thing! Yet, when it controls us rather than our spirit controlling us then that’s not good. Our minds are vital and are not to be treated as bad or to be ignored, but to serve us.

People say that our mind or soul consists of our will, emotions and intellect. I personally don’t limit my will, emotions or even intellect to just my mind. I believe those things also operate from our spirit but

were lost in the Fall and therefore we only associate them with our mind. But our spirit has a will, an intellect and emotions too, especially since our spirit has been created after the nature of God who has a will, an intellect and emotions.

I believe that a lot of the problems in our mind like fear, bad attitudes, doubt, jealousy, anger, hate etc. would be corrected not by discipline or memorizing scriptures but from allowing our spirit to lead. Each one of those things would be challenged, properly processed and kept in check by the perfect perspectives and truths of our re-born spirit. Our spirit would lead us out of those things and into the right way of thinking and processing such things and the life of our spirit would overflow to and influence our mind.

Now the fact is we have a mind and it's for a reason. God didn't just create us as spirit and flesh but spirit, flesh *and* mind. Our mind is there to serve us. Our mind has the ability to imagine, to dream, to be creative, to experience and express emotions, to solve problems, to remember, to reason, to rationalize, for logic, training, academic knowledge, strategizing etc. But without the life and truth of the Spirit of God working through our spirit the mind is left to the influences of the natural and corrupt patterns of this world. Even the Word of God is lifeless to our minds unless it is brought to life by the power of the spirit (Holy Spirit in fellowship with our spirit). With the life of the spirit our minds will be empowered to do all these things the mind was created to do, yet in a superior way. A spiritual and godly way. A way that lines up with the

mind of Christ and the perfect will of God. So the mind is good but it's important that it is empowered and led by our spirit.

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

Your spirit is perfect. It's a part of God. It's one with God. It has his nature in it. It's been given the fullness of Christ. His perfect truth, love, faith, passion, compassion, power, authority, strength, peace. The fruit of the spirit is in your spirit. If you walk by your spirit then you will automatically operate in the fruit of the spirit. It's not the fruit of the Holy Spirit that you get on occasions. It's the fruit of your re-born spirit that, when you walk by that spirit, those fruits begin to manifest. In your re-born spirit is perfect love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, humility, gentleness, self control and so many more. The Holy Spirit helps us to walk by our spirit. He leads us in the spirit. He testifies to the Word of God. Both the Spirit and the Word help us to walk in the spirit. They help us to renew the mind. They help us to shift our control center from our mind back to the place that God originally intended which is our perfect spirit, so that we would live in ascendancy over our mind and body. If we lived totally by our spirit 100% then we would walk in perfect truth, perfect love, perfect power, perfect soundness of mind, perfect passion for God, perfect obedience and the perfect will of God. The more we walk by the spirit the more our natural mind begins to get flooded with and lines up to spiritual truth. Lies are exposed, fears are destroyed, paranoia and anxiety vanishes, wrong patterns of thinking

that are based on lies and falsehood are exposed and dissolved, truth is established in us and God flows increasingly unrestricted through us.

LIVING WITH NO FEAR BUT LOVE, POWER AND A SOUND MIND

How do we overcome fear, flow in love and live with a sound mind?
Walk by your spirit.

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

- 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

We have not been given a spirit of fear but we have been given a *spirit* of love, a *spirit* of power and a *spirit* of a sound mind.

Timothy here says that we've been given a spirit of love, power and a sound mind. That means that if we live by the spirit then we will operate in love, in power and with a sound mind. Your spirit will bring soundness to your mind, will activate the power of God through you and cause you to walk in the love of God. It will also cause you to overcome fear because there is no fear in your spirit.

WHAT ABOUT CHARACTER?

Many preachers are desperate to develop and produce good character in their followers. They feel it's their burden to get Christians behaving right, moral and godly. I believe God does desire that we live right, but

God's idea of living right is us walking by the spirit and with faith in the finished work of Jesus. All our behavior is directly related to the level in which this is happening in our life.

There are two ways of developing character. One is a false way and the other is the genuine way.

1. False character is birthed out of manipulation. It is pressure that is applied to people by others, or even by themselves, that motivates their behavior based on promises of blessings or curse (in a Christian sense), or benefits and threats (in a worldly sense). Thought patterns get established in people's minds, whether Christian or not, that externally controls their behavior but does not produce genuine authentic internal character.
2. True character is in your spirit. It is actually God's character in you which flows to and through your mind as your mind surrenders to your spirit. This is the kind of character that you want being established in your mind and thought patterns as it is genuine character based on genuine motives. The law can make you look like you have good character when you do what it says to do. But it fails to *produce* that character in your heart.

RENEWING IS AN ONGOING PROCESS

Renewing is in the present continuous and is an ongoing process. It's about continually surrendering your mind to your spirit and living by

your spirit. It's about learning to live 'spirit-conscious' rather than 'mind-conscious'. It's about learning how to process life and respond by your spirit and live out of your spirit.

HOW DO WE RENEW THE MIND?

How do we surrender *our* mind more to our spirit and become more spirit conscious?

1. You start with a spirit that's born again. Then you need to awaken your mind to your spirit. You need to become aware of your spirit. And you need to find out the truth about your spirit. Your spirit is powerful.
2. Then you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He'll make you aware of your spirit and activate the life of God in you. He is God the Holy Spirit living in you. He is the Spirit of Truth. He awakens spiritual life in us. He is our closest friend and we can walk everyday aware of his presence.
3. Pray in tongues. 1 Corinthians 14. It builds up your inner man.
4. Prayer and fasting: Its sole purpose is for you to get in the spirit so that you're more in tune with the spirit.
5. Soak in God's supernatural glory presence. The more you do, the more you'll walk conscious of the spirit realm.
6. Talk to God. Sing to God. Don't just talk about God or sing about God.
7. Learn to discern between your mind and your spirit, and then go with your spirit.

8. Continue learning about these things.
9. Have constant encounters with God.

SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:

- 2 Corinthians 3:17-18
- Ephesians 5:25
- Titus 3:5
- Romans 8:5-17
- Ephesians 4:21-24

**THE 4 STAGES OF THE MIND THROUGHOUT
CREATION AND ETERNITY:**

1. Before the Fall – a new mind: spirit consciousness.
2. After the Fall – old mind: mind consciousness.
3. After redemption – a renewing mind: changing from mind consciousness to spirit consciousness.
4. After glorification – A renewed mind: total spirit consciousness in perfect harmony with a perfect mind and a perfect body!



CHAPTER 3

A MOMENT WITHIN GOD'S ETERNAL

GRACE COVENANT

God's grace does not have a beginning and it does not have an end. It is eternal. The covenant of grace is an eternal covenant that God cut even before time began and it was cut between the Father and the Son. The Bible says that Jesus Christ the Son is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the Earth. (Revelation 13:8; 1 Peter 1:19,20)

WHAT IS GOD'S GRAND MASTER PLAN?

God's grand master plan is that he would have a people that would not relate to him and have relationship with him on the basis of their own righteousness, but he would create a people that would relate to him and have relationship with him on the basis of his own righteousness. If Christ is the lamb slain before the foundation of the world, it means that God never intended for us to relate to him through our own righteousness, but his. That is why even before he created us he had already planned a way for us to receive that righteousness through Christ's substitutionary sacrifice, where he would take our unrighteousness and give us his righteousness. Not through anything we would ever do. Not through works, or keeping the law. Not through trying to please God or by obedience. Not through tithes or giving, or anything else but simply by believing and receiving his gift of righteousness. By this we would have perfect, unbroken fellowship with God every moment of every day.

CALLED BEFORE TIME TO KNOW GOD BY GRACE

"So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord or ashamed of me his prisoner but join with me in suffering for the gospel by the power of God ⁹who has saved us and called us to a holy life. Not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the

A Moment Within God's Eternal Grace Covenant

beginning of time but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus.”

- 2 TIMOTHY 1:8,9 (NIV)

Notice how his grace was given to us in Christ before the beginning of time? That means that Christ on the cross was not God's plan B but his plan A from the very beginning. God's plan was always for us to relate to him by his own grace through Christ and not our own self-righteousness. He had already decided this before we even came on the scene. God purposed before time began to save us and bring us into a relationship with him (a holy life) by grace and never because of anything we would do.

A HOLY LIFE IS A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!

The words 'holy life' scare people because they think it's a life that they have to try really hard to live out by not sinning. Actually it's simply just a relationship with God. It's a life that's close to God. It's the life that God purposed for you to have with him from before the beginning of time. It's where we are separated from everything else and come into him. The word 'holy' simply means 'separate'. To be holy is to be separated unto God. Sinning less doesn't make you more holy. Receiving God's righteousness and coming into him makes you holy. When God said in 1 Peter 1:16, "*Be holy for I am holy*", he never meant for you to try and be holy by your own efforts. It is impossible for mankind to be separated unto God by self effort. That's the point. Man arrogantly

thinks he can. The very context of that verse in Peter is that everything you do should be done from a place of knowing you are separated unto God (holy) and not to try and be separated unto God, which is what those under the law covenant were trying to do. We were never chosen to be separated unto God by the law but rather through grace.

We see the exact same thing in Ephesians 1:4 – 6:

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

God chose us to be in him (holy) and blameless (righteous) before the foundation of the world and before we had done a single thing to earn it but rather through his glorious grace in which he makes us acceptable to himself. It was predestined that Christ would be the cause of our adoption and not us.

When we read the Scriptures we need to see God’s master plan. He predestined us to relate to him by his righteousness and not our own. Many of us look at the doctrine of election and predestination through the wrong lenses and from the wrong angle. We are looking at it thinking, “Who has God predestined?” It is not about that! It is more about the fact that before time began God predestined you to relate to him through grace and the gift of his righteousness by the work of Christ and not your work.

A Moment Within God's Eternal Grace Covenant

“For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness (or the righteousness) of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brothers – and those He predestined, He also called, those He called He also justified, those He justified, He also glorified.”

- ROMANS 8:29

That's the span of God's eternal grace covenant right there! Before time he chose you. In time he justified you. After time he glorified you. And all in the past tense to show that this was God's plan right from the start!

Notice how none of the qualifying has anything to do with us? Only God can qualify people. The only thing we're called to do is have faith in Jesus. In fact, self-qualifying is what disqualifies people and keeps them out. There is no provision in God's plan for those who are determined to self-qualify. God doesn't call the qualified. He calls those incapable of qualifying themselves (everyone) to respond by faith in his ability to qualify them. Those who do are justified and made righteous and ultimately glorified. Those who don't and continue to rely on their own efforts to be qualified will be lost for all eternity in hell.

PREDESTINED TO GRACE JUST LIKE ABRAHAM

Abram definitely did not qualify yet he was chosen. God chose a filthy pagan sinner. We think Abram was a holy and righteous man and that's why God chose him. He wasn't. He was a pagan and a filthy sinner far from God. He never knew God, and yet God chose him. God

came to him one day and said, “Hey Abram, you don’t deserve it but I am going to bless you. You don’t deserve it one bit but I am choosing to qualify you for my blessings. And to prove to you that I am going to bless you, I am going to make a covenant with you. I will cut a covenant with you and swear by an oath and bind myself to you through an oath and a promise that says, ‘I will bless you and make you into many nations even though you don’t deserve it.’” And you know what? Abram simply believed God. It was insane for him to believe God. Being a pagan he knew he didn’t deserve any blessings, yet he still believed that God would bless him. And because he believed God, God credited his faith to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6, Galatians 3:6). That is why Abraham is the father of our faith (Galatians 3:7) because he believed that God would bless him even though he didn’t deserve it. That is the exact same faith we are called to have. We believe that God makes filthy sinners righteous even though we haven’t merited it or earned it or qualified ourselves for it.

Abraham enjoyed a relationship with God through grace (a grace that would later be paid for and completed by Christ’s perfect sacrifice and finished work). He was counted righteous and blessed by God apart from his performance and in fact he never relied on his performance in order to relate to God. Often his performance was quite terrible, yet God still blessed him and loved him. The same is true for Abraham’s children all the way up until Mount Sinai, when the terms of the relationship changed. (For a detailed insight into all this I highly recommend you

getting a copy of “He Qualifies You!” A brilliant book on the subject written by Chad Mansbridge.)

WHAT DID ADAM AND ISRAEL HAVE IN COMMON?

When Adam sinned, God didn't think, “Oh no! What am I going to do now?” No, Jesus was the Lamb slain *before* the foundation of the world. God knew that mankind could never relate to him through their own righteousness. It was just never going to be good enough. There is only one way that God intended for man to relate to him and that is through his righteousness, which is a gift to man. Adam and Israel both tried to be righteous in themselves in order to relate to God. Adam wasn't trying to be evil when he committed the ultimate evil of eating from the morality tree. He was actually trying to do good and avoid evil so that he could be more like God. What a deception! He was already like God. He should have lived out of that. Yet as he attempted to be more moral in order to please God he committed evil, the evil of *self-righteousness*. Similarly Israel vowed to keep all the laws of God in order to please God and relate to him. What a deception! They already had a grace covenant with God through Abraham. They should have kept relating to God through that covenant. As they attempted to be more moral within themselves in order to please God and relate to him they committed evil. The evil of self-righteousness.

We could criticize Adam and Eve as well as Israel, but the same thinking is found in all humanity. In Galatians 4:3-9 Paul calls it the basic elements of this world where man thinks, “Do good, get good. Do

bad, get bad.” It’s not man trying to be evil it’s actually man trying to be good and righteous. But to God that is a huge insult because it’s falling short of his righteousness and expecting him to be OK with that. God is not looking for our own self-righteousness. He’s looking for faith in his gift of righteousness. Our righteousness is an unstable and inferior righteousness that falls infinitely short of him. His righteousness is perfect and causes us to come into union with God and relate to him for all eternity. And this was his plan right from the start.

**YOU CAN’T RECEIVE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS
WHEN YOU’RE TRUSTING IN YOUR OWN!**

God had to teach mankind the futility of self-righteousness and the necessity of his gift of righteousness. How did he do it? Many Christians don’t understand this but he did it through the law. Moses came down from Mount Sinai to give the law to Israel and said, “If you want to be blessed by God then keep these Ten Commandments, but if you break even the smallest one then you are going to come under incredible curse.” (Sounds a little bit like the test he gave to Adam and Eve don’t you think?) Israel had to think about it for a moment and then basically replied, “Yes that doesn’t sound hard. We can do that. Yes we agree to those terms.” They should have said, “God what on Earth are you doing? You already made a covenant with Abraham who is our father and you blessed him regardless of his performance but because of his faith. God why are you making this *new* covenant with us, this performance based covenant? No God! We reject this covenant that you are

trying to make with us. We want to stay in your grace covenant. We want to stay in the Abrahamic covenant!" But they never said that. Instead they thought, "No we can keep the law. We can be as righteous as God demands." So for the next fifteen hundred years God showed them how they couldn't keep the law and just how unrighteous they were no matter how hard they tried.

Now it is extremely important to see that the law covenant had a beginning and an end. That it is simply a parenthesis within God's eternal covenant of grace. It started before time and it goes on for endless years into the eternity of eternity. The law covenant appears for a fraction of time. It's a mere blip in the grand scheme of God. It came in for one purpose and one purpose only, to show you how impossible it is to relate to God through self-righteousness (Romans 3:19; Romans 5:20; Romans 7:7,13).

JESUS HEIGHTENED THE LAW TO EXPOSE SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

It is bizarre how so much of the church today is trying to live under the heavy yoke of the law. It's because we try to apply all of Jesus' teachings to the church, not realizing that most of the time he was addressing and exposing self-righteousness in Israel. When Jesus came on the scene, Israel's spirituality was influenced mostly by the Pharisees: A legalistic group who had watered down the law to the point where you could appear to be keeping it and therefore give off the deception of righteousness. But it was ultimate hypocrisy because, while giving the

impression that they were keeping it outwardly, on the inside they were breaking it uncontrollably. Israel was beguiled by the Pharisees and Jesus' coming was to bring them out of their legalism and into grace.

Jesus said to those who were under the control of the Pharisees, "Come to me those that are weighed down and heavy burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." What was He talking about? He was talking about those who were under the yoke of the law. He was saying, "Give up your self-righteous laboring under the law and surrender to my grace and the gift of my righteousness."

The law is a heavy yoke for it weighs you down and crushes you and destroys you. Most don't realize it, but that is exactly what it is purposed to do. It is intended to break you and to smash you down and show you that you cannot relate to God through your own righteousness. The harder you try, the harder it has to smash you down. That is why Jesus was angry with the Pharisees. We look at Jesus' teachings and think that he was giving us an even higher standard than the law to live up to, and especially now because we have the help of the Holy Spirit right? Much of the church literally believes that, and are zealously trying to do all that Jesus taught. The thing is they're not trying to be evil, they're trying to be good. They are acting just like Adam and Eve, and just like Israel, but that's the problem. It's not what God wants. Jesus wasn't giving us a higher law standard that we now have to keep with the help of the Holy Spirit. He was exposing hypocrisy! He was angry with the Pharisees for lowering the law and making it appear as though they can actually keep

it. He was angry because people would look at the Pharisees and think, “Wow, look at how holy they are. I wish I could be like them. I wish I could be that legalistic then I would be close to God too.” Legalism was seen as a virtue in those days. But Jesus came and exposed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and they hated him for it. He said things like, “Yes, on the outside you look like white-washed tombs, clean and beautifully decorated, but on the inside you are full of death. Your righteous acts are dead works. On the outside you are keeping the law but on the inside you are breaking every single command and God sees you as filthy, unrighteous and dead!” and, “You say you shouldn't commit adultery but I say to you if you even lust in your heart then you have committed adultery.” He was saying that to the self-righteous yet the church thinks, “Oh that is the new standard for us.” No! Jesus was showing how extreme the law was. Even if you look righteous on the outside, the law exposes how unrighteous you are on the inside.

We need to read through the Gospels discerning what Jesus was doing. He was re-elevating the law back up to its high standard to show how no one can keep it and be righteous through it, but that under the law we come to the end of ourselves. The law covenant was not God's desire for mankind but designed to get us to finally surrender our self-righteous efforts and to receive the righteousness of God that comes through faith in Christ Jesus.

There is only one covenant that is good enough and that is the grace covenant. It's the only way by which man can draw near to God.

ABRAHAM HAD A GRACE BASED FAITH

Abraham was not under the law but in grace. The faith of Abraham is not a law-based faith. He had a grace-based faith. What is a law-based faith? It's a faith that says, "I believe that I can be righteous enough to earn God's blessings and God's presence and his favor." That is faith in your own ability. It is a useless faith because the object of your faith is useless! We don't have the ability. Grace-based faith says, "My faith is in him and in him alone! It's in Jesus, his finished work and in his ability to take my sin and make me 100% righteous before God!" That's what our faith should be in and nothing else. It would be crazy to put faith in anything else.

A FAULT FINDING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!

"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for the second. ⁸For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant..."

- HEBREWS 8:7,8

The law covenant is a fault finding covenant. Your relationship with God is based solely on you and your performance, scrutinized every moment by the law. There is no way you can please God because the law is always finding fault with your performance. Because God's law is perfect and people are imperfect, every imperfect thing we do is shown up and brought to our attention by his perfect law. Imagine living

twenty-four hours of every day with the unrelenting guilt for your short comings. Imagine if every day as you live your life, there is someone following you around who is constantly saying, "Oh you did that wrong. That's not right. You failed there. Look at that sin. You messed up again. And again. And again. That one was terrible. Oh that one was worse. How could you? Don't you love God? How could God love you when you do things like that? Oh what are you doing? Why don't you stop doing that? You are pathetic. You are useless. You are a failure. God can't stand you!"

That would be a fault finding relationship. And that is what the law is. It's a fault finding covenant relationship with God. Because of God's perfect integrity he has to find fault with you if you're under the law. And not a watered down law version like what the Pharisees had or the more deceptive version found in the modern day church. No, the absolute flawless microscopic scrutinizing of every single thing you do, think, say and believe. Nothing escapes God's infinite omniscience. His law is brutal. His law is violent. It is against you. It seeks to crush you and wear you down. You cannot have a close intimate relationship with God under the law. You can only know him from a distance. The law can never enhance your relationship with him, it can only show you how bad your relationship with God is. Under the law it's very hard to say, "Praise God I am just going to go and worship God and get in his presence." Or at very best it's an up and down relationship based on your performance. Brief momentary ups with long drawn out downs! Why?

Because it's hard to relate to someone who always has to find fault with you.

But God doesn't want to find fault with people. He loves the world. God loves us. He wants a relationship with us. It was out of his good pleasure that he created us. His grand master plan is to have a people who are his own who will draw near to him for all time and eternity in intimate covenant relationship. Jesus came to bring us into that relationship. He came to take us out of our own righteousness and bring us into his righteousness. A perfect righteousness that causes us to relate perfectly to God. Even with Adam and Eve, who originally were relating to God through their own inferior righteousness, there was always the potential to sin and fall away. This was then highlighted and emphasized again through Israel under the law. Man's righteousness is an unstable and inferior righteousness that cannot sustain a relationship with God. God wanted an infallible and unbreakable relationship with mankind that would last for all eternity and that's why the new covenant is a more superior and a far better covenant arrangement than the old law based one.

WHY IS THE OLD INFERIOR?

The law covenant, which is a blip in time and eternity, a momentary parenthesis within the grace covenant, is a useless and weak covenant because it is a covenant that God made with man.

A covenant is made when two people or parties who bind themselves together by making promises to each other and agreeing on the terms

and laws of the covenant. It's put in place by such things as promises and oaths, signatures and swearing, legal documents and contracts, the shedding of blood and laws and usually only breakable by death. A covenant is a serious arrangement that holds you to account. Failure to uphold your end makes you liable and carries consequences.

So God makes a covenant with man at Mount Sinai and says, "I will fulfill my end and you must fulfill yours. Your end is to keep everyone of my commands to the strictest letter and not break any part of them even slightly. My end is to bless you if you keep my laws and to curse you when you break them." That is the covenant that man entered into with God which had, as history reveals, devastating consequences for Israel. The more Israel tried to relate to God under this covenant the worse it was for them. In fact Romans 11 reveals that because Israel entered into this covenant with God they were cut off from God. They were called to relate to God by his righteousness through the Abrahamic grace covenant that was of faith, yet because of the sin of self-righteousness God had to show them (and the rest of the world) the inability of man to relate to God in and of himself. So God made a temporary and inferior covenant with man to show how weak and useless a covenant reliant on man is.

THE MAKING OF THE NEW COVENANT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU!

The New Covenant is better because it was made differently. It is an extrinsic covenant not an intrinsic covenant. Meaning that it was made

outside of you and the terms of the agreement had nothing to do with you. God made the covenant with his Son. He made it with Jesus. And then he brought you into it when he brought you into Christ. That means that your relationship with God now is not based on *your* fluctuating righteousness and performance in keeping or breaking laws but on Christ's righteousness and his perfect performance on your behalf.

Jesus can never break his end of the covenant. In fact he has already fulfilled it perfectly on your behalf, emphasized by the fact that he now *sits* in Heaven (Hebrews 10:13). It is also complete in us because he has made us perfect (Hebrews 10:14) and we are *seated* with him in Heaven. (Ephesians 2:6).

From that finished place, Jesus now mediates this new covenant relationship between God and man. Under the old, the priests were inferior because they died and could only offer temporary sacrifices. So the people could never enter into a perfect relationship with God in time and especially not in eternity.

Christ is superior because he offered a perfect sacrifice that once and for all removes all sins for all time (Hebrews 10:12), and is a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek meaning he has an indestructible life and can mediate the covenant between God and man. This gives us absolute security and confidence in our relationship with God. That he's not relating to us according to our performance-based righteousness but rather according to the righteousness of Christ that we have become. And Jesus ensures this:

A Moment Within God's Eternal Grace Covenant

“And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: ²¹(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:). ²²By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”

- HEBREWS 7:20-22

BOLDNESS TO DRAW NEAR FROM THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

The way the New Covenant works is that God the Father binds himself to the covenant by an oath saying, “I promise that I will never relate to those in Christ through their righteousness but I swear by a covenant oath to always relate to them through the finished work of Jesus.”

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them (that's His nature that He gives us); ¹⁷And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. ¹⁸Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. ¹⁹Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

- HEBREWS 10:16-19

That's so clear. Under the New Covenant God doesn't relate to us through our sins, because he remembers them no more, and we have bold access to the holiest (absolute intimacy with him) through the blood of Jesus.

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Jesus also, ever lives to intercede for us. His blood speaks on our behalf that our sins are removed and we have been made the righteousness of God in him. We can therefore boldly relate to God and continually live in his presence.

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? ³²He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ³³Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. ³⁴Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

- ROMANS 8:31-35

Then, furthermore, the Holy Spirit is also our Counselor. Not in the sense that he comes alongside and says, “Hey man, do this do that, don’t do this don’t do that.” He is our counselor meaning our legal defense. So when Satan, or the law, or other people or even you accuse yourself saying; “God, they broke this law or that law, how can you love them? How can you relate to them?” the Holy Spirit says, “Father remember, you swore an oath and promised to not relate to them through their performance, their righteousness or their shortcomings. You swore to relate to them through Christ’s righteousness.” Case dismissed!

“For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. ¹⁵Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for

after that he had said before, ¹⁶This is the covenant that I will make with them."

- HEBREWS 10:14-16A

CONCLUSION

If we could see the grand master plan of God's eternal grace covenant, then we would have no problem letting go of self-righteousness and completely surrendering to his gift of righteousness, not just for salvation but in our ongoing relationship with God. For the righteous shall walk by faith and never by flesh. We would recognize the sole purpose the law plays in people's lives and keep it in its rightful place, which is to bring us to the end of our self-righteousness and unto faith in Christ's righteousness. The bottom line is that God wants a relationship with us based on his own righteousness.

What an insult to God when people believe and teach a performance-based relationship with God!



CHAPTER 4

THE NEW WAY OF THE SPIRIT

VS.

THE OLD WAY OF THE LETTER

“Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

- 2 CORINTHIANS 3:6

The letter kills, but the *spirit* gives life. It seems so clear yet I still get surprised by how some people persist in trying to put Christian's back under the letter. We are not called as ministers of the letter but as ministers of the New Covenant.

Some preachers would say, "We believe that, yes, of course we're not under the Ten Commandments, we don't have to keep the Ten Commandments in order to be saved, and we don't put our congregation under the Ten Commandments, we know that." But they still put their congregation under the religious system of the Ten Commandments by putting them under the "letter". So what is the letter?

WHAT IS THE LETTER THAT KILLS?

It is a system of performance. It's performance-based Christianity where you try to perform to please God in order to earn his blessings and love and to avoid his punishment. Anytime people put you under performance for these reasons it's the letter. I'm not talking about stirring Christians to rise up in their true identity and God given giftings and callings and to go for it. I'm talking about religious manipulation that tries to motivate Christians to action by the promise of blessings or punishment.

TWO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WAYS OF LIFE

The spirit and the letter represent two completely different ways of life. The letter is a religious system of external pressure and motivation

The New Way of The Spirit vs. The Old Way of The Letter

to get you to serve God whereas the spirit is an internal transformation and empowered ability to serve God. Under the letter you are forced to serve God. Under the spirit it becomes your desire to serve God. The letter is the old way of being motivated before the new way of the spirit came. No longer is it, “Do this in order to be blessed, or don’t do that in order to avoid punishment.” Now it’s, “This is who you truly are, perfect and complete in Christ” and “This is what is available to you now, a miraculous and victorious life.”

We need to trust in the supernatural transformation of the spirit of a believer and speak to that spirit in them. That is the part of them that desires to live for God. Hebrews 8 and 10 tell us that God has written his law on our hearts and minds. This is not the Ten Commandments but the very nature of God in our spirit and conscience. God has put his nature in us! Ephesians 4:24 says that our new man has been created after God in righteousness and true holiness. The spirit of a Christian has God’s own nature in it. Their new nature has become God’s very nature, perfect in righteousness and holiness. Our exhortation to Christians therefore is to live not by their old man but by their new man by putting on new thinking that is based on a revelation of God’s nature in them!

In essence the letter says, “Perform” while the spirit says, “Believe”. The letter is about performing in order to receive. The spirit is about believing you already have received everything in Christ. And when you believe that then you *will* perform for God but it will be out of confidence and authority and not out of fear. In other words when you realize you’re not behind the eight ball trying to get ahead but that you’re way

out in front you'll live differently. When you realize you're a son in the kingdom and not a beggar outside you'll act and behave like royalty, with confidence and authority knowing that the kingdom is at your disposal. When you're a beggar you'll have no confidence or authority and you'll hope to try and impress the king in order to just get the crumbs of the kingdom.

THE OLD WAY WAS A PRISON!

When you put people under the letter you put them under a falling short mentality. The law is designed to show you that you are falling short of God's high standards and whatever you do it is never good enough. That is why it's called a ministry of condemnation in 2 Corinthians 3: 9. Because it always condemns you and shows you that God is not pleased with you. When people live under the letter they will never be fruitful because anything they do will not be good enough, and that is discouraging. This is what causes people to give up and to live separately from God.

The history of Israel under the law, overall, is not a happy story. There are a few moments of short lived triumph with decades and centuries of defeat and destruction culminating in 400 years of silence from the heavens and separation from God. In those years Israel grew far from God and became completely unfruitful. This is because of the ministry of death, the letter. Now imagine trying to put your congregation under the same thing and expecting a different result.

“BUT I DON’T PREACH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS!”

The problem is the subtlety of the letter. It’s not overtly the “Ten Commandments” but it’s the essence or the “spirit” of the system of the Ten Commandments. It’s the motivating force of the Old Covenant that says that God is not pleased with you until you have achieved such and such things for him, or that God will punish you if you do or don’t do such and such, therefore you better do this or that. Christians who live under that will serve God for all the wrong reasons and their relationship with God will be dependent on all the things they’ve done for God whether good or bad. They will then relate to God either through pride or condemnation rather than the grace of God which makes you humble and gives you confidence.

The fear in many Christians is that if we take the law off people then what will be left to motivate them? In other words if we take “fear of punishment” or “incentive of rewards” off them then they’ll move into sin and passivity. This shows a veiled mind that cannot see the new way of the spirit. Under the New Covenant we are completely released from the system of that Old Covenant law and are empowered through grace by the Spirit of God in our reborn spirit.

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

- ROMANS 7:6

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“Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed... Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.”

- GALATIANS 3:23, 25

“Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

- 2 CORINTHIANS 3: 17

Did you ever ask yourself why the word *liberty*? Liberty from what? What have we been liberated from? We have been liberated from the law and letter-based Christianity. On what basis? On the basis that Christ has fulfilled the law on our behalf and gives us his perfect righteousness if we come into him through faith. Or you could say on the basis that we have been born again and have come into the new way of the Spirit.

Christians who lack revelation on this will still try to move you by the letter. They will say things like, “If you do such and such, then God’s going to bless you, or if you do such and such God will punish you.” They don’t realize how inferior that is and that there is now a much better way of motivating Christians. We don’t need to do anything because of those old reasons anymore. Now we live for God and serve him because of the Spirit of God on the inside of us. He has transformed us and given us his very own nature, the nature of God on the inside of us filled with his purposes that wants to live for God and that doesn’t want to sin. We no longer need rules to tell us how God wants us to live.

The New Way of The Spirit vs. The Old Way of The Letter

We now have the power of the Holy Spirit in union with our reborn spirit wanting to express the life of God from the inside out of us.

Grace is the spirit covenant, and it causes people's spirit to come alive and to get excited and want to live for God. When you put the letter on people, it takes them into the flesh and the mind realm. The more you're preaching the letter the more people will get their eyes on themselves and therefore in the flesh. The more people get in the flesh the more they are going to sin. The more they're going to grow passive, feel like they're always falling short, feel far from God, and eventually just run from God altogether. If you preach grace, full blown grace, the more you'll help Christians to walk by the spirit. When Christians walk by the spirit and discover all that is available to them because of their identity in Christ you won't need to manipulate them with blessings or curse to get them serving God, you won't be able to stop them from serving God! We need to get people's eyes off themselves and onto Christ by ministering the spirit to them and not the letter.

WHEN WE SEE JESUS WE SEE WHAT WE'VE BECOME!

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass (mirror) the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

- 2 CORINTHIANS 3: 18

What's with the mirror?

"...beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are changed into that same image..."

Basically, when we look into that awesome glorious image of Christ, it's like looking into a mirror because we then see what we have become! (You might need to pause and really think about that.) I don't know if you can grasp this but when you see the glorious image of Jesus then you see what you have become!

Our identity is found purely in the image of God. It is not found in our performance or our morality. It is not found in our past experiences. It is not found in the bad things that have happened to us nor in the good things we have done. Those things have nothing to do with our identity! Our identity is found in the image of God because when we see Him we are looking into a mirror to see our true selves. You may look at yourself in the flesh and think of all your shortcomings and form your identity out of that, but when God looks at you he sees you in the spirit as a new creation. And when he sees you it's like he's looking at himself! He is righteous, he is loveable. You are righteous, you are loveable, worthy, beautiful, clean, acceptable, pleasing and perfect! All this is your true identity. That's why it says in Isaiah 60:1

"Arise, shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you."

It doesn't say, "Shrink back in shame and try to hide." That's what the letter does, that's what performance does. It makes you feel like you've fallen short of the image of God. Grace gives you boldness to

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shine because it shows you that you have not fallen short of his image anymore, but that you have been transformed into his very same image. And this is the clincher: the more you show people that, the more they will live that!

The more people see how perfect they are on the inside the more they will become that on the outside. The problem with the letter is that it tries to make people perfect on the outside but can't change the inside.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.”

- MATTHEW 23: 25-26 (NIV)

Let's not follow in the footsteps of the Pharisees by putting people under the letter but rather let us trust in what Christ said and his new way of the spirit. After all, he is the spirit of the New Covenant.



CHAPTER 5

GALATIANS 5 EXPLAINED IN CONTEXT

There is much confusion when it comes to Galatians chapter five. This is because some of the verses in it are hard to understand at face value. Some people, after reading the chapter without discernment of the New Covenant, would conclude that:

- Christians are in a battle with their old sinful nature.

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“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

- GALATIANS 5:17

- Sinning is living by the flesh and not sinning is living by the spirit.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness...”

- GALATIANS 5:19

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith...”

- GALATIANS 5:22

- Christians who do sinful things will not go to Heaven.

“Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

- GALATIANS 5:21

If you read these scriptures like that, then you would be wrong.

Galatians five is actually a wonderful chapter that should fill us with great hope and confidence in the goodness of the good news and the completeness of God’s salvation in us.

The key to unlocking this chapter is having a revelation about what it means to “walk in the spirit”.

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

- GALATIANS 5:25

What does this mean? Well to “live in the spirit” is to be born again as opposed to “living in the flesh” which is an unregenerate state. To walk in the spirit is to walk in that which got you saved, grace. To walk in the flesh is to walk with unbelief in grace and with confidence in your own performance. Therefore this scripture simply means that if we are born again by faith in Christ and are Spirit filled then we should continue to walk in that rather than going back to the law and relying on human effort. The walk in the spirit involves three things:

- 1) To walk by your reborn *spirit* – your new nature.
- 2) In the *spirit* covenant – grace.
- 3) In fellowship with the Holy *Spirit* – who is one with your spirit.

That’s what walking in the spirit is – To walk by your reborn spirit in the spirit covenant in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. As opposed to walking by your flesh in the flesh covenant (law) in accordance to the wisdom of this age.

FLESH VS. SPIRIT

One of the biggest contrast in Scripture is the contrast between the flesh and the spirit. Before you are saved you are ‘in the flesh’. You are born into Adam and his fallen state, and under the flesh covenant. The flesh covenant is the law covenant. It’s righteousness by the performance of the flesh. When you get saved you come alive in Christ. You

come out of the flesh and into the spirit. You come out of the flesh covenant and into the spirit covenant, the grace covenant.

Flesh represents: works, self-righteousness, legalism, performance, unbelief in grace and the Old/Law Covenant.

Spirit represents: faith, the gift of righteousness, grace, his performance on your behalf, and the New/Grace Covenant.

In order to understand Galatians chapter five it is absolutely vital that you see the context. The two most pivotal words to understand in this chapter are the words flesh and spirit. The most common rendering of these words in the church today is that “flesh” just means our sinful nature or carnal behavior and that “spirit” is just referring to the Holy Spirit. But this is not the case in Galatians chapter five. Galatians chapter four is where we get our definitions of the two words which then determines the context throughout chapter five. Galatians four shows us that when the word “flesh” is used it is primarily referring to the Old Covenant and law, and when the word “spirit” is used it is primarily referring to the New Covenant and grace. This is vital or we will misinterpret chapter five and bring confusion.

Galatians 4:22,23 and 29 show us that Abraham had two sons. Ishmael, who was born after the flesh and Isaac, who was born after the spirit:

“For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. ²³But he who was of the

Galatians 5 Explained in Context

bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.”

- GALATIANS 4:22-23

“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit”

- GALATIANS 4:29

Then verse 24 tells us what these two sons represent:

“Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants;”

- GALATIANS 4:24

Which two covenants? It represents the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The Old Covenant is an insufficient righteousness which is by the flesh and the New Covenant is a perfect righteousness that comes by the spirit. Ishmael represents Abraham not resting in the promise of God that he would have children and therefore trying to help God out by producing a child in human effort. Isaac was the child that God promised. He came by the supernatural work of the Spirit through Sarah who was barren.

The important thing to see here is that “flesh” represents the Old Covenant and law keeping and “spirit” represents the New Covenant of resting in grace. Or you could say it represents the “flesh covenant” and the “spirit covenant”.

So when Galatians 5:25 says, “If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit” it means if we are made righteous by the grace of God through faith in Christ then don’t go back to trying to be righteous by

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law keeping. No, continue in the spirit covenant of grace, not the flesh covenant of the law. See you can be born again but go back to the law. It doesn't mean you lose your salvation, it just means that you won't walk in all the benefits of your salvation that are available to you now. And in fact you'll live a miserable life of condemnation and bondage, not free and not being able to bring others into freedom. Galatians was written to urge the Galatians not to go back to the law as they were doing. He writes to show them the fate of all those that aren't saved and are trusting in their own flesh, that they will be judged. Therefore as a born again believer, why would you want to go back to something that is bringing judgment on the unsaved? No, stay in grace, walk in the spirit, sow to the spirit, keep your faith in the spirit and not the flesh.

“Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.”

- GALATIANS 4:30

You cannot mix the two covenants. You can't live in both. You can't mix bondage with freedom. You can't walk in the flesh covenant and expect to walk in the blessings and inheritance of the spirit covenant. That's the problem: People try to and wonder why their life is so miserable. Paul is making a distinction here trying to show people that you can't live in both. One cancels out the other. That's the whole theme throughout chapter five.

He's not saying that you'll lose your salvation. If you are born again then you "live in the spirit", but you can choose where you're going to

walk. You can walk from your position in the law covenant and try to attain blessings from God and try to earn his love and favor. All you'll end up doing is feeling miserable and lousy about yourself because you're living under a heavy yoke of bondage. A heavy, accusing and fault finding yoke that will bring death in your life. Or you can walk in the spirit/grace and just say, "Thank you God, you love me every day of my life. It's not about how I perform but about how Jesus performed for me. You love me in Jesus. You accept me twenty-four hours a day, every moment of the day. I'm not in a fault finding and condemning covenant, I am in a blessing covenant and an ever increasing glory covenant!"

INTERPRETING KEY VERSES IN CHAPTER FIVE THROUGH THIS CONTEXT

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

- GALATIANS 5:16

Let's apply the context of chapter four now to this verse:

"Walk in the spirit covenant and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh covenant."

In other words, when you walk in grace you will not come under a pressure to have to perform for God.

Another one:

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“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

- GALATIANS 5:17

Now you could argue and say that this is talking about your spirit versus your flesh, that is, don't live by your flesh but live by your spirit because the spirit and the flesh are against each other. I believe to some degree it is about that but it's important to keep to the context of Galatians chapter four which is an allegory of the two covenants.

So let's apply our context key to unlock what this verse is really saying:

“For the flesh covenant desires against the spirit covenant, and the spirit covenant against the flesh covenant, and these are contrary to each other so that you cannot do the things that you want to do.”

This scripture is saying that if you try to live in both covenants then you will live in a great conflict and not be able to do the things that you want to do. In one moment you'll want to rest in the finished work of Christ but at the same time you'll want to try and complete your righteousness by what you do. You'll try to walk in faith but at the same time feel the pressure to work for your salvation.

A perfect example is right after you have just sinned (God forbid, but come on let's be honest, there are times when we all just do stupid stuff!). You realize that you've done the wrong thing, so now what do you do? Well if you're living under both covenants one part of you will get all sin conscious and guilt conscious and condemning you, telling

you that you're now out of fellowship with God and need to repent and confess your sins and ask for forgiveness and promise God that you'll never do that again in order to be restored to fellowship. Another part of you will be telling you that you are still the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, that you mustn't get all sin conscious but Christ conscious. That you can just rest in the finished work of the cross and not get into unbelief by having to try and work off your guilt. Keep walking in grace. You are completely forgiven. Sure that was a silly thing to do. You know that and God knows that but keep your eyes on him.

Christians often run back to the law straight after they have sinned. They cannot accept that they are still perfectly righteous and holy before God and that grace has already abounded over the very sin they just committed. They feel like they have to pay for that sin. That's unbelief in the price that Christ paid for us.

The law says, "Work!" Grace says, "Rest!"

So which is it? I desire to rest but I feel like I need to work. Can you see the conflict that living in both covenants causes? That is what this scripture is talking about. Paul is telling the Galatians to stop living in both and just live in grace. "Since you live in the spirit, walk in the spirit."

So right after you've just sinned don't get caught up in the dead works of the law because of a lack of faith in your perfect righteousness. Rather say something like, "Thank you Jesus that I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Yes, I'm sorry about that thing I did. That's not a part of who I am. My new creation nature didn't want to do that. But

thank you God I don't need to get all morbid and introspective and lose all my confidence and beat myself up and feel like a pathetic little loser. I can lift my head up high and have confidence because Jesus loves me, his blood has forgiven me of all my sins. I am righteous in Christ and I can have just as much boldness now as before I sinned!"

See if you think that you can have more boldness to draw near to God before you sin than after you sin it shows that you don't understand grace! It's not about what we have done! We enter with confidence through his blood and not ours. You can have confidence twenty-four hours a day even after your most terrible sin. Does that mean we can just sin as much as we want? Of course not! If that is your heart then you are not even born again. The spirit of a born again person doesn't want to sin.

"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

- GALATIANS 5:18

This is a strange scripture if you don't understand the context here. It seems out of place if this passage was talking about just your flesh versus your spirit, but very much in place if these scriptures are referring to law verses grace. In other words, if you are in the Spirit Covenant then you are not under the Law Covenant. See how there is such consistency with this interpretation throughout this chapter so far.

Being "led of the Spirit" is a reference to us being born again. It's the same as "living in the Spirit." Romans 8:14 says, "Those that are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." It means that the Holy Spirit is now leading us if we are born again. Whether we follow and walk

after him is up to us but the point is that it's a reference to us being born again. Those that are led by the law are not the sons of God. Even if they were keeping the law 100%. It's not about being under the law that makes us sons but being born again by the Spirit of God through faith in Christ.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

- ROMANS 8:9

This is a very key text that speaks about the two positions that people are either in. Either you are in the flesh and not born again or you are in the spirit and you are born again. This scripture has got nothing to do with performance but everything to do with the position you're in. Now if you are in the Spirit then you belong to Christ. You have been born again and are now fully under grace. That means you are no longer under the law. If you are not born again and therefore in the flesh then you are still under the law. That's what Galatians 5:18 is saying. Paul is reinforcing to them that they are not under the law.

Extra Virgin Grace

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

- GALATIANS 5:19-21

Now many people get this scripture wrong because they miss the context that we have been talking about and because of that they end up saying that Christians who sin will lose their salvation. They will then try and use this scripture to motivate Christians to sin less out of fear of missing Heaven. This is the wrong way to motivate Christians and is full of error.

So what does this scripture mean? Let's apply the key. Notice how verse nineteen starts off with “now the works of the flesh are...” This scripture isn't talking about Christians who sometimes live in the spirit and sometimes in the flesh. It's talking positionally here. Those that are in the spirit are not in the flesh or under the law. But the works of those that are in the flesh and under the law, or rather those that are not born again, are manifest in these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness and so on. These are all transgressions of the law. This passage is describing those that are under the law and the behavior of those who live under the law.

Then the verse that scares everyone, “as I have also told you in times past, that *they* which do these things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Why? Because “they” are not born again. “They” are in the flesh. “They” are still under the law. “They” are not in the Spirit Covenant. “They” are not in grace. The emphasis is not on the things they do but on who “they” are. If the emphasis is on what is done and therefore even includes Christians then none of us will inherit the kingdom of God! All of us have done and still do some of these things. Go through the list and see what things you have done within the last year. Even if you’ve done one then that’s enough to be included in those who won’t inherit the kingdom if the emphasis is on those that do these things. But the emphasis is actually on the word “they” and it’s consistent with our context. *They* won’t inherit the kingdom because *they* are in the flesh, unregenerate and seeking a righteousness by the law.

Those that are in the flesh and under the law live according to their sinful nature. It doesn’t matter how much law you keep it won’t have the power to set them free from their sinful nature and produce true love in them. The law cannot change our spirit and cause it to be reborn. It cannot produce the fruit of the spirit, only the Spirit can when he regenerates our spirit and gives us a new nature, God’s nature. The law cannot produce God’s love in us. It just tells you what you should and shouldn’t do. That might look like you’re doing loving things but it is not true love. It is not the fruit of love but the fruit of fear.

Extra Virgin Grace

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

- GALATIANS 5:14

The law is fulfilled in this but the law cannot fulfill this. The law cannot make you love your neighbor. The works of the flesh are manifest in these... i.e. those that are under the law end up sinning and transgressing even more because the law was never intended to transform your inner man but to show you that you cannot love with the love of God because you are in the flesh and have a fallen nature.

Now look at Galatians 5:22:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

- GALATIANS 5:22

Most people teach that the fruit of the spirit is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Now I don't disagree with that but I just think it's incomplete. I believe that this scripture is actually referring more to the fruit of your reborn spirit and that's more consistent with the context.

Your new creation spirit has been made perfect in Christ. You have the fullness of Christ living inside of you. You've been made perfect and complete in Christ (Colossians 2:9,10). Inside of your spirit you have the love of God. Inside of your new creation spirit, that is seated in heavenly places in Christ, you have the very joy of God, the peace of

God, his patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self control.

Then the scripture says, “Against such there is no law.” That means that now you don’t need the law to tell you to love someone. You don’t need the law to tell you to be joyful or patient or kind or good or self controlled. Why? Because you’ve got something far greater than the law, you’ve got a new nature inside of you, the very nature of God, God’s nature inside of you! Hebrews 8 and 10 says that he has put his law inside our spirits. That’s not the Ten Commandments, that’s the very nature of God. The law reveals the beautiful nature of God. The loving goodness of God. But when we put it on people it cannot produce that nature in people. In fact it does the very opposite and manifests the sinful nature that is inside of people who are in the flesh which results in adultery, fornication, uncleanness, gossip and so on. If you put it on Christians it takes them into fleshy thinking and behavior which manifests in self-righteousness and judgment towards each other which eventually ends up in the devouring of one another. This is what Paul was referring to in verse 15:

“But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”

- GALATIANS 5:15

He was showing them what happens to a community that goes the way of the law and not the spirit: You end up devouring each other. Because the law cannot produce the love of God in us. It cannot produce the nature of God in us. The only thing that can produce the nature of

God in us is the Spirit of God regenerating your spirit and making you a new creation. As he does that you instantly and supernaturally receive the nature of God. We become partakers in the divine nature. We partake in the love of God, goodness, peace etc.

Therefore, “since we live in the spirit, so walk in the spirit.” In other words, you should now walk according to your new creation nature. Don’t walk according to your flesh and your feelings or your soulish wisdom which is the corrupt wisdom of this age, but walk according to the new nature that you have received because in that nature is the love of God and the joy of God and the peace of God and all the other ones. And you don’t need a law telling you to do all those things. Your spirit naturally wants to do those things. And the more you live by the spirit the more these things will manifest.

SO HOW DO WE WALK BY THE SPIRIT?

The law is the flesh covenant – the more you focus on it the more you’ll end up in the flesh.

Grace is the spirit covenant – the more you focus on it the more you’ll end up in the spirit and living from your spirit.

It’s not about trying to put law on people to produce love or the fruit of God’s nature in them. If you do that you’ll actually produce the opposite. It’s about helping to lead them in the spirit covenant, the grace covenant, as it releases what is in their spirit causing it to just flow out of them. That’s why we live and walk in the spirit. What is walking in the

spirit? It is living from your reborn spirit, in the spirit covenant in fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

HOW DO WE WALK IN THE SPIRIT?

By getting our reborn spirit into a place of ascendancy and dominance over our body and our mind. If our body or mind is in control then we will live our life from those realms. If you live by your body then you will only ever do what you feel like doing. But if your spirit is in control then you will live from that realm. Don't let the natural dictate your spiritual life. Let your spirit make the decisions for your life. Don't let your flesh or even your mind make those decisions. Your mind can come under the anxieties and fears of this world and will cause you to make a decision out of fear and worry and confusion. Make decisions out of your spirit. What is your spirit saying? You are in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of Grace, the Spirit of Truth and all wisdom and you are one with him in spirit. Now walk from that place. Don't live from flesh. Don't live from the law. Don't live from lies and fear. Live from truth – grace! Live from the spirit.

Sometimes there are just things that you need to do because in the spirit they are the right things to do. Like praying for yourself and others. Most times you won't feel like it. Your mind will give you ten reasons why you can't now. But in the spirit you know you need to. Make a decision from your spirit. I do this all the time. I go into prayer feeling all carnal and come out powering in the spirit having had some great

times in God and feeling the power of those prayers and the impact it will make in others lives.

What about going to church or corporate prayer meetings. There's no law that says you have to. No one's forcing you to. But you know that church is Christ's idea. It's his desire. Therefore he's put that desire in your spirit. Therefore it should be one of our major priorities. So what gets us to church or prayer meeting every week? A feeling? If we only went based on the feelings that we have one to two hours before the meeting, most times we probably wouldn't go. "Do I feel like going to church? Do I feel like going to prayer?" Probably most times you'll feel like you don't! It's been a hard week, you're tired. You just want to chill out and get some couch time and watch a good movie. That's often how your body and mind feels. Now your body and mind aren't evil, but it's just not good if they are in control and leading you.

Your mind is wonderful and your body is amazing. God created them. There is some corruption that has come in and we just need to understand that corruption and learn how to live from our spirit. We need to look after our body. You do have to get some couch time. You've got to eat healthy and exercise and rest. Then with your mind and emotions; you've got to watch movies and listen to music or read books and poetry that feeds your soul and stirs up your emotions. Have friends that refresh you. Take holidays and days of rest. Invest in your body and emotions. Look after your body and emotions. You don't want your flesh and emotions restricting your spirit. If you don't look after

them then they will restrict your spirit from being able to lead. So look after them, just don't let them be in charge!

Don't let your mind and body make all the decisions. Let your spirit be the one in control and make the decisions! So you might not feel like going to midweek prayer meeting or Sunday morning church, but it's not really about your feelings, it's about the family of God. It's about the team. It's about other people being touched by the grace and love of God. It's about others getting saved and healed and delivered and encouraged and the Kingdom of God coming, not about how you are feeling at that particular moment. Yes, you go to get blessed but if that's the only reason you go then something is wrong. That's inward and selfish. But the spirit is outward and generous.



CHAPTER 6

THE BEATITUDES ARE FOR THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS!

Matthew 5:1–7:29 is the ‘Sermon on the Mount’. Is this sermon intended for the church? Absolutely not! It’s intended for the self-righteous. It’s a pre-salvation preach that exposes self-righteous pride and performance and reveals the need for God’s righteousness as a gift through faith in order to see the Kingdom and become children of God.

Unless you really understand grace, don't go near the Beatitudes. They will mess you up! Teaching the Beatitudes to Christians produces legalism and religious pride or condemnation in them. We must rightly divide the Word of God to see what Jesus was saying and trying to achieve here.

He wasn't preaching to a church. He wasn't preaching to born again believers. He was preaching to Jews where the climate of the day was a striving for righteousness through works. Israel was still under the law of Moses. The Pharisees and Scribes had also perverted the law to make it more achievable and profitable. They were the ultimate hypocrites who externally appeared to be keeping the law but inwardly they were full of hypocrisy. Israel was in bondage to the deception of the Pharisees and tried to be as 'righteous' as them. Legalism was a virtue in those days. But God gave the law to expose self-righteousness and bring a person to the end of themselves, not to try and be righteous by it. Israel was trying to be righteous by the law and thought they were doing okay by the standards of the Pharisees. Jesus came to expose the self-righteousness of the Pharisees and bring people out of the delusion of self-sufficiency and into a revelation that they are bankrupt before God and in desperate need of his righteousness.

The Beatitudes are revealing the attitudes and the state-of-being someone needs to have and exhibit in order to reach out for salvation and to be saved.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit; those who mourn; the meek; those who hunger and thirst for righteousness; the merciful; the pure in heart

The Beatitudes Are For The Self-Righteous!

and the peacemakers.” These are the attitudes of people who have nothing to offer God to make themselves righteous and know that they don’t warrant forgiveness but require mercy.

The “poor in spirit” know they have nothing to offer God to be righteous. Those that are rich in spirit, in their minds think that they are righteous before God because of their works. Unless you realize how poor you are before God you’ll never reach out to receive his righteousness. Once you do receive his righteousness you become rich in your spirit and live out of his riches.

To mourn is to come to the realization that you are lost and are facing eternal hell. That your righteousness isn’t good enough and God’s judgments are upon you. When you come to that attitude then you are in the right place to receive from God the gift of righteousness and the comfort of knowing that God alone makes you perfect through Christ and enables you to be with him for all eternity. Once you have come into that place, it would then be wrong to keep mourning. Now it’s time for rejoicing!

“The meek shall inherit the Earth” is saying that those who are not proud in their own self-righteousness but humble before God (to trust and believe in his gift of righteousness) will, along with believing Abraham, inherit the Earth. Those that are in Abraham inherit the Earth through faith according to Romans four. So it’s a reference to being credited with righteousness like Abraham through faith and not works of self-righteousness as long as we are humble and not proud.

Those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” is not a reference to having a desire to be more righteous by your own works but knowing that you’ll never be righteous enough in yourself and therefore have a desire for his righteousness and for him to make you righteous. Romans three reveals that there is no one righteous, not even one. So anyone trying to hunger and thirst to be more righteous in themselves before God are in great danger because they haven’t seen the gospel. They need to hear the Sermon on the Mount! They need to hunger and thirst for his righteousness. If they’re not hungering and thirsting for his righteousness it means they are full to the brim of their own self-righteousness. That is a dangerous place to be!

The “merciful” give mercy to others who don’t deserve mercy because they themselves realize that they don’t deserve mercy either! It’s an attitude that reveals what’s in the heart. If you don’t give mercy to others who have wronged you, it means you believe they should suffer and pay for it. It reveals an arrogance in your heart before God thinking that you yourself don’t require God’s mercy since you are so “righteous” and have never wronged God. You’ll only plead for mercy when you see you’re guilty. When you don’t give mercy to others it’s because you believe they are guilty and deserve judgment. But those who see themselves as deserving judgment and needing mercy find it easy to give mercy to others who also don’t deserve it. Blessed are the merciful because they also realize they need mercy from God and are ready to receive it.

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The “pure in heart” are not those who just look righteous on the outside but those who have absolutely no impurity on the inside. It’s a reference to keeping the law perfectly and not falling short of it in the slightest. It’s absolute holiness according to the highest standards of the law. Jesus wasn’t saying that keeping most of the law is good enough. He was saying that if you want to live by the law then you can never break it. Not even once. The smallest transgression of the law brings about impurity in your heart and means you’ll never see God. So if your “seeing God” is based on the purity level of your law keeping, then you better make sure you’ve kept the law 100% of your entire life. Anything less and you’re doomed! If that sounds rather extreme it’s because it is. It’s because it’s meant to break down self-righteousness. When we come to that realization and surrender to Christ and receive his righteousness we become perfectly pure in heart for God gives us a new heart and a new nature, his nature.

The peacemakers are those who realize that the Gentiles can also be saved because it’s not by the keeping of the law that saves but by having faith in Jesus. The Jews didn’t believe that the Gentiles could be saved and therefore treated them as inferior. But God promised Abraham that all nations would be blessed (made righteous) through his seed - Christ (Galatians 3). Those that are not peacemakers are those that despise the Gentiles and treat them as inferior, thinking themselves to be superior to them since they have and “keep” God’s law. The book of Ephesians shows that God has removed the dividing wall of hostility between the Jews and Gentiles through Christ and made peace between the two!

Jesus was saying that as long as the Jewish people believe that the Gentiles don't deserve salvation it's revealing an attitude of self-righteousness. When you become a peacemaker it shows you believe in the one who made peace, Jesus (Ephesians 2:11-19).

Are you beginning to see now how the Beatitudes are referring to people who are stuck in religion and need to let go of self-righteousness and reach out for Christ's righteousness?

WHAT YOU RECEIVE WHEN YOU HAVE THESE ATTITUDES

Inherit the kingdom of Heaven; shall be comforted; shall inherit the Earth; shall be filled with righteousness; shall obtain mercy; shall see God and shall be called the children of God. These are all clear references to getting saved. You receive these things at salvation and they become yours to walk in from that point.

It's so vital to see that Jesus was speaking to Jews under the law who had been deceived to think that they were righteous enough in themselves. He had to expose that deception in them so that they became poor in spirit, mournful, meek, hungry and thirsty for God's righteousness, etc. How did he do this? He did it by heightening the law and showing how brutal and unforgiving it is, and that there's no chance of being righteous before God by it! (Romans 3:19-22).

Those who try to use the Beatitudes to produce better behavior and morality in Christians are doing the complete opposite of what Jesus was doing and trying to expose by giving the Beatitudes. It's not about

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trying to be more moral and righteous but about realizing your total insufficiency and therefore utter dependency on God's righteousness.

People think Jesus was giving a nice little sermon on the mount about how to be a better person and kinder to others and pleasing to the Lord. He wasn't. He was systematically exposing self-righteousness by revealing that while they may be keeping the law externally they were failing to keep it internally and therefore were unrighteous and not children of God.

The 'Sermon on the Mount' starts in Matthew 5:1 and doesn't finish until the end of chapter seven. Have a read through all three chapters with the understanding I've just revealed and see for yourself how Jesus, with great skill, violently destroys people's self-righteousness.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE REST OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MATTHEW 5:13-16

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

- MATTHEW 5:13

In Abraham they were the salt of the Earth but when they went under the law they lost their saltiness.

Extra Virgin Grace

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

- MATTHEW 5:14-16

In Abraham they were the light of the world as they would show the world the way to be blessed (made righteous), but when they went under the law their light was hidden. Jesus is telling them to let their light of Abraham shine so that people will see their good works or rather ‘faith works’ and glorify God. In other words the people will thank God that righteousness is not up to them but is a gift from God that comes through faith in Christ.

The point here is that he is saying that they were children of Abraham and heirs of the righteousness of God through faith but when they went under the law in Moses they lost everything! They became poor in spirit. They became self-righteous and therefore unrighteous.

MATTHEW 5:17-19

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. ¹⁸For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. ¹⁹Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do

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and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

- MATTHEW 5:17-19

Why would Jesus say this here in this context? Was he wanting people to keep the law? No! He was showing them that as long as they are under the law they had better keep every part of it perfectly. Not just teach it like the Pharisees did without actually doing it, but to both teach it and *do* it. If they can only teach it but can't do it then they're not keeping it. The reality is Jesus isn't intending for them to do it, but for them to realize that they can't do it. "Well, at least they should be trying!" some might say. No, they shouldn't! That's the point. As long as they think their performance is okay, they're under a delusion of false righteousness. They have to see that unless they can keep the law perfectly to the uttermost standard there is no point in even trying! Jesus' ultimate goal is for them to eventually see that he is the fulfillment of the law and therefore anyone who comes into Christ is credited with his righteousness and perfectly fulfilling the law.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.”

- ROMANS 10:4

MATTHEW 5:20

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

- MATTHEW 5:20

That is a very strong statement! It's a clear reference to going to Heaven on the basis of our righteousness. Romans three makes it clear that no human being is righteous in themselves.

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

- ROMANS 3:10-12

The Pharisees had a self-righteousness. Exceeding their righteousness is not about keeping the law more than them, but it's about receiving a righteousness that is perfect. That can only come from God.

JESUS RAISES THE BAR EVEN HIGHER!

Jesus then goes on to give this Jewish audience Ten Commandments. Not new commandments but old commands that the Pharisees had watered down so that people thought they were keeping the law. He shows how extreme the law really is and that it doesn't just expose what we do outwardly but what we do inwardly. Jesus doesn't give these commandments for us to try harder to keep, but to show how impossible it is

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for fallen mankind to keep God's impeccable high standard of righteousness. (The beauty of salvation is that our spirit comes alive to God and receives the very nature of God in it so that the fruit of his righteousness can then actually manifest in our life by the power of his nature and Spirit working in us!)

All these commands are given to expose the self-righteousness of people who think they're keeping God's law but are actually still breaking it and are therefore unrighteous before God and should mourn because of their state, and then hunger for his righteousness.

1. Matthew 5: 21–26: To have hate or anger in your heart toward someone without proper reason is the same as murder by God's standard.
2. Matthew 5: 27–30: To even lust after a woman in the heart is the same as committing adultery with her by God's standard.
3. Matthew 5: 31–32: Divorcing out of selfishness causes adultery.
4. Matthew 5: 33–37: Do not swear by anything. You have no right to swear by anything as everything comes from God. To think you can is an evil delusion of pride, thinking you are more than what you are or have more than what you have. You are bankrupt before God and therefore can only offer an honest "yes" or "no" to people.
5. Matthew 5: 38–47: Always forgive and love everyone. Even those who don't deserve it. If you can't do this you are falling short of God's standard. Then verse 48 commands us to be as

perfect as the Heavenly Father is perfect! If that is not taking the Law to the extreme then I don't know what is! He just put righteousness-by-works out of reach for everyone!

6. Matthew 6: 1–4: Never give money in front of others to look good.
7. Matthew 6: 5–8: Never pray in front of others to look good.
8. Matthew 6: 14–15: Forgiving to be forgiven.
9. Matthew 6: 16–18: Do not fast to look good.
10. Matthew 7: 1–5: Never judge others.

THE REST OF THE CHAPTER EXPLAINED

IN CONTEXT VERSE BY VERSE

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

- MATTHEW 7:11

Jesus just called them evil! That's not a nice encouraging sermon to good Christian followers is it? Jesus would never call someone who has God's perfect righteousness evil. This shows he was speaking to the self-righteous, to those who had evil hearts of unbelief. Hebrews three refers to Israel not entering the Promised Land because of their evil heart of unbelief in God's ability to fulfill his promises. Their unbelief was evil. Jesus called his audience evil because of their unbelief in the gift of righteousness. These are the good things he's referring to that

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they should be asking for. He's saying that if Israel would just lay down their fleshly works of self-effort and ask the Father, he would give them the Spirit of the New Covenant and make them righteous. But you'll never ask unless you believe you have the need. That was the whole point of the Beatitudes, to show Israel their great need.

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

- MATTHEW 7:12

You cannot be a hypocrite and fulfill this statement. It was given to expose their different standards by which they judged themselves and others.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at: ¹⁴Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

- MATTHEW 7:13-14

I suppose this is where the saying, "I'm on the straight and narrow" came from, referring to someone who has reformed their ways and trying to do good. But this isn't what Jesus was trying to say. He wasn't trying to get people to perform better but to give up their performance and surrender to his righteousness. He is the gate and he is the way and he is the life. So to be on the straight and narrow is to be in Christ. It's to have faith in him. To rely on your own efforts to be righteous is to be on the road to destruction. The meaning of the "gate that is wide" and

the “way that is broad” is that it’s easy to be self-righteous. The “straight gate” and the “narrow way” is the way that is hard for Israel because they don’t want to give up their self-righteousness.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

- MATTHEW 7:15

That is clearly referring to the Pharisees and Scribes and legalistic teachers. Outwardly they appear gentle and meek yet inwardly they are deadly. Their teaching appears harmless yet it viciously leads you to destruction. Beware of them Israel!

“Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? ¹⁷Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. ²⁰Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

- MATTHEW 7:16–20

You’ll know these legalistic teachers by their fruit. Does what they say produce life in people or death? The law is the ministry of death but the Spirit of the New Covenant is a ministry of life. The law cannot produce salvation only faith can. The law based life is an evil life that can never produce good fruit. It produces “evil fruit”, that is, actions that are based in unbelief. The faith based life is the life of the spirit that brings forth good fruit, that is, actions that proceed from faith.

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“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

- MATTHEW 7: 21–23

This verse often gets quoted out of context. People use it to try to refer to Christians who have lost their salvation because they sinned and didn't make Jesus Lord of all. That is an “evil” interpretation of this scripture. The context is people who think they are saved because of their self-righteous works. They tried to impress God by their works. Their faith was never in Christ but themselves. They may have gone to church and sang the songs and took part in ministry but Jesus “never knew them.” That means they were never saved. It doesn't say he once knew them but then they were lost as some people make it sound.

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. ²⁶And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: ²⁷And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

People read these words and then mistakenly believe we have to therefore try and do everything that Jesus had just talked about. But this was the ultimate summing up of all that he was saying. Basically that if you could do everything that he had just told them, then they would be able to stand through the storms of God's judgments. But if they failed to perfectly do everything he had just told them, then it would be like building their house on the sand. In other words he was telling Israel, in his final flurry of hypocrisy-exposing punches, that all their self-righteous attempts to impress God was like building their house on the sand because they were not fulfilling his words. He was telling them that the storm of God's judgments is coming and will beat them down and great is their fall going to be!

“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

They were astonished at his doctrine because they had never heard anything like it. It was so contrary to anything they had heard. The scribes had told them that they could achieve the law and therefore they must keep trying. Jesus came and contradicted their teaching by showing them how impossible it was to keep God's perfect law perfectly. The scribes didn't have authority because God didn't back up their deceiving message. But Jesus had authority because God backed up his message.

CONCLUSION

The Beatitudes are not for the church but were for unbelieving Israel. The church doesn't need the Sermon on the Mount. If you were to ask Jesus if he intended that sermon to be a standard that the church measures itself against, he would either start rolling around on the floor screaming with laughter, or bow his head and weep. This is a pre-salvation message that is delivered to self-righteous people who think that they are doing well with righteousness because they can keep some of the law. Once this message has done its job it has served its purpose and we then move on to the way of the spirit.

See, in the New Covenant we have something far superior than the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. We have the substance it was all pointing to. We have the Spirit. We have a new nature. We have his righteousness. We don't have to try and get it. We just have to rest in it. Our righteousness far exceeds that of the Pharisees. It's the very righteousness of God that came to us as a gift when we put our faith in Jesus and were born again.

The words of Jesus are always important but we must be so careful that we know how to apply them. People get into all kinds of trouble trying to fulfill every word of Jesus but not every word was intended for us! We just have to become good at discerning what is for us and what is not for us. This is not based on preference but on rightly dividing between the covenants.



CHAPTER 7

RE-DEFINING WHAT HOLINESS IS

Living a holy life should never be defined as ‘living without sin’. In fact sin has got nothing to do with holiness at all! We have been programmed to think that it does but that programming needs to be undone. The religious world has made holiness mean ‘not sinning’, and they have made that the most important issue for the church today. The religious spirit across the world is trying to put pressure on leaders to preach more on holiness and not sinning and it seems so virtuous, yet it is a demonic deception. Sadly many are blindly falling prey to it.

There are some things concerning this issue in the body of Christ that really need to be broken down. Namely the lie that says, “If you sin then you are unholy and if you don’t sin then you are holy.” That right there is the Ten Commandments! What is the first thing you think of when you hear the words “be holy”? You think “stop sinning” right? If that is the first thing we think of when someone says to “be holy”, then it means our minds have been programmed by the law to define what holiness is.

Holiness has got nothing to do with sinning or not sinning. If that is what we think, then we think that we are the cause of our holiness. There is only one person who is the cause of our holiness and his name is Jesus Christ. And if you are in him, then *you are holy*. You don’t have to try and be holy or get holy, you *are* holy!

“We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

- HEBREWS 10:10 (NIV)

It is amazing that this is in the Bible! You have been made holy once and for all.

God was holy long before sin ever existed. In fact God’s holiness could not be referenced to sin at all. Sin wasn’t around. If we limit the holiness of God to the mere absence of sin then we are limiting his awesome holiness. God’s holiness is far greater than just the absence of sin. What is holiness then? Holiness is who God is. God *is* holy. Here’s the thing: if you are in him then *you are* holy!

SEPARATION FROM GOD IS UNHOLINESS!

We were all born into the sin of first Adam and because of that we were made sinners (Romans 5:19). Now it was the sin of Adam and our state of sin that separated us from God. It wasn't our sin that was unholy, it was our separation from God that was unholy. A state of separation from God is a state of unholiness.

Then Jesus came and offered the once-for-all sacrifice that permanently removes all of our sins and makes us blameless before the Father. He made us righteous and blameless and because of that we were able to come into God. And it is the coming into God that makes us holy! People confuse holiness and blamelessness. We mustn't confuse the two. Blamelessness is the removing of our sins. Holiness is the coming into God.

“He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.”

- EPHESIANS 1:4 (NIV)

God made us blameless by making us righteous, and he made us holy by bringing us into himself.

HOLINESS IS NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU DO!

Holiness is not about what you do, it is about where you are. Where you are will affect what you do. So the question is, “Where are you?” If you want to understand what holiness is then you need to understand

where you are. Well, the Bible tells us exactly where we are in the book of Ephesians.

“God raised us up with Christ (That is being born again) and seated us with Him in heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.”

- EPHESIANS 2:6 (NIV)

That’s where you are! You are seated in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. That is your heavenly position. What else is true about your heavenly position?

- You’ve been blessed in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing that is in Christ Jesus.”

- EPHESIANS 1:3 (NIV)

God cannot bless you with anymore in the heavenly realm for he has already fully blessed you in Christ Jesus.

- You have been given fullness in Christ.

“In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form ¹⁰and you have been given fullness in Christ.”

- COLOSSIANS 2:9,10 (NIV)

Some translations say, *“You have been made complete in Christ.”* That means you can’t receive any more fullness in your heavenly position in Christ. It’s easy to read over that and miss it or just simply not believe it. Do you believe it? You need to believe that. You need to see

where you are. I'm not talking about your flesh or your soul but your spirit that has been made alive with Christ and seated with him in the heavenly realms in fullness. Think of what the fullness of Christ means. That means you don't have to try and achieve any more righteousness or achieve any more perfection because you already have his perfect righteousness. That means 100% righteousness and 100% perfection. You've got Christ's 100% obedience, love, faith and authority, health, riches, victory, passion, etc. That is your heavenly position in Christ.

WHAT EXACTLY IS HOLY LIVING?

Living holy is not about living without sin. Living holy is about living from your eternal heavenly position in Christ Jesus! That's true holy living. The Greek word for "holiness" is the same word for "sanctification" and it means two things: Firstly it means *separation* or *separated* or *separate*; secondly it refers to *the life that flows out of someone who has been so separated*. So to become holy is to be separated from your old life of sin in Adam and to be brought into your heavenly position in Christ. Holy living is the life that flows out of that place.

DOES THAT HAPPEN AUTOMATICALLY?

No, it doesn't. It has the potential to flow out of that place but if you don't see that place and have a revelation about that place, then you will live your life from this natural earthly place. What I call your "current earthly condition." But we're not called to live *from* our current earthly

condition. We're called to live *in* our current earthly condition *from* our eternal heavenly position.

LET'S DRIVE IT HOME!

To live holy is to live from your eternal heavenly position. To live unholy is to live from your current earthly condition. It has got nothing to do with sinning. It has to do with position. It's about where you are living from. Sin is not unholiness, it's the *byproduct of* unholiness. Or rather, it is the byproduct of not living from our eternal heavenly position. If you were to live 100% from your eternal heavenly position you would never sin while in your current condition.

THE RELIGIOUS WORLD MAKES HOLINESS

ALL ABOUT NOT SINNING!

They make holiness about what you have got to do and what you have got to change. Holiness has become a standard that can be measured by the amount of sin you do or don't do. Their focus is behavior modification. Forget about behavior modification. Forget about trying to change and just see your heavenly position. The more you see your heavenly position the more that position will flow through your current condition.

WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE?

The religious world makes holiness the most important issue. I believe holiness is the most important issue but not the way the religious world has defined it as living without sin. “God *wants* you living holy.” they say, “God wants you living *without* sin!” Actually, God’s priority is not to get you to sin less. God’s priority is that you live holy according to the biblical definition of living from your position in him.

We have got to separate the concept of sin from holiness and see Heaven. When you define holiness as living without sin, people automatically think that if they stop sinning then they are holy. That gets their focus on themselves, on their flesh and on their human efforts. It makes them think that not sinning is the cause of their holiness. When we realize that holiness is simply living from that place where you are seated in Jesus and his fullness, it will get your eyes off yourself and onto him, who he is in you and who you are in him. The more you see *that*, the more it will flow through you here on Earth. The more you see your position, the more you will live from that position, and the more you live from that position the more you will actually overcome sin. More importantly, it will cause you to see Heaven come to Earth through your life and more and more you will do the works Jesus did, and greater.

God did not leave us on Earth to see how much sin we could overcome. He left us on Earth to see how much of *Heaven* he could bring to Earth through *us*!

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The religious world says, “Produce fruit!” Grace and truth says, “Get rooted and grounded in the love of Christ and you will see the fullness of Christ that is in your heavenly position manifesting through your earthly condition.”

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love... might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

- EPHESIANS 3:17-19

The more you see by faith your heavenly position, the more your current condition gets rooted in the heavenly realms and the fruit of being rooted up there will show down here. You don't even have to try to make it manifest. You won't be able to stop it from manifesting.

Religion pulls on the leaves and branches of a tree to make it grow. Forget trying to do that. Just make sure the roots are grounded in the right place and feed them and the tree will grow and produce fruit. Get rooted and grounded by revelation in your position in Christ and the fruit of Heaven will show up in you on Earth!

If you don't see that holiness is about living from your position and who you really are, then when you read scriptures about holiness, you will assume that all they are talking about is you not sinning. When in actual fact, they are trying to say that you must live by faith out of your position in Christ and not get caught up in activity aimed at achieving a position in Christ.

Bill Johnson says that our destiny is to go to Heaven but our assignment is to bring Heaven to Earth. My version of that is that we have already achieved our destiny because we are already seated in heavenly

places and now the life we live, we live from Heaven to Earth, bringing Heaven with us.

You could say the more you live from the heavens, the more the heavens will show up in your life. It is not bad to live from the heavens. Don't mock people who are always in the heavens and living from the heavens. You need to live more from the heavens. You need to be more "holy". That is the actual appropriate way to say that. When you hear that you don't think, "Me, my sin, my shortcomings, what I must do." You think, "Him and what he has done and how awesome he is." As a consequence of that, faith erupts in your heart to lay hold of the things that are yours in Jesus Christ.

FINAL THOUGHT

The more you find out about your position in Heaven, the more you find out about your potential on Earth. You have the potential for total victory over sin. You have the potential to walk in divine health. You have the potential to walk with God in the glory realm twenty-four hours a day, the potential for great wealth and to finance nations, to continuously hear the voice of God, to raise the dead, to do the works Jesus did and all that God has planned for you to do.

I don't preach on faith. I preach those things that produce faith. Similarly, when it comes to sanctification, I don't preach sanctification. I preach those things that cause sanctification, namely your position in Christ. We don't need to preach obedience to the church, but rather the things that empower obedience! The church preaches too much about

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who we aren't. In other words they keep telling us we're sinners, filthy, disgusting, incomplete, not deserving of God's blessings, unworthy, guilty, fallen short of God, displeasing to God, powerless, poor, sick and open to the devil. No wonder the church ends up living in these things. The church needs to hear who we really are. Sons of God, 100% the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, perfect, complete, seated in the heavenly places, blessed with every blessing, holy, pleasing to the Father, accepted in the Beloved, more than conquerors, unable to be separated from God's love, etc! That is our true identity. To agree with that is holy thinking!



CHAPTER 8

HEBREWS 12:

A GRACE UNDERSTANDING

OF GOD'S DISCIPLINES

(It would be helpful for you to read Hebrews 11:32 to Hebrews 12:13 before going any further in order to properly understand this chapter.)

Many people read Hebrews 12 in a very negative way that causes fear in their hearts and in the hearts of others. But actually these verses

were written to encourage believers and fill them with confidence. We mustn't read them from the 'fig tree' perspective but from the 'olive tree' perspective. If you read this passage from the 'fig tree' perspective then you will simply read: "God wants to stop you from sinning therefore he will punish you when you sin and you must endure that if you are a son because it means that he loves you. The more he punishes you for your sin the more he's correcting and helping you because he loves you." But if you read it from the 'olive tree' perspective then you will see that it's actually saying, "Don't throw away your faith because you feel like it's not working because you are being persecuted. In fact the persecution is coming because of your faith and reveals that you are a true son! Now endure it as though it's the Lord's discipline that is helping you to stay in the race of faith and keeping you from going back to works and performance-based righteousness, which is the entangling sin of unbelief."

What is fundamentally important to see when reading Hebrews 12:5-11 is that firstly, it's not God doing the chastising and secondly, that the chastising was not coming because of moral sins but because these Hebrews were standing for the gospel. People miss this so easily and then make up all kinds of theology about God punishing us. But that ends up in a perversion and distortion of these scriptures.

BAD TEACHING BASED ON DISTORTION

People use these scriptures to say that if you sin then God has to punish and discipline you. Then they say something even more subtle and

ungodly: They say that God uses hardships to teach you how to sin less. That the hardships come because of sin in your life and therefore they are good because it's God's way of sorting out that sin in you. They make it all about you and your sin and how God has to come and punish you to stop you from sinning. "You need to endure hardships because it's actually God sanctifying you." This kind of teaching just opens up a big wide door for the devil to come through and say, "Hey, you know why you are sick don't you? It is because of that sin you did! That is why you are sick." or "Hey, you know why you are going through a financially hard time, right? You know don't you? It's because of all those sins you committed and now God is having to teach you how to not sin and he is allowing sickness, financial difficulty and hardships because you must be taught to not sin. You need to embrace the sickness, the poverty and hardships because it is the Lord's discipline!"

See how the lies of the enemy creep in? This is absolutely not what these scriptures are speaking about! You cannot use these scriptures to build a doctrine of God's punishment against sinning Christians. You cannot use these scriptures as a principle for churches disciplining people who sin. If you do, then you are perverting and distorting these scriptures and taking them out of context.

SCRIPTURE IN CONTEXT

The context of these scriptures is about enduring persecution that comes because of your faith in the gospel. It's an encouragement to stick with your faith solely in Christ and not to go back to the easy road of a

works-based religion because of pressure from legalists. That will entangle you in unbelief. This is shown by revealing two different categories of people who endured persecution for their faith, and then us as the third category who can also endure because of their example. That is simply the context here.

THE THREE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE:

1. *Other sons* who were persecuted for their faith. (Hebrews 11:32-12:1)
2. *Jesus the Son* who was persecuted for his faith. (Hebrews 12:2,3)
3. *You as a son* being persecuted for your faith. (Hebrews 12:4-12)

The other sons before the Cross were the ones persecuted for their faith in a coming Messiah and a coming righteousness. They were cut in half, they were tortured and persecuted yet they did not allow themselves to compromise in faith. Jesus the Son also endured persecution for his faith as the Messiah who would bring this righteousness. Likewise, you as a son can endure any persecution for your faith that you are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

It's important to see these divisions because it shows us the context of the disciplines referred to here, which are simply God using these persecutions for the gospel's sake to strengthen our faith in him!

KEYWORDS THAT UNLOCK THIS PASSAGE

Five keys that will show you that this chapter was written as an encouragement to stay in the race of faith and that it's not referring to God punishing us for moral failure:

1. THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES (HEBREWS 11:32–12:1)

These were the Old Testament saints who were persecuted for their faith and endured. They are mentioned here to give encouragement to the recipients of the letter to take courage and not bail out so easily when they face persecution. That just because they are facing difficulty because of their faith doesn't mean that their faith is flawed. The cloud of witnesses were not people that God had punished because they were sinful, they were God's people who had persevered in faith despite opposition and hardships. Likewise, we are not punished by God because of sin, (Jesus was punished completely for our sin in our place) instead we face persecution because of our faith.

2. THE PERSECUTORS (HEBREWS 11:36,37)

Who were the ones sawing these people in half and torturing them? It was those with an anti-Christ, legalistic or self-righteous spirit, whether Romans, Philistines or Pharisees. The God-haters that were driven by religious spirits. They were the ones that stirred up trouble because of

people's faith. They wanted to prove their own righteousness by their works and by their flesh. So they persecuted and killed these people. Our battle is not against flesh and blood but principalities and ultimately it starts with the demonic realm. The demonic realm hates this gospel. It is attacking this gospel. Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation." The gospel he was preaching was about a righteousness that was from God apart from works. It's how we get saved and how we relate to God for the rest of our life! It's this gospel that he was persecuted for. Everywhere he went the enemy stirred up trouble against him through the Pharisees and religious legalists. Everywhere Paul went they would follow. They would stir up the crowd against Paul so much so that they even stoned him and left him for dead.

The chastisement, the scourging and the rebuking that Hebrews talks about are the hardships that come because of the gospel. Paul's thorn in his flesh was not sickness. He tells us what it was (2 Corinthians 12:7). It was a messenger from Satan to buffet him and come against him because of the exceedingly great revelation he was having about all that was available to him in the heavens. The demonic realm assigned a fallen angel against Paul to try and stop him from proclaiming this gospel because Satan hates it. Those that stand for this gospel will have the enemy hating you, and he will try and stir up trouble and opposition against you. If you are born again and believe this gospel then you already have the demonic realm against you. But if you stand up and proclaim this gospel then you will not only have the demonic realm against you but you will have people against you that have been incited by the

demonic realm. They were the ones that persecuted the other sons, they were the ones that persecuted Jesus the Son and they are the ones that persecute us as sons.

3. THE SINNERS (HEBREWS 12:3)

The third key to unlocking this scripture is to know who the Bible is referring to when it says “sinners”.

“For consider Him that endured such contradiction (“opposition”, NIV) of *sinners* against Him lest you be wearied and faint in your mind.”

Who is the Bible talking about when it says “sinners”? Is it talking about immoral sinners? No. Jesus came for them. They loved him. The “sinners” referred to here are actually the legalists, the self-righteous, those who oppose and resist the true gospel. The persecutors are the sinners. They are sinners because they try to justify themselves by works and are offended at those who believe that they are justified before God by simply having faith in the Messiah, and persecute them.

We are encouraged to consider Jesus who faced opposition from such sinners, so that when we face the same opposition because of our faith, we will stand fast and endure in faith just as Jesus did.

4. SIN (HEBREWS 12:1&4)

Sin is mentioned twice in this passage. The first time it is mentioned is in verse 1:

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“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us...”

People say that this is talking about “throwing off moral sin” and if you don’t throw it off then God will discipline you. The reality is that it is not talking about moral sin. It is talking about the sin of unbelief that causes people to go back to the law. It’s really saying, “Throw off the sin of unbelief and don’t go back to a law-based righteousness. Don’t compromise your faith by getting tangled up again in the works of the flesh and trying to relate to God through your own righteousness. There is only one way to relate to God and that is through the gift of righteousness!”

We see something similar in Galatians 5:1- 3:

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.² Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.³ For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.”

The law entangles your legs so you cannot run the race of faith. Going back to the law is sin because it’s the opposite of faith in Christ - it’s faith in yourself!

There is an intimidation that comes to you as a Christian. It’s an intimidation from the demonic realm and from religious people. It tries to get you to compromise and back off from the gospel. The reason why these scriptures are written is to encourage you not to back off from the gospel. Jesus himself went through what you are going through yet did

not compromise his faith. He is the author of our faith and we must fix our eyes on him.

The other place it talks about sin is in verse four:

“Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”

The NIV says,

“In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”

People mistakenly use this scripture to say that we are supposed to struggle against moral sin and temptation right up until the point of death. It is not talking about moral sin or even your sin. Believe it or not, it is actually talking about the sin of other people! It's referring to *their* sin against you. It's actually talking about the sin of the legalists and persecutors who persecuted the other sons and also Christ the Son. And they persecute you because you are a son. Their sin is unbelief. They don't believe the gospel. They don't believe in the gift of righteousness. If you do believe in the gift of righteousness then they will attack you for believing this. Their attacking you is out of unbelief and is called *sin*.

“You have not yet resisted their sin to the point of shedding your own blood!”

He is challenging the readers by saying, “You always give in! You always compromise! When you come under attack for believing this gospel, you don't stand through it and press through it but instead you

back off and give in. The circumcision group comes and tells you to be circumcised and keep the law and because of all the pressure you compromise. You haven't yet resisted that sin to the point of shedding blood like Jesus did or like the other sons in the cloud of witnesses did.”

The other sons refused to compromise their faith. Jesus refused to compromise his faith and who he was. He was the Messiah and the One who was going to bring forgiveness and righteousness to the world. The legalists hated him because of that and tried to kill him and yet he endured the Cross. He didn't back off! It is the same for us. We face intimidation, hardships and persecution because of the gospel. God is trying to stir us and say, “Hey, there is a way through. Consider Jesus!”

5. UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE DISCIPLINES ARE AND WHY THEY COME

People often fail to catch the heart of this chapter and turn it into an unpleasant principle of God's disgust for your sin and how he wants to smash it out of you. But actually if you look at the wording throughout you'll see that it's very encouraging. It's a loving father walking through the hardships with us and turning them into inspiration to press on! The heart of the chapter is not a father smashing us but a father lovingly correcting when we get off track and helping us back onto our destiny.

It's so important to see that it's not God bringing the persecution and hardships. It sounds like that's what this scripture is saying when you read it without the context. But when you see the context you see that

it's the religious bringing the persecution and God using it as a means to reveal the authenticity of our sonship and to stay on track in the power of the gospel.

Paul talks about this exact thing in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10:

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. ⁸For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. ⁹And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

The heart here is that God doesn't just make our life easy. The fact is a supernatural life will be met with great opposition from the enemy. God doesn't like seeing us suffer, but the joy that is on the other side of that suffering is that God can manifest his power through our life as we surrender in absolute dependence to him! That is what God desires for our lives. It doesn't come cheap. It doesn't come to those who take the easy road. It doesn't come to those who fall back on their own self-reliance and ability. It comes to those who give up self-dependence and trust in God as their source for everything.

When the Bible speaks about partaking in God's holiness and yielding the peaceable fruits of righteousness in Hebrews 12:10-11 it's not

taking about trying to be holy and righteous, it's talking about living from Heaven and in all that is available to you through faith. Now if you get off track and back into performance, works and self-righteousness, then you forfeit and cannot access or walk in all those glorious riches. That's why God uses the persecution to strengthen our faith.

IT WAS NOT GOD BRINGING THE HARDSHIPS OR THE PERSECUTIONS

People say “Oh, if you sin then God has to punish you.” But this scripture doesn't say that God brought them. God doesn't like seeing you smashed up and beaten! God didn't like seeing his son crucified on the Cross. God doesn't like it when you have to walk through hardships and troubles and persecutions. But it is what happens when you stand for this gospel. Those who stand for this gospel will face persecution and God wants you to stand for this gospel.

Remember what the author of our faith said in Matthew 5:10-12:

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

When you stand for the gospel you will face hardship. The demonic realm will stir up all kinds of trouble against you. The reason why many

of us walk through hard times is because we believe the gospel and the demonic realm hates it! It wants to stir up all kinds of rubbish and junk against you! God doesn't like seeing you go through it. God is not doing it and God is not putting it on you. God is not using it to deal with sin in your life. But as a father he stands alongside you as you walk through it and he teaches you to lean into him and find his bigness through it all!

WHY DO WE FACE HARDSHIPS?

Hebrews 12 is actually showing us that hardships and disciplines don't come because of wrong-doing such as immorality or impurity but, in fact, they come because of right-doing! Paul's hardships didn't come because of his sin. They came because he preached the gospel. They came because of his faith in the gift of righteousness. That's why the enemy targeted him with a thorn in the flesh. That's why he was persecuted and attacked. That's why we are persecuted and attacked: All for the sake of the gospel. But God turns it all around for our good. Even though he doesn't like seeing us getting smashed up, he can still use it. We're his kids. As a father, I don't like seeing my children getting smashed up! But if I do see them walking through hardship then I will get down on my hands and knees and try to teach them through it and try to give them strength to get through it. They can learn from it and come through stronger. I don't want to provide a bubble-wrapped world for them. God doesn't wave a magic wand over us and say, "All the troubles and hardships go!" No! He lets us go through them and he says "My grace is sufficient." Paul said three times, "God please take this

thorn in my flesh away from me.” and God said three times back to him, “My grace is sufficient.”

YOU ARE GOING TO FACE OPPOSITION!

If you are going to stand up and preach this gospel and stand for this gospel then you are going to face persecution. You are going to face opposition against you because you are upsetting the demonic realm. That is what happens when you preach the gospel and when you stand for the gospel.

God doesn't wave a magic wand and make it all easy. He says “My grace is sufficient and you can find strength in me to overcome anything.” As we do, the devil will find out that he is not that strong!

WHAT DOES GOD TEACH YOU THROUGH PERSECUTION?

Firstly, he teaches you that you are a true son. How does he teach you that? He helps you see that the very fact that you are being persecuted reveals that you believe the gospel. It shows that you believe in the gift of righteousness. That is what the devil hates. When you are persecuted for believing in the gift of righteousness, it reveals that you are a true son. It means that you are born again. If you are not being persecuted by the demonic realm or people because of your faith in Jesus then it probably means you do not have faith in Jesus and you are not a true

son. But when you do face trouble and persecution then it shows that you do believe the gospel and are a son. So be encouraged. You are a true son!

We sometimes lose the plot when we walk through hardships and troubles and testing times and too often get all focused on them and not on Jesus. Rather we should be encouraged and say, "Praise God I am a son of God! The devil hates me. Legalists hate me. But God loves me and many people love me because of the freedom that I am bringing and the truth that I am standing for."

Secondly, through hardships and persecution God is teaching us how to endure in faith. He wants us to run this race of faith that is marked out for us. At the end of Paul's life he was able to say, "I have run the race and I have kept the faith."

I tell you the devil is against you and is trying to separate you from your faith. He wants to get you to back off and back down. This race we are in is a fight! It's a good fight. It's a fight worth fighting because it's for the sake of others. Too many lives are at stake. When you walk in faith you bring the Kingdom of God into people's lives! When you get out of faith, you pass people by and they pass you by.

We don't want to glorify the demonic ever. The devil is small and we must always keep that perspective. He is small and he is defeated and yet he still operates through lies, fear and by trying to get the law back into your life. When this happens you get entangled. You come under accusation and lose confidence before God, but if we keep our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, then we will overcome the

enemy every single time. We will reign in life by the grace of God and the gift of His righteousness over condemnation and accusation and have confidence before God.

Jesus said to Paul, “I am not going to rescue you. My grace is sufficient for you in everything you face.”

Also, part of that grace is the gift of the name of Jesus to us. We have the Name that is above every name and can use it by faith to address every demonic spirit that comes against us.

HOW DOES GOD TEACH US TO ENDURE THROUGH OPPOSITION?

He teaches us by showing us the other sons, the cloud of witnesses. He says, “Come on guys, you are not alone! You are surrounded by an awesome bunch of people who endured the things you are facing. They endured the scourging, mocking, crucifixion, beating and the demonic realm that harassed them and came against them. They endured all of it and are examples to spur you on in your faith. You are not alone. You can make it. Walk through this time. You *will* get through it! They made it through! Some of them got to Heaven a bit earlier than they probably wanted to but they didn’t back off or compromise. They became a cloud of witnesses and you can draw encouragement from them.”

People are watching you to see how you walk through opposition and persecutions. Why? Because they are walking through it themselves. They want to draw strength from your life. You are an example of enduring faith to others.

JESUS THE SON

How else does God teach us? By getting us to fix our eyes on Jesus and by considering him who, “for the joy set before him endured the Cross.” Do you see the prize? The joy set before you? What is the joy set before you? Yes, it's Heaven, glory, salvation, but it is also the liberation of nations as they into life and freedom! At the end of the day it really isn't about us, it's about them! It's about others being saved. Keeping our eyes on the prize and running this race of faith will cause us to see the lives of others touched and healed and saved. There is something about fixing your eyes on the multitudes that will come into the liberty and freedom they need because you persevered. Multitudes are going to be liberated!

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Thank you Father for your discipline! Thank you for keeping me in this awesome race. Thank you that I can live from Heaven to Earth with such confidence that you love me and are for me and are backing me. Thank you that you are greater than all those that are against me. Thank you that you treat me as a son and that I have access to all the riches that were made available through the Cross. Thank you for the multitude you will reach through my life because of the faith work Jesus is doing in my life. I rejoice and count it all joy!



CHAPTER 9

ROMANS 5, 6, 7 & 8 UNLOCKED

I believe these four chapters are the bedrock chapters of understanding grace. They form a solid foundation of what the gospel is, and will give you confidence to stand in the grace of God. The more you study them and understand them, the more you will be able to look at other verses that seem to pose a “problem” for grace, that contradict grace, and unlock their true meaning with clarity. Usually you’ll find that the difficult scriptures end up being the best scriptures to support the consistent thread of grace throughout the entire Bible.

Romans five, six, seven and eight come as a package. They are together and therefore it is not good to isolate just one chapter and build a theology around it outside of the context of the four. There is a flow and a sequence to these chapters and a clear framework that you have to be aware of in order to interpret any of the verses within. What I want to do is to arm you with a tool on how to understand this framework and therefore interpret the context correctly.

Firstly, let me give you an overview of the framework and then I'll go through the four chapters and touch on key verses and show you how they establish this framework and context. This chapter won't be a verse by verse exposition of the chapters, but a tool to help you to expisit them. I will do some exposition however.

What is Romans five through eight talking about? I believe it is talking about *two* states of being or *two* positions that we are in. There are *two* groups of people on Earth, those who are in first Adam and those who are in last Adam. Romans five through eight is contrasting the two states of being of those in either first Adam or those in last Adam. You are either in first Adam or last Adam.

Romans chapter five is all about the two Adams. It is contrasting people who are in Adam with those in Christ. There is nothing you can do to put yourself in either one of those. You were born into first Adam and had nothing to do with that. When we come into Christ we are born again, and have nothing to do with that except to believe. No righteous acts of our own brought us into Christ, just like nothing *we* did put us in

first Adam. Romans five is all about people's position. People are either in Adam or in Christ. One or the other.

Romans chapter six contrasts people's positions, either being *in sin* or *in righteousness*. People read Romans six and get confused and think it is talking about "sinning" or "not sinning" or "doing righteous things" or "doing unrighteous things". Actually it's talking about position and that either you are *in sin* or you are *in righteousness*. Because people are in Adam they are automatically in sin. People who are *in Christ* are automatically *in righteousness*! For those in Adam it doesn't matter how many good works they do, they can never be *in righteousness* or *in Christ*. In the same manner, for those who are *in Christ* and *in righteousness*, it doesn't matter how many bad works they do, they can never be *in first Adam* or *in sin* again! They are *in Christ* and *in righteousness*.

Romans chapter seven is contrasting those who are under the *law* with those who are in *grace*. It is actually talking about how we have died to the law so that we might belong to another, which is Christ through grace. And again it is all about *position*. You are either in the position of "being under the law" or you are in a position of "being in grace".

The flow so far is this: If you are *in Adam*, then you are *in sin* and *under the law*. If you are *in Christ*, then you are *in righteousness* and you are *under grace*.

People who are under the Law can try and live in grace but unless they die with Christ and believe by faith in him then they can never come out of law and into grace. Those who are in grace can put them-

selves back under law, but positionally they are in grace whether they like it or not. With their mind and their body they can try and keep laws and fulfill the law which Galatians five says is to “fall from grace”, but their position in grace is secure. To fall from grace is not a *positional* thing, it’s a *conditional* thing. You can’t fall from grace in your position. Your eternal heavenly position is still in grace and still in Christ and in righteousness but in your temporary earthly condition you have simply gone back to trying to impress God and earn his love and blessings by trying to keep his laws, which Romans seven here infers is “spiritual adultery”. It’s spiritual adultery because you left your new husband “Mr. Grace” to go back to your old husband “Mr. Law”. That is to “fall from grace”. You are still saved and still in Christ but you have alienated yourself from all that is available to you in Christ, here on Earth, and are opening yourself to an onslaught from the enemy, whose obsession is to get you back under law.

Romans chapter eight is contrasting those who are “in the flesh” with those who are “in the spirit”. Those in the flesh “walk after the flesh” and those in the spirit “walk after the spirit”. It’s talking about those who are born again and those who are not born again. Positionally if you are in Christ then you are *not* in the flesh! You *are* in the Spirit.

This completes our flow. If you are in Adam then you are in sin, under the law and in the flesh. If you are in Christ then you are in righteousness, under grace and in the Spirit! The key to understanding Romans five, six, seven and eight is to understand what position it is talking about.

The four chapters are primarily focused on establishing the foundation of the position that a person is in, especially focusing on a born again person, and secondly they show the course of life that is empowered by that position. Or rather the course of life that is potentially available to you because of your position, if you're willing to believe it and lay hold of it.

It is absolutely key to know that, at any given point within these four chapters, there are two states in contrast:

In Adam		In Christ
In Sin		In righteousness
Under the law	~ or ~	Under grace
In the Flesh		In the spirit

For example, when the four chapters speak of someone who is in Adam, it refers to someone who is in sin, under the law and in the flesh. They are not in Christ, not in righteousness, not under grace and not in the spirit. When the Scriptures here refer to someone who is in the spirit, it is simultaneously referring to someone who is not in the flesh, who is in Christ not Adam, in righteousness not sin, under grace not law. Pick one and try it for yourself. Try it a few times. It will really help you as we now go through some of the key scriptures from each chapter.

“Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world. For that all have sinned.”

- ROMANS 5:12

Mankind became sinful through Adam.

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

- ROMANS 5:19

Through Christ, we are made righteous. Take special note where it says “*made sinners*” and “*made righteous*”. It’s speaking about a position that people come into not because of anything they have done or do, but because of something someone else did, being either Adam or Christ.

So when you were born into Adam you received the free gift of sin! Hallelujah! Isn’t that awesome? You don’t need to have faith for the consequences of that sin. They just come upon you whether you do anything good or bad! You receive separation from God. You receive future judgment. You receive condemnation, etc. No good works that you can do can cause you to slide out of Adam and into Christ. No good work can take you out of a position of sin in Adam and into a position of righteous in Christ. It’s exactly the same when you come into Christ: You are *made* righteous. You are imputed with the gift of righteousness. It wasn’t your righteous behavior that did it, it was given to you as a gift. You were *made* righteous! Now you don’t have to have faith for the blessings or for the consequences of that righteousness. You are given the free gift of righteousness and you receive all the consequences of that righteousness. That is, being blessed in the heavenly realm with every blessing in Christ and coming into a relationship with God based entirely on grace. No bad works you could ever do can cause you to

backslide out of righteousness and back into sin; out of Christ and back into Adam.

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?”

- ROMANS 6:1

People read Romans 6:1 *“Shall we continue in sin?”* and think that it is talking about “Should I keep *sinning* or try and stop *sinning*?” It’s not talking about the action of sinning. It is talking about someone who is *in sin* or *in righteousness*! “Shall I continue *in sin* that grace may abound?” He is actually asking “Shall I continue under the law so that the law might come and expose sin and *keep* exposing sin, so that the more the law reveals that sin, the more grace will be revealed to overcome that sin?” Paul just says, *“No! God forbid!”* You can’t! It’s impossible! You can’t live in the state of sin if you have come out of Adam and are in Christ. You cannot live in sin if you are in righteousness. You cannot be *in sin* if you are *in righteousness*. Now you can do sinful things but that does not make you *in sin*. You are in the position of righteousness. Someone who is *in sin* can do all the righteous things that they want but it does not put them in the position of righteousness. They have to be united with Christ and be born again.

“For he that is dead is freed from sin.”

- ROMANS 6:7

Many of us read that and think it means we are free from ‘sinning’. Then we think, “But I still sin! Oh no! That means I am not truly dead!

Ah, I need to kill myself! Kill my flesh and kill my sinful nature!” And so we get into all these dead works thinking that we have to do something that the Bible actually says has already taken place. We either died with Christ or not. There’s no continual, drawn out dying with Christ. You’re either dead or not!

“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: ⁹Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. ¹⁰For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. ¹¹Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

- ROMANS 6:11

Understand that you *have* died with Christ. Reckon it. Believe it. Don’t try to make it as though it is true. Believe it because it *is* true. It’s not your believing that makes it true. It *is* true so believe it! You have died with Christ and have come out of the position of the slavery of sin and all its consequences and you’ve come into Christ and into righteousness.

“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

- ROMANS 6:18

The NIV says the “slaves of righteousness.” Some say, “Oh, I don’t want to be a slave.” No, you do! You want to be a slave of righteousness. It is good to be a slave of righteousness because even if you do bad things, you are still the slave of righteousness and righteousness is not

letting you go anywhere. Righteousness is cracking the whip and keeping you from going back to being in sin. For all time and eternity you are in Christ and in righteousness. Righteousness is your new master. You are a “slave” and it’s impossible for you to leave the dominion of righteousness. And who would ever want to anyway? No wonder Romans 8:1 says that there is now no condemnation for those in Christ. Why? Because we’re not in Adam, in sin and under the law but we’re in Christ and in righteousness and under grace.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

- ROMANS 6:14

“Oh, but sometimes it feels like sin has got dominion over me. If I was really under grace then I would stop all sinning, right?” It’s not talking about that! It is saying that the consequences and the judgment of sin no longer have dominion over you. Why? Because you’re not under the dominion of sin anymore, you are under the dominion of righteousness. The position of sin shall not have dominion over you because you are longer in it. You are in the position of grace and righteousness is reigning. When you were under the law, sin had dominion over you because the law condemned sin and brought judgment.

We must be very careful not to put Christians back under performance by saying things like, “If you were truly in grace then sin would have no dominion over you.” The conclusion then is that “I’m not in grace until I stop sinning completely.” You say, “Well I’m not talking about the little sins, only the big ones.” Well then you’re a hypocrite and

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a bit self-righteous, thinking your little sins aren't as bad as the big sins of others. Sin is sin, and if big sins mean you're not truly in grace then little sins do too. My friend, the truth is that if you are in the position of righteousness, even if you did keep sinning, big or little, that sin would not have dominion over you. There would be no condemnation, no judgment, no punishment, no separation from God, no withholding of blessings from God. Why? Because you're under grace! I know the next immediate question people would ask is, "Are you saying it's OK to just keep sinning then?" Well, that should be the next question after you hear about grace. If people never ask that question, then you're over qualifying in your grace presentation and distorting grace. Have a look at Paul's next question.

"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."

- ROMANS 6:15

His previous statement just provoked this question because that is what it sounded like he was just saying. That if you just kept sinning, you'd still be righteous because you're in grace. That God wouldn't hold that sin against you one bit. Do you know what? That is exactly what he is saying! Does it then mean that we should just keep sinning? "*God forbid*" or in other words, "That's not the will of God." God doesn't want you doing that. It's not his nature. And his nature is in you. Your spirit was made righteous and given a new nature, the God nature. His will is that you walk in step with your spirit. In other words, you exercise dominion over the members of your body just as righteousness

has dominion over your spirit! Your spirit is empowered by a new position in righteousness and it would be strange to go back to that old place under the law where you were under the dominion of sin.

“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? ²For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. ³So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”

- ROMANS 7:1-3

Paul here gives an example of the marriage covenant to talk about our position in either the law covenant or the grace covenant. He wants to make a clear distinction that someone can only be in one or the other and not both. Someone who is married is in a position of marriage. They can't just leave the marriage and marry someone else. If they do it's called adultery. You cannot have an adulterous affair with grace while still being married to the law. And you can't just go marry grace while still being married to the law either. In order to come into the covenant of grace you have to be released from the covenant of the law. The point is that you cannot rely on your own self-righteousness and God's gift of righteousness at the same time. Law is based on self-righteousness, but grace is based on God's gift of righteousness. So how are we released from the law covenant to come into the grace covenant?

Extra Virgin Grace

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead.”

- ROMANS 7:4

This verse shows how one comes out of the position of being under the law to the position of being in grace without committing spiritual adultery. They need to die to the law in order to be fully released from it so that they can then be joined to Christ in grace.

We also have to see that we were joined to *“him who is raised from the dead”* which means that we can never die again, because Christ can never die again and we’re in him. That means that we can never go back to being in a position of being under the law. God doesn’t want Christians to be under law at all. Why do people still preach that Christians are still under the law? This is the whole point Paul is making here, that we can’t be in Christ and still be under the law. Unfortunately many are confused about this and try to relate to God through grace *and* through the law. We can try and put ourselves back under the law and commit spiritual adultery, but from God’s perspective once we’ve died with Christ, we’ve died to our position in the law and come into a new position which is in grace. Therefore the law has no more bearing on our life whatsoever. It can’t because we died to it. 100% dead to the law! This is consistent with Colossians 2:15; Galatians 3; 2 Corinthians 3: 6-18; Ephesians 2:14-18; Hebrews 7:11-18; 8:6-13; Matthew 9:16-17 and many other Scriptures.

Romans 5, 6, 7 & 8 Unlocked

“For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”

- ROMANS 7:5

That’s when we were in Adam and under the control of the sinful nature or our position of being *in the flesh*. We weren’t trying to keep the law in Adam but we were still under it. The reason God gave us the law was not so that we should try and keep it in order to get into Christ. He gave us the law to show us that we have an internal sin problem that we cannot fix on our own. He gave the law to expose that problem. Paul says later in this chapter that he would not have known what sin was but by the law. The law stirred up the self-righteous sinful nature in us. The sinful nature then tries to drive us into sin. So the law came to expose how unrighteous we are and how desperate our need of Jesus Christ is. Once we get that revelation then the law has done its job and is no longer required. We can be released from it and come into Christ. That’s when our whole position changes. The Old Testament is about the Law and the Prophets proclaiming and pointing *to* the Christ. They don’t point *past* the Christ. Once we come to Christ then the law has done its purpose, we’re released from it and come into a whole new way of life, which is life in the spirit and the nature of God ruling in us. That nature doesn’t require the law because it’s the fulfillment of the law.

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

- ROMANS 7:6

We have come into a new position in Christ which has changed everything. Our spirit has been reborn and made righteous and given a new nature. We no longer need the external law telling us the high standards of the righteousness of God. Standards we could never live up to anyway since we had a fallen self-righteous nature. The law was like an external restraint trying to control us to produce righteousness. But the law could never produce righteousness in us, it could only ever show us how far short we had fallen from the true righteousness of God. It was impotent to produce the real fruit of righteousness. It's only when we come into Christ that we are given the gift of God's righteousness and transformed in our spirit to God's nature. So now we don't live from the old fallen state trying to measure up to righteousness, rather we live from the new state of his righteousness. We no longer need external restraint and motivation, which never could work anyway, now we have internal restraint and motivation which is *his* nature and *his* righteousness. This is the new and living way of the spirit.

Romans 7:7-13 emphasizes the purpose of the law, that it was never given to produce righteousness but to expose self-righteousness and our fallen state in Adam and under the dominion of sin.

Then Romans 7:14-25 shows the hopeless efforts of someone (not saved I'm convinced) trying to live by the law, like Paul when he was a Pharisee. Many people read these verses incorrectly thinking that it applies to a Christian who is just struggling with the flesh or sinful nature, or even a Christian going back to trying to live by the law. I can understand how that could be but, when you understand the structure of Ro-

mans five to eight, it should be easy to figure out that he's talking about someone who is in Adam, in sin, under the law and in the flesh, and not someone who is in Christ, in righteousness, in grace and in the spirit.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

- ROMANS 8:1

Why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus? It's because they walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Meaning they are in the spirit covenant position of grace and not the flesh covenant position of the law. In the flesh, you were under the law and condemned but in the spirit you are under grace and the law has no dominion over you to condemn you or bring judgment on you. “No condemnation” is a positional legal declaration over you and not a fluctuating conditional status based on your performance. There is so much confusion and condemnation because people don't see that. Condemnation in the life of a Christian, no matter how small, is a sign that they don't really understand Romans eight. It was written to show us that there is *no* condemnation, and there can never be condemnation, for those who are *in* Christ Jesus. “No” means “no”! It leaves no room for even a little bit. Some preachers think it's healthy for Christians to carry a little bit of condemnation because they think that will help them not to sin again. According to Romans eight those preachers are in heresy. They get away with putting condemnation on Christians, through bad interpretation of Romans eight, by saying, “When you're not sinning then you are walking in the spirit, but when you are sinning you are walking by the flesh.” So

the deduction is that if you sin there is condemnation but if you don't sin then there's no condemnation. Sounds exactly like the old covenant right? Romans chapter eight isn't talking about that, it is talking about your position. You are either *in* the flesh or you are *in* the spirit. You don't go back and forth between them, just like you don't go back and forth between Adam and Christ.

Now we can choose to not live from this revelation and go back under the law and condemnation, or we can live from the spirit and walk in grace constantly.

The most important key to Romans eight that will help you put the whole chapter in context, is to see that *walking after* or being *in the flesh* refers to all those in Adam who are not born again, and *walking after* or being *in the spirit* is referring to all those in Christ who are born again. The key verse that shows us this is:

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

- ROMANS 8:9

If you are born again then the Spirit of God dwells in you and you are not in the flesh! These people that teach on Romans eight about being in the flesh one moment and in the spirit the next are not interpreting properly and are sending Christians in the wrong direction. We must read it in context, otherwise there is condemnation and confusion. We need to realize that we are always *in the spirit* and never *in the flesh* positionally. A lot of Romans eight is about living out of our position now

on Earth through our body. We need to understand that we could do fleshy things and do carnal things as Christians but that doesn't take us back to "being in the flesh". Just like you cannot be in the flesh and do spiritual things that could take you into "being in the Spirit". This is important to understand when reading verses 11 to 14.

Finally when Paul gets through establishing all this about our position in Christ, righteousness, grace and the spirit, he then launches into some amazing truths about the outflow of our position in Christ! He goes on to talk about the Spirit giving life to our mortal bodies; and that we are joint heirs with Christ; the promise of glory that is ours; the Holy Spirit who helps us to pray and connect with God; God working all things together for our good; God being for us and therefore no one can be against us; God freely giving us *all* things; no charge ever being laid against us and therefore we are *more* than conquerors no matter what we face in this world. Then, in the final climax of these four chapters, Paul concludes that there is *nothing* that can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. A wonderful picture of eternal security and an amazing hope to inspire endurance through any difficulty.

You can see how rich these chapters really are! You could write a book about each one. I encourage you to take what you've just learnt in this chapter and read through Romans five to eight and see what revelation God opens up to you. If something is unclear, meditate on it and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal it to you.



Chapter 10

HEBREWS 5 & 6

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF

LOSING YOUR SALVATION!

Hebrews 6:4 is probably the most perplexing and misunderstood verse in the Bible, although I believe it's one of the most important. If you can understand this one in its proper context, as well as the truth that sur-

rounds it, it will no doubt accelerate you towards being deeply established in grace.

I would like to state right at the beginning that I believe that this scripture was written to Jewish believers that still had a legalistic mindset and were therefore struggling to grasp the concept of salvation by grace through faith alone in Christ. They were people who were stuck, by their mindsets, in an Old Covenant system of continually offering sacrifices to deal with sin and guilt. They were struggling to come into a New Covenant revelation of continually trusting in the grace of God and the gift of his righteousness, made available to them because of the finished work of Jesus. They still thought righteousness was a result of law keeping rather than the result of a gift from God. They couldn't grasp the concept of being born again and being made perfect in their spirit once and for all. They kept thinking that their sin caused them to "*fall away*" from God. They therefore measured their "salvation status" by the level of guilt they felt and how well they were or weren't performing for God. They were people who couldn't properly recognize the new system that God had brought in, which was a perfect and permanent salvation based on one perfect sacrifice that dealt with all sin for all time and eternity and that makes them (and us) perfect once and forevermore! (Hebrews 10:14). I believe Hebrews 6:4 is trying to show that if Christ dying once for us wasn't enough and that you could therefore lose your salvation, then in order to get it back you would have to crucify Christ again. But if we could understand and, more importantly, *accept* the revelation about Melchizedek then we would know how impossible it is

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for Christ to die again and therefore how impossible it is for us, who are in Christ, to fall away! Because to fall away means to spiritually die again. If Christ can't die again and we are in Christ, it means that we can't die again. If we can't die again then it means that we can never fall away! I believe this scripture is written to show them, and us, how perfect our salvation is and how impossible it is to lose it, based on the fact that Christ can never die again! And it's written to help us come into an amazing confidence that God is for us, always relates to us through grace, and therefore we can walk intimately with him with boldness and confidence in this life.

“For it is impossible for those who have once been enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost and have tasted the good Word of God and have tasted of the world to come - if they shall fall away, to renew them again seeing as they crucify again to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to open shame.”

- HEBREWS 6:4

If you read this scripture at face value and out of context, what does it sound like it is saying? It sounds like it is saying that you can lose your salvation, right? It sounds like if you fall away then you are toast and you've got no chance to ever come back to God. Many people have preached these scriptures that way and have butchered them and the Body of Christ as a result. Many say things like, “You better make sure you serve God all your life and never grow cold or turn your back on him because then you'll fall away and lose your salvation.” or “You bet-

ter make sure you don't keep sinning too much or you may reach a point where you will have to choose between Christ and sin and may end up rejecting your faith and fall away and then you're finished!" or even bizarre things like, "This scripture only applies to mature Christians who reject their faith and fall away, but it doesn't apply to immature Christians who reject their faith." It's bizarre because they're saying two conflicting things at the same time; that rejecting your faith causes you to lose your salvation and rejecting your faith doesn't cause you to lose your salvation. Well, which is it? There are unfortunately at least twenty different "theological" views on this scripture which I'm not going to look at. I believe that there is a context here that you have to see and understand otherwise you are guaranteed to get these verses wrong! I want to explain what I believe is a good interpretation of the context and see how our difficult verse fits into it.

Verse four actually starts with the word "for", showing that there is a connection between all the previous verses and this text. The writer has just said a whole lot of important things and now, for a good reason says, "For it is impossible..." So there is a context here that we cannot ignore. If we do ignore it we are guaranteed to get the interpretation of this scripture wrong. I want to take you back to where I feel the context begins to get established and then work our way forward until we get to verse four. Hopefully by the time we get back to verse four you will know exactly what this difficult scripture is saying without me even having to explain it. I will however explain it, just in case. We could start in Hebrews chapter one but we don't have to go back that far. He-

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brews 4:14 is a good place to start. We'll start here with our exposition and work our way to Hebrews 6:4 touching on the key scriptures.

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that has passed through the heavens - Jesus the Son of God - let us hold fast our profession.”

- HEBREWS 4:14

I believe this verse contains the very essence of the book of Hebrews: The more we see Jesus as our eternal perfect ever-living and unchanging mediator between us and God, and therefore that God relates to us and we relate to him always and only ever on the basis of Christ's perfect righteousness and never on the basis of our righteousness, the more we will be filled with great hope and confidence to live this life boldly for him, increasingly manifesting on Earth all of who we are and have in him!

“For every high priest taken from among men is ordained of men of things pertaining to God that he may offer gifts and sacrifices to God for sins.”

- HEBREWS 5:1

This is showing the old inferior order of temporarily dealing with sins by animal sacrifices that were offered by inferior priests. Inferior because neither the sacrifice nor the priest could make a person perfect before God.

Extra Virgin Grace

*“So Christ glorified not Himself to be made a high priest but He said unto Him; ‘Thou art My Son - today I have begotten Thee’ –
‘Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.’”*

- HEBREWS 5:5,6

This is showing that Christ was chosen by God to be a superior priest in the order of Melchizedek. This priest is superior because his sacrifice, being his very self was perfect and makes us perfect.

So here we start seeing the context being revealed. The writer of Hebrews is beginning to introduce Jesus Christ as the superior high priest and mediator of a better covenant. And he is contrasting Jesus with the old Levitical priesthood, the old order of sacrifices and the inferior priesthood with the new order based on a superior sacrifice with a superior priest, Christ himself. We have to see this. The book of Hebrews does this a lot. It contrasts the inferior with the superior.

The Old Testament Levitical priests are inferior, why? Because they offer an inferior sacrifice and they keep dying! Their sacrifice could never remove your sins, it could only temporarily cover them. And the priests kept dying. That means God could never wrap up time and take people to Heaven because the sacrifices these priests offered could never remove their sins and therefore no one could go to Heaven because of sin. These priests could not go to Heaven either and keep offering sacrifices because they were imperfect as well, and in sin. So if things continued under that old order of priesthood then no one could go to Heaven! That is why Jesus is superior because he offered a superior sacrifice that dealt with *every* sin for *all* eternity. He is a High Priest in the

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order of Melchizedek. Do you know what that means? (Read more about him in Hebrews seven). The big deal about Melchizedek is that he is a high priest *forever*. The actual big deal about him is that he is God and has an indestructible life. Jesus is a high priest in the order of Melchizedek because he has an *indestructible* life and that means he can *never* die again. (Take special note of that point because it is the key that unlocks our difficult scripture.) Jesus offered a better sacrifice and he is an eternal High Priest that mediates for us.

“And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:”

- 1 JOHN 2:1B

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

- HEBREWS 13:8

Often we use this scripture to apply for healing, which you could if you wanted. But he is not going to be healing forever in eternity. There will be no need for healing in eternity. The book of Hebrews reveals Jesus as the superior mediator for our sins and speaks on our behalf and he is the same yesterday, today and forever!

Yesterday he was our mediator and dealt with all our past sins. Today he is our mediator and deals with all our present sins, and forevermore he will be our mediator and will deal with all our possible future sins! And that will never change because he will never change. Can you see the context starting to evolve?

Extra Virgin Grace

“Though He was a son yet learnt He obedience by the things which He suffered.”

- HEBREWS 5:8

What does that sound like? It sounds like Jesus had to learn obedience through the things that he suffered. This doesn't quite sound right and legalists use scriptures like this to butcher God's people. Let me ask you the question: Was Jesus ever disobedient? Did Jesus ever need to learn obedience? Absolutely not! If you study the original Greek the inference is that he *remained* obedient through the sufferings because he knew some higher truths. He knew that he was a son, and that God was for him! You'll see how this fits into the whole context. The book of Hebrews is written to a people that are facing persecution. And it's to give them encouragement and strength to stand firm in their faith and to not shrink back or throw away their confidence, which usually happens when we feel condemned and that God is against us because of our sins and shortcomings. There is something about walking in a deep revelation of sonship based on grace: Knowing that God is good and always for you, that he sees you perfect all the time and will always relate to you through the gift of righteousness and that you are eternally secure in him. It fills you with a confidence and boldness to walk with him and press through any persecution and hardships you face, to continually manifest the life he's ordained for you to live because of his grace working in you.

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“And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.”

- HEBREWS 5:9

Another scripture that has been messed up by people! When you have a legalistic mindset you read the scriptures wrong. But when you have a New Covenant mindset then you will unlock the scriptures! Let me explain this verse.

“And being made perfect...”

Jesus was raised back to life and made perfect by his very own blood (Hebrews 13:20). The Bible says he is the first fruit and first born among many brothers. That means just like he was raised and made perfect, so too are those who come into him “raised and made perfect.” Perfectly righteous, perfectly born again, perfectly set apart unto him, perfectly right with God, perfectly permanently and eternally saved! (Hebrews 10:14)

“He became the author of eternal salvation...”

Firstly, it’s eternal salvation because there’s no other kind, and secondly it’s him who makes us perfect! He’s the author. We don’t make ourselves perfect by what we do and don’t do, and likewise we can’t make ourselves imperfect by what we do or don’t do! Now if he has made you perfect then you are perfect. Therefore you should never say, “Oh, I wonder if I’m saved? Am I saved, or aren’t I?” Instead know that once we are in Him we receive *eternal* salvation!

“To all them that obey Him”

“Ah, you see Ryan, you have to obey him to make sure you receive eternal salvation!” It’s talking about obedience to the truth. You can obey Moses and be obedient to the law or you can be obedient to Christ which is being obedient to faith. Faith is obedience! Paul, in Romans 1:5, talks about his apostolic calling to call Gentiles to the “*obedience of faith.*” Faith is obedience! Works is disobedience. Unbelief is disobedience!

So it’s actually really clear what this scripture is saying, that Jesus is the author of salvation to everyone who has *faith* in him. And it’s only Jesus. Only he is the author of eternal salvation. No one else! Because no one has been made perfect. If you are in anyone else then you are imperfect just like they are. If you’re relying on your ability to keep the law in order to save you then you are actually being disobedient to Christ and disobedient to faith. Don’t rely on the Old Covenant sacrifices or priests, they’re imperfect! Rely on Jesus alone. He is perfect and can make you perfect! Why? Because he is...

“Called of God and high priest after the order of Melchizedek.”

- HEBREWS 5:10

The writer is stirring with a revelation about Christ as our high priest in the order of Melchizedek, but you’ll see soon that he’s going to have to put it on hold for a while, because the people who he’s writing to aren’t yet ready to receive this revelation. The next verse shows us why. This is a key verse which many people miss. We have to see this verse.

“Of whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered seeing ye are dull of hearing.”

So here the writer of Hebrews is trying to bring out this incredible revelation of Melchizedek, of Jesus as a high priest forever and his perfect sacrifice. He has many things to say to them about Melchizedek, but he said that it is hard to explain these things to them because they are dull of hearing. Now it's very important to understand what "dull of hearing" means. I believe "dull of hearing" is a legalistic mindset. It's a law-based or performance-based mindset. A mind that is dulled by the law. It's what 2 Corinthians 3 speaks of, that when the law of Moses is read a veil covers their minds so that they cannot grasp the glory of the gospel of Christ which is salvation by grace through faith. It's a legalistic mindset that makes them think that when they sin, Christ is not enough but they must offer another sacrifice in order to be restored back to righteousness. That is a mind that is dull! It is dull because it doesn't understand or *see* Christ's "once for all perfect sacrifice." So here the writer would like to get into some amazing revelation of Melchizedek but he knows they would not be able to grasp it because their minds are dull.

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers ye have need that one teach you again that which be the first principles of the oracles of God and have become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat."

What are “the first principles of the oracles of God”? They are the first things you hear when you hear the gospel about Jesus. It’s the very basics of the gospel of grace that reveal God’s salvation to mankind through faith in Christ. Which is turning away from “dead works” (useless self-righteous efforts to try and save yourself), and putting your faith in Christ alone in order to receive his gift of righteousness. He is telling them that because their minds are dull and law/performance oriented, they are struggling to move on from the very basics of the gospel of grace to being firmly established in the depths of grace. It sounds like this has unfortunately gone on for years. By this time they should have been able to teach others about the gift of righteousness but instead still need someone to explain it to them again. How can they teach others about the depths of grace and eternal salvation if they don’t even know whether they’re saved or not? It reminds me, somewhat, of people who one week come to church and get saved, then go through the week and commit some sins, feel guilty and condemned and conclude that they must have fallen out of salvation, then come back to church the next week not *feeling* saved but actually feeling like they need to get saved again. Most of us probably can relate to this kind of thinking at least in the initial stages of our Christian walk. The truth is that many Christians still haven’t gotten past this kind of thinking, and continually struggle with not *feeling* saved. It can go on for years. That’s what this scripture is describing. Until these guys can let go of law based thinking and grasp the very elementary principles of grace they will always be shaky and insecure about their relationship with God and their salvation.

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It's because they sin and feel guilty and unsaved, and then try to apply an Old Covenant way of thinking to deal with the situation - offer another sacrifice to be made right with God. That's exactly the mindset of the Old Covenant law system. The law condemns you when you sin and tells you that you're separated from God until you offer a sacrifice. People with a dull legalistic mindset who haven't grasped grace will try and do that with Jesus. They sin, feel guilty and conclude that their sin cut them off from God and caused them to *fall away* from God. To get rid of it and feel close to God again, they need to get saved again. Now if this was the case and they needed to get saved again, it actually means that Jesus needs to be crucified again because the first time wasn't good enough to keep them saved. The tragic thing is that many Christians believe that you can come in and out of Christ. This is a very shaky understanding of grace and shows that they haven't actually understood it. This verse reveals to us that there is a problem with the way these Jewish people were understanding grace. The writer wants to help them come into a deeper understanding of grace.

“For everyone that uses milk is unskilled in the teachings of righteousness.”

- HEBREWS 5:13 (NIV)

Now you could also say it this way, “For everyone who is still self-righteous does not have a revelation about the gift of righteousness.” What is the teaching of righteousness? It's the teaching about self-righteousness versus the gift of righteousness. It's the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. There are only two

kinds of righteousness: Your righteousness which is self-righteousness, and God's righteousness which is perfect righteousness and the gift of righteousness. When you are behaving righteously it is not your righteousness, it is the gift of righteousness bearing fruit through you because you have been transformed by it. We must never put our trust in our ability to be righteous in order to impress God or to cause God to deal with our sin and guilt. What righteousness are we supposed to put our trust in? An answer anything other than his gift of righteousness reveals a dullness of mind. The writer of Hebrews here is trying to help these Jewish so called "believers" get established in the teaching of righteousness so that they will move away from self-righteousness and rest in God's righteousness having a secure hope in their salvation and be able to move onto maturity. (Which, by the way, is simply getting more and more established in the teaching of the gift of righteousness.) Many Christians mistakenly think that grace is like milk and sanctification is like meat. Many say that we're saved by grace and then sanctified by the law. So their thinking is that you have to move on from the milk of grace to the meat of sanctification by law in order to become mature. In this context it's like saying we need to move on from having a clear mind to having a dull mind again. That's not going forwards, it's going backwards!

Any time you go back under the law and become performance-orientated to please God, get him to love you, bless you, not curse you, etc. you are going backwards towards milk. Anytime you stand on the gift of righteousness and in faith in the grace of God for his blessings,

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his love, his pleasure, his protection, you are going forwards to meat. Basically milk is immaturity and meat is maturity. Those who are immature rely on self-righteousness. Those who are mature rely on his righteousness. The more mature you become the more you can recognize this and be able to discern between the two.

“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

- HEBREWS 5:14

Many people get this scripture wrong. They say that the more you learn about how to be righteousness the more you will do good and the less evil you will do. That is not what this scripture is about at all. It is saying that the more you get established in a revelation of the gift of righteousness the more you will be able to *discern* between good and evil. Eating the meat of the Word is the teaching of righteousness. It is not eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (self-righteousness). He is talking about eating from the Tree of Life (God's righteousness). The more you do that the more you can discern between what is good and what is evil. What is good? Good is God, his righteousness and faith in him is good. Good is God speaking to you and telling you that you are righteous in him. Good is the good news about the way God now relates to us in the New Covenant through his gift of righteousness! What is evil? Evil is trust in anything but God. It's legalism, unbelief, condemnation, sin-consciousness and trying to relate to God through your own righteousness. Babies who require milk can't

discern between self-righteousness and the gift of righteousness. They can't discern between the covenants. When they read the Bible, they can't discern between what is written to the legalists to expose their self-righteousness, and what is written to those of faith to encourage them to stand firm. So they end up trying to do everything written in Scripture, even things written exclusively to legalists! This is the cause of the writer of Hebrews' frustration. He wants to establish them in the deeper truths of Melchizedek but he can't because they're still babes who can't discern between law and grace and what it means to be in Christ.

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, ²Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. ³And this will we do, if God permit.”

- HEBREWS 6:1-3

Those are all the things you hear when you first hear the gospel in order to get saved. He is basically saying, “Can you guys just grasp these things already so that we can actually move on to being established in the full revelation of the gift of righteousness! Then you'll be able to rightly divide between teachings from the Old and New Covenants and how they apply to you now, and discern between what is true wisdom and the voice of God and what is false wisdom and the voice of the enemy.”

A lot of people erroneously use this scripture to say, "Come on you need to move on from grace. You've heard about grace and now you

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need to find out what you need to be doing.” That is not what the Bible is saying here. It is speaking to a people that are struggling with the first principles of the gospel. They don’t even know whether they are saved or not. They are trying to offer Jesus again and again! And he is saying to them that they need to move on to an understanding that you can’t need to offer Jesus again and again but *once* was enough to bring you into eternal perfection once and forever more!

Which brings us to our original verse:

“For it is impossible for those who have once been enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost and have tasted the good Word of God and have tasted of the world to come - if they shall fall away, to renew them again seeing as they crucify again to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to open shame.”

- HEBREWS 6:4

This verse is not trying to scare you with the possibility that you can lose your salvation, it is trying to fill us with an absolute certainty that it is completely and utterly impossible to ever lose your salvation!

People take it out of context and read it at face value. Then it does sound like he’s saying you can lose your salvation and never get it back. But when you read it in context you see that he’s trying to reassure them and us, with dramatic language, that you don’t need to keep struggling with your guilt and sin, thinking that it causes you to fall in and out of Christ. No, you can settle the matter and be secure, that it’s actually impossible to fall away from Christ. In fact there is no mechanism or

means by which you can fall away from Christ once you're in him. If somehow you ever could, well then it would be impossible to come back into him because that means he would need to be crucified again.

See, the deeper revelation of Melchizedek is that he has an indestructible life and can therefore never die again. Christ is a high priest in the order of Melchizedek. That means Christ has an indestructible life. That means it's impossible for him to ever die again. Now here are the deeper revelations. The reason why you can never lose your salvation is because you were *united* with Christ when you got saved and came into him. You were united with Christ in his *death*, *burial* and *resurrection* according to the books of Romans and Colossians. In Ephesians two it also says that you were united with him in his *ascension* and even when he sat down *on the throne*. You are seated in heavenly places in him! Now you have to see this.

In order for you to lose your salvation, God would have to kick you off the throne, descend you down to Earth, kill you, put you in the grave, put your corpse back on the Cross and resurrect you back into spiritual death! But that's not all. Because you are united with Christ, he would have to kick Christ off the throne, descend Christ, kill Christ again, put him in the grave and then put him back on the Cross. That will *never* happen because Jesus is a high priest in the order of Melchizedek and has an indestructible life and it is impossible for him to ever die again! If Jesus can't die again then *you* can't die again. If you can't die again then you can never fall away. "Falling away" means falling away from spiritual life back to spiritual death. But how can Christ fall

away from life to death? He can't. And if you're in him you can't either. His life is your life! It is impossible for you to fall away because the life of Jesus won't allow it. That means you can never lose your salvation!

I don't know about you, but I am so satisfied with this view of Hebrews 6:4. It makes the most sense in context out of all the views I've heard. Hopefully it has shed some light for you on this very misunderstood scripture or at least provoked another train of thought that will lead you to a greater revelation.

CONCLUDING OVERVIEW

The book of Hebrews reveals Jesus as the superior mediator of a better covenant. He's better because he offered a better sacrifice and he's an eternal priest that mediates eternally for us, being a high priest in the order of Melchizedek. The writer said to his Jewish recipients that he had many more things to say about Melchizedek. He wanted them to mature into deeper teachings of grace that would fill them with such security and hope, establishing them firmly in the gift of righteousness and cause the fruit of that gift to flow through their lives. He was somewhat frustrated that he couldn't tell them these things because he knew they would not be able to grasp them. The reason they couldn't grasp them is because they were struggling to even grasp the very primary foundational teachings of salvation by grace. He goes about to try and help them. He explains the reasons they can't grasp grace is because their minds are dulled by the law. Their legalistic mindset was stopping

them from grasping grace and keeping them immature like helpless babies on the basic primary food of milk.

The reason why they're babes on milk is because they refuse to let go of legalistic thinking. If they did that, they would soon become full age (able to eat meat). He explains that maturity is not about coming back under the law and trying to do things for God and to try and be a better person, but it's about being established in the teaching of righteousness. In fact even if they wanted to move on to maturity they could not as long as they were still thinking by the law! They had to think by grace. He helps them by clearing up a fundamental issue they were struggling with. They thought, as all legalists think, that when you sin it cuts you off from God and causes you to *fall away* from him and that the only way to get back was through some sort of sacrifice to pay for that sin. They were trying to apply that teaching to the gospel of grace, which would equate to Christ having to die for us every time we sinned in order to restore us back to God. He shows them, in our difficult scripture, that they don't fall away every time they sin and that if they did, then they would have to keep crucifying Christ in order to be restored back to God.

If they could just receive a basic revelation about the gift of righteousness then they would not keep struggling to grasp grace but become filled with a sure hope, and be able to move on to the deeper truths about Melchizedek and how such a secure hope empowers us to live with great confidence, endurance, boldness, intimacy with God, the

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blessings, Heaven flowing through us, power, authority and every good work that God has prepared for us to do in Christ!



Chapter 11

THE THEOLOGY AND EXPERIENCE OF REST

Rest is two things: It's a theology and more importantly an experience. I don't just want to know the theology of God's rest, I want to experience the living reality of it. The theology is there to bring us into the experience. It's not just about knowing that you are righteous in Christ. It's about continuously experiencing the peace that this revelation brings. Rest is about knowing where you are seated and why you are seated there. You are seated with Christ on his throne because you have become his perfect and complete righteousness. You are not standing and

working but are seated and resting. The Holy Spirit doesn't just want you to know where you are, he wants you to experience where you are. There is such rest in his presence. Often we're too busy to wait on him and experience his presence but when you do, it brings you into the experience of rest. People say, "Well I never experience his rest." That's because they don't know the theology of rest. You will find it hard to experience his manifest rest in your life until you believe in the theology of his rest. This chapter is about helping you experience his empowering rest by giving you a theology of the perfect complete rest we have in Christ. He is our rest.

A WORKING COVENANT VS. A RESTING COVENANT

After God had finished his six days of work in creating the world and universe he rested on the seventh. That means he stopped all his work, as it was finished, and rested. Adam and Eve got to live in that rest for a while right up until the point when they fell. That brought the curse where Adam would, "Work by the sweat of his brow." Later on, Israel entered into a works-based covenant with God that required them to fulfill laws in order to be righteous and blessed and avoid curse. This was the Old Covenant and it was a "six day" covenant. It was a working covenant. Israel had to perform continuous religious acts of righteousness every week for six days and only got to rest on one day of the week, the Sabbath. That one day was a shadow of grace. It was a taunting foretaste of what was to come: The New Covenant where people would enter

permanently into the rest of being righteous before God and no longer have to work for it.

“For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.¹¹ Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

- HEBREWS 4:10,11

According to this scripture, if we are to enter into the rest of God’s righteousness then we must cease from our own working-to-be-righteous. The only work we are required to do is to enter his rest. The only way we enter that rest is through faith. The way we fail to enter that rest is through unbelief which is to continue in our own working-to-be-righteous.

In my opinion the six days of creation is actually symbolic of the law. God’s law is perfect and beautiful. It represents his impeccable nature of righteousness. It is so high and extreme that only he can fulfill it. Just like only he has the power to create. God could have created everything in a split second but rather he makes a point that later he would use to describe Israel’s attempts at being righteous. Because Israel rejected a righteousness by faith that was their inheritance through their father Abraham, God then allowed them to enter into a covenant that affords them the opportunity to see if they can do what only God can do – be righteous. They fail miserably again and again. What a surprise! How arrogant to enter into a covenant that is based on them being as righteous as God and to think they could pull it off. God allowed this to show the world the futility of relating to him through self-righteousness.

When it comes to righteousness only God is righteous, no one else! (Romans three) God never intended for us to be righteous of ourselves but, by faith, to enter into the rest of being made his righteousness. That's why when Jesus walked the Earth he fulfilled the six day covenant on man's behalf. He fulfilled the law for us. He did the work. And once fulfilled he said, "It is finished." and then laid his head to rest.

He sweated drops of blood from his brow to break the curse. His body was lashed open for our healing and bled for our forgiveness. The punishment that was on him was for our peace. He became our sin so we could become his righteousness. He took our poverty so we could receive God's riches. His death was our victory. He is our perfect and complete salvation. We cannot add anything to it but simply believe it and rest in it.

The New Covenant is a seventh day covenant. It's a Sabbath covenant. It's a rest covenant. Israel wasn't allowed to perform any religious acts on the Sabbath. This was to show that once we enter into the Sabbath covenant we are no longer required to perform religious acts in order to be righteous. Instead we stop our work and rest in his.

If we are ever ruled by a feeling of not being good enough or worthy enough, or simply weighed down by guilt and condemnation it's a sign we're not living in his rest. We are trying to work off the guilt, we're trying to make ourselves feel worthy and we often do this by some kind of religious activity. It's not about asking for forgiveness over and over or making all kinds of promises to God. It's about believing that you are

forgiven and made perfect before him already and about believing the promises *he* has made to you.

The whole point of grace is that God does the work on our behalf and then credits us with having done it all perfectly so that we can just enter into a relationship of rest. What is rest? It is, “Work finished – now sit down and enjoy me!”

SIT DOWN!

After Jesus had fulfilled the law and became the perfect sacrifice for sin he sat down on the throne. Job complete. By entering his finished work we are all made perfect and holy in him and therefore sit down together with him on his throne. The law is a standing and working covenant but grace is a sitting and resting covenant.

“And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: ¹² But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; ¹³ From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. ¹⁴ For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

- HEBREWS 10:11-14

Now there is no more sacrifice for sins required because his ultimate sacrifice dealt with every sin from the start of time to the end of time. That means our work has finished. Grace says, “Stop working and just believe.” Jesus said, “This is the work that the Father requires - to believe on the one he sent.” Not to keep the Ten Commandments. Not to

try and be holy. Not to focus on sinning less or trying to win the world for Jesus in order to please God. The only work that we are required to do is to, “believe on the one he sent”. The only thing that pleases God is faith (Hebrews 11: 6). Anything beyond that to get rid of sin and guilt, or make yourself more righteous, or earn God’s blessings and love, or avoid his punishment and curse, is simply unbelief in the finished work of Christ!

Any good work we do now flows out of what he’s made us into (a new creation) and not to earn or avoid blessings and curse.

STOP CARRYING FALSE BURDENS!

God wants to lift off the false burdens that we carry. You may have a passion to live for Jesus and to serve him, but be aware that the enemy can get behind that and say, “You are not doing enough. You need to do more.” He tries to drive us and get us carrying false burdens. Things like thinking that God requires us to be more holy, to change and to do more. Many Christians believe that God wants them to change. But I believe God is saying, “Stop trying to change.” God doesn’t want you to try and change. Stop trying to change yourself! I don’t know if I even have a theology of changing! So much emphasis on changing in the body of Christ! God doesn’t want us to change. He has already changed us. He just wants us to see who he has changed us into and to just believe that you are that person, your *true* identity. The more we see him and who we are in him and where we are seated in him, the more we’ll begin to live from that place. We don’t need to change. We just need to see him

and therefore our true identity. Jesus is our new identity and the more we see that, the more our behavior will represent that.

Sanctification is not about trying to sin less and less, it is about living from your true identity in Christ more and more. We have already been sanctified (Hebrews 10:10) and set apart in Christ. Living a sanctified or holy life now is about living by faith in your true identity in Christ. Living unholy is not having faith in Christ and who you are in him. Sinful behavior is simply the consequence of not believing that. The more you believe that the less you will sin.

The religious world is putting pressure on pastors to preach more on holiness, obedience and resisting sin. That actually just makes people more carnal. It replaces their true identity with their performance to create a false identity. Your identity is not your performance, it's Christ! Get your focus off yourself and onto Christ! Stop trying to complete your holiness and righteousness by trying to be holy and righteous! Stop trying to complete blessings and approval from the Father by your obedience. You have got it all already, now just cease from your works and rest. You'll be amazed at what flows out of rest! You'll be amazed at what you do from a place of rest. When Israel did enter the land of rest they did great exploits for God by resting in him.

WON'T GRACE LEAD TO PASSIVITY?

“Ryan if you preach that, then it's going to lead to passivity. It will lead to fatalism! Christians won't want to do anything.” Actually grace says, “If you never did another thing for God for the rest of your life

then he would still love you and approve of you and be pleased with you! God is not relating to you based on your performance, he is relating to you based on Christ's performance. You are in Christ and he is pleased with Christ, loves Christ and is happy with Christ." You are in Christ and are accepted fully in Christ. You don't have to do another thing for God to get him to accept you or love you. He loves you completely.

We live with this thing in our mind that if we are not praying enough or winning the lost enough then God is a little bit displeased with us. That is a lie from the devil! The truth is that if you never read your Bible again or prayed another prayer for the rest of your life or never tried to win one more person to Christ then God would still fully love you, accept you and be pleased with you! That's true grace. People often quote that grace is God's unmerited favor yet would have a problem with what I'm saying. They contradict themselves. God's favor toward us is either earned or it is not.

"But then won't Christians just not want to do anything?" Well, just because you may coerce a Christian into working for God doesn't mean that they want to do it. True grace actually frees Christians from all the "have-to's." I don't want to live my life according to someone telling me, "You have to do..." That is the Ten Commandments again. That's the Old Covenant of externalism. The New Covenant is about an internal desire and motivation that comes from a reborn spirit. Your reborn spirit wants to serve God! When you take all the "have-to's" off a Christian then all the "want-to's" begin to come out. Grace awakens your spi-

rit to all the goodness that God put in there at the point of salvation and draws those things out. Ephesians 4:23 tells us that we have been created after the very nature of God. My spirit has got the nature of God in it. Too many people preach that, as Christians, we still have a sinful nature. This is simply just bad teaching. Colossians 2:11 tells us clearly that our heart has been circumcised of that sin nature. Now my spirit is part of the new creation order, meaning nothing from the old got put back into my spirit. When my body dies and I go to be with the Lord then my spirit will be instantly with the Lord and nothing will change in my spirit. It's already part of the new creation order. So nothing has to change in my spirit. Nothing of the old, no evil or sin or unbelief is in my spirit. My spirit is made perfect in Christ. When you take the "have-to's" off a Christian then all of those good things that are in their spirit can have freedom to manifest. The nature, love, joy, peace, passion, power, patience, kindness, faith, humility and goodness of God are all in there and *want* to come out! Grace awakens those things to come out.

A lot of legalism in the church is simply because of bad theology. When you haven't seen your salvation and what God has done in your spirit then you feel like you have to move Christians into action. "Do this, do that, or else!" The church is full of these clever manipulation techniques that seek to move Christians to action. But they are wrong! The only thing that should move us into action is the Spirit of God on the inside of us awakening our true identity. Grace moves us. Unmerited favor moves us. Not external pressure. God took off external pressure and external restraint and put it all internally in our spirit.

Extra Virgin Grace

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

- 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

We don't have a spirit that is moved by fear but a spirit that is moved by his power, his love and his perfect mind.

Believe it or not, a born-again Christian doesn't want to just go out and sin. They actually want to get rid of sin. Their new nature struggles with sin and doesn't like sin. The flesh and mind still like sin but your spirit doesn't! Sin is foreign to your spirit. The more we live by our spirit the more we can overcome sin. If you are putting “have-to's” on people then you are not teaching them how to walk by the Spirit but by external rules and laws that are not based on faith and which lock up the new nature.

Often churches and denominations have their own set of rules that people have to conform to in order to be seen as good Christians and righteous people. These rules usually violate people's own conscience. For example:

“Christians are not allowed to drink alcohol. If you drink, God will not be pleased with you, because you are sinning by drinking.”

But no one has the right to tell another Christian that they are not allowed to drink alcohol. Maybe God told them not to drink alcohol. But if they say to another Christian that they are not allowed then that is external manipulation. If that person bows the knee to that then they didn't do it because the Spirit led them to but because someone put pressure on them. Likewise, no-one can say to you, “You need to pray every morn-

ing for one hour.” God might have told them to do that but he might not have told you to do that. They have no right to put that on you, no matter how good their intentions are.

God is trying to take false burdens off us and get us to move by the Spirit and not by the pressure of man. God doesn't want us living and moving by the pressure of man but by our re-born spirit in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. That is rest.

BUT I FEEL LIKE I'M SUPPOSED TO CHANGE!

Some say, “Well I am not happy with myself. I have still got this problem and that problem that needs to change.” Or perhaps someone else is putting pressure on you to become better. God says, “Get your focus off that and stop trying to change. I am not even putting pressure on you to try and change. All I want is for you to see me!” That is all God wants. Just see how good he is and how awesome and loving he is. See how happy he is with you. Do you know that God has absolute delight in loving you? We all hear that God loves us. Some think that God has to love them because he saved them. Actually God has delight in loving you. It brings God pleasure to love you and he enjoys doing it. Have you heard that in your spirit? “God delights in loving you. God is happy with you!”

Lots of people believe that Christians should live with a sense of God not being happy with us and if we have that then it will move us to live in such a way as to make God happy with us. They insist on Christians living with sin-consciousness because then they will be moved to get rid

of sin. This is not how God operates in the New Covenant. If all you are preoccupied with is what you have to repent of then your entire focus is on how short you have fallen from God and how useless you are and how unhappy God must be with you. That is awful. We should be focused on how perfect we are in him and how right we are with him.

YOU NEED GRACE REFERENCE POINTS IN YOUR LIFE

Once you get grace reference points established in your heart then it will be hard to move you from grace no matter what distorted scriptures are thrown at you by legalists. People can try to put any clever slant on Scripture but you will always live in a place of knowing that God is happy with you, likes you, and that you are 100% righteous in him.

The three most foundational reference points are; total forgiveness of all sins past present and future, the teaching about the gift of righteousness, and that the believer is no longer under the law.

You have to understand total forgiveness: That God has already poured out all wrath and punishment on Jesus. That means he will never judge or punish a believer. Some people say you are sick because you did this sin or that sin. That is rubbish! God will never punish you again because he fully punished Jesus in your place.

The teaching of the gift of righteousness says that you are 100% righteous in Christ forever! God doesn't just see you righteous by turning a blind eye to your sin. No! He has made you righteous. Your righteousness is now made of the same substance as God's righteousness. In fact it's not a different righteousness, it's *his* very righteousness. We

need to see ourselves 100% righteous because that is how God sees us all the time.

Thirdly, you need to know that you are in no way under or accountable to the Mosaic Law. People who still believe that they are under the law even slightly will never fully grasp grace. You know those people that you have tried so many times to help catch this message of grace and yet they just don't seem to come fully into it? It's because at some level they still believe they are under the law.

Unbelief in these truths brings you out of rest. When you fear that somehow you are still under the law and not totally forgiven and not 100% righteous and are therefore still facing God's judgment and punishment then it's hard to be in rest. But once these reference points are established in your life you will not be moved from rest.

REST LEADS TO GREAT EXPLOITS!

How many programs do churches run so that Christians are doing something and not wasting their time? Programs that aren't spirit led or inspired by faith. Instead they are motivated and driven by unbelief. You'll hear, "You need to be a good steward of your time." as though that's supposed to fill you with passion to do great exploits. God says, "No, enter my rest and I will give you supernatural initiatives." You are not being a good steward of your time if you are doing things that you don't even have faith for. When all the "have-to's" are off and you are walking by the spirit, then God can awaken his dreams in your heart.

God personally gave me an assignment in a dream that has literally set the course of my life! The assignment is to show Christians their salvation. It came to me in a dream while I was asleep and at rest! I wasn't striving to be obedient or to fulfill my duty to God. God can drop business ideas or evangelism strategies into your heart through dreams and visions or simply just inspired ideas. I have never done so many things for God before in my life since coming into this revelation of rest and it doesn't even feel like I'm trying! I wait for God to give me supernatural initiatives, and when he does, I just follow them. I like doing those ones because he's all over them and it's not me trying to work something up in the flesh! More of this to come in the following chapter but for now if you've never experienced the reality of rest then allow the theology of this chapter to sink in and empower you to walk in his presence of rest.



Chapter 12

MORE GETS DONE WHEN YOU REST!

“...thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”

- PSALMS 23:5

Ever feel like you're missing the sweet spot in life? Feel like there's a better way you're meant to be living? A way that's easier, more effective and enjoyable. The sweet spot on a tennis racket is where the most power comes from. It's where the racket is most accurate and where less energy is required to produce that power and accuracy. It's such a satisfying and enjoyable feeling when you're hitting in the sweet spot. When

you're not, the ball doesn't go where you want it to or as fast as you want it to and it's just frustrating.

Well, God's rest is that sweet spot and it applies to our lives. When we're not living in the sweet spot of resting in the finished work of Christ, life seems harder, ineffective and frustrating. But when we live from a place of rest we find life becomes increasingly more enjoyable and effective. God wants us to live from the sweet spot. He wants us to enter his rest and live from that place.

REST STOPS A WHOLE LOT OF USELESS ACTIVITY!

When you rest in the revelational reality of the gift of righteousness, it will not only improve your relationship with God, it will also cause you to stop doing a lot of pointless and energy draining activity. When you live from a place of peace and intimacy between you and God your life gets sweet. No matter what you walk through, your perspectives are larger than life. You stop complaining to God about the size of your problems and you start talking to your problems about the size of God. You stop worshipping your problems by talking about how big they are, and you find yourself thanking God for all that he is, has done and is going to do.

When you rest in the gift of his righteousness you stop trying to get righteous and holy by doing lots of religious activities. You don't try to maintain your righteousness by religion. You also stop suffering under the crushing weight of condemnation and trying to rid yourself of it

through works. Condemnation will cause stress and agitation in your life that will rob you of rest and get you out of the sweet spot.

When you rest in his righteousness you also realize that you don't have to do anything to make God love you more. You realize he loves you completely, unconditionally, undeservedly and eternally. You don't try to do anything to earn his blessings. They're already yours! You don't get caught up in the enslaving cycle of fearing God's judgments or trying desperately to avoid them. In fact you realize there aren't any. Jesus took them all for you!

Faith brings you into rest and faith is how we walk. When we walk in faith in the finished work of Jesus and our perfect righteousness in him then we walk in rest. Sometimes to stay in rest though, you have to fight for it. That's why it's called the fight of faith.

REST IS SOMETHING WORTH FIGHTING FOR!

Living from rest is something worth fighting for. It's something that doesn't just come naturally. The enemy is against it. If you want it you'll have to determine to get it. There is an ugly spirit that is against rest. It's an agitating spirit that comes to get you out of rest. It cunningly seeks to distort and cheapen the revelation of rest. It tries to make you feel like you're being irresponsible when you're living in rest. But that's a lie! Rest is from God. He wants us to walk in it. If there's one thing that's worth fighting for it is rest. If the enemy has been intensifying his attack against you in this area, don't throw in the towel. Many people do and just settle for getting through life. If you do that then what will hap-

pen is that years will go by and you'll realize you've lived life stressed out, not in the sweet spot, striving in the flesh, unhappy and unfulfilled. You'll have missed out on the things that God had for you because of a lack of peace and stress. Fight for rest. It will keep you walking in the things of God and in his overflow. You will walk in, "The Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want!" It will cause your life to be effective and powerful because you're now tapping into God's resources and not living from your own.

WORKS VS. GOOD WORKS

God wants to bring you into a new dimension of rest. He wants to re-gear your life for the future. For the next ten to eighty years. He doesn't want you going through life stressed out and robbed. He doesn't want you to die prematurely because of stress. He doesn't want you to miss out on what he has for you. When you live in rest you won't.

Rest doesn't mean passivity and inactivity. Rest means; "being led by the Spirit". It means you are not striving in the flesh. You're not trying to make something happen. You're not under pressure and missing it but you're operating from a place of rest: A place where you can hear the voice of the Father and you can feel the promptings of the Spirit. Rest actually means "great exploits" for God. God has prepared "good works" for you and I to do (Ephesians 2:10). "Good works" are works of faith. They are works that flow from a place of rest. "Works" on the other hand is just us striving in the flesh. But "good works" are his works. They are the works that *he* has prepared for us.

So rest means walking in the Spirit, walking in the things of God and walking in your destiny and calling. If you want to walk in your destiny and the things of God then find that place of rest.

THE SECRET TO BEING CONTENT IN EVERY SITUATION

Paul said, “I have found the secret to being content in every situation. Whether hungry or well fed. Whether poor or with everything.” He found the secret to walking in the sweet spot. He found the secret to walking in rest. It was his secret to reigning in life even when he had nothing to eat or when he had no money. His hope and his confidence were not in money or food or possession. It was in Jesus and his finished work. It was in the grace of God. It was in the gift of righteousness. It was in God’s abiding presence. Even when Paul had lots of food and money, he didn’t put his hope and confidence in those things. He just kept it in God and the abiding presence of his grace. Paul says in Philip-
pians 4: 6–7:

“The Lord is near, be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and petition and thanksgiving present your requests before God. ⁷And the peace of God that transcends all understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus!”

Often we misunderstand that scripture by thinking that the thing that will stop us from being anxious is our prayers. But actually the thing that will stop us from being anxious is knowing that, “The Lord is near.”

When you know that God is near and that his resources are available to you through the finished work of the cross you won't be anxious!

"The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing."

MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU

Do you know that Paul the apostle got out of the grace of God three times? The very guy that says in Romans 5:17 that we reign in life through the abundance of God's grace and the gift of his righteousness. The guy that said, "I have found the secret to being content in every situation." Three times he stepped outside of the grace of God. When was that? Remember when he said that he had been given a thorn in the flesh? (2 Corinthians 12:7) This was a messenger of Satan to buffet him day and night with hardships and persecution for the sake of the gospel. Paul cried out three times, "Lord, take this thing away from me!" yet the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you." He didn't say, "My grace is just enough" or "It will just help you to get through." That's usually our thinking. "It's sufficient. It's just enough." Actually the original Greek word "*arkeo*" implies, "To raise a barrier; to ward off and to avail." God's grace isn't just enough, it's more than enough! It enables us to reign in life and over every situation. But Paul had lost sight of that and cried out, "God take this thing away from me. I can't handle it! I can't cope!" It's funny how Jesus didn't just bail him out of the situation. He reminded Paul of his grace: "My grace is sufficient." His grace is more than enough! It's super abounding. It's empowering. It will cause you to reign through situations in life.

More Gets Done When You Rest!

You might be going through a situation at the moment and are feeling like just bailing out. Your breakthrough is not in bailing out or running away. God won't bail you out either. God didn't bail Paul out. He allowed him to go through it, and he said in the situation, "My grace is sufficient for you." Your breakthrough in the situation is in finding the grace of God! It's finding that rest. It's finding the surpassing sufficiency of his grace.

Hebrews four tells us to strive to enter his rest because anyone who enters his rest ceases from his own work. Then it goes on to talk about Jesus who was tempted in every way just as we are and is able to sympathize with everything that we go through. And then it says he is now at the right hand of the Father interceding for us as Melchizedek our mediator, and then it says in verse sixteen, "Therefore let us approach his throne of grace that we might find grace to help us in our time of need." There is enough grace to help you through your time of need. Not so you can just make it through but so that you can reign through it. There is enough grace for you to reign in life through every situation. Amen!

MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

- MATTHEW 11:28-30

A classic example of a false burden is when we put ourselves back under law and performance. It's when we don't rest in our position. We don't rest in the finished work of Christ. Jesus is our rest. He's done the work for us. That's what the yoke is all about. Oxen are yoked together to pull a plough and to do hard work. Jesus said, "Take my yoke." Why? Because the work is already done. Rest in your position that is in Christ. In terms of your holiness and your righteousness and the forgiveness of your sins, rest in the finished work of Christ. The work is done. You are holy. You are righteous. You are fully forgiven. In terms of sickness, we don't pray to try and get healing. We rest in the healing that is already provided for us by faith in it. When you pray for the sick, we're not trying to work and do something. We're praying from a place of rest. This sickness has been paid for, and we're administering the work of the cross.

JESUS IS THE SABBATH REST!

If you know your theology then you'll know that Jesus created the heavens and the Earth. All things were created by him and for him and unto him (Colossians 1:16). He was there in the beginning (John 1:1). He created this planet and the stars and the sun. He separated the light and the dark. The six days of creation was Jesus' work, then it was finished and so he rested on the seventh. He called that day holy, a Sabbath. Then when Jesus was on this planet he was under the six day covenant, the Law Covenant. And he fulfilled it for us by doing all the work it required. He kept it all on our behalf. Then he hung on the cross

and was punished for us, and once the price was paid he said, “It is finished!” Work, “It is finished!” Six days, “It is finished!” Then he laid his head to rest. Enter into rest.

He is our Sabbath. He is our rest. We are not called to work for our righteousness and holiness and blessings but to rest in him.

AUTHORITY FROM REST!

You are a son. You have authority in him. When you pray you don't have to try and get authority. You rest in the authority that you have because he has all authority in Heaven and Earth and you are in him (Ephesians 1 & 2). You are fully in him, the one who has all authority and you come from a place of absolute authority.

REST FOR YOUR SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY

Rest is most effective when you walk in it in your spirit, soul and body. You can be going well spiritually but if you're overdoing it physically then you will get tired and wear out. You'll struggle with sickness and it will start robbing from you spiritually. You could be powering in the spirit and feeling physically fit but mentally you're laboring under stress. Your mind is over active. You don't know how to switch off. You're worried about lots of different things. That will start robbing you spiritually. It will start robbing you of physical life as well. There is something about not just resting spiritually but also physically, mentally and emotionally. Now this doesn't mean inactivity. There are things in

life that we just have to do and want to do and are called to do. I believe in working and working hard. But I also believe in working smart and working efficiently. A major part of that is dealing with stress. Stress will keep you working even when you've stopped working. It releases adrenaline in your body that, if not addressed, will cause your body to wear out and age quicker.

DRINK MORE WATER!

Some people's breakthrough is to drink more water! When you don't get enough water your system struggles. Your cells can't process nutrients properly. Your organs can't function the way they're supposed to and there is this drag on your whole body. You get headaches. You can't sleep properly. We're looking for some awesome breakthrough but God is saying, "Just drink more water!"

SLEEP!

You can be powering in the spirit but if you're not sleeping enough it will catch up to you! Our bodies were designed to sleep at least one third of our life! You need at least six to eight hours of sleep every night in order for your body to function properly. It needs time to recover and rebuild. It needs time to rejuvenate. People who don't sleep enough age faster! People who sleep enough are generally happier. Your body releases serotonin into your brain when you sleep. That's the hormone that makes you feel happy! Anti-depressant drugs largely consist of this in-

gradient. Some Christians don't know why they are struggling so much spiritually and are always unhappy and are looking for some big breakthrough. God says, "Sleep!"

"Ah, I've got too much work to do, I can't sleep!" Maybe sometimes you can't avoid that but it should not be a continuous lifestyle of overworking and not getting enough sleep. If it is, you need to sort that out. You need to come into a place of rest, literally.

Sometimes it's the physical things that can have the most profound effect on us spiritually. Get the breakthroughs you need in the physical.

WASTED EMOTIONS ARE ROBBING YOU

Oh, how many wasted emotions people suffer when not in rest! Wasted emotions are a thief. Unnecessary emotions waste our energy and take from us. They come to rob from you. For example: Overreacting. It is a waste of emotions. Someone cuts in front of you in the traffic, "Raaaahhh! You bad stinking *#@& son of a #&*@....!!!" Or someone doesn't pay you your money on time so you overreact. What is the point of all that wasted emotional energy? What does it accomplish except to drain you and get you out of peace and rest?

Unforgiveness is a waste of emotions. You're expending all this emotional energy that is taxing and robbing you and it's pointless. Of what benefit to you is not forgiving someone?

Bitterness is a waste of emotion. Self pity as well. "It's so unfair. Poor little me. Boo hoo." You know what? It probably isn't fair. But it's

not doing you any good just moping about it. It's depleting you. It's dragging you down. It's stealing from you. It's robbing your rest.

We need to get control over our emotions. Most of these wasted emotions come because we lose our perspective. We lose our state of rest in knowing that our Father is with us. Our eyes are back on ourselves instead of on him. We're striving in ourselves rather than striving to enter his rest.

I believe that there is an anointing of rest that we can walk in every day of our lives. But sometimes there's a demonic agitation that we can't seem to shake no matter how we try to get a good perspective and determine to rest. It's those times you actually need to go into prayer and break that thing in the spirit. You know if you keep trying to labor through it you'll spend the day out of rest. You just have to do what needs to be done and sort that thing out spiritually with the authority you have in Christ. Get that grace from his throne all over you and walk in the tangible reality of his supernatural rest.

REST ISN'T JUST A FEELING!

We're not after a feeling! "Am I in rest? Aren't I in rest? I can feel it. Why can't I feel it? I've got to make sure I'm in rest!" No, we're not chasing a feeling even though it will overflow into a feeling. The feeling of rest is good. But it's firstly a truth and it's an attitude or a resolve that you have. Listen to the way Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 4:7-9:

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. ⁸We are troubled on every

More Gets Done When You Rest!

*side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;
9Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;"*

We need to have the attitude, like Paul, of resting in our position, an attitude of victory.

MAKING YOUR DECISIONS FROM REST

Is pressure making your decisions? Is the pressure of man making your decisions? Many believers in church struggle with feelings that if they just went somewhere else then everything in life would just start happening and opening up for them. Of course God does move people on to new places to fulfill and open up their destiny, but often that feeling of just having to go somewhere else for breakthrough is a lie that's trying to rob people of their destiny. Most often the breakthrough is where you are! If you're chasing the pot on the other side of the rainbow you're setting yourself up for a cycle of frustration and disappointment. People think if they can just go to a place where many others are walking in the things of God then it will release them into those things. But if you go to any of those places you will also find people who are frustrated and disappointed and feel like everyone else is walking in it except for them! Somewhere along the line, sooner or later, you have to get your own personal breakthrough and not ride on the breakthrough of others. Sometimes it's just a matter of stepping out and breaking through fear.

What's putting the pressure on you to make a decision? There are things that come to put pressure on us to make a decision and often we don't make our decisions from a place of stillness where we can hear that still quiet voice of the Holy Spirit that leads us into our destiny. Sometimes it's just frustration, stress, impatience, disappointments, comparison to others, feelings of falling short and so on. Don't give in to that pressure. Don't make your decision out of that pressure. Don't make your decision out of confusion, when you're not sure and you're just confused. Often that's a demonic thing. There's darkness trying to confuse your mind. When you make a major decision for your life you should make it from a place of peace, rest and clarity and a knowing in your spirit that God is with it and in it. Those are generally the good decisions we make in our life that are fruitful.

I hope this book has brought you into a greater rest and helped you to see the beauty of Christ and the wonder of his grace. I pray that you will allow God to raise you up as a voice of grace amongst those you are called to, that grace would flow like a river of life out of you and sweep so many out of slavery and into destiny. Inside of you are the greatest riches this world has ever known. The world is waiting for the New Creation Sons of God to manifest. This is your life, this is your time. Arise and shine for your light has come.



Appendix

KEYWORDS AND SCRIPTURES IN CONTEXT.

This chapter is more of a study tool to help you unlock certain scriptures rather than a read-through chapter. It focuses on a number of words that usually get interpreted incorrectly and explains their proper meaning. This chapter isn't thorough or in depth but will certainly assist you in your own studies by triggering helpful patterns of thought.

KEY WORDS

Faith; obedience; pure heart; pleasing God; works; purge; lusts of the flesh; sin; holiness; fear of God.

FAITH

Total trust in the grace of God through the finished work of Christ. Adding nothing to it especially not the works of self/flesh in keeping the law! Also includes not trusting in idols, false gods, traditions, practices and other beliefs. To trust in Christ *and* other things is really not to trust in Christ. Genuine faith is faith that only trusts in Christ and his finished work.

Galatians 2:16,21; Galatians 3:1, 2, 5-9, 11-14, 18, 26, 29; Galatians 4:23,30; Galatians 5:1; Galatians 6:14-18; Ephesians 2:8,9.

OBEDIENCE/OBEY

Submitting to the truth or simply believing in the truth of the gospel which is the finished work of Jesus, adding nothing to it. To add to the gospel is to disobey Christ. To obey Christ is to believe Christ. Faith is obedience. To have faith is to obey. Unbelief is disobedience to the truth of the gospel of Christ.

Romans 1:5; Romans 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Romans 2:8; Galatians 3:1; Galatians 5:7, 8; Hebrews 5:9; Romans 6:17; Hebrews 3:17-19.

PURE HEART

A heart that has faith in Jesus and nothing else. An unclean heart is a heart that believes in other gods, idols and traditions other than Christ. A holy heart is a heart set apart unto faith in Christ. An unholy heart is a heart that mixes Christ with other gods, faiths, idols, etc.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

- HEBREWS 4:12

His word is truth and divides what’s in our hearts whether Christ or a mix of other things. A heart full of faith enters into his rest but a heart that is mixed with unbelief takes you out of a place of rest. Let your heart stand in faith in Jesus because he is our great high priest who has entered into the heavens for us! Let the Word of God fill your heart bringing you into faith, bringing you into rest. In other words let Jesus fill your heart because he is the Word of God. (Ephesians 3:17-19, John 1)

1 Thessalonians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 3:17-19, 2 Timothy 2:22.

PLEASING GOD

Only faith pleases God so refers to anything done out of faith. If referring to actions then it’s actions that flow out of faith in the finished

work of Jesus as opposed to actions and practices that flow out of unbelief in the finished work of Jesus which are evil actions.

Hebrews 11:6; 1 Thessalonians 4:1; Romans 8:8; Hebrews 13:21; Matthew 3:17; Matthew 17:5; 1 Corinthians 10:5.

WORKS

Refers to actions or deeds that flow out from either faith or unbelief. Good works and pleasing works are works or actions of faith or the life of faith. Evil works are works of the flesh; that is unbelief in the finished work of Jesus. Evil works are the actions of self-justification and self-righteousness by the law/flesh/performance and include faith in other gods, idols and practices. Workers of evil are those who distort the gospel and try to bring people back into the works of the flesh/performance/ law.

Rewards of God are according to works of faith. Only that which is of faith will be rewarded.

John 6:29; 1 Corinthians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; Hebrews 6:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:17; Romans 14:20; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 13:21; 2 Corinthians 11:13; Philippians 3:2; John 14:12; Romans 9:11; Romans 13:12; Galatians 2:16; Galatians 5:19; 2 Timothy 2:20,21. James 2:18-24.

PURGE

To get rid of, in your thinking or belief, any mixture of Christ with other gods, faiths and practices.

2 Timothy 2:20,21.

LUSTS OF THE FLESH

Commonly mistaken to mean the physical desires of one's body but in actual fact refers to the desires that spring up from unbelief in the finished work of Christ. Flesh often refers to the activities that one desires and feels they need to partake in when they don't have faith in the finished work of Christ. These things include worship of false gods, legalism, idolatry, religious practices, self-justification, self-righteousness, guilt and shame, condemnation, etc.

Lust of the flesh often contextually refers to a desire to prove your righteousness by your flesh because you don't believe you are perfectly righteous. When people don't have faith in Jesus then naturally their belief is in themselves or other things. The result of that is a desire or a lust to prove themselves by what they do. That is called "flesh".

People not born again are "in the flesh" (Romans 8) and people born again are "in the spirit". It's a position. However people in the spirit can go back to the flesh by losing sight of the gospel of the finished work of Jesus. This doesn't mean they lose their salvation, it just means they are living way below who they truly are in Christ. If you're in the spirit and born again you can never be "in the flesh" but you can live like someone

who is. That's what Galatians five is all about. Paul concludes it in verse 25 by saying that if we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. In other words, "You are in the spirit so don't walk as though you are in the flesh because you are not! Those who are in the flesh are not born again and will perish in hell. But you are not in the flesh you are in the spirit so walk in the spirit and don't put any faith in the flesh. You walk in the spirit by walking in faith."

Paul was always warning against going back to the law and relying on the flesh because in those days (and today) there were always false apostles and Pharisees putting pressure on Christians to go back under the law and trust in their flesh.

Galatians 2:16; Galatians 3:3,10,12; Galatians 4:3,9,10,21-31; Galatians 5:16-18,24; Galatians 6:8,12,13-15; 1 John 2:16,1 Corinthians 10:6; 2 Timothy 2:23; 1 Peter 1:14-18,24; 1 Peter 2:11;1 Corinthians 1:29-30; Ephesians 4:17-24; 2 Peter 2:9-22; Romans 7:5,25; Romans 8:5,9,13.

SIN

Not always but often in the New Testament, sin refers to "unbelief" in Christ and not "moral sinning". Sin that is filthiness, uncleanness or impurity often refers to mixing Christ with other gods or covenants. Touching that which is unclean or unholy is to put hope in anything other than Christ.

John 16:8,9; Romans 14:23; Hebrews 3:17-19; Hebrews 10:26; Hebrews 12:1-4; 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1.

HOLINESS

Is to live from your heavenly position by faith only in Jesus. It should never be defined as living without sin, unless it's referring to the sin of unbelief in the finished work of Jesus. God is holy and to be born again and come into God is to become holy. Adam's sin made us sinners and separated us from God. It wasn't the sin that was unholy, it was the separation from God that was unholy. A state of separation from God is a state of unholiness. Jesus offered a perfect sacrifice to make us righteous and bring us into God. We weren't made holy when we were made righteous, we were made holy when we came into God! Sin is not unholiness, it's the byproduct of unholiness or you could say that it's the byproduct of not living from your position in Christ. If we lived 100% from our position in Christ we would never sin while in our condition here on Earth. To live holy is to live in your earthly condition from your heavenly position. To live unholy is to live in your earthly condition from your earthly condition. Your heavenly position is that your spirit has become perfectly righteous in Christ. Your earthly condition is that your body and mind are catching up to your spirit but haven't been made perfect yet.

Demons are often referred to as "unclean spirits." Not meaning sinning spirits but spirits that are not from God or not of God. They are separate from God. But "holy angels" are angels that are of God and from God. The Holy Spirit is God the Holy Spirit. He is of God from God and is God. That's why he's holy: Because God is holy. When God says, "Be holy because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15,16) he doesn't mean to

live without moral sin. He is saying that because we are in him, we are holy and therefore don't need to try and get holy. Just *be* holy because you already *are* holy because you are in him. Let all your actions flow out of that place and that revelation. Holiness is not about what you do, it's about where you are. Where you are will affect what you do.

Holiness in your flesh is to live by your spirit and not your flesh. If you live from your spirit it will affect what you do in your flesh. Your spirit will lead you in who you truly are in him, but your flesh will lead you in natural carnal desires. Hebrews 10:10; Romans 6:19, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7.

Having a holy heart is a heart that is separated unto Christ only and no other faiths, religions, gods, idols, practices, etc.

Ephesians 1:4; Colossians 1:22; 1 Peter 1:15,16.

FEAR OF GOD

New Covenant fear of God is not about fear of punishment or what bad thing God can do to you, but about a realization of who he is. To fear God is to recognize and see the magnitude of his being and to ascribe that greatness to his name. It's to agree with his greatness. A part of his greatness is his goodness. We are not good in ourselves but he makes us good with his own goodness and then relates to us through his own goodness in us! You could say then that a part of fearing God is to recognize his goodness and ascribe glory to him because of his goodness. If you can't recognize his goodness then you don't fear him! But I would go further to say that truly fearing God is not only recognizing his

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goodness and ascribing glory to him because of it, but fearing God is being able to receive and walk in his goodness! If you can't receive and walk in his goodness then you don't fear God! Self-righteousness says, "I can be good enough." or "If I'm not good enough then God will sort me out." Humility and the true fear of the Lord say; "I can never be good enough by anything I ever do to earn his love and acceptance and ongoing relationship with him, I need him to make me good (righteous) and believe that it is his good pleasure to do that as he has already displayed through the finished work of Christ!"

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

- 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

We need to keep this scripture in mind when we talk about the fear of God. God doesn't want us to have a fearfulness of him. Our relationship with him, and consequently our relationship toward others, is one of power (God's empowerment), love (God's love) and a sound mind (a supernatural sound mind).

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. ¹⁶And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. ¹⁷Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that

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feareth is not made perfect in love. ¹⁹We love him, because He first loved us."

- 1 JOHN 4:15-19

According to this scripture it is wrong to fear God's judgments. If we fear God's judgments it means we don't understand his love.

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: ²⁹For our God is a consuming fire."

- HEBREWS 12:28-29

Let us have grace to serve God acceptably. What's acceptably? It's in faith. It takes faith to acknowledge who he is. A reverence and a godly fear is about seeing God – the magnitude of his being and ascribing that greatness to his name. It's not taking the greatness for yourself and it's not playing down who God is. That would be the opposite of grace, that is self-righteousness.

The fear of God that the self-righteous have is that God will judge them for not being righteous enough. The fear of God that the Christ-righteous have is that God has qualified them to share in the Kingdom and that he is on their side and they therefore cannot be shaken or moved and that this awesome God will judge their enemies with fire! It's not saying let us serve God because if you don't he will judge you with fire, but let's not be afraid to serve God because God is on our side and will judge our enemies!

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The context of Hebrews 12 is that the saints were being persecuted for their faith and feeling like giving up because the opposition was too much. But the writer is saying, see who God is, how great he is, that he is on your side, that you're in an unshakable kingdom, that your God is a consuming fire.

You've got God and Heaven for you, backing you. When you see that, you will have the boldness to serve God the way that he has called you to serve him, with boldness and confidence in his grace and power and authority. To see this is to "fear God." To not see this is to have no "fear of God."

