

Faith That Receives
The Grace of God



Dan A. Rodriguez

Faith that Receives the Grace of God

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~~Email: taci@danrodriguez.org~~

~~Website: <http://www.danrodriguez.org>~~

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Introduction

This book was written by the prompting of the Holy Spirit to answer many questions Christians are asking today. It is a book of spiritual Bible answers! Do you want answers to any of the following questions?

Is faith important?

What does it mean to live according to the “present truth”?

How is faith activated?

What is an “extreme” or “super” faith?

What is the Sovereignty of God?

Does God sometimes say “no” to our prayers?

Is it God’s will to heal and deliver?

Will love, mercy, and grace heal and deliver me?

Is anything in the kingdom of God automatic once you receive Jesus as Lord and Savior?

What is righteousness?

What is sanctification?

What does it mean to abide, walk, and live in Christ?

What is the fear of the Lord, and is it different for the Christian today?

Did Jesus teach love and acceptance?

Do Christians need to confess their sins?

Are Christians responsible and accountable before God for their future sins?

Was first John written to Gnostics?

Were the epistles of John, James, Hebrews, Peter, Jude, and the Revelation only written for Jews?

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Are Paul's writings the only writings that are relevant for the church in general?

Did the Apostle Paul and Jesus agree?

Did Jesus teach according to the harshness of the law, but Paul taught according to grace and love?

Has the Old Testament been cancelled because we are under grace?

What is the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament?

Has "faith" and "following steps" become legalism for many in the Body of Christ?

What is grace and how is it accessed according to the New Testament?

How do we get into a flow of grace?

Are we required to do anything since we are under grace and not under the law?

Can grace grow and be multiplied in our lives?

What are the works of the law?

What does it mean to be "performance" or "works" minded?

Are we subject to the law?

What were Paul's arguments about the law and works?

What is the royal law of God?

Do we have to practice the feasts and festivals given to Israel?

Should we wear a Jewish prayer shawl to pray?

Are we required to keep the Sabbath?

Do we have to keep a certain diet?

What is a "works" covenant?

What is the difference between pre-Calvary obedience and post-Calvary obedience?

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Are many today teaching a gospel based on performance?

Are we required to do good works?

What are good fruits?

How will Christians be judged at the Judgment seat of Christ?

What does the book of Revelation say about grace and works among the churches?

Are there pre-conditions to God's promises?

This was only a sample of the many questions answered in this book. Even if you believe that you know the answers to some (or most) of these questions, are you willing to learn some more on the subjects? Are you ready to study God's Word? That is the only true source of precise answers to all our questions. That is what we give you in this book by the Word and by the Spirit of God!

Our study is divided into two major parts. You must understand part one on "The Faith that Receives" before you can get to part two on "Receiving the Grace of God". Try not to get too excited and skip some areas of the study. Read it in the chapter order of this book if at all possible. The Lord has helped us to put it in order for you. It is a teaching that is built line upon line and precept upon precept from His holy Word. (Isaiah 28:9, 10) Be mightily and overwhelmingly blessed!

PART I: THE FAITH THAT RECEIVES

Are you interested in receiving from the Lord? If you are then this is for you! Everything we ever will do, have, or participate in where the kingdom of God is concerned is dependent on faith, specifically, a receiving faith. The riches of God's grace, and His mighty promises and blessings are accessed through faith according to the Scriptures. These are central points that will be studied and developed from God's Word throughout the pages of this book. Keep these truths in mind because we will be referring to them often.

It all begins in God.

“Have faith in God.” Mark 11:22

The Father is the Source of every good gift and every perfect gift. (James 1:17) He is the Source of all grace gifts. He has provided for us everything we need to live a victorious and overcoming life. Jesus lavishly provided it through His awesome sacrifice for us. In this book we study how to appropriate the mighty provisions of the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 1: Why Some Receive and Some Do Not

People have all kinds of ideas as to why they pray and nothing happens. Many blame God and say, “Well maybe it was just not God’s will that I have it. You just never know what God is going to do.” What does the Word of God say about it? We are to judge everything by Scripture and not by people’s experiences or opinions. (2 Tim. 3:15-17, Mat. 4:4, 7, 10, 22:29, Acts 17:11) So, let’s get started.

Whatever you ask for when you pray believe that you have received it and it will be given to you. Mark 11:24

How about if you do not believe that you have received it when you prayed? Will you still get it? Not according to this verse. “Believe that you receive when you pray” is one of several keys to answered prayer as taught by Jesus. There are other words of Jesus that give us more instruction, and we want to look at them.

Here is a major issue in receiving anything from God. Many simply do not follow the instructions of Jesus on the subject of prayer and receiving. They have their own ideas and beliefs. Whatever we think about the subject is useless unless it is proven with God’s Word. When we prove something from God’s Word we have to make sure that what we believe the Bible is saying agrees with other Scriptures on the same subject in order

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to come to a viable conclusion. This means that it must agree in its context. You can't take one verse alone and build a doctrine on it. Context is essential to right Bible interpretation. So we want to look at other Scriptures on the same subject.

Ask in faith nothing doubting, for he that doubts is like the waves of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed; for let not that man (person) think that he (or she) will receive anything from the Lord. James 1:6, 7

Asking and receiving is based on faith. The person that asks and doubts gets nothing according to James! What does that do with the vast majority of prayers that people pray worldwide? Many have thought that "sincere" prayers are heard by God. Does the verse above say that if you ask in sincerity you will be heard and you will receive answered prayer? No it does not say that. It says, "*Ask in faith nothing doubting.*" One can be completely sincere in their prayer and yet be praying in doubt and unbelief. ONLY prayers offered in faith with NO doubting are heard and receive an answer from the Lord. No doubting means that you are not wavering back and forth or staggering at the promises of God. You are like Abraham in His faith in Romans 4:17-23. It means that you know that you know that what God has said is true, and that it is true for you!

As hard as it may be to read this, the unvarnished truth is that God ignores prayers without faith! James said in the verses above that the one in doubt should not think they will receive anything from the Lord. It takes a receiving faith and no doubt to lay hold of any of God's

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promises. Are you beginning to see this? Read the verses above a few more times and let this become real to you.

So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Romans 10:17

Faith and the Word of God are closely connected and related! If a person cannot receive anything from the Lord without faith, then that tells us that we cannot receive anything from Him without the Word on the matter. There can be no faith without the solid foundation of God's Word.

James 5:14, 15 teaches us about the elders of the church praying the prayer of faith for healing. Since faith is born from God's Word then their prayers of faith must be based on God's Word. Do you see the progression here?

Many pray and get nothing because they have no scriptural basis for their prayer. Without the foundation of the Word answering every question in the heart, there can be no faith to receive.

When you go and assure your heart according to God's Word, and the Word is in you mightily, then you can pray in faith and not doubt and get results. Is that so hard to understand? Is this a cryptic message or is it the simple Bible truth? We believe that it is as plain and clear as the sunshine at high noon! There is no mystery or difficult thing in any of this.

This next verse gets down to the central or core issues of getting prayers heard and answered. It goes a long way in answering why some receive and some do not. Since I am really interested in answered prayer, then

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I am going to pay attention to Jesus. Nobody knew more about prayer and how to receive answers to your prayers than He did.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask what you desire and it shall be done for you. John 15:7 (NKJV)

To Mark 11:24 and James 1:6, and 7, we must add the teaching of Jesus in this verse. We already saw that the Word of God must be the foundation to our prayer or there can be no prayer of faith.

First, John 15:7 tells us to abide in Jesus and let His Word abide in us. According to Jesus, these must precede the “ask what you desire and it will be done for you.” Many want that part but don’t place first things in first place!

What did Jesus mean when He used the word “abide”? That is the place to start. In the Greek it is the word *meno*, and it is defined as (in bold italics): ***To continue***; that is, to persevere, be steadfast or constant, and not cease to do. ***To dwell***; that is, to abide as a permanent resident. ***To endure***; that is, to bear, to sustain, to support without breaking or yielding to force or pressure. ***Be present***; that is, being in a certain place, opposed to absent, being before the face or near, to be in the company of). ***To remain***; that is, to continue, to rest or abide in a place for a time indefinite, to be left after others have withdrawn, to rest or abide in the same place when others are removed, are lost, destroyed, or taken away. ***To Stand***; that is, to be fixed, be steady, and not vacillate.

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The definitions and synonyms that follow the italicized and emphasized words in bold type were each taken directly from the Greek-English lexicon. These bring further light to our understanding as to what Jesus was telling us with this word “abide.”

Here are some further definitions for the word abide from another Greek dictionary; *to last, wait for one, to continue to be, not to perish, to last, live in- in reference to state or condition, to remain as one and not to become another or different.*

A lack of doing these things when it comes to the Lord Jesus and His words is why many pray and get nothing. Jesus went on to tell us after the “abiding” part, “Ask what you will (desire), and it shall be done for you.” Many fuss incessantly over that part of the statement of Jesus. It is just too good to be true for them. They refuse to believe it or try to make up some excuse for it if they “tried it” and it didn’t work for them.

Some have asked, “What do you mean ‘ask what YOU will and it will be done for you’? Do you mean I can ask for anything I want and get it?”

Did Jesus mean what He said, or was He just playing with us? Was He giving us a false hope? No, He was giving us the truth on the subject of prayer. The Lord is the good Shepherd and “I shall not want”. (Psalms 23:1, John 10:11) Glory! That’s an awesome truth concerning prayer, but we must look at the WHOLE truth He is teaching!

Jesus said (and that's not you, me, or Mickey Mouse) that IF we abide in Him and His words abide in us then we will have access into the last part of this verse in John 15:7. The last part of the verse does not work

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without the first part, and that is where most people miss it. They pray thinking they are basing themselves on this verse or on Mark 11:24 but receive no manifestation. That is when God's will is questioned, and the subject of prayer and faith get clouded with doubt and unbelief.

Here is one major way tradition answers this dilemma:

“Well, maybe it wasn't God's will in the first place, so God didn't see fit to give it to me. You just never know what God is going to do. I believe that God ALWAYS answers ALL prayers but sometimes He says NO.”

These are bad excuses for having a prayer failure. Have you ever heard this nonsense? Of course, we have all heard it, and maybe had doubt and unbelief in this regard ourselves!

According to Paul, if you are basing yourself on God's revealed promises in Scripture, God ALWAYS says YES!

For all the promises of God are in Him "Yes," and in Him "Amen," to the glory of God through us.
2Corinthians 1:20

The promises of God belong to all believers, at all times forever, because we are “legally” placed IN CHRIST because of the new creation. (2Corinthians 5:17) Many still don't understand this today, but others do and have not learned that something else is taught about IN HIM in the writings of Paul and the apostle John, and in the words of Jesus. IN HIM is further defined in the New Testament as to whether we are

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actively LIVING in Him or not. In other words, “IN HIM” is not just positional or “legal” as many have thought.

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so WALK IN HIM, rooted and built up IN HIM, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Colossians 2:6, 7 (NKJV)

Walking in Him is much more than being IN HIM “legally” because of the new birth or the new creation we received when we made Jesus the Lord of our lives. The Greek word for “walk” means: *to make one’s way, progress; to make due use of opportunities.* To “walk” is a Hebrew figure of speech that was adopted by Paul and others into the Greek and it means: *to live in, to regulate one’s life by, to conduct one’s self according to, to pass one’s life in.* This is the other side of IN HIM not addressed as often by preachers and ministers that correctly address the side of what we have available IN HIM. To walk IN HIM means that I live day in and day out according to Jesus and I conduct and regulate my life by the pattern of living He told me to follow in His Word. Note that walking IN HIM is required after you receive Jesus as your Lord. Abiding in Him and walking in Him are always connected!

He who says he ABIDES IN HIM ought himself also to WALK just as He walked. 1John 2:6 (NKJV)

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The word “also” means that abiding IN HIM is equal to walking just as He walked. We are confronted with the fact that to abide IN HIM means that we are to regulate and conduct our lives after His pattern for living. That means holiness and purity of life any way you look at it!

Some have the idea that “I am in Christ no matter how much I sin or live like the devil.” If you believe that, then let me tell you this other side to the story. If you have been taught the legal side of the IN HIM statements in the New Testament, but never heard about the fact that there is a VITAL or LIVING side to these statements, then this may really upset and uproot your theology. Good! We must be rooted and grounded IN HIM as Paul taught and not in wrong thinking and believing.

If it could be possible to examine the lives of the people that got nothing out of their prayers, it would be abundantly clear that they never did the first part of the verse in John 15:7. That is the reason they never got to the manifestation part of “it will be done for you.” They never did the first part of the verse on one or more points, so they never got the manifestation part of “it will be done for you.” That is THE truth, but people have a hard time accepting the fact that a prayer failure was never God’s failure! They would rather blame God for their failures in prayer than recognize that their unbelief was the cause of the prayer failure.

It is hard for the religious mind to accept this fact because religion practices a form of pride and haughtiness. One preacher dubbed traditional ideas and theology as a “no fault religion.” If you can blame God

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for your failure to receive then it is not your fault! Pride keeps people that believe that way blind to the truth that the problem is never God's willingness to bless or answer our prayers. The truth is that spiritual principles have been violated. God would have to be unjust to answer prayers of people that do not pray in faith according to the instructions of Jesus and James. It would be unrighteous of Him to answer the prayers of those living in violation to His Word or revealed will. He is the righteous Judge and does ALL things right! (2Timothy 4:8, Genesis 18:25, Romans 2:5, 2Thessalonians 1:5, 6) If we didn't receive, it was not His fault!

Folks, I didn't write the verse in John 15:7. Jesus said it out of His own mouth.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask what you will and it will be done for you. John 15:7

I am only reporting what He said. Many excuses as to why people have not received answers to their prayers would melt away and disappear when this verse is properly understood.

Again, notice Jesus did not say, "If you are IN CHRIST "legally" because you have been born again, ask what you will." No! Jesus is speaking to people that are already His followers. This verse is not referring to our legal union to Christ Jesus because we are a new creation IN CHRIST. This "abiding" message of Jesus was a direct reference to your day in and day out living in Him, as we have already seen. The definitions of the Greek word "meno" (translated "abide") opened our eyes

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to this truth. Here are the questions John 15:7 should immediately trigger in our thinking: Is Jesus where I abide on a daily basis? “Did I become a Christian but really do not live for Him consistently?” Did you notice that to abide means that you make Him your permanent dwelling place? This means that you didn’t just come by for a visit! It means you set up camp, persevere, and live for Him every day of your life. He is where you abide! This is where the rubber meets the road!

“Abiding in Him” has more to do with “lifestyle” according to Jesus than the fact that we were made the righteousness of God by faith in Christ Jesus when we made Him Lord of our lives. (2 Cor. 5:17, 21, Rom. 10:9, 10) This refers to what you do with your daily life as a doer of His Word, your daily walk, living a holy life, and keeping your mind, mouth, body and actions IN Christ.

Are there more Scriptures that teach this? If I am going to teach on it, then it has to be a very well established subject in Scripture or else it’s best to leave it alone. In this case, it is a VERY well established teaching in the Bible and in the New Testament in particular. Here is another verse on this subject:

And the one who keeps (does or obeys) His commandments ABIDES IN HIM, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, from the Spirit whom He gave us. 1John 3:24

The apostle John had much to say about this subject of abiding IN HIM as a vital truth and reality in 1John. Take the time to go through that short epistle and

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underline all the times he teaches on it. Did you see in the verse above that the ones that do (keep or obey) His commandments are the ones that abide in Him? Immediately, this tells me that that we can't say we abide in Him and violate His commandments to us! This means that one cannot live like the devil and abide in Him as a living reality!

Chapter 2: Faith and Righteousness

If you received the free gift of righteousness and are truly His righteousness, then that righteousness is required to come out of you in actions that are righteous! It is not enough to BE the righteousness of God in Christ. We must NOW act in righteousness. We must do what is righteous in our daily walk and in our talk!

Righteousness has more than one definition. What are the definitions of righteousness?

Christians in tradition think that righteousness is something never attained in this life but only in the world to come.

If you have been around circles that teach the Word and not a bunch of tradition, then you know that righteousness is the position of the believer in Christ that was bought and paid for through what Jesus did through His great redemptive work. (Romans 3:22-25) It came as a free gift that was received in the new birth. (Romans 5:17, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21) It is our legal position as those that once were sinners, but now we have been washed and cleansed by the Blood of Jesus. Righteousness means that we can legally stand before God as though we have never sinned, as free of sin and guilt as Adam and Eve before they sinned! (Romans 5:12-20)

Righteousness means that I have access into the throne room, into the holiest of all, as an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus.

Righteousness means that we have certain rights and privileges before the Father as blood bought children of

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the living God. It is an extremely important revelation what identifies the believer's legal status, heritage, and inheritance.

Righteousness can be summarized with the phrase "the salvation of God." By this, I mean that everything that Jesus died and paid for is included in that word "righteousness." We should spend time reviewing righteousness and refreshing ourselves in it. If you don't know these truths, then begin to study to get them into your spirit.

A growing number of ministers teach on this subject with a lot of proficiency, and they have books and recorded teachings on it. Often that is as far as the teaching on righteousness goes. Many have only taught the legal side of redemption where righteousness is concerned. It is time to teach the vital side!

In Hebrew, *righteousness*, *salvation*, and *peace* are words with very similar meanings. There are nuances to the words that seem to be specific to each word, but when you look at these words as a whole, they all speak about the redemptive acts of God and what He does to redeem and deliver His people. This is a truth that is mostly foreign to westerners, but it was very real and understood by the writers of the New Testament, even though most did write in Greek.

Paul was VERY familiar with an ancient translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek language called the Septuagint. The passages he quotes from the Old Testament come from this translation that was completed around 300 B. C. It is very important to understand this because Paul used this translation to transmit Bible truths to the Gentiles. This ancient Jewish version was

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translated by 70 Jewish scholars in Alexandria (Egypt), and in it were established Greek equivalents for the Hebrew words. Paul was a Hebrew, and he was a scholar that trained under Gamaliel in Jerusalem. He knew what the words meant in Hebrew, and he knew the equivalent Greek words assigned to each Hebrew word by Jewish scholars in the Septuagint. When Paul wrote about “righteousness”, he was thinking *tzedakah* and that the *tzadik* was the righteous individual. When he wrote about “salvation”, he was thinking *yeshuah* (from where the Hebrew name for Jesus came – *Yeshua*), and “to save” from *yasha* or *yeshah*. When he wrote about “peace”, he was thinking *shalom* and *shalem*.

I know that this may seem complicated for the uninitiated, but multilingualism was common in the ancient world when Jesus and Paul walked the earth, much as it is today around the world in many countries. English speaking countries seem to be at a loss in this area as a general rule. Unless your parents are from another country, most people born in the U.S. can only speak English. I, for one, am extremely blessed to have grown up in a bilingual family.

In Jesus day, Hebrew, Greek and Latin were the most common languages of the population in Judea and Galilee. How do we know this? Here is one proof. When Jesus hung on the cross, Pilate had the words, “This is the King of the Jews” written in those three languages. (Luke 23:38) Hebrew in Luke and the rest of the New Testament means Hebrew!

Don’t let the outdated scholarship in older Bible translations tell you that “Hebrew” actually meant “Jewish Aramaic” because that is totally wrong. In

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Greek there are two completely different words for Hebrew and Aramaic.

When it says in the New Testament that the Apostle Paul spoke in Hebrew to the Jewish people and leaders, it meant Hebrew and not some other language! (Acts 21:40, 22:2)

Hebrew was not only the language of liturgy in the synagogue and the Temple as many have believed. Hebrew was also a daily spoken language among the Jewish people, especially in Judea and Galilee. There is a whole lot of modern scholarship that we can quote and refer to that prove this beyond any shadow of a doubt, but this is not the purpose of this book.

I will mention some sources for the student interested in the languages spoken by Jesus and his contemporaries in Judea and Galilee. The Dead Sea Scrolls, especially in the commentaries on Scripture (*midrashim*), the community Manual of Discipline, the Mishnah and Tosefta found in the Talmud, the Bar Kokhba letters, etc., and much of the archaeological evidence in the land of Israel, all point to the fact that Hebrew was not just the language of liturgy and study, but it was a commonly spoken and written language. This is really important because it means that Jesus taught and preached in Hebrew among the Jews, and that helps us greatly to better understand the words of Jesus.

I wrote all that to write this: Another definition of righteousness, one well known in Hebrew language and ancient Judaism, is found in Matthew 6:1. The KJV used the translation “alms.” The best Greek texts have the word here that means “righteousness.” Most translations render it as charitable deeds, good deeds, merciful acts,

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and so on. The NASB correctly translates it as “practicing your righteousness.” If this had been written in Hebrew, it would have used the word for righteousness *tzedakah*. In Hebrew it is understood that it is giving out of generosity to minister to the needs of others. In modern Judaism it has taken the form of giving to the poor. This was a legitimate use of the word righteousness. *Righteousness is not just something to be had, but something to be practiced as an honor to God according to Jesus.* In Matthew 6 Jesus is rebuking the Pharisees for seeking the praise of men instead of the approval of God in their giving, fasting and in prayer.

In Matthew 6:33, the Amplified Bible interjects an explanatory phrase when it uses the word righteousness. It says that righteousness is BEING right and DOING right. BEING RIGHT is what Jesus does in us by the new birth and the power of the Holy Spirit. *DOING RIGHT is what we do to express that righteousness that the Lord put in us in actions that correspond to it.*

DOING righteousness was the side of *justification* (meaning: to be made righteous) that the Apostle James was referring to in James chapter 2 when he taught that Abraham was justified by his works, and that through his works was faith made perfect. (James 2:20-24)

Small wars have been fought over this because people have thought that this violated the teaching of Paul on grace and righteousness by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus. No it did not! James was not saying that when we come to Jesus that we are saved by works or that we have to earn our salvation. That would have made James a heretic! Nobody can earn their salvation because it is the free gift of God. (Ephesians 2:7-9) That was

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something done for us through the sacrifice of Jesus. James was not referring to the legal side of redemption at all! James was not speaking about the new birth here. He was explaining the truth we are addressing.

James was teaching people that had already been made the righteousness of God (born again, made a new creation in Christ, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and begotten by God). (1Peter 1:23, Titus 3:5, 1John 5:1) He was teaching the righteous in Christ Jesus that they had to live in this righteousness by having righteous actions. Faith without righteous actions corresponding to it is dead! (James 2:26) Go and read that second chapter of James and you will see that James mentions the righteous actions of Rahab, Abraham, and ministering to the needs of others. (2:14-26) This has nothing to do with receiving Jesus as Lord and being born again. (Romans 10:9, 10) This has everything to do with the living or vital side of righteousness that many either ignore or refuse to believe.

This living side of righteousness has to do with manifesting righteousness. It has to do with manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, the manifestations of the Spirit, ministering to the needs of others, being led by the Spirit and acting in loving obedience and service to the Lord by carrying out the great commission.

I am going to quote a longer portion of Scripture from James so you see what he was teaching.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Exercising His will He birthed us by the word of

truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures. So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:17-21

Notice that he is speaking to brethren that were already birthed by the Father. They had received God's very good and perfect gifts. These were already born-again believers. Legally they were the righteousness of God, a new creation in Christ Jesus. (2Cor. 5:17) Note what he was looking for with his teaching. The last part of verse twenty is the key. He was addressing that which produces outwardly the righteousness of God. He was teaching this vital and living side of righteousness. He wanted the brethren to LIVE the righteousness and not just mentally assent to it. He wanted them not just to BE but to DO!

Therefore laying aside all filthiness and abundance of evil, in meekness receive the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But become doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, this one is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observed himself and has gone away, and immediately forgot what sort of man he was. But the one who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one shall be blessed in what he does. If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but

deceiving his heart, the religion of this man is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. James 1:21-27

Righteousness on the legal side means that I am blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 1:3)

Righteousness on the vital side is when you become a blessing to others and when you live according to His Word. God told Abraham that He was going to bless him so that he would be a blessing. (Genesis 12:1-3) Doing righteousness is walking in love, in deeds, and in truth and not in word only. (1John 3:17, 18)

Righteousness on the vital and living side is ministering to the oppressed and the sick, casting out demons, ministering to others in the love and power of the Spirit.

Righteousness is feeding the poor as the Lord leads, helping the widow and the orphan, helping at your church, giving your tithes and offerings where the Lord leads you, being a witness by living a holy life marked by purity in words and actions, honoring your father and your mother, blessing your spouse by treating them with respect and kindness, and living according to God's Word. All these things reflect the living and vital side of DOING righteousness. Righteousness as a vital truth and reality means that one becomes a doer of the Word of righteousness and not a hearer only! (Heb. 5:13, James 1:22-27)

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Abraham had already believed God before he acted out his faith where Isaac was concerned and it was accounted to him for righteousness. (James 2:20-26) Faith actions were the result of the faith he already possessed in himself. He lived outwardly what was already a fact inwardly. Please read James chapters 1 and 2 to have a basis for what we are teaching here.

Here is a powerful key for our understanding of James chapter 2 and the teaching of faith with works, or as other translations have it, “corresponding actions”. For the believer, faith without actions will never *save*, heal or deliver you. You cannot receive healing unless you act on the Word. You can’t be delivered unless there is a corresponding action. Read this very closely.

Salvation in James 2:14 is not speaking about the new birth or our legal position in Christ, but it is addressing this vital and living side of our righteousness. “To save” also means healing, health, doing well, prosperity, and having divine protection. It is here the Greek word *sozo*. Strong’s concordance simply says, “*to save, that is, deliver or protect (literally or figuratively): - heal, preserve, save (self), do well, be (make) whole.*” This was the side of salvation that James was referring to. James understood that an action is necessary for faith to come forth to completion or to be perfected.

Just believing that “My God will supply all my needs according to His riches in Glory” is not enough for a prosperity manifestation. (Philippians 4:19) Sowing and reaping **MUST** be engaged in for a harvest to come forth. (2 Cor. 9:6-10) An action is required!

Believing that “by His stripes I was healed” is not enough. (1 Peter 2:24) There will have to be some sort of

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action involved for healing to manifest. Action is seen over and over in the ministry of Jesus where healing is concerned. Some kind of action will be required! Sometimes it could be the action of changing unbelieving words and substituting them with faith words in line with the healing that Jesus provided for us. Sometimes the Lord may lead you to have someone come into agreement with you in your petition of healing, other times He may want you to ask the elders of the church to pray the prayer of faith for you and anoint you with oil. (Matthew 18:19-20, James 5:14, 15) Action will be required of you to hook into the provision of healing! We will say more about the action of faith in later chapters.

Is DOING righteousness a clearly taught requirement for the believer in the New Testament, or are we just "barking up the wrong tree"?

If you know that He is righteous, you know that every one that practices righteousness is born of Him. 1John 2:29 (NKJV)

You cannot tell if a person is actually born of Him (born again) by what they say they believe, or even by what they think they know, but only by what they practice. This blows many holes into traditional thinking, and even into the thinking of those that believe "you are righteous in Christ" even if you live like the devil's children. It is time to go further in teaching than the "legality" of being the righteousness of God in Christ (Romans 3:22-25) and get into teaching the Body of Christ to PRACTICE righteousness!

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Paul taught this same truth in Romans 6. He taught that we are to yield our members (our body and all associated with it) to righteousness and not to sin. Righteousness must be practiced as a living reality now that you are, legally speaking, in Christ through the new birth!

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?... For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. Romans 6:16-19 (NKJV)

The next verse in 1 John cuts through all the wrong ideas of many.

Little children, let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.
1John 3:7

People have been deceived into thinking that they are righteous in Christ and that nothing else will ever be required of them IN HIM. Not according to this verse! The New King James Version also translates 1John 3:7 as “practices” righteousness though others simply state it as “does” righteousness. The bottom line is that we MUST DO or practice righteousness according to these verses. Take a look at some other verses along the same

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line of teaching in Revelation 22:11, 19:8, Matthew 6:1, Luke 1:6, and James 2:20-24.

People believe that they are the righteousness of God in Christ and think that is all Jesus requires of them. They think that to “just believe” is all that is required. Doing and practicing righteousness is much more than “just believing” that you are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

Often, sanctification, holiness, and purity are seen only from the viewpoint of what we have been made in Christ Jesus through the new birth. In Christ Jesus we were legally washed, sanctified, and made holy through what Jesus did for us through His great sacrifice. (1Cor. 6:11, Hebrews 10:10, 14) That happened to us in the new birth, but there is more. *The apostle Paul goes on to teach the vital and living side of walking in the holiness, purity, and sanctification as a daily lifestyle.* Paul reminds the church of Thessalonica of the warning he gave them previously; that those that defraud a brother (or sister) in doing things contrary to purity, holiness and sanctification, the Lord is the avenger in those situations. (1Thess. 4:1-8)

Does the Lord require more of us? YES HE DOES! We are commanded by the Lord through the apostle Paul that we should also live righteously and live godly lives!

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus. Titus 2:11-13

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NASB

Let me give you another two translations. They all say the same thing but use slightly different words.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.
Titus 2:11-13 NIV

For God has revealed his grace for the salvation of all people. That grace instructs us to give up ungodly living and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this world, as we wait for the blessed Day we hope for, when the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ will appear. Titus 2:11-13 GNT

These verses reveal that once we make Jesus the Lord of our lives, we are to live a lifestyle of consistent faithfulness to Him. We are to live righteously and have Godly lives and say, "NO" to worldly passions! *According to Paul, a Bible based grace message teaches and instructs you to live right.* Paul taught this truth under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As we progress in this study you will see why this is so important.

Mark these verses in your Bible. This is vital information that will keep you grounded in the truth! If the "grace" message you are hearing does not teach you

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to give up ungodly living and worldly passions, and if it is not instructing you that because you have received salvation by grace through faith that you MUST now as a believer live godly, self-controlled, and righteously, then it is a false grace message. Examine and compare what you are being taught at your church, or what you are hearing through preachers on TV. Does what they teach conform to this? If it does not, then it is a false message of “grace.” Don’t believe it!

Jesus statement in John 15:7 is a revelation of what the Lord Himself requires of us. It is not a “Sunday” faith. It is not the faith of “once in a while” or of convenience. The kind of faith that gets results in the kingdom of God is not the faith of a mere belief system, but it is a faith produced by the consistency of life of the faithful in Christ Jesus! Jesus is looking for faithfulness in His declaration of “abide in me.” (See these other references on “faithfulness”: Mat. 25:45, Luke 16:10-12, 19:17, 1 Cor. 4:2, and Rev. 2:10.)

Jesus is asking the question, "Are you presently abiding in me?" Having a one-time faith of, "I was born again and accepted Jesus as Lord of my life," is not enough in His book! A partial faith of, "I asked Jesus into my heart years ago but really don't live for Him now" is not enough for Jesus. He is looking for a living and active faith right now! He is looking for those committed to doing His Words right now! These are the ones that love Him. These get answers to their prayers! Those that do not do His Words do not love Him at all regardless of how much they sing and talk about “loving” Him! Did you know that?

Chapter 3: Faith and Manifested Love

He that has my commandments and keeps (obeys and does) them, it is he who loves me. And he who loves me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, and what has happened that you are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep (obey, do) my Word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and we will make our home with him. He who does not love me does not keep (obey, do) my Words; and the Word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. John 14:21-23

Did Jesus actually say this? Yes He did! Then why do a growing number of people today teach a theology that is contrary to this? Do you think Jesus was plain enough? He didn't stutter when He made these statements. The ones that truly love Him will keep or obey and do His words. If you don't do His Word, then you don't love Him, the Father will not manifest His love towards you, and Jesus and Father will not abide or make their home with you! Ouch! Tell the Lord that you love Him, but never do what He says, and He will not believe a word of it! The *manifested* love of the Father will only be upon those that keep, observe, and do His words! Again, reread what Jesus said.

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Some have the idea, "Oh, God loves you no matter what you do." He does love you, but there is another Bible side to the equation according to Jesus. It is true that He demonstrated His love for mankind through the awesome sacrifice of Jesus while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:6-9) It is true that He loves us right now just like you would love your child even when they mess up. (Ps. 103:13) He knows we don't get everything right and miss it. *He loves us in spite of our mistakes and sins, but not because of them.* He does not love our sin or unrighteousness! If we are to have His love **manifested** in our lives, according to Jesus, we MUST observe, keep, obey, and do His words. Again, I am just telling you what Jesus said. Do you agree with Jesus in His Word?

*The **manifested** love of God in your life as an individual is conditional according the statement of Jesus in John 14:21-23! Don't give up and keep reading!*

Notice that I said, according to the words of the Master, that God's **manifested** love is conditional and not His love as such. Generally speaking, He loves all His kids, whether good, bad or indifferent. If His love is going to be **manifested** in your life, that is a different story. It will depend on whether you are a doer of His words or not. Jesus said that! I know this goes very contrary to much of the "unconditional love" many are preaching, but Jesus should know the truth on this subject. What do you believe? Do you think He was right? There is no question He was absolutely right because He is THE truth. (John 14:6) Yes, His love is unconditional in the sense that it is available to everybody, everywhere, and at all times, but in order for

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His love to be *manifested* towards you, obedience to His Words is required. Here is an example we can all relate to. Remember that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, BUT it is only those that believe on Him that get any *manifestation* of that love so they don't perish and have everlasting life! (John 3:16)

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. James 1:22 (NKJV)

We must be doers of His word and not mere hearers so we are not self-deceived. Many have been deceived into thinking they are OK with God as long as they go to church and have made a confession of their faith in Jesus at some point in their lives. They think that as long as they are members in good standing and were baptized that they have it made in the shade! They are self-deceived if they are not DOERS of the Word, and they DO NOT love the Lord according to statement of the Master Himself! I know this is tough, but it is in your Bible just like it's in mine!

Jesus is looking for those that abide in His love by walking in love towards those around them. This love is NOT a love of words only but in deed (actions) and in truth! (1John 3:17, 18, John 15:7-12) Jesus loved people by ministering to the needy and the sick. He did something! He brought God's Word, healing, wholeness, deliverance and provision to them in His compassion, and we are to do the same in His Name. (Mark 16:15-18)

Let's address the second part of His preconditions to "ask what you will" in John 15:7. Jesus said, "*And my Words abide in you.*" The remaining, enduring, abiding

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Word of God in us is our foundation for any promise of God or prayer to Him, but we MUST be active doers and not hearers alone as we have seen. (James 1:22) It is not enough to know the verses. It is not enough to hear and hear God's Word thinking that is all that is required to have faith. Real hearing, scripturally speaking, will always lead to doing or you didn't hear it right! James was talking about hearers that heard the Word and it went in one ear, and they let what they heard leave them out the other ear.

In Hebrew, the word hearing (*shama*) means that you are led to obey what you hear. It is the disobedient that really don't hear. That is the way Paul, Jesus, and the other New Testament writers often used the word "hearing." When they quote from the Hebrew Scripture, this is what "hearing" or "to listen" is referring to. (Here are a few examples; Matthew 13:13-15, Romans 10:14-18, 1Corinthians 2:9, Hebrews 3:7-19) "Shama" was and is a powerful concept in Hebrew that has often been lost in translation.

This why Jesus said 7 times to the 7 churches in the book of Revelation chapters 2 and 3, **"If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."** He was speaking about this hearing that leads to obedience. Did He get across His point? Please take the time to study this because it is an often overlooked truth.

Chapter 4: Faith in God's Will and Direction

We must be assured and established concerning God's will by His written Word, but we must also do what we learn from His Word.

We must not allow His Word to depart from our mouths and meditate in it day and night if we are to have success in the things of God. (Joshua 1:8, Psalms 1:1-3, Prov. 4:20-24) Go and read Joshua 1:8 and note that not letting the Word (His law) depart from our mouths and meditating on His Word was to lead us to do His Word!

Something is supposed to happen and be evident in your life if you practice His Word. Let me say it another way: *Something will be evident in your life if you practice His Word!* A doer begins to line up their whole life with what God says in His Word. The Word becomes their rule for living and acting. It becomes what they practice on a daily basis.

You cannot have any kind of a solid foundation in God's Word by hearing alone. Get this straight right now! Many have heard and heard the Word for years but they don't do it, and they are deceived. True hearing must be accompanied by doing His Word.

Jesus said that it is hearing AND DOING the Word that lays your foundation upon a solid rock. (Luke 6:46-49) Hearing but not doing means that you have NO foundation according to Him. (See also Matthew 7:24-27.) Again, this is why many pray but never get answers to their prayers, and then they blame God for their failure to receive. If it was provided by Jesus, and if it is

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in the promises of God, then I can have it in my life because that is the will of God for me, but I must truly hear and do the Word! These are the Lord's requirements for answered prayer! Are you starting to see why so many pray and get nothing?

What about if what I am praying about is not directly answered in the Word, as for example, where to live, where to work, what church to go to, whom to marry, what to invest in, ministry, and so on? That is when we must pray in the Spirit in other tongues and find out the "specific" will of God for our lives. (1 Cor. 14:2, 4, 13, 14, Rom. 8:26, Jude 1:20) We must be led by the Holy Spirit in the unspecified areas of life. (Rom. 8:14, 16) Let me tell you what I mean with some examples.

The general will of God that is revealed in His Word for marriage is the union of one man to one woman as it was in the original creation. (Genesis 2) There can be no doubt about this once you know what the Word says.

A homosexual marriage is forbidden by the fact that it violates the union of one man and one woman. As you may have heard, "In the beginning God created them Adam and Eve, NOT Adam and Steve!" Homosexuality is called an abomination to God and was punishable by death. (Leviticus 20:13) It is sin from any and every angle. No part of a homosexual lifestyle can be accepted and called OK. Romans 1:27-32 calls homosexuality everything from reprobate and perversion to wickedness.

An open marriage (where either partner is free to have sex outside of the confines of the marriage) is forbidden because any sexual contact by a married person with someone outside their marriage is called

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adultery. (Lev. 20:10) Adultery was a sin punishable by death just like homosexuality.

How about a polygamist marriage? It was clearly forbidden by Jesus when He taught that the right answer to the question about marriage and divorce is found by going back to God's original creation and design; ONE man married to ONE woman. (Matthew 19:4-9) The apostle Paul taught the same thing in Ephesians 5:21-33.

Polygamy was allowed in most of the ancient cultures of the Bible, and it was allowed for a time in ancient Israel. In Deuteronomy 17:17, there is a rebuke about kings multiplying wives. If you don't believe it is a serious breach of God's original intention with dire consequences, ask Abraham about Ishmael, Solomon about his harem, and see what it got them! Polygamy was a practice that developed along with polytheism, but it was never God's original plan or His original design, according to the book of Genesis chapter 2, and Jesus, and Paul in the New Testament. By the time of Jesus, men in Israel had been practicing monogamy for a very long time and polygamy was rejected and banned. The rabbinic authorities had long come to the conclusion that God's will was ONE man and ONE woman just like when God created Adam and Eve.

The Bible also has much to say about the treatment of the husband and the wife, the raising of children, and so on.

These are all the general will of God, but specifically speaking, the Bible does not tell sister "doodad" to marry "brother so and so"! That will have to be found out in prayer by both parties from the Lord, and

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there is going to have to be agreement! Both parties will have to be assured of God's personal will for their lives.

Once I know the will of God in a certain area of my life that is not specifically addressed in Scripture, then I can pray with confidence and receive an answer to my prayers in these areas, just like I can for the areas where I do have specific promises of the Lord. (1John 5:14, 15)

Even in areas that are revealed in Scripture as the will of God for our lives, like healing, divine protection, and prosperity (3John 2, Mat. 6:33 8:17, 1Peter 2:24, Psalms 91:1-16, 2Corinthians 8:9, 9:6-12), there may be specific instructions from the Lord at times in what we must do in order to receive. Obedience to His instruction is ALWAYS required! Mary said concerning what Jesus would instruct, "**Whatever He says to you do it!**" (John 2:5)

A good example is in the area of divine protection from accidents and tragedies according to Psalms 91. The general will of God is that we be protected from harm and an early grave. He wants to satisfy us with long life and fulfill the number of our days. (Psalms 91:16) We should fulfill the plan of God by running the race that is set before us! (Hebrews 12:1) That is the general will of God for all His people. This is true regardless of whatever wonderful saints of God you may know that died tragically. The will of God was, and is, that they do not leave this planet as the result of some work of the enemy that snuffed out their life and they never get to finish doing all that God intended for them to do. According to your faith it will done for you in this area just like in any other area of the promises of God that you stand on by faith.

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Let's say that one believes strongly in God's divine protection because it is our provision in Christ Jesus. Psalms 91 belongs to "whosoever" will believe it!

You plan a ministry trip to some country on such and such a day and time. You get to the airport and something begins to scratch at you on the inside. For some reason you begin to feel like you should not get on that flight to "Hunga-Hunga." (It's a fictional name folks because as far as I know, there is no place on earth with this name!) The closer the time gets for take-off, the more focused the "scratching" or prompting becomes.

You finally say to yourself, "Wait a minute. Maybe the Lord is giving me a warning not to get on this flight." You keep thinking about it, and now you begin to reason with yourself: 'A lot of planning has gone into this. People are expecting me in "Hunga-Hunga" today. It's all been arranged. The first meeting is the night after I get there and they expect a record turn-out. I have a responsibility. Maybe it's the devil trying to stop me from going today.'

After some more reasoning, seating begins to be called to board the plane. You finally convince yourself it's the devil, and you rebuke him.

You conclude by saying, "After all, I believe in the divine protection of Psalms 91. I'll be protected by the angels on this flight. It was all just the devil trying to get me scared. I'm going, and I don't care what I feel scratching at me on the inside."

So the dear saint of God gets on the plane and off they go into the wild blue yonder. What nobody knew in the natural was that the engines were going to have a catastrophic failure and the plane would go down and

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crash into the side of a mountain killing all 300 passengers, including our dear saintly one in the Lord.

It all happens so quickly that, suddenly, the dear saintly one finds that they are in heaven, and they see Jesus. The dear, wonderful, saintly one that so loved the Lord, and had served Him unceasingly for 40 years, asks the Master, “Why did I die in that crash? You know how strongly and firmly I believed in Psalms 91. Was it your will I die before my time and not fulfill my mission?”

Jesus answered and said with tears in His eyes, “I wanted you to live a long and productive life. I had great plans for you in the years ahead.”

The saintly one asks in bewilderment, “Lord, I believed in you and always have trusted in you for my protection. I know you protected me from many potentially dangerous situations. Why then did I die if you wanted me to live on?”

Jesus answered the dear saint, “All those times in the past you obeyed me and I helped you. I tried to tell you at the airport today that there was danger and tragedy ahead for that flight, but you wouldn’t listen! You disobeyed me so I couldn’t help you this time.”

On the other side, on the earth, after the tragic death of this great saint of the Lord, people begin to dream up all kinds of reasons as to why the saintly one died early, but they are dumb and lame excuses. Everything from, “it must have been the will of God” to “you just never know what God will do,” and all the unbelief in between was reasoned!

The truth was and is that a spiritual law was violated by this dear one in our story. What was violated? The saintly one of the Lord had faith in God’s Word and

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even had a consistent faith in God's divine protection and the ministry of His angels given charge concerning us so that we don't dash our foot against a stone. The dear follower of Jesus understood authority over the devil (treading on lions, snakes- cp. to Luke 10:19) and even rebuked the devil from the situation but the tragedy still happened. (All of these statements are based on Psalms 91.) People knew this about this saintly one of the Lord and heard this person preach and teach on it many times, but they still died tragically.

This is where people get mixed up. Instead of agreeing with the Word in Psalms 91, regardless of any experience, they make the experience their official Bible interpreter. They begin to add an "if" or a "maybe" into Psalms 91 and they slide into fables and old wives tales as Paul called them.

The principle that was violated was that Jesus, by the Holy Spirit, gave the person in our example a specific instruction to prevent the tragedy from happening, but it was disregarded, so there was disobedience to a divine direction. In this case, disobedience cost them their life! The principle that was violated was the principle of the guidance and leading of the Holy Spirit into ALL truth. (John 16:13, Rom. 8:14) The Lord showed the saintly one the truth about the situation but they refused to obey and change the flight.

This person also never asked the Lord if it was a warning from Him. Did you notice that in our story? This godly person in the story should have inquired of the Lord right then as to whether this "scratching" or prompting on the inside was the Holy Spirit telling the brother or sister to stay off the flight or not.

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These are the violations of divine principles that you rarely hear about because only the Lord sees them, and God may show them to someone else, like to me and to others, for the purpose of teaching.

Personally, I have seen supernatural protection from harm on the other side. I have been aware of God's supernatural leading and guidance that kept me from tragic accidents. I believed His Word of divine protection, but I have also obeyed His leading and changed my plans when necessary in order to stay (ABIDE!) in His protection! I did not just "say" of the Lord that He is my refuge and fortress. I also made the decision to abide under the shadow of the almighty. I was ABIDING in Him! (Psalms 91: 1-3) Are you seeing how this ties to the teaching of Jesus in John 15:7?

When His leading came, faith also came at the same time to act in obedience, and I responded quickly. That is not the time to reason. It is the time to inquire further of the Lord and get ready to change any plan to conform to His leading and guidance because that is also His will.

Whatever is born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith.

1John 5:4

OUR FAITH must be based on God's Word in order to live the overcoming lifestyle, but we must also be led by the Spirit as we stand on His Word so the Holy Spirit can lead and guide us into victory on every front.

Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. Is faith important? Is the world going through a bunch of junk today? You know they are. Everything is in a state

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of flux and in great turmoil. The world doesn't know which way to turn and what they can do.

Jesus said that in the world we would have tribulation. He said we should be of good cheer because He had overcome the world. (John 16:33) Yes, the world has a truckload of tribulation that it wants to lay down on our doorsteps, and frankly, it wants to shove it down our throats. Are we to bear all their mess like good little troopers because there is really nothing that can be done about it? There may be nothing we can do from having the tribulation come our way, but there is a whole lot that Jesus did to overcome the world that brings it! He overcame it and 1John 5:4 says that the victory that overcomes the world is OUR FAITH! He defeated hell, death and the grave and passed on that marvelous and glorious victory to us! (2Corinthians 2:14, 1 Cor. 15:57)

Even when tribulation comes, if we will listen to Him, and use the shield of faith that "quenches" or puts out the fiery darts of the wicked (Ephesians 6:10-18), then we can stop tribulation before it can become a stronghold against us. (2Corinthians 10:3-5) We can actually put out the "fire" of the enemy's tribulation before it can cause damage in our world. If you don't believe that then just allow the enemy to tear up your life and do "damage control" after he pours on the tribulation. That is not fun and can actually be a dangerous place for the believer! Truthfully, operating in "damage control," after the fact, is the reason many believers have checked out early from this life and gone to heaven long before they have finished their mission on the earth.

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I prefer to never let the devil go there! I chose to stop him in the Name of Jesus before he can tear up my stuff in any realm upon this earth! I just see it starting to go in the wrong direction and I take authority over it in the Name of Jesus and put the devil in his place, UNDER my feet! (Ephesians 1:19-23) I haven't been perfect in this area, and nobody has other than Jesus, but we should be getting better at it every day!

This kind of faith I am now referring to is what some churches and ministers that live in doubt and unbelief have labeled an "extreme faith" or "super faith" teaching. Call it whatever you want, but it will work for you or anybody else according to however far they are willing to take their faith in the matter.

Come on, read Hebrews 11 and look at the astounding possibilities of faith! Read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and look at all the "extreme" and "super" healings, miracles of protection, signs and wonders! One thing resonates like thunder and lightning throughout the Biblical text: "Is there anything too hard for our God?" (Jeremiah 32:17, 27) The problem is not with our God and His ability to protect or deliver us supernaturally. Jesus said that ALL things are possible to the person that believes. (Mark 9:23) The problem is; what will you believe in the situation?

Did you know that Jesus taught an "extreme" or "super" faith! Study what He said about it and see if it was not extreme to the max. (Mark 11:22-24, Luke 17:5, 6, Mark 16:17, 18, Mark 9:23, Mathew 21:22, etc.) Many deny these "extreme" possibilities of faith because they have been lied to by tradition and by people that have no faith in a supernatural God. What will you

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believe? How far are you willing to take His divine protection in all realms of life? (Psalms 91:1-16) According to the measure you use to measure, it will be measured unto you again. (Mark 4:24) Believe and trust little and get little. Believe and trust much and get much more in operation and manifestation!

Faith activates this great victory that Jesus provided for us through His sacrifice and His defeat of hell, death, and the grave, and it puts us on the winning side. We are winners! Faith overcomes the world and anything it can throw our way. Faith wins in all realms spiritual and physical. Do you believe it? Should we be more interested in faith? Yes, we should be! Is faith important? What we are studying should leave no doubt as to its importance!

Some have laid all mention of faith aside. Others have exchanged faith for the doctrines of men and unbelief. Some have relegated faith to a subject that we don't really need to address much anymore because "today is a new day" and we should only be concerned about "present truth." They mean by this "present truth" idea that teaching faith is an "old" truth and that their revelation is what we should believe above everything else today because it is "newer" truth. That is a lie!

Nothing in the Scripture has changed and it is still IMPOSSIBLE to please God without faith! (Heb. 11:6) If it is impossible to please God without operating in faith, then, in my book, it is impossible for the message and teaching of faith to ever go out of style or to be sidelined! I want to please God with everything in me. Do you want to please Him too? Then never sideline faith or put it up on a shelf as yesterday's "revelation."

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The message and teaching of faith is a very present truth (2 Peter 1:12), extremely relevant to our lives today, because FAITH is the victory that overcomes the world!

Besides all that, let us put faith into perspective for you. God created the worlds by using His faith. (Heb. 11:3) Until you or I can do the same, then we have a lot more we can learn about it! Until you can create the next universe, I think you can stand to learn more about faith.

I have spent some years (since 1975) studying on the subject of faith. Just recently, the Lord said to me, "I am going to teach you some more about faith." That will keep you humble. I recognize that after so many years I may know (maybe) a drop in the ocean of the wealth that is the faith of God. Yes, Lord Jesus! Keep teaching me and keep teaching the Body of Christ about faith! Jesus asked, "When the Son of man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) Will you yell it at the top of your lungs with me? "YES!!!!" Yes Lord Jesus, you will find our faith on the earth when you come!

Chapter 5: Faith and Unbelief

We have been seeing important revelations that are connected vitally to faith. This is something we will continue to do because we want to be in position to receive from God. As they say in Texas, this teaching will “jerk the slack out of you.” It will strengthen those areas where faith has been weak and put you on the winning side. That is our purpose!

Jesus said to the woman that had the issue of blood:

"Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be whole from your plague." Mark 5:34

Faith in God and His Word has the power to heal and deliver you just like it has the power to save you and protect you from tragedy! Though this woman received healing through her faith, the same principles of faith function in the same way when receiving any of God's promises. So remember this as we look at this woman's faith and the faith of others.

This woman had faith in the healing power that was operating in the life of Jesus to heal. She believed it and laid hold of it by faith. Jesus said, "Have faith in God." (Mark 11:22) This woman demonstrated for all time how faith in God works for healing or for anything else. The same principles will work in any area of life.

Jesus did not say that His faith made the woman well. Jesus was the one anointed by the Holy Spirit and power to heal and deliver people. (Acts 10:38) Healing power was on Jesus, but faith was the essential

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ingredient that produced a manifestation of it in the woman's body. Jesus was anointed to minister to people, but that anointing was NOT always active, even though He had been anointed by God to heal. (Luke 4:18) How do we know all this, and can we prove it? Notice that this woman received the power of God when she touched His garment. What was the response of Jesus?

...Hearing about Jesus, coming in the crowd behind Him, she touched His garment. For she said, "If I may but touch His garments, I will be cured." And instantly the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she knew in her body that she was healed of the plague. And knowing instantly within Him that power had gone forth out of Him, turning in the crowd, Jesus said, "Who touched my garments?" And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing on you, and do you say, "Who touched me"?"
Mark 5:25-34

Jesus wanted to know where the touch came from that caused healing power to flow out of Him. The power was present for healing, in and on Him, but it was inactive until this woman touched Him in faith. Many others were touching Him because He was in the middle of a crowd of people that were "pressing" on Him. That means that a lot of people made physical contact with Jesus, yet nothing happened.

No healing power went out of Him based on only a physical touch.

So many think like this: "Oh if Jesus was here in the flesh, and I could touch Him, then I could get healed."

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Not according to this portion of Scripture. It took more than a physical touch to receive the power of God for healing.

Some have said, "Jesus come by here and touch my fevered brow." Then there is the old, "Put your hand in the hand of the man that stilled the waters," etc. They imply that they are looking for a physical touch thinking that will get the healing.

You can put your hand in the hand of Jesus all day and still get nothing.

Why? It is not the physical touch that gets the healing power to flow! It takes faith to get one out of the realm of a physical contact alone that can do nothing for you and into contact with healing and delivering power flowing into you and driving out sickness and disease.

Jesus said it was her faith that tapped into God's healing power. If ANYONE will follow the same steps of faith that this woman followed, then they can also receive from the Lord because God is no respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34) That means that He does not distinguish between one person and the next based on race, color, creed, religious background, etc. He has a non-discriminatory policy towards people. White, Black, Yellow, Red, Brown, "green" or "blue". God doesn't care at all about the color of your skin! He never has and never will. He doesn't judge anybody by whether they are rich, poor, fat or skinny! He doesn't judge you by whether you are brilliant or a little slow. None of that will ever determine His love, compassion, mercy, grace, or power towards you.

Even though He never distinguishes between folks in that way, God does distinguish between faith and

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unbelief. (Read the entirety of Hebrews 3 and 4) Jesus, the Father in Heaven, and the Holy Spirit on the earth do distinguish between little faith, great faith, and NO faith! Look at these:

Little faith- Matthew 14:31, 6:30, 16:8

Great faith- Matt. 8:10, 15:28

No faith- Luke 8:25.

The Lord recognizes degrees of faith! The only kind of faith that really blessed Him and was commended by Him was GREAT faith. LITTLE and NO faith gave Him no pleasure and received no commendation from Him. Actually little and no faith displeased Him!

GREAT faith is not some unattainable thing at all. All of us can have great faith like the centurion and the Canaanite woman had. It is the same kind of faith Abraham had as described by Paul in Romans 4:17-23. We are all to have and walk in that same level of faith on a daily basis! This means that it is not difficult to reach. It must be easy. (Matthew 11:29, 30) It will be easy if we will just function in it His way and not go about trying to figure it out on our own. It is very easy if you have the right commitment to the Lord Jesus and His Word and you refuse to quit. That is another purpose for this book. In it we are pointing out the basic principles of faith we all must function in on a daily basis.

Jesus was God manifested in the flesh. (John 1:14) He and the Father were (and are) One. (John 10:30) He that had seen Him had seen the Father. (John 14:9) Jesus also said that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in His name, as His personal representative. (John 14:26) So, Jesus was speaking on behalf of God at all times and came to do ONLY His will and the Holy Spirit was sent

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to do the same on His behalf. (John 3:34, 14:10, 6:38, 39, 15:26, 16:13-15) Whatever He said and did was exactly what the Father would have said and done, and it is exactly what the Holy Spirit will say and do.

God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Lord Jesus do not discriminate against anyone because of any natural condition or the color of their skin, as we have explained, but God does discriminate deeply concerning faith! God is VERY partial to faith. He does profoundly discriminate against unbelief. He is VERY prejudiced against doubt and unbelief because these are called sin, hardness of heart and rebellion in Romans 14:23 and Hebrews 3:7-15, 19. An evil heart of unbelief will withdraw from the living God. (Heb. 3:12) Unbelief will keep people out of God's best for them. (Heb. 3:19)

God does see our faith and it pleases Him when we act in faith. (Hebrews 11:6, Luke 5:20, James 2:26) As those that are justified (made righteous in the Blood of Jesus) children of God in Christ, we are to live by our faith.

The just will live by faith. Romans 1:17 (Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38, Habakkuk 2:4)

To "live" by faith does not mean that you received Jesus as Lord by faith at some past point in your life and that nothing else is ever required out of your faith. It does not say "lived" in the past tense. "Live" is stated in the continuous present. Living by faith is supposed to be a 24/7 way of life and not a one-time event!

Chapter 6: A Living Faith and Redemption in Christ

Jesus said, **“Have faith in God.”** (Mark 11:23) God is the Source of every good and perfect gift of grace. (James 1:17) We saw that in chapter one. The marvelous riches of His grace that He provided through the awesome sacrifice of Jesus can only be accessed through faith. (Romans 5:2, Ephesians 2:4-8) We are studying these mighty truths and seeing important elements within them.

1 Timothy 1:4 in the NET translation says, **“...God’s redemptive plan that operates by faith.”** Faith is what accesses any part of our redemption in Christ Jesus. Faith is what makes it work for our benefit. Without a living faith in operation, the redemption provided for us in Christ Jesus will be of no avail to you or me. An active or living faith causes the redemption in Christ to operate for you and me! Faith receives the promises (Gal. 3:14), the grace (Rom. 5:17), and the power of God (Mark 5:34). Faith activates God’s power to heal and deliver; a vital truth proven to us by the woman that had the issue of blood. (Mark 5:25-34) We believe God’s Word on the subject! Receiving from God in any realm is based on faith. It always has been and it always will be so!

Let’s see this verse again because it answers many questions as to WHY people pray but receive nothing.

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But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. James 1:6, 7 (NKJV)

Here is another verse in James that further clarifies the WHY some people do not receive.

You have not, because you do not pray; or you pray and yet do not receive, because you pray wrongly, your object being to waste what you get on some pleasure or another. James 4:2b, 3 (Weymouth)

Some get nothing simply because they do not make a petition in prayer! Others pray and get nothing because their motives are wrong! God does want you to enjoy life to the fullest (1Timothy 6:17-19, John 10:10), but you cannot use what He gives you for the wrong reasons or with the wrong motives.

Could you imagine some Christian praying for the Lord to supply them with a certain amount of money so they could pay off their credit card and go gamble at the casino? How about the Christian that prays for healing for their leg so they can go dancing at the club and get drunk without stumbling too badly? How about a brother or sister in the Lord that prays that something bad will happen to another person because they were crossed by them? James goes on to tell these people with wrong motives, and the prideful that will simply not pray, that they are spiritual adulterers and adulteresses, sinners, or apostates! That is a strong rebuke! I wonder how many churches ever preach about that subject.

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Some teach that when the verses in James 4 tells believers that have strayed from the faith that they are sinners and need to cleanse their hands because of wrong motives and pride, that this does not apply to the church today because we are in Christ and there is no condemnation to you according to the teaching of Paul in Romans 8:1. People that believe this have missed the fact that James was writing to his brethren in Christ Jesus when he taught this! (James 1:2) James was not teaching anybody that didn't legally belong in the Church in his epistle! He was teaching born again people! James chapter 4 is a dire warning to Christian brethren that stray from the truth and begin to act and live like sinners in the world!

James chapter 4 is teaching Christians that you can't adhere to the principle of prayer and at the same time violate the principles of God's Word where righteous conduct and holy morality are concerned.

Many have downplayed this aspect of the Gospel message with a watered down version that is a perversion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Some don't even recognize that this is a part of the gospel message taught by Paul and the rest of the apostles to all believers in Christ Jesus. They will not preach a message of personal responsibility and holiness because they want to please everybody, and because they don't want to "rock the boat." God forbid that some member would get angry at their message and leave the church; after all, we know how much we need their money to keep the lights on and pay the bills! Churches and leadership that follow that "seeker friendly" route need to repent of their spiritual adultery and fornication.

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James is teaching us that no one can expect answers to their prayers and live like the devil at the same time because that will never work. The FIRST thing a person living like the devil must do is not pray that the Lord get them a better job or a new car! The FIRST thing this person that is living like the devil must do is repent and straighten up their relationship with the Lord before they ever come with some petition of healing, protection, or provision! SUMBITTING TO GOD must always come FIRST before we are able to resist the devil so he flees from us! (James 4:7) First things first!

I didn't write all that out of my head you know. I am simply restating the spiritual principles taught by James in this powerful fourth chapter. Check it out.

We need more preachers on the air waves that are not afraid of preaching against sin and that are for holiness, righteous living, and truth in the Christian life. When people awake to this living and vital side of righteousness, together with the legal side of who we are in Christ Jesus as the righteousness of God, they will keep themselves from sin! (1Cor. 15:34) Watered down versions of the gospel avoid talking about these subjects. People often think they may be "offensive" or too "harsh." They need to get out of the way of the truth. As people continue in His Word, the truth will make them free! (John 8:31, 32)

We need more preachers with the fire of the Holy Ghost on them that open their mouths and the conviction of the Holy Spirit melts the hearts of the most hardened sinner. We need more preachers that boldly proclaim a gospel of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues, healing, victory, and deliverance like

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Jesus and the early church did, and really don't care about what the critics, religious leaders, and what the news media thinks about it!

Early in this ministry I am called to, I remember one man that came to me for prayer because he was having some trouble with terrible nightmares. He asked for prayer to be delivered from this demon or demons that were making him have so many sleepless nights. We prayed for him and things escalated and even got worse. Soon it became apparent that there was some other problem. We found out that this Christian man was living under the same roof with a Christian woman outside of wedlock. They acted like they were married, she wore a wedding band, but they were living together as husband and wife and sleeping together while still unmarried. It was all a deception. They had the gall to think that God would just skip over the parts in the Bible that forbids sex outside of marriage and that the man could still get healed! The Bible calls all sex outside of wedlock fornication, yet they thought our prayers would get results anyway. Had I known the truth, that they were fornicators, I would never have prayed for them. I would have first led them to repentance. First things first! Repentance and submission to God is first, then you can resist the devil and he will flee! (James 4:7, 8)

Some years later, a woman asked me to pray for her boyfriend's healing. By this time, I was a little more seasoned in ministry. I asked her some questions and found out that her boyfriend was an unbeliever. She had no business making such a request based on that fact alone. To make things much worse, the man was already married! This was beyond brassy. How could people be

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so blind! Needless to say, I refused to pray at all and told her to repent. She didn't repent because she was "so in love" and could not leave this man. She was in love all right, but with sin, fornication, and adultery! She was in love with the devil! Those that really love Jesus will DO what He says, and clearly this woman was not. (John 14:21-23 and 1John 3:8)

Some people think that God just loves everybody so much that He will just do anything for them regardless of their conduct or way of life. That is a very big, extremely fat, and pompous lie! God loved the world so much that He gave Jesus so we could believe on Him, but He does NOT love anything the world does or says, nor will He "let it slide" unless people repent.

Repentance is one of those marvelous Bible truths that some have minimized. The world is an enemy of God (James 4:4, 1John 2:15, 16), and God and Jesus HATE iniquity, sin, and unrighteousness. (Proverbs 6:16-19, Hebrews 1:9, Revelation 2:6, 15) They despise these things because they are completely contrary to God's nature and character, they are the very essence and nature of the enemy of God, and they will always lead to death and destruction. (Rom.6:23) In the same manner, we are taught to hate these evil things. The beginning of the fear of the Lord is to HATE evil. (Proverbs 8:13) Not knowing this is why some Christians succumb easily and frequently to sin. They have not been properly taught the fear of the Lord.

Some wrongly taught Christians think we should accept the world as it is because, "after all, Jesus taught love and acceptance and we should not be so critical of people's perverted lifestyles. You can even hear rank

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sinner voicing this travesty on TV: “Jesus taught love and acceptance and a Christian should tolerate the homosexual and lesbian lifestyle because if Jesus were here today He would have loved them any way.” I saw one TV interviewer bring this up and the foolish guest preacher just agreed with that perversion of the truth.

Get it straight once and for all: Jesus did not preach or teach “love and acceptance” of the world’s perversions, transgressions, and sins! Jesus preached repentance and obedience to God’s Word and the Gospel of the Kingdom!

Repentance is NEVER acceptance and tolerance of evil. Repentance is a complete rejection of sin and a change from darkness to light, from unrighteousness to righteousness, and from Satan to God. Actually, that is what Jesus commissioned Paul to do in His ministry. (Acts 26:14-18) He did not call Paul to preach some phony and lame message that excluded living in the light of God and in righteousness. We already saw Titus 2:12, 13 and that Paul himself taught that the true grace message will teach Christians to live righteously, godly, and self-controlled lives against the passions of the world.

What about the fact that true believers are supposed to be SALT and LIGHT in this world? (Matthew 5:13, 14) The way some believe today, they are anything but salt and light. They are super “sweet” and some shade of grey! Some of them are so “sweet” that it leaves a very bad taste in your mouth!

Did you ever eat or drink something that was so sweet that it made you cringe or get the shivers? One morning, I put enough sweeteners in my cup of coffee

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for, I think, a dozen cups. It was early in the morning and I was obviously still half-asleep when I made this mistake. When I tasted my piping hot cup of coffee, I was shocked awake, and I almost threw up because it was so repugnant. I spilled that cup of nasty coffee all over that table.

In one movie I saw years ago, someone was tied up in a chair ready to be brutally interrogated. The interrogator that was getting ready to beat the brains out of the person to be interrogated told another person in the room, "Go sweet talk him for me." That meant to "butter them up" for the beating they were going to get! Watch out for all the sweet talkers that are really full of envy, jealousy, and have the poison of an asp on their tongue! Proverbs talks about the flatterer and the sweet talker that uses their speech to manipulate you.

Away with all the phony sweetness and "sweet talk" that does nothing good for God! Give me some salt and light baby! We are supposed to be the standard that the world looks at and sees a marked difference in our walk and our talk. We are to shine brightly in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation! (Philippians 2:15) We are not called to blend or mesh with anything in the world that is perverse and crooked! We have NOTHING in common with anything perverse and crooked.

And so the Lord says, "You must leave them and separate yourselves from them. Have nothing to do with what is unclean, and I will accept you. I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Then, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all

defilements of flesh and of spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2Corinthians 6:17, 18, 7:1 (GNT)
(Read the entire passage beginning with 2 Cor. 6:14.)

The apostle Paul also taught about holiness and the fear of the Lord! These are subjects that must be revived in the thinking of many that are following a weak message that minimizes these things, and in some cases totally ignores them! I am talking to folks that desire manifestations of God in their lives!

What did Jesus actually preach and teach? Was He teaching “love and acceptance” of everybody’s perverted and crooked lifestyle? Here it is:

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent! For the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”
Matthew 4:17 (NKJV)

Has He changed today to exclude a real powerful and strong message of repentance? No way! After He was raised from the dead, He appears to John on the isle of Patmos and, in two chapters written to local churches, He speaks about repentance SIX times! (Rev. 2: 5, 16, 21, 22, 3:3, 19) Do you think repentance is a subject of importance in His thinking? “Oh, Jesus should have ministered grace, love, and acceptance. He should have been sweet to them. He was so harsh.” Yea, right!

Some (not all) think “grace” means you have a license to get away with sin.

“Oh, it’s OK dear heart because in His grace even your future sins are taken care of, so if you sin just go on and forget about it because there is no condemnation,”

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some are teaching brazenly. Have you heard this foolishness? It is a lie with enough truth mixed with it to fool many and poison them spiritually. That is the way the devil fools people. Usually, he does not come right out and lie. Sometimes he will even quote to you Scriptures taken out of context in order to present his lies. That is what he did to Jesus. (Matthew 4:1-10) In Genesis 3, the devil persuaded Eve to transgress by using a half truth.

To poison a rat, what do you do? Do you place pure strychnine in the strategic places or do you wrap the strychnine in cheese, meat, or peanut butter? It has to look, taste and smell good so the rat has no knowledge of the fact that it is being poisoned until it is too late! I have known people that have used this same method on numerous destructive critters. It got them every time.

This is what the devil does and is doing in the earth today. He has no respect for the human family and he hates everybody, but he especially has a deep hatred of believers. To him they are like a rat infestation. He thinks like this: "Give them enough truth mixed with a big, fat, juicy lie so that they swallow it hook, line, and sinker. As my dad used to say, "They even swallow the boat, the engine, and the fisherman in the boat!"

Yes, Jesus settled and solved the sin problem forever. (Hebrews 9:12, 26) Yes, His sacrifice did it all for us, but NOTHING in His sacrifice will do you any good automatically. It must be believed, received, and acted upon by a living faith. Let me quote it again:

...God's redemptive plan that operates by faith.
1Timothy 1:4 NET

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The redemptive plan ONLY operates by faith, regardless of what “Aunt Minnie” or “Uncle Bob” believes about it! This is what 1Timothy 1:4 tells us from the NET version based on the best Greek texts. The Greek word here is "oikonomia," and it is translated as "redemptive plan." Other versions translate it as "administration" or "dispensation," but as a New Testament term *oikonomia* refers to the full "plan of redemption" when it is used by Paul. See Eph. 3:9 where the word is translated as the secret "plan" which God had reserved, the great plan of redemption. (See also Eph. 1:10.) The redemption operates by faith but it is a living faith of right now being a doer of the Word and not a hearer only! (James 2:26, 1:22-25) Keep reading because you will see how all this connects powerfully.

Chapter 7: Faith's Responsibility and Accountability

In this chapter we take a further look into the responsibility and accountability of those claiming to have faith in the Lord Jesus and His Word. We could have kept strictly to teaching about the more “obvious” aspects of receiving by faith, but the Lord Jesus has impressed my spirit about dealing with other areas of our faith in Christ that are addressed less often. Ignorance or wrong teaching in these areas has led to prayer and faith failures. We want all the roadblocks to a productive faith to be removed. I desire that the Body of Christ have a powerful and explosive faith? Do you desire the same thing for your life personally? Then don't shrink back from this chapter. There are responsibilities that go along with your faith, and this is mainly what we will be looking at.

Here is a verse that many are using as an excuse today. We need to look at it closely in order to have our faith working correctly. Get ready for an adjustment in your thinking!

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1 (NASB)

Freedom from condemnation and understanding our rights and privileges in Christ is a very big deal if we are to have a productive faith. We must be condemnation free so that when we ask in prayer we KNOW that we

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will get answers to our prayers. (See 1 John 3:20-23.) Condemnation has robbed many people from exercising faith in God's Covenant provisions through Jesus. Satan brings condemnation or a guilty conscience over past sins, and sometimes over the ones you may commit after you get born again. He brings all kinds of feelings of unworthiness and unrighteousness. Even if you do sin as a believer, there is repentance and confession of sin that will cleanse you of ALL unrighteousness. (1John 1:9) The devil has no business bringing you any condemnation over any sin you have gotten rid of in the Blood of Jesus!

As long as you think you are not worthy to receive you will not receive. As long as you are carrying a guilty conscience then your faith will be feeble. Through the Blood and sacrifice of Jesus, you have been legally placed in a position of being right with God, and He sees you as worthy to take possession of all of His blessings and promises. That is LEGALLY true. This truth of our legal righteousness in Christ has been preached long and hard on many fronts. Great strides have been accomplished in this area over the last 50 years. Great books and many anointed teaching series are out there on the subject. The Body of Christ as a whole needs this revelation! It is an EXTREMELY important and relevant revelation for the Body of Christ. Even more preaching and teaching should be done about it.

In this book, I am taking a different approach than the legality of our righteous position before God through what Jesus did. I dedicated the entire book, "*The Story of our Great Redemption: Beyond Human Imagination*" to the legal provisions of the sacrifice of Jesus. This present

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book is looking at the living or vital side, the side of living in the now for Jesus because of what He did for us. Let's explore some more of the VITAL and LIVING side of our faith.

Though the best Greek texts do not have the second part of the verse in Romans 8:2, it is recorded in the Greek in verse 4b: **“Who do not walk after the flesh but after the Spirit.”** The NKJV includes the phrase in Romans 8:1 and verse 4. Other versions also include the phrase. It is a part of the context! So, we can't ever get cocky or prideful like some have and think that this is not a part of what Paul is teaching here.

For the sake of the ones that vigorously oppose including this phrase in Romans 8:1, I say that they need to read the rest of the verses in this chapter (especially verses 2- 9) before coming to faulty conclusions that have been taken completely out of context! Yes, there is no condemnation, but only if you stay in Christ Jesus, don't walk after the flesh but after the spirit, and don't set your mind on the things of the flesh that bring death, but on the things of the Spirit that bring life and peace! (Romans 8:1-9)

Unless you are prepared to say that there can be sin IN Christ Jesus, then you better read Romans 8:1 right. Jesus had sin in Him only once, and that was when He was made sin with our sin on the cross so we could be made the righteousness of God in Him. (2Cor. 5:21) Up until that moment on the cross, sin had never touched Him. (Heb. 4:15) He died with our sins and transgressions. (Isaiah 53:5, 1Peter 2:24) He defeated all of hell and was raised from the dead with an immortal body. (Col. 2:15, Heb. 2:14, 15, Rev. 1:18, Acts 2:27,

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31, Rom. 6:9, 10) Now He is in heaven, and it is impossible for sin to touch Him!

Only IN Christ Jesus can there be NO CONDEMNATION. If you sin, that places you temporarily OUTSIDE of being IN Christ Jesus as a living reality until you repent, confess your sin before the Father, and RECEIVE forgiveness of sins and cleansing from all unrighteousness which is in what He did for you through His awesome sacrifice. (1John 1:9) We prove it so keep reading. *I didn't say that you lose your salvation at that moment.* I said that you are placed temporarily outside of the IN CHRIST JESUS camp or status because you are not abiding in Him while in sin or unrighteousness. It is impossible to abide IN HIM and in sin at the same time! One will negate the other! Are we teaching some weird and unfounded doctrine or is this what the Bible says? The apostle John wrote:

And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and IN HIM there is no sin. No one that ABIDES IN HIM sins; no one who sins has seen Him or known Him. 1John 3:5, 6 (NASB)

The one abiding in sin is no longer ABIDING IN HIM and has been removed by sin from seeing and knowing Jesus as a vital reality. Again, I am not saying that their relationship with God has been broken and that this person loses their salvation at that moment. That is the “legal” side of our relationship with God. The legal side is that when I was born again I was placed in Christ Jesus legally; I became an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus. (2Corinthians 5:17, Romans 8:17) I am

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referring in this study to the vital or living side of the IN HIM truth, and the fact that sin takes you out of abiding or living in Him as a living reality.

There are a number of examples in the Hebrew Scriptures that point to this truth as a type and shadow. I don't have the space to study them here, but you can go back and study the references.

As one example, the leper was forced to live outside the camp of Israel until he received his healing, asked for a priest to confirm his healing, offered up the prescribed blood sacrifices, and had the blood sprinkled on him. After he followed all the instruction for his cleansing, then he was allowed back into the camp of Israel. (Leviticus 14) His leprosy placed him outside the camp until he came through the blood sacrifice.

This is exactly what happens to a believer that sins. The sin will take them out of the IN CHRIST JESUS camp as a vital reality, as a temporary situation, but it can be remedied by confession of sin and receiving the cleansing from all unrighteousness that has been provided in the Blood. This restores fellowship and the position of the believer inside the Christ Jesus camp as a living truth or reality.

Another example is what happened with Miriam, the sister of Aaron. Miriam was a firm believer and a prophetess when she was put outside the camp because of her sin. (Exodus 15:20, Numbers 12:1-15) She was still a member of the "church" of Israel, but she was in a temporary separation because of sin. She didn't have the mighty privilege we do in Christ. She had to wait for days before being allowed to return to the camp. We can come back into the Christ Jesus camp immediately if we

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will confess our sin and receive His cleansing from all unrighteousness as 1John 1:9 teaches us.

That may be a new thought for some, but to wrongly believe that once in Christ Jesus always in Christ Jesus regardless of the sin and transgression you commit, would mean that you can be IN HIM as a vital reality and be IN SIN at the same time. It would mean that you believe that sin is allowed and permissible in His Body. This would mean that sin (your or my sin) could exist IN Christ Jesus, and that is blasphemy and born of a spirit of error. No sin can ever exist in the resurrected Lord of Glory or in His Body. The Bible says that He is separated from sinners, undefiled and holy. (Heb. 7:26) Jesus is the righteous Advocate in heaven, and He can present Himself before the Father all the time, totally and absolutely sin-free. (1John 2:1) Sin can no longer touch Him! (1John 3:5) He is consecrated forevermore! (Heb. 7:28)

When Jesus presents His Body (the church) to Himself at the catching away of the Church from the earth (1Thessalonians 4:16-17), He will present to Himself a Body having no spot, wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:27) That means no active sin and no unrighteousness will be nor can be in His Body at the catching away of His church. Sin and unrighteousness are these spots and wrinkles. (Compare with 2Peter 2:13-15.) Does this tell us to live for Him in holiness as His temple everyday or what? (1Corinthians 3:16, 17, 6:19, 20) Obviously, this means that some calling themselves Christians will be left out at His appearing or catching away (1Thessalonians 4:16-18) because they are in the

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category of a blemish, wrinkle, or something like it. That is not a popular thought or teaching, I know, but it is the truth anyway. I didn't write these truths. I am only reporting them as the Lord has led me. There is too much fluff being taught and preached that is not preparing the people of God to meet the Lord at His coming. Do you remember the parable of the ten virgins; five that were wise and were prepared (ready) to meet the bridegroom and the five foolish one that were not prepared to meet their Lord were left out? (Matthew 25:1-13) A word to all the wise reading this should be sufficient. Get ready! The bridegroom (Jesus) is coming!

Don't misunderstand me and think that I am saying you have to be perfect to go in the catching away of the church. If that was the case, we would all get left behind! There is a marvelous truth we need to know here.

If we live in the light of God's Word that we have, then His blood will cleanse us from all unrighteousness, even when we don't know that we have sinned. (1John 1:5-10) This is not automatic though. It will ONLY work IF we walk in the light of God and His Word that we do have. This is a powerful truth and revelation. This is shouting grounds!

Jesus replied, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin, but now because you claim that you can see, your guilt remains." John 9:41

We are not held accountable by the Lord for what we don't have light on according to this verse. We are not guilty of sin that we don't see, know, or have light on. Only what you know and have light on will be what

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you are held accountable for before God. This is an important Bible principle.

So whoever knows what is good to do and does not do it is guilty of sin. James 4:17

Did you know this? You are only guilty of sin when you know something is right and good and yet will not walk in the light of it. If you truly do not know and have no light in an area of life then you are free of all guilt and sin! I am talking to believers now. That is good news of the divine protection in the Blood of Jesus IF we will walk in the light we have. What a glorious truth! As long as we stay in the light of God that we do have regardless of how much or little it may be, we have divine protection from sin in His blood. His Blood will keep you free from the sins that you know nothing about. Let's quote the verse in 1John 1 though we have given the reference previously.

But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 1John 1:7 (NKJV)

Folks, this is amazing grace news because none of us know it all! We do not have light on everything. We only know in part. (1Cor. 13:9) We probably sin often in a day and are not even aware of it because we only have a certain amount of knowledge and understanding. We all stumble in many ways. (James 3:2) Only God really knows all the ways we 'miss the mark' (one definition of

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sin) on a daily basis. Thank God that this should never be a concern for me as long as I continue to walk in the light of what I do know and understand. Talk about the grace and mercy of our loving Heavenly Father!

Is this not a great reason to walk in the light of God's Word that we do have day in and day out? Is this not a powerful reason to keep the switch of faith turned on 24/7 in what He accomplished for us through His great sacrifice sealed forever in His own precious blood? (Romans 3:21-26, Heb. 9:12)

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 1John 2:1-3

Thank God that we have an Advocate with the Father that, when we know that we have sinned, we can run to God and get free of any sin and get right under the Blood's protection once again! Only born again believers have this privilege. You have to legally be the righteousness of God in Christ to have access into this marvelous reality. Sinners do not have this gift of God's grace. You must have already believed in the cleansing power of His sacrifice (His Blood) for you from all unrighteousness for this to work for you. (See Romans 3:22-25.)

Once a person makes Jesus the Lord of their lives, then and only then, can they receive Jesus as their

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Advocate when they sin after they are born again. Jesus is not the Advocate of the people in the world but ONLY of the believer. He is the sacrifice or propitiation for the entire world, but He is not the world's Advocate. He becomes your Advocate in heaven before the Father once you are a new creation in Christ Jesus.

When we confess our sins to Him, He takes up our case as our trial lawyer (Advocate) and gets us delivered and cleansed as though the sin had never happened. We go free from any punishment that would be due to us for our violation of God's Word. Sin deserves death and separation from God, but because we came to Jesus and repented of whatever sin we committed, He takes up our case and guarantees our release from any effect or consequences because of His great sacrifice. He tells the Father, "They can go free because I paid the penalty for their freedom, and they have put their faith and trust in My Blood." The Father grants the Advocate's request and says, "Then they are free, and we expunge (wipe out) any record of the sin ever happening! It is forgiven and cleansed!" This is the VITAL side of how we appropriate what Jesus did for us AFTER we are born again and we sin. This is how we maintain fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ! Read the whole context where John taught this in 1John chapters 1 and 2.

Chapter 8: Faith and Confession

Do you know that the idea is spreading that we no longer have to confess our sins as Christians? This is where some have muddied the pure teaching of God's Word. Some have the idea that since Jesus settled the sin problem once for all (Hebrews 9:12-14), our future sins are already forgiven, and we don't have to confess our sins. What?! This idea violates 1John chapters 1 and 2 from every angle one could possibly look at it. It is really an extremely dangerous error. If this is true (and it is not), it would mean that after I come to Jesus and am born again, if I sin, I am no longer held responsible nor accountable for any sin I commit.

People preaching this error firmly deny that this is what they are teaching, and I believe that they believe they are preaching the truth, but it doesn't change the implication and the seduction of what they are presenting to the Body of Christ as truth.

Theoretically, their teaching means that if as a Christian I murder someone, I will not be held accountable for that sin before God. What about the sins of adultery, fornication, theft, covetousness, and so on? Do you see what this line of thinking and preaching can do? It is designed by satan to give Christians a reason to get away with any sin because God does not hold you accountable or responsible for future sins you may commit! Accountability for the sins we committed BEFORE we came to Jesus had been resolved through our initial faith in His Blood (Romans 3:25), but this does not mean that I am not responsible before God for

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future sins! I will be held accountable for all future sins after I am born again, UNLESS I go to my Advocate and confess my sins to Him, He takes up my case before the Father in Heaven, and I receive cleansing by faith in the same Blood that I was redeemed with. If this is not so, then it does away with any need for an Advocate in Heaven!

You don't need a heavenly lawyer if you can't be held accountable or responsible for your violations and transgressions against the Word, law, or covenant of God!

Do you mean that if I murder someone I can keep my eternal life status? What about the fact that John says that the murderer does NOT have eternal life ABIDING in him? (1John 3:15) It is a foreign (devilish) idea to think that believers are not being held responsible or accountable before God for any future sin, and it violates the entire teaching of ALL Scripture! This wacky doctrine takes away from a believer any responsibility for his or her actions, be they good or bad. This violates so many NEW TESTAMENT Scriptures that you wonder how anybody could come to such a perverse conclusion.

“Whatever is not of faith is sin,” is one verse in Romans 14:23 that contradicts this idea of no responsibility as a Christian for the future sins one commits. Get out of faith and sin is the result according to Paul. This means that the wages of sin (death) will still be applicable while remaining in sin. (Romans 6:23) Only confession of sin and receiving cleansing from sin corrects the issue and brings a person once again under the Blood's protection. That is having a LIVING faith!

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When we first came to God and were born again, we were washed, sanctified, and made holy through what Jesus did for us through His great sacrifice. (1Cor. 6:11, Hebrews 10:10, 14) That was not all Paul taught about sanctification and holiness. Paul teaches the vital and living side of walking in the holiness, purity, and sanctification as a daily lifestyle. He instructs us on our accountability before the Lord in these areas. Paul warns the church at Thessalonica about those that defraud a brother (or sister) in doing things contrary to purity, holiness and sanctification. He mentions the fact that the Lord is the avenger against things contrary to holy living. (1Thess. 4:1-8) If the Lord forgave all our future sins, which means that we are not held accountable for them, as some teach, then how could the Lord be the avenger of sins committed against sanctification (holiness and purity)? The only way out of a breach of sanctification (holiness and purity) is via repentance, confession of sin, and placing your trust in the cleansing power of His Blood that was shed for us! See also Colossians 3:25 because it speaks clearly of the accountability before the Lord of a believer's wrong actions or sins. Living faith in the Blood is the way out!

We saw that James 4:17 says that if we know to do what is good, and do not do it, then it is sin. If we can no longer be held accountable for any sin we commit, then that means that we can live like the devil, and still make heaven. That idea would make this verse a lie. No, the wrong ideas being taught in the name of grace are a lie. This verse is telling us the divine truth in the matter.

Some actually believe that grace is a form of immunity from any sin they commit as a Christian! If

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this is true, then why even bother serving the Lord after you are born again? Don't give me the lame duck excuse that we serve Him only because we love Him. As we quoted, JESUS said that if you love Him you will keep, do, or obey His Word. (John 14:21-23) Those that truly love Him will demonstrate it in obedience to the Lord! All others have a "pretend" or make believe love!

This non-scriptural message of "grace" that some embrace today, (immediately or eventually) moves people into error and sin instead of teaching them to live free of it. The boundaries established in the New Testament for living a holy life come off. There is no reason for restraint, self-control, or to flee fornication or any other sin. Those that espouse such a lie are really turning people from light to darkness once again, and from God to satan! Instead of teaching others like Titus 2 that tells us that true grace will teach you to live godly, righteously, and self-controlled lives, they are teaching a pseudo-grace that is leading people to make excuses for their sin. They are making people to go back and wallow around in the filth of the world! Peter had some words to say about that.

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, "The dog is turned to

his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” 2Peter 2:20-21

I believe that word from the teaching of the apostle Peter should be plain enough. No commentary is needed because it is self-explanatory!

2Corinthians 7:1 tells Christians that have sinned to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness and the fear of the Lord. This sounds like responsibility and being held accountable for the sins one commits after one is born again. The only way to interpret “cleanse ourselves” is by understanding 1John 1:9 and the part we play as we IN FAITH confess any committed sin and receive cleansing from all unrighteousness in His Blood.

As a side thought, I heard on TV the strange teaching that the fear of the Lord in the New Testament is different than the fear of the Lord in the Old Testament, and Romans 8:15 was used as a text to prove it. Oh, brother! Where do people come up with such nutty ideas? I know where; the devil! “Fear of the Lord” never means a spirit of bondage to a devilish fear in any part of the Bible. Romans 8:15 is referring to the kind of fear that leads to bondage and is not a reference to the fear of the Lord in Scripture! Romans 8:15 is a reference to devilish fear, a spirit of fear or timidity, the fear of death and all related to it; things that we are delivered from in Christ. (See also Heb. 2:14, 15 and 2Tim. 1:7.) The fear of the Lord leads to wisdom, understanding, and to hating evil, and it will also cause you to depart from doing evil. It is absolutely pure. (Ps. 19:9, 110:10, Prov. 1:7, 8:13, 16:6, 19:23, 22:4) It gives us strong confidence, prolongs our lives, is a fountain of life, and

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delivers from the snares of death! (Prov. 10:27, 14:26, 27) “The fear of the Lord” does not mean “worship”, though by implication it could refer to it because if you fear the Lord you will worship Him! The word *fear*, when used to refer to this quality all believers should have where the Lord is concerned, refers to honor, awe, reverence, profound respect, and even to “being afraid” of displeasing Him. The fear of the Lord is a holy thing. Study it from any Greek or Hebrew concordance for yourself and don’t allow people to fool you. How dare the foolish downplay this important Bible doctrine on the fear of the Lord as though there was something wrong with it in the Hebrew Scriptures?

We read earlier that it is faith in the redemptive plan that makes redemption operational on our behalf. (1Timothy 1:4) The problem is that some do not understand that faith can be alive or dead depending on how you live. Faith needs right actions to be a living faith. (James 2:22-26) This is something we will show you often from the Word in a number of ways. *The VITAL side of faith has to do with obedience, loyalty and faithfulness to God.* This is the side of faith many either ignore or do not want to believe. They would rather believe that faith is “only believe” or to have a strong conviction that something is true, but real Bible faith is MUCH more than that.

The apostle John was writing to Christians in 1John about living before God as believers in Christ Jesus. Some teach that 1John is not applicable to Christians today because it was written to “Gnostic Christians.” 1John was not an epistle written to Gnostics, even though John does address within his epistle certain

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erroneous ideas floating among some of the churches in his day. Gnostic beliefs and its errors may be what John was addressing when he emphasizes that Jesus had come in the flesh, a truth challenged by Gnosticism. Satan was doing his best to infiltrate the churches with all kinds of strange ideas, but John was not writing a letter to false brethren or to "Gnostic Christians". He was writing to "his little children." (1John 2:1) These were brothers and sisters in the Lord that had probably come to the Lord through his own ministry. 1John was a letter written by a spiritual father figure that was giving younger Christians clear warnings and instructions. John uses this same Greek word for children (*teknion*) 6 more times in 1 John. One of those times is in the famous verse found in 1 John 4:4. The little children (*teknion*) are those that have the Greater One dwelling in them! In 1 John 2:12 the apostle John uses the word and says that these little children (*teknion*) have had their sins forgiven! See also 1John 2:28, 3:7, 18, 5:21 where this same Greek word is used, and there is no question that John was writing to the children of God and not to some false religious cult!

With all that in mind, I am going back to look at 1John 1:9 again and the confession of sin.

We never allow the enemy to go into our past and condemn us over sins we committed before we were born again. That was all wiped away. We also never let the devil condemn us over a sin we committed after becoming a Christian once we truly repent of it, confess it to the Lord, and receive forgiveness and cleansing from it. Those sins are washed away and "under" the Blood and God will never revisit them! He puts them into an ocean of forgetfulness! (Micah 7:19, Isaiah

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43:25, Jeremiah 31:34) He does not remember them and neither should we! Never let the devil beat you over the head over sins you repented of and confessed before the Lord! That is none of his business because he is not your lord! It is between you and your Lord Jesus, because if you confessed your sin and forsook it, the Lord will never condemn you nor hold you accountable for it! Even if we have committed some sins over and over, if we run to the Lord in true repentance, He forgives us! He NEVER turns away the truly repentant! That is true grace and mercy!

There is another side to this. It is one that is unpopular with some and rarely taught, but it is in the New Testament. Paul taught that if we judge ourselves then we will not be judged. (1Cor. 11:29-31) Some of the Corinthians did not judge themselves, and that was the reason they were weak, sick, and dying prematurely. Judging ourselves is something we should do, especially during the participation of communion or the Lord's Supper.

Some Christian people that don't judge themselves of their wrongdoing are setting themselves up to be judged and to be disciplined. Judgment eventually comes to the unrepentant Christian because the Father does not want them to be **"condemned with the world."** (1Cor. 11:32) That means that He does not want them to die and go to hell. Hell and the second death (the lake of fire) are the condemnation that is facing the world without God. (See Revelation 19:11-15, 21:8) Paul also said that judgment must come to the one that persists in sin so that the **"spirit (of the Christian) may be saved on the day of the Lord."** (1Cor. 5:5) Both of these statements

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clearly tell us that the persistent and unrepentant Christian is in danger of going to hell!

I know this is a shock to the system of those that believe "once saved always saved" regardless of the sins you commit and live in, but there it is in the Scripture. What are you going to do with it, ignore it or accept and believe God's Word? This is why judgment comes to the unrepentant Christian. God wants them to avoid hell and go to heaven! That is God's great mercy and grace!

Judgment comes first with correction by the Word in numerous ways, either from the Holy Spirit directly or through others, as in Galatians 6:1 and in Matthew 18:15-17. Have you ever had the Lord give you a good spanking with His Word? Sometimes a 2x4 on the side of the head would feel better! It cuts to the heart because it comes by the sword of the Spirit. (Hebrews 4:12, 13, Acts 2:37) Have you ever had it happen publicly? That is when it really gets tough.

At the first Spirit-filled church I attended when I was 19 years old, as new Christian, I was getting into big trouble with the girl I was dating. I knew it and she knew it too. It was a real mess, but sin can be pleasurable for a season. (Hebrews 11:25) Of course, the devil neglects to tell people that even though at first sin may "feel good" that it will eventually carry serious consequences. Death and hell are about as serious as you can get!

I got called on the carpet at that church by the Holy Spirit through one of the elders in front of 800 or more people on a Sunday morning! It shook me up, but it especially shook that girl up, and we parted for good and went our separate ways! It also seriously shook up that church.

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Don't be concerned about this happening in most churches today because they preach and believe a watered down version of holiness and this will never be allowed to happen! They think it is too harsh and tough for our modern society! They are very wrong in that assumption. This is one (not the only) New Testament way of dealing supernaturally with sin as the Holy Spirit leads.

Do you know what public rebuke will do for a church? A few scared ones may leave and stay away for a while, but the others in the church will walk in a greater fear (reverence, respect, and honor) of the Lord. They will repent long before they come to church! For one, they do not want to run the risk of being publicly humiliated for some dumb sin! They will tiptoe and walk circumspectly before the Lord. That is what will happen.

This is what happened after the Ananias and Sapphira incident. Great fear came on the whole church as a result of this very public judgment. (Acts 5:1-11) Do we need more of this in our churches so that people learn to respect and honor the Lord and His Word? Yes we do!

Getting rebuked and corrected for sin is no fun. It actually grieves you and makes you feel sorrowful for your sin, but it is a grieving and sorrow that leads to repentance. It is a Godly grieving and sorrow and that is completely different than the grieving and sorrow that the world engages in. Study Hebrews 12:5-15 and 2Corinthian 7:9-11 in this respect.

In cases where a believer consistently refuses to repent of sin, they will be judged and turned over to the enemy. Study 1Corinthians 5:1-5, 1Timothy 1:20, and Matthew 18:34, 35 as examples of what I am telling you.

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This really is very bad news on the one hand because the devil will begin to work on the body and the mind to destroy them. (John 10:10) On the other hand, it is great and wonderful good news because if they repent, they avoid and eliminate a lot of pain, premature death, and the possibility of going to hell!

The way to avoid this painful "chastisement" that comes as a judgment is to repent and judge yourself! (See also Hebrews 12:5-11.) Never stay 5 seconds in sin! Repent, confess your sin, receive your cleansing from all unrighteousness, and stay within the boundaries of the protection and blessing that is in the Blood of Jesus! Only those out from under the protection of the Blood of our Lamb (Jesus) will get hurt by the "destroyer." (Exodus 12:23, 1Cor. 5:7)

This is how we judge ourselves where sin is concerned, and we do it according to what Jesus did for us. He paid the price for our sins; therefore we now confess our sins, and partake of what He did for us and stay in the protection of the Blood.

Here is a truth that is ignored by many: *Confession of sins is not and never was designed for unbelievers.*

Frankly, I know that I could have never gone back and confessed all my sins before I was a Christian. That would have been an impossibility because I was a rank sinner and there was no way to even remember all the sins I had committed. The catalog of sins I had committed were so many, even if I possibly could have remembered all of them, it may have taken me months or years to confess them all! Where would I even begin to confess all my pre-new-birth sins? There was no way. I believe many reading this could have said the same

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thing. Thank God we were not required to confess all our sins to get born again!

When I came to Jesus, yes, I was repentant for my past life and my many sins (Acts 3:19, 2:38), but my confession to get born again was to CONFESS with my mouth that Jesus is my Lord. (Romans 10: 9, 10) I believed in my heart that Jesus was raised from the dead for the remission of my sins, and I confessed Him as Lord of my life, and I was born again and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. (1Peter 1:23, 2Corinthians 5:17, Romans 4:24, 25)

Confession of sins by a Christian is not going back to the law by any means. Confession of sins by a believer that has sinned is not “works” or “a works mentality” either. We should thank the Lord every day for the privilege this act of confession of sin affords us. We can get right back into divine communion or fellowship with the Father because of it. Confession of sin to the Lord, if we commit a sin after we are born again, demonstrates humility and our desire to be cleansed from unrighteousness that has crept into our life. It shows the Lord that we want to maintain our fellowship with the Father. (1John 1:6-9)

Repentance and confession of sin are connected in Scripture. Study Matthew 3:6-11 in the ministry of John the Baptist and note how repentance and confession are intimately connected. This is important when you read the references in Paul’s epistles to repentance. Especially see 2Cor. 7:9-12; also Rom. 2:4, and 2Tim. 2:25.

In Judaism, during the time of Jesus and the church in the book of Acts, confession of sin and repentance were considered a part of each other. Even to this day,

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the Jewish religion teaches that confession of sins is an integral part of the repentance process.

Though Judaism over the centuries has become an organized religion with many traditions, they have maintained certain things within their religion intact and a true representation of certain doctrines and practices that have not changed much over the millennia. I cannot say this for all their religious practices or beliefs, but there are some practices and beliefs that are traceable historically to the time of Jesus and the early church, and even to before the time the Lord walked the earth. This area of repentance and confession of sins is one such area that has remained constant until the present in Judaism, and that is why I mention this here.

Confession of sin is to admit the sin. You admit your transgression, your violation of God's Word or Covenant. By doing this, you are not appropriating sin, but removing it from you. Until you confess it, it is still with you! The admittance of sin is the rejection and renouncing of it. You cast it away from you when you humble yourself before the Lord, repent and confess your sin. It is the humble that gets grace and mercy! (1Peter 5:5, 6, James 4:6) The proud that refuse to admit their sin get only the opposition of God according to these verses.

In the book of Acts chapter 19, we see that born again and Spirit Baptized believers at Ephesus began to learn their need to repent and confess their sins because some were still hanging on to witchcraft and other devilish practices. These people were certainly not Gnostics or even "Christian Gnostics"!

Many of those who had believed came forward, confessing and making their deeds known. Large numbers of those who had practiced magic collected their books and burned them up in the presence of everyone. When the value of the books was added up, it was found to total fifty thousand silver coins. In this way the word of the Lord continued to grow in power and to prevail. Acts 19:18-20

This incident in Acts 19 happened under Paul's ministry. Verse 18 says that they had already believed. They were already born again! If you go back in this chapter you will see that Paul had already been ministering the baptism of the Holy Spirit to these believers in Jesus at Ephesus. Obviously, Paul did some further teaching on how a Christian is to live, and he must have pointed out that practicing magical arts of any kind was sin. We know he was teaching daily. (Acts 19:9) This must have come up in his teaching. What did the born again believers at Ephesus do when they heard this? The BIBLE says that they came forward, CONFESSING and making known their evil deeds. Is that not the plain and direct record of what happened?

Note that Paul didn't rebuke them when they came forward and began to confess their sins AFTER they were born again. This sounds similar to what we saw in 1John 1:9 and in all that first and second chapters. Paul didn't tell them, "Well, all your future sins were already forgiven, so you are wrong to confess your sins. There is no condemnation to you. You are over into the law and works!" Baloney! Had they not confessed and admitted their sins, their sins would have remained with them and

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they would not have gotten free from them, particularly once they knew better and had the light of God's Word on the subject as we studied earlier. This is the clear implication, instruction, and teaching of what we have been seeing in God's Word.

If I gave you no other scriptural evidence than this one in Acts 19, it should be plain enough. James 5:16 further proves our point because it is speaking, again, specifically to Christians and instructs them to "confess their sins" to one another so as to remove all the roadblocks to healing.

Here is one verse that summarizes beautifully what we have been seeing in the New Testament about the confession of our sin.

The one who covers his transgressions will not prosper, but whoever confesses them and forsakes them will find mercy. Proverbs 28:13

Only those that humble themselves and admit or confess their sins and forsake them will find the mercy and grace that they so desperately need! There is no way to succeed in the things of God if you are hiding your sins instead of confessing and forsaking them. (Ps.32:5)

Study what Jesus had to say on the subject and you will see that repentance and confession of sins are connected in His teaching. (Luke 17:3, 4, 15:18, 21)

The things taught to us by Jesus, Paul, Peter, and John in Scriptures about grace and righteousness were not written so we have an excuse for sinning. John said that the things he wrote about confession of our sins,

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forgiveness, and cleansing in 1John 1 were so that you
SIN NOT!

**My little children, I write these things to you so that
you do not sin... 1John 2:1**

Some in Paul's day thought that he was teaching a
perverted message that encouraged people to go ahead
and sin so good would come (Rom. 3:8) because they
were under grace, but that idea was nowhere near the
truth of the message that Christ Jesus gave him. Oddly
enough, I have been accused of preaching something
similar, but it is far from the truth!

**What will we say then? Will we continue in sin, that
grace may abound? God forbid. How will we, that
are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Romans 6:1, 2**

He further stated on the matter:

**What then? Will we sin, because we are not under the
law, but under grace? God forbid. Romans 6:15**

So let's get our thinking straightened up and
understand that a true grace message will teach us to live
right and stay free of sin! (Titus 2:11, 12) Grace is not a
license to sin at all!

Here it is what Jesus preached and taught from
another one of the Gospel writers:

**And after John was delivered up, Jesus came into
Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of**

God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God draws near. Repent, and believe the gospel.” Mark 1:14, 15

Some misguided Christian person said, “OK, I can agree with that, but that was under the law and we are under grace, and today it’s all love, tolerance, and acceptance of everybody.”

Jesus had this to say AFTER He was raised from the dead. He said that His church was to go into all the world and **“that repentance and remission of sins should be proclaimed in His name among all nations.”** (Luke 24:47)

God rewards those that diligently seek Him, and it is IMPOSSIBLE to please Him without faith. (Hebrews 11:6) You cannot be lazy or complacent and think that God is just so gracious and so merciful that everything will just happen for you with no participation and no holy living on your part. Your faith must be provided or supplied with virtue or (Bible) moral power and energy! This is what the Greek text of 2 Peter 1:5 is pointing out when it says, **“Add (supply) to your faith virtue.”** *Virtue* is from the Greek word *arete* and it means moral goodness and excellence, and it refers to purity of life. *Holy living and faith go hand and hand! Separate these two and you have a dead, useless, and lifeless faith!*

Years ago, I was privileged (together with my dad and mother) to be one of the pioneers of the message of the Word in the area of faith, healing, and so on in Puerto Rico. This message first came to Puerto Rico on a consistent basis through the ministry granted by the Lord to our family. Many loved that bold uncompromising

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message we taught because it was positive, rich, completely contrary to tradition, and it ministered deliverance to multiplied thousands. Thousands were born again and baptized in the Holy Spirit. Others started out with us, but after a time they fell by the wayside when they began to spend time around the Word we were teaching. They began to understand that faith also requires you to live a holy life and that it is not a free ride for living a sloppy Christian life of sinning and getting away with it. Some loved their sin so much that they ran off because our teaching required also that they live right. Others adjusted their lives to the Word of God and great things happened in their lives.

Do you understand that God never rewards the do-nothing doubters that live sloppy Christian lives? He rewards the faithful, the diligent, and those operating in faith. (Heb. 11:6) Together with your faith and faithfulness to God and His Word, your will and your choice is involved in the matter. God said that He gives us the right to choose between life and death, blessing and cursing. (Deuteronomy 30:15-30)

The blessing will come to those that hear and obey His Word. The curse will eventually come to those that persist and continue in doubt, unbelief, and refuse to obey His Word. This is a clearly taught truth in both testaments. For example, see Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 14, 15, and compare that with the great commission in Mark 16:15-18, 20. Do what Jesus tells you to do and you get life, salvation, peace, victory, healing, and so on. Don't do what He tells you to do and you get the exact opposite. Jesus sums it up by saying that those that refuse to believe (meaning basically "trust and obey")

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will perish! Let us remind ourselves again of John 3:16. Believe it and get it. Don't believe it and perish. That is so completely clear and straightforward that it would take a misguided preacher to help you misunderstand it!

Here is an example some are using as an excuse for being "do-nothing" doubters. Some say that all we need to do is, "Stand still and know that He is God." (2 Chronicles 20:17-22) They believe that it means "don't do a thing and let God do it all because that is real grace." Some think that if you have to do anything then you are getting into a "works" or a "works mentality" No, "stand still" does not mean that at all.

Even in Jehoshaphat's case the praise teams were sent out before the armies of God. If "stand still" means to "do nothing" then why were the praise teams sent out first? Stand still meant to "stand your ground in faith". The literal Hebrew says, "Station yourselves; stand and see the salvation of YHVH with you." What was the meaning then? "Stay hooked up in faith and trust with your God." They saw NOTHING that they did as "of works" or of a "works mentality" because they were doing something that was springing up out of their faith. Their praise was an act of their faith and trust in God!

Here is a powerful lesson that we have already stated, and it is one we will repeat: *Action must be put to work along with faith or it will be a useless and defeated faith.* Jehoshaphat and his people acted by faith and were praising and giving thanks to God for the victory before they ever saw it. That is faith brothers and sisters! They acted like God told them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth! They were fully persuaded folks just like Abraham.

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Abraham gave glory to God while his body was still as good as dead and the womb of Sarah was still unproductive. (Rom. 4:17-24) Just like Abraham, Jehoshaphat and Judah added thanksgiving to their fully persuaded faith, and that is a powerful faith act. (See Philippians 4:6.)

Understand that any faith will be a dead faith unless there is a working out from the spirit into an action of faith. (James 2:18-26) Acting in faith is not a “works mentality” or doing something by “works” at all if it is done by faith in God's Word and through the leading of the Spirit.

In later chapters, we will see that "works of law" was a very specific phrase used in Paul's writings when he was speaking about how the Jews and their religion had quit doing things by faith and trust in God, and ended up doing things by tradition or by religious repetition with no power. It will change your life if you will receive what the Word says about it. We will get there soon but we are on a Holy Spirit track in teaching, and there are certain things that must be addressed first.

Here is another side of faith that I want to briefly address. Never are we to get so “me, I, and myself” minded that we forget that it is not our might or power that will get results. (Zachariah 4:6, Gal. 2:20) It is OUR faith that hooks us into God's power, but it is dangerous to ever think that it was the power and might of your hand that did it. (Deut. 8:17) Our trust MUST be in God and His Word (Jeremiah 17:5-8, Ps. 119:42) and the indwelling Spirit (1John 4:4, Rom. 8:11). NONE of the above are ever irrespective or in violation to the principles of faith that include right hearing, right

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believing and thinking, right confession, a right confidence, right living, and a right action!

Certainly, real Bible faith is NEVER outside of God and His Word. Mark 11:22 says: **“Have faith IN God.”** Try to make it work by yourself, without your trust firmly placed on God and His Word, and you will fall flat on your face. It doesn't ever work like that. The other side is that there is a definite cooperation between God and the receiver of God's blessing. We are not talking about people that are in a rut or ditch on the side of thinking that it's all God. We are also not on the other side of the ditch by thinking that it is done in your own strength either because that is also really dumb. There is always a God-ward side and a man-ward side to receiving the promises of God. We are all for staying straight with God and His Word and not getting into a ditch on either side. Let's stay on the highway of God as revealed in His Holy Word and not get sidetracked with flaky ideas!

It is and always will be God's power and anointing that breaks the yoke of bondage and removes burdens, but His anointing will not just happen to you without participation on your part. (Isaiah 10:27) The faith of the woman that had the issue of blood was that caused the anointing that destroys every yoke of sickness to flow from Jesus into her body. There was a cause and an effect. There was a contact and a transmission. Jesus was anointed but nothing happened UNTIL the woman acted in faith and drew on that power. Jesus knew power had gone out of Him when somebody made a faith contact. Jesus told us it was the woman's faith that made the right connection. (Mark 5:34)

Chapter 9: Faith's Access into the Promises

Let me quote this verse again:

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. James 1:6, 7

Resist or repel His power or anointing by doubt and unbelief and you will never get it to manifest for you. You can think on His grace or mercy all day long and it will never get you healed. It is a faith that is solidly grounded in God and His Word together with actions that will produce results. This story of the woman in Mark 5:25-34 clearly pointed this out to us.

Faith is what ALWAYS has access to what God has provided by His great grace through Jesus' awesome redemption. (Romans 4:16, 5:2)

I gave you this Scripture earlier in this book, but it is so powerful a verse that we want you to think about it again. 1Timothy 1:4 in the NET translation says, **"...God's redemptive plan that operates by faith."** Faith makes His redemption work or to be operational on your behalf. Without faith, no part of redemption will be available. On both sides of righteousness, grace, redemption, and justification, are faith in the provisions of Christ in Romans. (Romans 3:22, 24, 25) The great riches of the grace and mercy of God are the fact that Jesus paid the price for us so that we would be saved,

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healed and delivered. (Ephesians 2:4-8) Faith is what has access to ALL the provisions of God through Jesus. Nothing will come automatically.

For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you." Hebrews 6:13, 14

Do you realize that God's promise to bless Abraham was sworn by God based on His own person? That means that for God to violate His Word it would mean self annihilation! God would have to self destruct to lie or to back out of His Word.

Here is the good news for you today: Whatever blessing God the Father promised Abraham and Jesus- the seed of Abraham- is yours and mine right now! Just as sure as the fact that God can NEVER lie because if He did He would self destruct, that is how sure the promise is to us that are heirs of the promises God made to Abraham and his seed. The seed is Jesus and it is US that are joint-heirs with Him! (Hebrews 6:13-16, Galatians 3:13, 14, 16, 29, 4:7, Romans 8:17) The blessing of Abraham and Jesus belongs to us NOW.

The grace, mercy, and power (this blessing) of God that was on Abraham to bless him coming in and going out, to make him the head and not the tail, to prosper on everything he set his hand to do, to live a long and blessed life in every way, that is our inheritance in Christ!

Study the blessings of God that were purchased by Jesus through His great and awesome sacrifice for our

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spirit, soul and body, and a marvelous picture emerges of the goodness, grace, and mercy of our God for every believer. This is God's great and wonderful idea- that we be blessed to the max inside and outside, spiritually and physically, in life and financially! God's will is that we be blessed all over in all we set our hand to do, and in all that is according to God the Father's plan for us! (Jeremiah 29:11, 33:9)

All these wonderful provisions are available as the glorious grace and mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, but it must be received and applied by faith to your life!

For if by one man's offense death reigned by one, much more they who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. Romans 5:17

The abundance of grace must be received! That is done by faith. It will not just happen without your faith in operation, even though it is God's great and mighty gift to us. A gift **MUST** always be received or it can not be a gift to you!

So that the blessing of Abraham might be to the nations in Jesus Christ, and that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Galatians 3:14

It takes the application of Bible faith in the Covenant mercy and grace of God. It takes faith to receive His promises manifested towards you. Faith gives action to the power of God on your behalf.

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The blind man that came to Jesus for healing said, **"Have MERCY on me Lord, Son of David!"** Jesus did not respond, "Yes, my mercy alone will do it. There is no need for faith." No!

First, Jesus called the blind man to Him. Mercy will get you an audience, but more will be required of you for healing. Jesus then asked the man, "What do you want me to do for you." Jesus was drawing the man's faith out of him by this question. Jesus wanted the man to speak by faith. The man gets specific with his request and his faith begins to talk. He answered Jesus, **"Lord, that I may receive my sight."** Jesus responded to the man, **"Your faith has made you whole."** (Mark 10:47-52) It was the great mercy of God coupled with faith that got the miracle according to Jesus. Jesus told this man something that was almost identical to what He said about the woman that had the issue of blood in Mark 5. Faith made them both whole according to Jesus. Do you see it? Faith made the right connection.

The woman from Canaan cried out for mercy, but the Lord did not even respond to her until her faith came out coupled with her request for mercy. When she was firm in faith and refused to take anything less than healing for her daughter, her determined faith got results. Jesus said to her, **"O woman, great is your faith; be it unto you as you want!"** Again, we see that it is the mercy of God hooked up with faith that got results. (Matthew 15:22-28)

So then those of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. Galatians 3:9

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The blessing connection is by faith in the Covenant. Faith means trust, but there is more to its definition. Faith can NEVER be separated from faithfulness and obedience or your definition of faith is very incomplete. Faith and faithfulness are connected in this verse as it is all over the Bible! The Church has generally thought of faith as one's beliefs or believing alone, as in the mental exercise of conviction, but the definition of real Bible faith from any competent Greek-English dictionary encompasses more. Dig a little into the root words to get to the basic meanings. It will completely change the way you have been seeing the word faith.

To get a full picture of what the word faith means, I recommend you study Hebrews 11 and see all that this chapter says about faith. It includes a whole lot more than what people have generally understood as "faith." It's a powerful chapter. We will teach some about Hebrews 11 in a later chapter of our book.

Through Him we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice on the hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:2

Access into anything Jesus did for us through His great and awesome sacrifice, and the all inclusive Blessing of Abraham, is always by faith. There is no access into this grace any other way! It is a truth we must understand. God loves us and has made great mercy and grace available to us. His love and grace are eternal, but we only get into them through faith. We have to believe the love God has for us. (1John 4:16) It is not enough to know His love intimately according to this verse in

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1John 4. Faith must be added to the equation or it is an incomplete recipe.

Do you know what happens when you leave an ingredient out of a good recipe? It is never as good as it could have been, and sometimes it can ruin the dish. Leave flour out of a good cake recipe and see what you get. Leave the garbanzo beans out of a good Middle Eastern "humus" dip and see if anybody knows what it is. Leave the chocolate out of a chocolate brownie recipe and see if you get anything that even approximates a good brownie. You get my point. The recipe for receiving God's awesome grace must include faith!

Jesus said, **“Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it when you pray and it will be done.”** (Mark 11:24 in NASB and others.) That is the way faith works. It operates based on eternal principles and it is a spiritual law that will work every time that it is put to work. (Romans 3:27) God will not put it to work for you. You are the one that has to step up to the plate and say, “Thank you for the provision. It's mine now. I take it, and I receive it now,” and then do whatever He tells you to do.

Let me state it again: Jesus told the woman that had the issue of blood, **“your faith has made you whole** (or healed you completely).” Jesus was anointed with healing power (Acts 10:38) but from the entire crowd it was only this woman that drew upon the anointing to remove burdens and destroy yokes on that day. (Isaiah 10:27) Jesus said that HER faith made the connection. (Mark 5:25-34) So, if you have been hoodwinked to think otherwise, get your teaching and doctrine straight right now! If you ever hear teaching that tells you just to

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sit back because “grace or mercy” is all you need, just know that the verses we are seeing prove that theory to be contrary to the instruction of the Scripture.

Chapter 10: Faith and the Agreement of Scriptures

Let me switch gears here because I am going to quote you much more in this book from Paul's epistles and the ministry of Jesus in the Gospels. They both intimately agree in their teaching! They are not contrary to one another as some have thought in the past, and some are teaching today. As a matter of fact, Paul would have said that the teaching of Jesus was superior to his own. I guarantee you that it would have been shocking for Paul to hear the way some exalt his teaching today above that of the Master Himself! Jesus said that a student is not above his master or Lord, and that it is enough if he is like Him. (Matthew 10:24, 25)

Some misguided scholars go so far as to teach that Paul “invented” Christianity! Go figure! They think that Paul and Jesus were in disagreement on many points, and that Jesus was a Jew teaching according to Judaism and the law, and that Paul was a Jewish man that taught a “new gospel” based on grace, and that it was the opposite to the law. If this was true why would Paul ever call himself often, “the servant of Jesus Christ,” and not call himself “Master and Lord”? No way! He knew that Jesus was his Master and Lord and that his teaching came from the Lord. Either the Head of the church universal (Jesus) is double-minded or a schizophrenic or the teaching of Jesus and Paul somehow agree. Could it be that the issue is that people often misunderstand Jesus and Paul? Yes, that is the case, and it includes a bunch of

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scholars that are blinded by the theological musings of dead and useless religion!

I heard someone publicly teaching that the statement of Jesus, **“If your hand offends you to cut it off,”** that it was Jesus teaching based on the “harshness” of the law, but now we are under love and grace and this does not apply to us today. (Matthew 5:29, 30) The foolishness of such a statement is massive. This person actually thought they were basing themselves on Paul’s teaching!

Here is the very simple answer to this misinterpretation. It will show you how well the teaching of Jesus and Paul harmonized.

What happens to a severed limb when left by itself and it is never reattached? It will die, rot, go back to dust, and disappear. Jesus was not telling you to take an axe to your hand because it had led you to sin. He never made mention of the need to use a physical sword or axe. He was not teaching self mutilation! God forbid! He was teaching to pluck it out and cut it off in a figurative sense. Study it. He was saying that you need to cut it off from whatever is giving it life so that it dies and stops being a hindrance in your life.

Did Paul ever say something to this effect in his writings? Can we verify this interpretation in Paul’s epistles? He said, **“Then put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil lust, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”** (Colossians 3:5, Romans 8:13) He also spoke about crucifying the flesh. (Galatians 5:24)

The “flesh” is not the body per se. “Flesh” has to do with the weaknesses and sins that the body yields to, which

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are the passions and lusts driven by the old nature without Christ. Romans chapters 6:6-16 and 8:4-13 will clear this up for you. Note that Romans 8:13 correlates living after the flesh and mortifying (putting to death) the EVIL DEEDS of the physical body. This tells us that living after the flesh is when people yield to the evil deeds that the body is pressured to obey instead of “mortifying” or putting them to death. With this in mind, go back and study these two chapters in the book of Romans.

Many have thought there was something intrinsically wrong with the body. In one sense there is because it is still mortal, but I am not referring to its mortality. Many read Paul’s statements on the flesh and don’t understand that it is not referring to the physical body as such but to the sin, lust, and evil ways of the old sinful nature that still dwells on this earth and applies its pressure to the physical body. This is what attacks the body in the attempt to get it to yield to sin. The body still has to fight off these evil things, but in Christ Jesus we take a stand in the spirit, renew our mind, present our body as a living sacrifice, and we train the body to live and talk right! (Ephesians 6:10-18, Romans. 12:1, 2, Hebrews 5:12-14) We walk in the spirit, which is walking in the fruit of the reborn and recreated human spirit put in us by the Holy Spirit, so we don’t fulfill the lusts of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16-25) This will help you understand these statements of Jesus.

The message of Jesus and Paul is to “cut off” the source of the offense or sin. Paul said to put the offending “member” to death! Jesus said to “cut off” the

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“hand” (member) that led to sin. They were both talking about exactly the same thing!

If it is fornication, then quit it, put it to death, or cut it off. Do you see it? Stop acting it out right now, and maintain purity consistently until all the evil that has “wormed” its way into the body is completely overcome and is “dead” and no longer has a voice. Every time it visits your neighborhood just say NO! If you keep saying “no” long enough, it will lose its hold and go away to find someone else.

It is just like the stray dog. When he comes begging, whatever you do, don’t ever feed it or you have gained a new pet! It will not leave if it knows it will get food and water at your house. If you want to get rid of the animal don’t feed or give it water! It will finally leave and find someone else. I know for you animal lovers that may seem cruel, but get over it. It was only an example to drive home the point. We have a wonderful dog in the Rodriguez household, and we truly love and take excellent care of our pet!

The words of Jesus are not His suggestions to us but His commandments to us. (John 14:15, 21, 23, 15:10) Jesus is the living Word made flesh. (John 1:14) THE Word of God was expressed in the earth in a flesh body for all to see, and He spoke in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. How could anyone possibly think His words are less valid for us than Paul’s words? That would make Paul superior to Jesus. Are you kidding me? Paul would have freaked out at such a pompous and outrageous suggestion. He would have torn his clothing and run out among the crowd crying out against those thinking that blasphemy and told them to repent! He did that at

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Lystra! (Acts 14) They thought one of the “gods” had come down among them!

Paul aspired to be as His Lord and Savior but certainly not to be better or superior in His teaching to Him! It is error to think that somehow Paul got the upper hand over Jesus in his teaching! Jesus was and is God manifested in the flesh. (1Timothy 3:16) If Paul’s teaching is to somehow be superior to the Master’s then, “Houston, we have a problem”! To say or infer such a thing means that Paul is somehow superior to God manifested in the flesh. That is idolatry and I will have NO part of it!

No, the truth is that Paul was anointed by the Holy Spirit and inspired by Him to write. That means that His writings have to agree with Jesus- THE LIVING WORD OF GOD. Either this is true or Paul’s writings came by some other spirit and not the Holy Spirit. No, Paul’s writings were inspired by the Spirit just like Jesus’ recorded words were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Their words have to agree because they came by the same Spirit.

If you have been taught that the Body of Christ is only to live by the Pauline epistles, note what Paul wrote about this very subject to pastor Timothy:

For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God...
2Timothy 3:16

What Scripture was he referring to? Was he only referring to his writings? No! He was referring to the only Scripture any of them had at the time which was what most refer to as the Old Testament. To Paul and the

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apostles the "old" Testament was the only Scripture they possessed. Historically, the gospels and epistles came much later and they had somewhat of a limited circulation after they were written. They didn't have e-mail and there were no printing presses! All the copies were made by hand, so it took time, sometimes years for the word to get out.

Yes, I believe that what Paul wrote was also Scripture just like I know that the gospels, the other non-Pauline epistles, and the book of Revelation are a part of the Holy Word of God. Peter even referred to Paul's writings as Scripture (2 Peter 3:15, 16) Peter also said that ALL of the older writings (the Holy Scriptures) were written not by the will of man but by the Holy Spirit's inspiration. (2 Peter 1:20, 21) Did they lose their inspiration because Jesus came and went to the cross? Some in Christianity are inferring this or come right out and say and teach this today!

Here is something else to consider. If we are to live only or primarily by the Pauline epistles, then do we ignore the anointed writings of Peter, John, Jude and James? What about the fact that Jesus said to Peter (not Paul), **"I give you the keys of the kingdom"**? (Matthew 16:19) Did Peter miss the boat and never get any revelation of these keys of the kingdom? No way! The revelation of these keys can be found in Peter's writings and in what we see about his ministry in the book of Acts.

Paul's epistles do not substitute or replace any of these other writers and their writings. Since these other writers were also Holy Spirit inspired, they MUST agree with Paul and Paul with them. If you look at them in an

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unbiased manner, they perfectly agree and harmonize, but each one emphasizes truths that the Holy Spirit led them to teach about. It helps in your study to keep this in mind as you read the different anointed writers.

It is awful, but some emphasize that ONLY Paul's epistles are relevant for the church because all the writings of Peter, Jude, Hebrews, James, John and the book of Revelation were written to the Jews. To think that this error is being promulgated publicly on worldwide television gives me the shivers. Do they not understand that they have taken it upon themselves to change the validity of all the Scriptures for all believers everywhere? It is a very dangerous and very damaging position to take. Obviously, they don't get it yet, but I am trusting that they will very soon.

First of all, for the first 10 to 15 years of the church ONLY Jews were accepting the Lord Jesus. There were no Gentiles until Acts 10 with the conversion of Cornelius and his household. There were no "Gentile" Christians until then! Multiplied thousands of Christians were all of Jewish parents and descent!

Secondly, it is a blunder and lack of knowledge to think that God made a sharp difference between the "Gentile" Christians and the "Jewish" Christians in these epistles. These were each written to believers in Jesus as Lord (regardless of their national heritage) because Paul says, "**There is neither Jew nor Gentile... for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**" (Galatians 3:28, Col. 3:11) Paul also taught that the middle wall of partition that separated Jew and Gentile has been broken down through the sacrifice of Jesus! In Christ Jesus, Jewish and Gentile believers are all part of the one new man-

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the body of Christ! (Ephesians 2:12-22) This new man is the new creation in Christ! (2 Cor. 5:17, Galatians 6:15) Paul taught that **“by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jew or Gentile.”** (1 Cor. 12:13) There is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile when it comes to Jesus and His awesome sacrifice! (Romans 10:12- see also 10:9-12)

All of this being true means that whatever the apostles wrote to the believers in Christ Jesus of Jewish descent was also VERY relevant and of extreme importance for all other believers regardless of their nationality or lineage. The writings of ALL the New Testament apply to the Jew, Italian, Greek, German, African, American, Hispanic, Russian, and Chinese, and to all other nationalities. In Christ it is irrelevant from what cultural background or upbringing you come. The epistles written by John, Jude, James, and Peter (and the book of Hebrews), were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and they apply to everybody that calls themselves a Christian! What they wrote by the Spirit was applicable to those of any national heritage and lineage.

Jesus told the eleven apostles that gathered at the place where He ascended into heaven, **“Therefore go and teach ALL NATIONS...”** (Matthew 28:19) Did you notice that Jesus didn't tell the eleven apostles that they were to teach ONLY the Jews because He had somebody else in mind for the gentile Christians (Paul), and that what they were to teach was irrelevant for these “Gentile” Christians? No, Jesus said nothing of the kind. According to the Master, their teaching was for all nations! “All nations” means that their teaching was for

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Jew and Gentile equally, and for anybody else on the planet!

Jesus told the eleven apostles (because Judas had already died), that they would be His witnesses into ALL the earth, and not just to the Jews! (Acts 1:8) Their message was for all the earth and all nationalities, and not just for Jews or Jewish Christians. Thank God! James, Jude, Revelation, Hebrews, and the powerful epistles of John and Peter are for all the nations and not “mainly,” or even “exclusively.” for Jews as some that are misguided are preaching and teaching. These belong to all the church, whether they came into Christ from a Jewish or Gentile background!

The Pauline epistles do not substitute the older writings but they build on the revelation God had already given in His Word, and they are never to be interpreted apart from the rest of Scripture, be it older writings of the Bible or the newer writings of the New Testament. Paul profusely and consistently quotes and infers the Scripture of the older parts of God’s Word (the O.T.), as do other writers in the New Testament.

Paul uses a lot of spiritual (Holy Spirit led) deductive reasoning based on the Scriptures in his interpretation of Bible truths, even though at times he may not give you a direct quote from the Bible. His comments were based on God’s Word, though he did not quote “chapter and verse” as often as we would like.

Paul had been trained at the feet of the recognized and well beloved rabbi Gamaliel. (Acts 22:3) The rabbis taught God’s Word to their students and to others by using methods of deductive reasoning in order to come to an interpretation of the Scripture. The rabbis also

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taught in parables or stories to drive home a point (a preferred method of Jesus), and reasoning from the minor to the major or from the light to the heavy. Jesus used this latter method (in Hebrew called *kal-vachomer*) when He taught using the phrase “how much more” (Luke 11:13 and others). Paul uses this method when he taught in Romans 5:9-18 and in other places.

The rabbis also would interpret a word according to the context in which it was used, and interpret Scripture in the light of other Scriptures that taught something similar. Most anointed Christian teachers actually use these methods of teaching today to one degree or another, whether they recognize what they are or not.

The epistles of Paul add further light and revelation, but they are NOT to substitute the rest of Scripture. Yes, I know that God gave Paul special revelation of the mysteries in Christ, but Paul was moved upon by the Holy Spirit to use a huge amount of the older writings of God in the Bible whether he quoted or inferred them. In my Bible, I often come across his inference of Old Testament Scripture though he doesn't quote it, so I write the Scripture reference in the margin to remind me of where Paul got the basis for his comments. If your Bible has good cross references that point out Old Testament Scriptures, it would be wise to go look at them. They are not always right, but the Lord will lead you into all the truth if you will ask Him to.

Sometimes Paul only infers a part of a much larger portion of Scriptures. When you see the fuller context in the reference, it opens up your understanding to what he was teaching. The Word of God was the foundation for all of his teaching and preaching, directly or indirectly!

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Paul said that Timothy had known the Scriptures from childhood. (2 Tim. 3:15) What Scriptures was he referring to? Of course, the reference is to what we have wrongly dubbed the "Old" Testament. Yes, they are the older writings but they are not OLD in the sense that now we do away with the writings that existed before the Gospel of Matthew in our Bibles. They are in your Bible with good reason! There is much that God spoke to the older writers that is not repeated in the Gospels or the rest of the newer writings of the Word of God (the New Testament).

Chapter 11: Faith and the Activation of the Anointing

Let's quote once again the story of the woman that had the issue of blood as a reference because we are gleaning some faith principles from it:

Hearing about Jesus, coming in the crowd behind Him, she touched His garment. For she said, "If I may but touch His garments, I will be cured." And instantly the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she knew in her body that she was healed of the plague. And knowing instantly within Him that power had gone forth out of Him, turning in the crowd, Jesus said, "Who touched my garments?" And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing on you, and do you say, 'Who touched me?'" And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be whole from your plague." Mark 5:25-34

Note that Jesus said, **"YOUR FAITH has healed you."** Jesus did not say that His faith healed the woman. We do have to qualify this to understand it correctly. Yes it was her faith that made the right connection, but what did she connect to? Did she connect her faith to something in herself or to something outside of herself? The answer to that question is important because when we say "her faith" healed her, we understand that if healing power had not been in and on Jesus, then her

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faith would have had no healing to connect to unless she chose to believe God's Word concerning healing and received by her faith based solely on His Word. (Psalms 107:20, Exodus 23:25, Psalms 91:1-10, Proverbs 4:20-24)

In the case of this woman, she didn't get healed by believing the Covenant promises of healing, at least not directly. Some see her touching the hem (Gr. *kraspedon* from the Heb. *tzitzit*) of His garment in this light, and I believe it can be successfully taught that way. In the past, I have taught it like that. It could be right but there is something else that stands out in this story.

The more obvious conclusion is that this woman had faith in the healing power that was operating in the life of Jesus to heal and deliver. Her faith was not in herself or her ability but in Him, and her faith connected to the power of God that Jesus was anointed with for healing and deliverance! Jesus was the one anointed by the Holy Spirit and with power to heal and deliver people. (Acts 10:38) Healing power was on Jesus, but was her faith that connected to that power and received a manifestation of it. Jesus was anointed to minister to people, but that anointing was NOT always active, even though He had been anointed by God to heal. (Luke 4:18)

Any gift of grace in Christ Jesus operates the same way. The riches of His great grace and kindness towards us function in the same manner. The grace is the mighty provision of God in Christ Jesus through His awesome sacrifice, but our faith is what connects us and "makes a withdrawal" from the "GRACE" bank of Heaven! The inexhaustible resources of Heaven, "His great riches in

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Glory” are accessed through our faith in Him and His endless supply! (Romans 5:2, Eph. 2:4-10, Phil. 4:19)

Thank God that His mercy endures forever, but as we approach His throne with BOLDNESS we *obtain* mercy and *find* grace to help in the time of need. (Hebrews 4:16) This is the boldness of faith in what Jesus accomplished for us!

To get an accurate definition of what kind of boldness accesses grace and mercy, one needs to read Hebrews chapters 1 through 4.

Boldness is when your faith is mixed with the gospel message that He suffered in our place and defeated the devil and death in every realm of human existence. (Heb. 4:2, 1:1-4, 2:14, 15)

Boldness is by faith entering into His rest, the rest that Jesus provided ALL for us through His great and awesome sacrifice! (Heb. 4:1, 10, 11)

Boldness requires staying out of a hard heart of unbelief and staying firmly in Christ to the end. (Heb. 3:12, 14, 19; 4:1, 6, 7)

Boldness lays hold of His Word that is more alive and more powerful than any two edged sword. In order for the sword to do you any good it must be used! (Heb. 4:12, 13 and James 1:22)

Boldness is by faith holding fast to our confession (Heb. 3:1, 4:14) and trusting in our High Priest in Heaven because of all He did and provided for us. (Heb. 4:15) We approach the throne of grace with this kind of bold faith, and we OBTAIN and FIND grace and mercy!

Faith gives action to the anointing and the power of God, and it is doubt and unbelief that will short circuit it.

And He could do no work of power there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick ones, He healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. And He went around the villages, in a circuit, teaching. Mark 6:5, 6

Shouldn't the riches of God's mercy and grace have gotten them healed anyway? (Ephesians 1:7, 2:7) Grace came through Jesus Christ, did it not? (John 1:17) Is not God a God that is rich in mercy? (Eph. 2:4) Why didn't they all get healed that day? Weren't grace, mercy and compassion there in a glorious way in Jesus? You know that it was! Shouldn't God have just overridden their unbelief and their objection to the ministry of Jesus because of the great riches of His grace, mercy, and kindness, and healed them anyway? Sorry, but it does not work that way.

There were plenty of sick people in Nazareth. God loved them very much. He really does love everybody but that certainly does not mean that He loves their sin or perversions. (John 3:16) He loved the world so much that He gave the world Jesus as a sacrifice to be the author of our full redemption, but this marvelous redemption will only go into effect for the believing ones. Unbelieving ones will perish. It is really that simple. Believe it and get it, reject it and refuse to mix faith with the Word preached and get nothing. (Mark 16:16, 17, Heb. 4:2)

In Nazareth, on that day, only a toothache and a hangnail were all that was probably healed. The Greek text implies that the sick that were healed that day only had minor sicknesses. No cancer was cured, and no

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cripples walked that day, no deaf heard, and no blind eyes were opened in Nazareth. God is a good and gracious God and He just should have done it anyway, right? Grace and mercy will do it all on its own, right? God will just do it for you with no faith on your part, right? WRONG! VERY WRONG!

Note that it said that Jesus COULD do no work of power there. It never said that He was unwilling or refused to do it. Literally the Greek says that He was *unable* to do what He wanted to do. Grace and mercy wanted to heal everybody there, but He could not on that day!

Chapter 12: Faith and the Sovereignty of God

"I don't believe any of that. God can do anything He wants to because He is sovereign and no one can resist His will," some have said about a teaching like this one. You hear stuff like this often as a rebuttal to this kind of message.

God is sovereign and no one can resist His will? Is that so? Then, how come God in His sovereignty can't get 70 to 80 percent of Christians (even more according to some polls) to tithe? Tithing your income is His sovereign will, according to His Word. (Genesis 14:18-20, Malachi 3:6-14, Hebrews 7:1-28)

Since I am on the subject: Why do so many Christians give nothing more than a tip for His work? Why has stinginess instead of generosity for the work of God taken over so many church members? Some may think it is the result of a "lack of money" or the economy, but it is the sinister and deadly "love of money" at work in these last days! (1Timothy 6:10) Anytime a believer withholds what is right from their church or a ministry that God has instructed them to support, it is the love of money at work. (Proverbs 3:27) This has to change, but it seems like their will and response is involved.

So, are many Christians resisting the will of the sovereign God when they do not tithe or give generously? (2Cor. 9:6, 7) Yes they are, and yes they do resist His will often!

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Does *sovereignty* mean that God as the King and ruler of the universe can do whatever He wants, whenever He wants, irrespective of what He tells us in His Word? No, it does not mean that at all! He can and will do whatever He wants to do that is in line with His Word, or else His Word would be a lie. If His Word cannot be trusted then that would make Him out to be a liar, but HE IS NOT A LIAR! (Numbers 23:19) Let God be true and every man a liar! (Romans 3:4) If He said it, then it is so and it can be depended on as THE eternal truth. (John 17:17, Ps. 119:142)

All of God's actions on this planet are governed by His Word. His rule and government are subject to the dictates of His Word. He never will do something that is opposition to His Word. He is bound to His Word because it is THE TRUTH and no lie is of the truth. (1John 2:21) His eternal will is what He says in His Word. Only hypocrites say something that they really don't mean, and God is no hypocrite! He is truth personified, and what He wants and wills is what He says.

How does the human will come into play in all this business of sovereignty? Have you noticed that not everybody is saved or getting saved, even though God wants all men to be saved? (1Timothy 2:4) The sovereign God wants everybody to be saved, but are men and women resisting His will all over the planet by not accepting the sacrifice of Jesus and making Him Lord of their lives? Their willingness to believe and receive is involved. How come everybody that is going to hell will do so even though it is God's perfect and sovereign will

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that not one person perish and go to that horrible place?
(2 Peter 3:9)

Many have the idea that if it is the will of God then it will just happen whether people receive it or not or want it or not. Some have the idea that God's will is going to be done always in all circumstances. "If it's God's will then it will happen because He is sovereign. If it is not His will then it won't happen." This is far from the truth and actually a gross error in theology.

This traditional idea of the sovereignty of God is a false doctrine that infiltrated Christianity from paganism and Islam. In Islam, everything that happens, both good and bad, is the will of the sovereign deity of Islam. If they do something good or bad, to them it is all the will of their god, so that removes human responsibility for evil actions in many ways. It removes the need to correct and better yourself when you make a mistake. If you ran out of gas, "It was the will of Allah." Never mind that a Muslim could have avoided that problem by simply watching the gas gauge and pumping some gas into the tank! God's will did not have one thing to do with their lack of diligence. If an Islamic terrorist murders someone in the name of their god, then it was the will of Allah, he was behind it, and he gave them the strength to commit the murder or murders. Talk about a religion for the living dead! Islam is a religion of death, one that glorifies and exalts death on many fronts. Our Bibles teach us differently!

If God always gets His will done on the earth because He is sovereign and no one can resist His will, then why did Jesus teach us to pray to the Father, "Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven"? (Matthew

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6:10) The truth is that, in the human family, God doesn't get His way or will done very often.

Yes, I do believe that more and more of His way and will is being done upon the earth as we approach the coming of the Lord because there will be multiplied millions of believers on the earth seeking to do the will of the Father. I believe that with all my heart, but today, God doesn't see His will done in the earth very often. People mostly do their own will and they do things contrary to God's will and Word. Turn on the news channel and there is plenty of evidence of this!

Contrary to the sovereign will of God, most human beings are living in disobedience to God's will and Word. I say "most" because there are about 1 billion plus Christians on the planet compared to about 5 to 6 billion non-Christians. Even if all 1 billion plus Christians were doing the will of God, that would mean that the majority on the earth don't obey God's will. If only 20 or 30 percent of those that call themselves Christians actually give their tithe, this means that 70 to 80 percent of Christians rob God and are not doing the Word in this area! (Malachi 3:6-10 and Hebrews 7) If they are disobedient in this very basic instruction on tithing, how many other areas of teaching from the Word do they refuse to obey? Yes, I have to maintain that most people on the planet today are not doing the will of the Father!

All the stealing, killing and destroying being carried out by human beings in the earth are the result of following the devil and doing his works! (John 10:10, 8:44) They are all resisting the revealed and sovereign will of God in His Word, and His sovereignty as Ruler and King.

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem that kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, like a hen gathers her own brood under her wings, and you refused!”
Luke 13: 34

The Lord wanted to gather them. It was His sovereign will as their Ruler and King to gather them, but THEY refused! It was His sovereign will that He be their King and Ruler, but they chose to have a king like the other ungodly nations. (1 Samuel 8:5-22) His sovereign will was not done where they were concerned!

The human will can oppose God’s sovereign will as Ruler and King on this planet, even though it is sheer arrogance and pride to do so. God certainly allows it because He has given every human being the right to choose between blessing and cursing, and life and death, even though God wants people to choose His goodness.

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live: That you may love the LORD your God, and that you may obey his voice, and that you may cleave unto him: for he is your life, and the length of your days... Deuteronomy 30:19, 20

It is our choice! We decide what we get from the Covenant or from God! God does not choose for us! The provision has been freely and graciously provided through the sacrifice of Jesus, but the decision as to

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whether we get anything from God and His Word is in our hand and not in His hand! He has given us the right to choose. He has provided for us exceedingly great and precious promises. (2 Peter 1:3) Yet they must be received and walked in by faith.

Jesus tried to get the people healed in Nazareth but very little happened. (Mark 6:5, 6) He could not get them healed even though it was His sovereign will to heal them! (Matthew 8:16, 17) Don't you know that has to grieve the heart of God, who is love? (Eph. 4:30, 1John 4:16) He desired to do the miraculous through Jesus. Jesus laid His hands on people and they got zilch! It was like laying your hands on a door knob. There was no life and no connection. They made NO decision to receive and they rejected His ministry.

I have been ministering in a healing line under a powerful anointing by the laying on of hands. I laid hands on one person and it was like laying your hand on a cement block. They were completely unresponsive. Then, I have laid hands on another person where the anointing of God rushed out of me with such force and power into the other person that it nearly knocked me off my feet. I felt it. I mean, I really felt it. Sometimes it has felt like when you were a kid and stuck your finger in an electrical socket. It was that strong. It would almost make you jump and holler. There have been times that I laid hands on somebody that was so unresponsive that it felt like laying your hand on a dead body- cold and lifeless. Other times, the fire of God was flowing as I laid hands on somebody and it would almost feel like a hot honey or liquid fire flowing out of my hands. I would immediately break out in a profuse sweat. Don't laugh or

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think that it is some weird or far out thing we are talking about. God's power is REAL and it affects people in these ways sometimes as they minister with a real anointing. I have had this happen repeatedly over the years. Sometimes, I have had both extremes take place in the same healing line! What is the difference? Faith and expectancy to receive was high in the one that received, and doubt and unbelief was at work in the other person where there was no action.

I have been in churches that were VERY responsive to God, His message for them through me, and actually honored the anointing of the Lord on my life. My God! Talk about healings and manifestations of the Holy Spirit! There have been many in places like that.

Then, I have been in churches that I don't even know why I went in the first place. I probably missed God. They had no faith response and no respect for an anointed one of God. They did not respond to the message or the anointing on the messenger. Can you guess what they got? You got it. They got absolutely nothing or VERY little.

In those churches it can be like plowing without a tractor, horse, mule, or even a plow. You are "plowing" by hand and it is tough and very tedious. It is really that bad to go among unresponsive people. The Spirit of God gets grieved and you can certainly perceive that grieving in your own spirit. It is no fun, preaching is hard, and it leaves a sour taste in your mouth, if you know what I mean. Church was never intended to be like that. Most of the people in Nazareth were like that. Yuk! What a bunch!

Chapter 13: Faith in God's Willingness and Mercy

The leper said to Jesus, **“You can heal me if it is your will.”** This is the cry of so many Christians in the world that still haven't settled the fact that Jesus already provided healing for us through His awesome sacrifice. (Matthew 8:17, Isaiah 53:4, 5, 1Peter 2:24, Gal. 3:13) Jesus answered the leper's doubt concerning His willingness to heal with, **“I am willing. Be made clean!”** No question should be in us as to God's desire and willingness- His mercy and compassion to heal. God is willing to heal and deliver. He wants to do it! (Mark 1:40-42)

And He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. Matthew 13:58

And He could do no work of power there, except that He laid His hands on a few sickly ones, and He healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. (Literal Greek of Mark 6:5, 6)

Though God is FULL of grace, mercy, love, willingness to heal, and He yearns for the deliverance of the masses because of His mighty compassion for folks, Jesus COULD do no work of power because of unbelief in Nazareth. God's power did not flow to bring healing and deliverance because of a resistance to the message and the Messenger. (Mark 6:4) God is love and He is full of grace and mercy, but that is not where the story ends.

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He is also righteous and just and will never reward doubt and unbelief. He rewards ONLY those seeking Him diligently by faith. (Heb. 11:6) He cannot reward unbelief or doubt because whatever is not of faith is sin. (Romans 14:23) This is why Jesus corrected the leper's wrong believing. The leper had to move from only believing that God could heal Him into believing that He would do it for him and do it right then. The three words of Jesus should reverberate throughout our whole beings. **"I am willing"** answers the will of God questions because Jesus has not changed! He is the same yesterday, today and forever! (Heb. 13:8) If He ever said, "I am willing", and He did, then that settles it forever for all mankind! He is saying to you and me today, "I am willing!"

Jesus said, **"That is why I tell you, as to whatever you pray and make request for, if you believe that you have received it, it shall be yours."** (Mark 11:24) Notice that this verse tells us in no uncertain terms that the "it shall be yours" comes only after the "IF you believe you have received it." It doesn't just happen. Participation by you is required! It is not "it will come to me because of grace, love and mercy" regardless. No! There is a believing you HAVE received BEFORE seeing the manifestation. This verse is telling us that you have to have it first in you, in your spirit, as a faith reality BEFORE the manifestation can come. Faith gets it, believes it, or receives it as a faith reality BEFORE you see it. (Study Hebrews 11:1.) Then, and only then, can you get it as a manifestation. The "having" is first inside and then it manifests on the outside.

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Faith begins in the heart and not in the body. Believing starts in the heart or spirit first. (Romans 10:9, 10) We walk by faith and not by the dictates of our sight, (2Corinthians 5:7) but faith connects with God's power and causes transference of spiritual power into the physical world. God's power is spiritual but it can be accessed by faith and transferred into the natural world where it will go to work to change things in the physical realm. Faith is the link between both worlds. The world of the spirit is eternal and it is the place where God who is the Father of spirits dwells. (2 Cor. 4:18, John 4:24, Hebrews 12:9) Think of the spirit world as another dimension. Faith is the portal from that dimension into this one! Faith opens a door from that world into this world where the will of the Spirit of God can be done on earth even as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

Faith is the "channel" that tunes into the POWER transmission facility of heaven! God is transmitting right now. His grace and mercy of healing was and is available, but without faith in action you have no receiver! Faith is the receiver. Have you ever tuned in to a radio station with no receiver? It doesn't work like that. There is NO reception without having a receiver. Here it is in black and white.

And it happened on one of the days, even as He was teaching. And Pharisees and teachers of the Law were sitting by, who had come out of every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was there to heal them. Luke 5:17

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The power of God was present to heal them. "THEM" means that ALL of THEM could have gotten in on this marvelous healing power. Heavens healing transmission tower was on at full blast! Only one man tapped into that healing power on that day. God's healing power was available for everybody to get it. All could have been miraculously healed. Grace was there for everybody as a free gift, but only one RECEIVED the free gift God was offering. The gift (Gr. *charisma*) of God, His grace (Gr. *charis*), MUST be received-received by faith! See Romans 5:17, Galatians 3:14, and Hebrews 10:36.

The paralytic brought by four men was the only one that got anything on that day even though the healing power was available for everybody. (Luke 5:17-25) That portion of Scripture tells us that Jesus SAW their faith. So faith can be seen in certain actions. Even more often than that is the fact that faith will be heard, as it was with the woman that had the issue of blood, the gentile woman of Canaan, and others we have studied.

Look at the contrast when everybody is in an expectancy of faith to receive from God. Look at what happens. Look at the stark difference between the crowds that pressed in on Jesus in Mark 5 where only one woman got any release of healing power, and compare that with this next crowd of people.

And ALL the crowd sought to touch Him, for power went out of Him and healed them ALL. Luke 6:19

See the great difference in the two crowds? The crowd around the woman had no faith in operation. Only

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the woman that had the issue of blood got healed by her faith. (Mark 5:34) The power was present and available. Grace, mercy and love were there, but no one got a thing except that woman that acted in faith. Then there is this crowd that had a faith response, they accessed the anointing power on Jesus, and miracles flowed like water!

There is another side to the manifestation of grace, mercy, and the love of God that we are not addressing in this book except in passing. The gifts or manifestations of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 are manifestations of the grace, mercy, and love of God that can go into operation to minister to others through a yielded vessel as the Spirit of the Lord wills. Though they manifested as the Spirit wills, faith is required for their operation, though usually it is not the faith of the recipient of the gift, but of the one used to minister it. Faith is still a requirement of the yielded vessel used to minister a gift of the Spirit, but it is not necessarily required of the individual that the gift was delivered to. There are a number of examples of gifts of the Spirit going into operation in the ministry of Jesus where the faith of the individual was not mentioned at all, as for example, the man at the pool of Bethesda, the woman bowed over for 18 years, the man with the dropsy, the man with the withered hand, at the raising from the dead of the man at the city of Nain, and others. Please study my free book on our website, *“Pathways of the Spirit”* to get a deeper understanding of spiritual gifts and their operation, and how these are completely different than receiving based on your faith in the Covenant.

Chapter 14: Faith and a Covenant of Works

"Oh Brother Rodriguez don't you know that all this you are referring to was before the cross. That was under a "works" covenant and we only live as Christians in the Pauline epistles, under the grace, love and mercy of God," some have unwisely said to me in recent years.

That silly thinking doesn't take into account that God has always been a God of grace, love, and mercy. This reality is seen frequently in the older parts of our Bibles! (See, for example, Psalms 136 and the numerous references all over the Hebrew text to mercy, love and grace! Do a study on these words. Since when does God change? (Malachi 3:10) He doesn't change and He does not alter His covenant or the thing that has gone out of His mouth. (Psalms 89:34)

Read this closely: *There is no such thing as a "works" covenant! All covenants with God were always based on faith and depended on His mighty provisions!* No faith then meant that you had no provision just like it means that now. The just (righteous) in the older covenant had to live by faith just like we must live by faith in the covenant sealed in the Blood of Jesus! (Habakkuk 2:4) The Old Testament Scripture was the place where the writers of the New Testament got the verse "**the just shall live by faith**". (Romans 1:17, Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38) They didn't invent something new and unheard of! Nobody in any covenant with God has ever been excluded from the necessity of living by and through faith in God's Word.

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Read the hall of fame of faith in Hebrews 11 and note that living by faith goes all the way back to Abel in Genesis 4. God created the universe by faith! It all starts with Him. Follow it in Hebrews 11 and see that faith was always a part of what God expected because it is impossible to please Him without faith. (Heb. 11:6)

Israel got into trouble because they refused to walk by faith in God's Covenant and began to establish their own ideas and practices as law. That is a major part of understanding the "works" versus "grace" controversy in the writings of Paul. (Romans 9:30-32) These "works" have to do mainly with the oral traditional commandments not found in Scripture that were taught by the Pharisees and doctors of the law as, "Thus saith the Lord," even though the Lord never taught them to do anything of the kind. Jesus called these manmade ordinances "the commandments of men" that were making God's Word of NO effect in their lives! (Mark 7:7-13) We will study this in much more detail a little later in another chapter.

Paul was also opposing, in his "grace versus works" arguments the misguided teachers that were demanding the new male converts to the Lord out of paganism to be circumcised and keep the law in order to be saved. This basically is a non-issue today!

Christian Brother reading this, when was the last time you were tempted to go and receive circumcision in order to be saved? It is not an issue today, but it was in Paul's day because ALL of the first followers of Jesus, numbering into the multiplied thousands, right up until the first group of Gentiles converted to the Lord Jesus in Acts 10, these were ALL Jews that had been circumcised

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according to the Covenant provision for the male descendants of Abraham. This is the main focus and central issue in the epistle to the Galatians, and it is why it all came to a head at the church council in Acts 15. That whole 15th chapter of Acts is dedicated to this issue, but more was going on that needed correction.

One focus of the book of Hebrews was to correct the notion and the temptation of Jewish believers to go back into Temple worship and blood sacrifices. The sacrifice of Jesus completely abolished and completely eliminated any need whatsoever for Temple worship, blood sacrifices and the Levitical priesthood because His sacrifice was done one time forever and never has to be repeated again. (Heb. 9:12, 24-28, 10:1-14) To go back to that old ceremonial stuff would be an insult to the Spirit of grace that provided through Jesus such a marvelous redemption! (See all of Hebrews chapters 8-10.) The law of temple, priesthood, and sacrifice was a temporary measure that was to be made obsolete! Again, this is mostly a non-issue today because the Temple and its priesthood disappeared after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A. D.

There are some people that attempt to go back and keep the feasts and festivals, and also the Sabbath, but these were meant ONLY for national Israel and not to be spread into the non-Jewish world. If you study Exodus through Deuteronomy you will see clearly that these feasts and festivals, and the Sabbath, were for Israel and their descendants and not for the rest of the earth!

Many have missed it here by attempting to make Christians practice these things when we are not subject to them.

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On the other hand, I see nothing wrong in someone practicing them if they want to commemorate Jesus or His sacrifice. I'll tell you why. Jesus is our Passover sacrificed for us! (1 Cor. 5:7) He is the fulfillment of these feasts and festivals, and He is our Sabbath rest! (Hebrews 4) Paul says that no one should judge us in these things.

Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or in respect of a feast, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbaths. Colossians 2:16

Did you know that this verse teaches us that it is wrong for us as believers to condemn or judge those that find spiritual meaning to the feasts and festivals (and even the Sabbath day as unto the Lord) and desire to engage in them? This verse also teaches us that it is stark error to make these a hard rule imposed on Christians and to make our spiritual life dependent on feasts, festivals, and the Sabbath. (Please also read Romans 14:3-6.)

In the same way, people get hung up on foods and diet. Oh man, now I am really stepping on some toes. Some in Christianity fuss over what we should and should not eat. They want to push off their doctrinal point of view and what so and so said about this food or that food as though it was the Gospel truth. It is not!

Some ministers even push the dietary books of the ungodly and those that follow religious cults! Yea, go ahead and support the ungodly and those that follow after error, and celebrate it on your website, and call it all

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“good” for Christians! I know this is somewhat sarcastic, but it is time to wake up out of slumber.

Don't even get me started with all the unscriptural mess being sold in church bookstores! Some books I have seen in some Christian bookstores were an affront to the Word of God, and were not even fit for the bottom of the birdcage, if you know what I mean!

The Kingdom of God is NOT food or drink, or in keeping feasts and festivals of Israel and the Sabbath! (Rom. 14:17-22) Paul told Timothy not to get caught up and preach and teach a certain dietary regiment. (1Timothy 4:1-9) Many have not heeded this and yielded to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons by giving themselves to preach and teach diet as though it is something God requires for all Christians.

Don't misunderstand me here. I am all for Christian doctors telling us about the risks or benefits of eating and living a certain way, but I am totally against making it a hard fast rule or doctrine for any believer. Believers need to follow their own consciences and faith in this area. No one should ever try to push a certain “diet” or “way of life” concerning food on other Christians as a law or rule of life. (1Corinthians 8: specifically verses 8 and 9. Also see Romans 8:14, 16, and 9:1.)

I personally believe in eating right because my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) and I have to live in it in order to fulfill my call and mission, but I can't judge you based on whether you eat a certain way or not. I adhere to a certain personal rule in eating and exercise, but I am led by the Holy Spirit in what I need to do concerning MY body. I have to present MY body as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God. (Rom.

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12:1) I have to buffet my body and make it obey me. (1 Cor. 9:24-27) I must train the senses in my body to discern between good and evil through the Word and the Spirit. (Heb. 5:14) That is no one's responsibility but my own before God. We must be led by the Holy Spirit in the how to get this done for our own bodies and not be led by men's ideas and philosophies! (Rom. 8:14)

Again, if anyone does an unbiased reading of these chapters and verses I have mentioned, they cannot help but come to these same conclusions from the Word of God.

There is a modern version of the "grace" versus "works" controversy floating around churches that should have never happened, but the devil is good at confusing the issues in Paul's writings among the gullible and untaught. (2 Peter 3:15, 16) The apostle Peter saw that some people were misunderstanding Paul even in his day, so it should not be a surprise when people misunderstand him today! This "controversy" has become a challenge to the right scriptural understanding of this subject, and it has clouded the truth for many. It is a destructive heresy that has "secretly" come into the church in these last days, because even though it is being preached far and wide via Christian television, in some churches, and through books, it has remained largely unexposed. (2Peter 2:1) This is one prominent reason why this book was necessary; to manifest truth and the light of God's Word on these subjects of faith and grace and those related to them in one way or another.

You better judge EVERYTHING you hear from any preacher, including me, from the Word of God! If I don't

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give you chapter and verse in context then you are free to discard it!

Some excellent Bible teachers have mixed their otherwise good teaching with a twisted perspective on grace and watered down version of faith. We go back to the analogy of the rat and the strychnine poison wrapped in something good and tasty! If you just heard these teachers on occasions without digging a little deeper into what they are teaching, you probably would conclude, “Oh, they believe just like I do!” They will teach right on healing, the gifts of the Spirit, prosperity, and so on, but then you begin to realize that there is a dangerous mixture of great truths with grave error on the subject of grace and that they teach a watered down version of faith.

Some have already come to the place where everything they teach is seen through the eyeglasses of their wrong ideas about grace and faith. Error is like that. One fundamental error will breed other errors because everything is perceived through the initial error that has now become the platform from which everything is taught. Once that happens, it’s all downhill from there. Paul put it like this:

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. 2Timothy 3:13

I don’t believe for one second that everybody teaching a wrong doctrine is evil, because there are good Christian people out there teaching some crazy stuff. Though they may be good Christian people, they have fallen into the category of “seducers” because they are

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heeding seducing spirits and they are conveying their perversions of the truth. (1Timothy 4:1, 2) Sooner or later, if people continue down that road of heeding seducing spirits, evil will be the result. Paul says that instead of going from glory to glory and faith to faith (Romans 1:17, 2Cor. 3:18) that they will wax worse and worse. It is a very slippery downhill slope.

I wrote a book in 2008 that, even though the main theme is restoration, it addresses how error comes into a church, and how it gets the ball rolling downhill when it is not addressed and thrown out. It is a free download on our website. The title is: *“What Happened to our Pastor?”*

I find too many Scriptures all over the New Testament that contradicts in many ways the strange teaching espoused by some in the areas of faith and grace. They have misunderstood Paul’s purpose in writing these things about “works of the law” and what these actually were. They have come up with new meanings to clearly taught controversies that were very real in Paul’s day. It is not a hard subject to understand if you look at Paul’s writings in an unprejudiced way. We will expound on Paul’s teaching on this subject in later chapters. It will answer most if not all your questions along this line and give you many Scriptural references.

Some go so far as to say that no rules or laws apply to the Christian life. They are in opposition to any rules, even spiritual and holy spiritual rules or laws like the law of faith that I mentioned earlier. (Romans 3:27) Love is called the royal law, and there is the law of liberty, the law of the Spirit of Life, and the law of sin and death! (James 1:25, 2:8, 12, Romans 8:2) People in opposition

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to “laws” of the spirit are mixed up and are in a bind. They are in for a very nasty surprise and rude wake-up call! They don’t understand what it takes to receive according to spiritual laws. I am presenting by the Spirit spiritual laws or rules of faith (and others) that can and will aid anyone in receiving from the Lord. If there was a law of faith that went into operation to receive from the Lord in the past, then it will be the same today.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.
Hebrews 13:8

His power and anointing have not changed and the spiritual laws that gave action to that anointing back in His earthly ministry are still the same. We still operate under the spiritual law of faith. Faith is a rule or law of God according to this verse! It is an eternal principle of God that connects us to God’s inexhaustible provisions. We will soon see clearly that grace is all the provisions in Christ Jesus, but that it is a living faith that receives it in every realm.

Chapter 15: The Right “Steps” to a Receiving Faith

...But also to those walking by the *steps* of the faith of our father Abraham... Romans 4:12

This kind of faith demonstrated by Abraham is the kind that we are to walk in or live our daily lives by, as seen in this 4th chapter of Romans and Hebrews 11. It is also seen in the fact that we look unto Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith because of what He did for us through His awesome sacrifice. (Heb. 12:1-3) This is the kind of faith that pleases God and gets results. (See Heb. 10:35-38, 11:1-6.)

The woman that had the issue of blood demonstrated a faith that pleases God and gets results. (Mark 5:25-34) We can learn much from her example of receiving from God. There were certain "steps" of faith that led to her receiving healing. I want to know what they were because they worked! Are you also interested in knowing them so you can apply them?

We are to walk by the steps of the faith of Abraham. Following “steps” is perfectly OK when we deal with principles we should follow based on God’s Word. I say this for the benefit of those that think that following “steps” is legalistic. Following God's RULES cannot be "legalistic" or “performance” minded as some blatantly teach. *Manmade traditional rules* are what are damaging and are extremely "legalistic." Religion of men is what is legalistic and full of non-productive dead traditions, but

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doing God's Word and following His rules from the heart as an honor to Him can never be legalistic! Get your theology straightened out! How could you ever think that God's rules in His Word are "legalistic" or have to do anything with "trying to earn" anything from God? As one woman of God said, "That is 'stinkin thinkin'"! This reminds me of when Jesus was going to raise Lazarus from the dead and he commanded the stone to be removed from the mouth of the tomb, and Mary said, "Lord by now he stinks"! It is truly a dead and "stinky" idea to think that God's rules are somehow "legalistic." How dare people accuse God of legalism?

How can being doers of His Word, or even following His directives and commands, ever mean that one is a practitioner of a "performance Gospel"? Actually, if a Christian is not a doer of the Word of God, then that Christian is self deceived and has not really made Jesus the Lord of his or her life! (James 1:22, Luke 6:46-49) One is never "performance minded" or believing a "performance Gospel" by being obedient to God and His Word!

What did Jesus say about "performance"? Here are a few of His sayings. If anyone does not like them, please argue with Him!

"...The works that I do shall you do also and greater works than these shall you do..." John 14:12

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord', and do not the things that I say..." Luke 6:46

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“If you love me, keep (act on or do- NET says “obey”) my sayings... The one that does not love me will not keep (act on, do, and obey) my words...” John 14:21-23

“Give and it will be given unto you again, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over...” Luke 6:38

“Forgive and you will be forgiven...” Luke 6:37

“If you do not forgive; neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses...” Matthew 6:15

“Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, ‘Be removed, and be cast into the sea...’ ” Mark 11:23

“Rise up, take up your bed, and go to your house...” Matthew 9:6

“Launch out to the deep and cast out your net for a catch...” Luke 5:4

“Go down to the lake, throw a hook, and the first fish that comes up, open its mouth...” Matthew 17:27

“Go wash in the pool of Siloam...” John 9:7

There are many more but you get the picture here! Does anybody see "performance" in any of this or is it just me? While I am at it, is “performance” a bad word? Some would lead you to believe that performance is bad

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because it is of “the works of the law” and a “works mentality”, but it is not. Here is the dictionary definition of performance: *Execution of an action; a doing; something accomplished; the fulfillment of a claim, promise, or request; deed, feat, implementation.* So let’s boil it down: performance means DOING and it means ACTION!

For the record, Paul believed in being “performance” oriented or “performance minded” AFTER you receive the new birth.

Paul said in Acts 26:20 that he preached to Jew and Gentile that **“they should repent, turn to God, and PERFORMING deeds** (translated by others as “works”) **appropriate** (that corresponded to) **repentance.”** (NASB) The NKJV translates the word *perform* as *do*. In the Greek it is the word *prasso*, and it means “*to do, act on, accomplish, carry out, and to perform.*” He was telling Jew and Gentile that once they repent and turn to God (or are born again); the next thing on the agenda should be the performance of works as a manifestation of repentance. If Paul didn’t believe in performance of works, he would have never mentioned it. This was a few years after ministering to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians and to others among the gentiles. He had already received revelation in Christ. His message was the same to all believers.

Prasso is the same Greek word Paul uses in Philippians 4:9 when he instructs that church that **“the things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me practice (*prasso*- perform) these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.”** The God of peace being in manifestation WITH you depends on

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“performance” according to Paul. *Paul believed in a Gospel of practicing, performing and doing good works after you are born again!* This perfectly agrees with what Jesus said about the manifestation of the Father and of Himself among us as we OBEY (perform or do) His Words or commandments. (John 14:21-23)

Some are saying, “It is all legalistic and a performance or works mentality,” when they hear God's principles today being called "steps" or "rules." They say these things are “under the law and not grace” even though they are precisely taught principles in the Scripture. God’s rules and principles are never legalistic, works minded, works of the law or a performance Gospel!

Being systematic in our approach to spiritual laws is not legalism but DIVINE ORDER. There are principles or rules, yes; even laws in the world of the supernatural, and these are to function in a certain way.

God likes order and not disorder! Disorder is confusion and that is NEVER of God. (1 Cor. 14:33, 40) He dislikes chaos and confusion so much that He recreated the heavens and the earth after Genesis 1:2 happened. He put order back and eradicated the chaos and disorder that crept into the universe after Genesis 1:1! He never creates anything in chaos and disorder! (Isaiah 45:18) Many believe that chaos and disorder were the result of lucifer's fall from Heaven according to Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-19. I believe that. It makes good spiritual sense because satan is the personification of chaos and disorder, and he hates ALL of God's rules! That is what got him kicked out of

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Heaven. He wanted to violate God's rules and it condemned him forever. (See also Rev. 12:7-9.)

There are very specific instructions (rules) in Scripture, and there are direct prerequisites to the promises of God found in most of them. That is divine order.

As a reminder, we saw John 15:7 in chapter one of our book. Jesus did not only say, "Ask what you will and it will be granted unto you." He prefaced it by saying, "IF you abide in me, and my Words abide in you." As we saw, IF you abide in Him is the Master's call, not just to be declared righteous in Him by the new birth, but it is His call to PRACTICE righteousness as a daily part of our lives. It is a lie to believe that you can "abide in Him" and live like the world at the same time. "Abiding in Him" is living within the parameters of holiness and sanctification. (See 1John 3:4-8.) You cannot say you "abide in Him" and practice sin at the same time according to the apostle John! (1John 3:6, 2:6)

"Abiding in Him" also has to do with following His example, walking in love, and other things. I am not presenting here a complete study of the subject of "abiding in Him" but it should be enough to get you to study the subject.

There are clear preconditions in John 15:7 that must be engaged in FIRST before you can ever get to the second part of that verse. To have His words abide in us means that we are not just hearers of God's Word but doers of them! (Luke 6:46-48, James 1:22)

Jesus did not say, "Whatever you ask for in prayer will be done for you." (Mark 11:24) NO! Jesus said that we must believe that we HAVE RECEIVED what we

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prayed for FIRST, before we get the manifestation of it! Again, this demonstrates principles or "rules" or ORDER in the world of the spirit. These are "STEPS," as in the "steps" of the faith of Abraham. We are discussing a very specific "law," rule, or order of God in the spiritual realm. According to the apostle Paul, it is called the LAW of faith. (Romans 3:27) Some translations instead of "law" in this verse translate it as "rule of faith." Get used to it! There are rules in God's realm, both now and forevermore!

Chapter 16: First Step of Bible Faith- Right Hearing

Let's quote the story of the woman that had the issue of blood one more time, because now we get to the nitty-gritty of what she did to receive by her faith. We begin to see the "steps" of her faith that led to a miracle. We have some understanding now of what it means to have a living faith. We are seeing how to apply faith as a vital reality.

Hearing about Jesus, coming in the crowd behind Him, she touched His garment. For she said, "If I may but touch His garments, I will be cured." And instantly the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she knew in her body that she was healed of the plague. And knowing instantly within himself that power had gone forth out of Him, turning in the crowd, Jesus said, "Who touched My garments?" And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing on you, and do you say, 'Who touched me?'" And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be whole from your plague." Mark 5:25-34

What were the steps taken by this woman that led her to a manifestation of God's power? God is no respecter of persons, and it is in our bibles as an example of how faith functions. If it worked for her, then trust

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God that it can work for you today. Here is the first step of what she did:

1. She heard about Jesus.

Having heard about Jesus she came... Mark 5:27

What are you hearing? She trusted in God and the stories of healing she had heard about Jesus. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17) She heard about the healings but she also heard about the people that touched his garment and were made whole. (Luke 6:19) Note her kind of hearing propelled her into action!

Unbelief, which is a refusal to hear, trust, and to be persuaded by what God says, also comes by hearing. Again I ask you: What are you hearing? If you are hearing unbelieving kinfolks or unbelieving preachers then what is going to happen to you? Hearing and hearing unbelief, tradition, and doctrines of men has the opposite effect of hearing and hearing the Word of God. Hearing and hearing the Word of God and about what Jesus provided for you through His great sacrifice will feed and strengthen your faith to receive. The key here is APPLYING what you hear just like this woman did. Hearing, having faith, and being strong in faith, being convicted, being fully persuaded, and having great assurance is not enough. Faith has to be released, applied, used, and acted upon, or it will stay in you only as a faith possibility instead of becoming a physical reality.

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The woman heard about Jesus but she moved beyond only hearing, but this is an initial first step to receiving. It is essential to hear and get faith according to the Covenant.

You **MUST** pay close attention to what you hear. Why? What you hear will either feed your faith or your doubts. The idea is, as I heard one preacher of the Word put it years ago; feed your faith and starve your doubts! Here is the spiritual principle in the words of Jesus.

And He said to them, “Take heed to what you hear. With that measure which you measure, it shall be measured to you. And to you who hear, more shall be given. For he who has, more shall be given to him; and he who has not, from him shall be taken even that which he has.” Mark 4:24, 25

To you that hear shall more be given! **“If anyone has ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches”** is repeated often in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. Everyone had physical ears on their head, but Jesus was emphasizing listening to God who is Spirit in your spirit.

What are you hearing and what are you looking at? Both of these will determine what you get out of the Covenant promises. (Prov. 4:20-23)

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of

sinner against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Hebrews 12:2, 3

How can we "look unto Jesus" as it says there? Almost sounds like a paradox because He is invisible to the natural eye. So, how can you look at the invisible Lord? The answer is by looking into the promises of God and the redemption provided through the great and awesome sacrifice of Jesus. The rest of this portion of Scripture points this out. We look unto Him by considering His sacrifice for us! That is how it is possible to look at the unseen! (2Corinthians 4:18) Looking at the unseen according to God and His Word will change the visible realm to line up with the invisible that is called for! Jesus was and is the Word made flesh! (John 1:14) Believing for God to do what is impossible for man to do on his own is by His Word and trusting in His promises.

And coming down with them, He stood on a level place. And a crowd of His disciples, and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon (who came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases) were there; also those tormented by unclean spirits; and they were healed. And the entire crowd sought to touch Him, for power went out of Him and healed them all. Luke 6:17-19

These crowds came to hear Him AND to be healed. Some today only want healing but they really do not want to hear anything, especially if it contradicts their

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dearly held tradition or religious ideas. Hearing not only implies that you will act on what you hear; it also means that you are willing to discard your wrong ideas and beliefs and exchange them with His Word and His promises. That is the kind of “hearing” possessed by this woman that was healed of the issue of blood. It was a hearing that moved her away from religious thought and inaction and into the realm of believing in something far beyond her own self and the circumstance that plagued her. Her hearing moved her into faith actions springing up from her heart. That was the first thing that she did... SHE HEARD OF JESUS!

Chapter 17: Second Step of Bible Faith- Right Speaking

2. *She said it.*

...For she said, "If I can touch his garment I will be healed." Mark 5:28 (See also Luke 8:44.)

She didn't say, "I am so very sick. I am about to die. I can never get healing." She didn't say, "Well I just don't know if it's God's will to heal me." She didn't say, "I am so broke I can't pay my bills."

Her life was not a complaining and a “murmuring in her tent”! She did not speak doubt and unbelief. She believed in the healing power on Jesus regardless of what the doctors told her. The doctors had done all they could and she kept getting worse. They all believed it was just a matter of time before she died. She obviously believed that if Jesus healed those that touched His clothes that she could get in on it. (Luke 6:17-19) It's clear to me that she believed if anybody got healing from Jesus she was going to be one of them. Her determination to receive was powerful. She let nothing and nobody talk her out of her healing. She was unrelenting and fearless as she came into the crowd. She was afraid later, after she realized what had happened and Jesus called her out on her actions. She didn't know if she was going to get stoned over the boldness she demonstrated because a woman with a blood flow was

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considered unclean, and she had dared to touch a man of God.

Here is something many have to get right to receive healing, or any promise of God for that matter:

Your mouth has to agree with healing and whatever is the promise of God you believe.

The woman that had the issue of blood made her mouth agree with healing. Talk sickness and disease and you may never get healed. Talk sickness and disease after you get healed and you will probably lose it and get something worse. Jesus said to the blind man that received his sight, "Sin no more lest a worse thing come upon you." (John 5:19) Everything that is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23), so we must make our words agree with faith that comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God.

My mother, Noemi, reminded me of a healing story I want to share with you. Here it is in her words:

"In 1970, your father (Israel) prayed for a young girl that was deaf. She was your sister's friend. One night she stayed at our house. She asked for prayer because she wanted to be healed and to be able to hear and speak perfectly. Israel anointed her with oil and prayed over her. The young girl started to shout because she could hear! We had an awesome time listening to her as she repeated everything she heard. The girl and her family were born again believers. We used to go to the same church. When her father came to pick her up, she got so emotional sharing about the miracle that took place. Her father started yelling at her, telling her that it was a lie because miracles were not for today. He made her renounce her healing, and got angry at us for bringing

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his daughter hope that he considered was not for this time. The girl started crying, renounced her healing, and she went back to her original state and got worse. What a sad story it was for all of us.”

I remember the incident. It was a sad story of demon inspired tradition gaining the upper hand and short circuiting a miracle in the girl’s ears. Their words became stout against the Lord our Healer and Deliverer. Tradition is mean and ugly! That father should have rejoiced that his little girl was healed and could hear! Tradition blinded this father just like it did the Pharisees and Sadducees. Whenever Jesus healed people on the Sabbath they fussed and fought over the day of the week it was done instead of rejoicing over the healing received!

Our words cannot be stout against God's healing and health provision in Christ. (Isaiah 53:4, 5, Malachi 3:13, 14) *People need to get their tongue in line with God's Word and keep it there.* Please study this article: "The Words of your mouth: Are they Important?" on our anointed Articles page. Your mouth has a lot to do with your healing, deliverance, protection, money, and in fact every facet of your life WITHOUT EXCEPTION. Your tongue will affect your body and your entire world according to Brother James! (James 3:2-6)

Study how Abraham got his miracle. Note how much his tongue was involved. It takes faith to call yourself the father of many nations (the meaning of the name "Abraham") when your wife and you are really, really old and your wife has never even had a child! That takes some guts, faith "guts" that is! (Romans 4:17-23) Grandma was to have a baby and it wasn't to be a

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"virgin" birth either! Selah- pause and think about it! It's a funny thought, for you still struggling to get the joke!

Do you think that Abraham and Sarah would have had a son if instead he would have been running around the countryside calling himself, "Really old dude with dried up old grandma of a wife"? I don't think so! He had to call himself "the father of many nations" for years before he and his wife had a son. Did it work? Did it produce results? Did faith rise up in his heart and completely overtake his life? Yes it did, and it made everybody laugh. Anytime grandpa and grandma can have a child at around the century mark that is way too funny!! Isaac means laughter! And everybody said, "HA HA! Amen!"

Chapter 18: Third Step of Bible Faith- Right Action

3. She did something.

She came in the crowd behind Him and touched His garment. Mark 5:27

Faith has to do with actions that correspond to the faith as we are taught in the written Word and as led by the Spirit. (James 2:12-26 from Weymouth's translation and others. John 16:13, Romans 8:14) How do we receive the promise or blessing of God promised to Abraham and Jesus? Does it just happen or fall on you like apples from a tree with no faith or receiving on our part? No it does not and never will! Faith gives action to the power of God on your behalf just like it did for that woman that had the issue of blood, but the woman did not just sit there and hope that someday in the sweet bye and bye it would happen. Her faith moved her to do something in faith, in the now. Her faith was like the faith that moved the friends of the paralytic to carry him up on the roof, break open the roof tiling, and lower him with ropes in front of Jesus! Jesus SAW their faith! (Luke 5:17-25)

There was never a miracle without obedience to a command of faith or a divine word.

Every work of power had a "work" of some kind that went along with it. That is why it is called the "working" of miracles. (1Corinthians 12:7-11)

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It takes faith in a divine word to let down your net just because an anointed preacher (Jesus) tells you to do so! (Luke 5:4-7) An action was demanded! If Peter would have said, "No Lord, your grace is sufficient. Go ahead and bring the fish in and I will wait here for your provision," do you think he would have received a miracle catch? Peter would have gone broke had he refused to act on the word of Jesus!

When the Lord said "My grace is sufficient" to Paul, He was talking about the fact that the victory over that messenger of Satan had already been provided. (2 Cor. 12:7-10) All Paul needed to do was USE IT! We can reign in life IF we will receive (from the Greek word "lambano", meaning: to lay hold of, apprehend, choose, select, claim, make your own, appropriate, etc.) grace and the gift of righteousness... (Romans 5:17) Jesus was saying, "Paul, use what I provided for you!" Jesus was NOT saying, "Sit there and grace will do it all for you."

It takes faith to obey the word of the prophet when he says, "Dig this valley full of ditches" in order for the miracle of much needed water to come forth. (2 Kings 3:16 and following) Doing something was required! No "sitteth thou here and doeth nothing" mentality! The way some people think today they would have said to Elisha: "How dare you ask me to dig ditches brother Elisha? You are over into a works mentality and a performance gospel! I am depending on God's grace, mercy and love to do it for me!" Anyone with their thinking as twisted as that would never have received anything on that day! Frankly, people like that have become spiritually lazy! They are like the man that hid his talent instead of putting it to work for the glory of God! (Matthew 25:14-

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30) Jesus did not have kind words for the man that hid his talent! The man got a stern rebuke and was considered wicked and lazy! Jesus also said that the lazy and wicked person that did not use his talent to gain more was an unprofitable servant.

It takes faith to rise up and walk when the anointed man of God tells you, "Jesus has healed you," even though you have been crippled since you were born! (Acts 14:8-10) How about if the man had never responded with an action of faith and just sat there looking pitiful? Would he have been healed? Absolutely not!

It takes faith to build an ark when it had never even rained upon the earth and there were no bodies of water to float the humongous boat anywhere near the place where you built it! (Genesis 6:13ff. and Hebrews 11:7) How about if Noah would have said, "Now God, since I found favor (grace) before you (Gen. 6:8), you love me and have mercy on my family, please go ahead and build the ark because I don't want to get over into works and performance!" What do you think would have happened? Noah, his whole family, and all the animals would have perished with the wicked people of the earth with that kind of thinking. No one would have remained alive and the human race as we know it would have ceased to exist. Thank God he moved and obeyed by faith!

Do you realize that this boat building project was long term and took many years for Noah and his sons to finish it? Try building a boat that had a minimum of 450 feet in length by 75 feet in width and was about the height of a three story building. Oh, and build it with NO modern tools and equipment, no precut planks or beams,

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and see how long that will take you! There was no Home Depot or Lowe's, and no way to transport all the wood by truck! It was all done from scratch and by hand baby!

I'll mention Abraham again because it takes faith to call yourself "the father of many nations" (the meaning of the name "Abraham") when your wife and you are really, really old and your wife never even had one child!! (Romans 4:17-23) How about if Abraham kept calling himself, "O childless one and really old dude with a grandma for a wife"? What would have happened? He would have died childless! It was an act of his faith to call himself "father of many nations."

One of the great keys to getting any manifestation from the Lord is: **"Whatever He tells you to do, do it,"** as Mary told the household servants when the water was to be converted into wine. (John 2:1-7) It takes faith to obey the word of Jesus and fill the water pots with water and then go serve it to the headmaster because it is supposed to be wine! Faith demands action! What would have happened if the servants would have refused to obey and decided to sit around waiting for grace and mercy? Nothing would have happened. It took OBEDIENCE to a Divine directive to get the miracle. Jesus told them what to do to connect to the grace and mercy. They did it and the result was the miracle.

Often, the Holy Spirit will give you a specific action to move you right into your miracle. Jesus is not here in person today, but He is here in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. (John 16:13-15, 2Corinthians 3:17, 18)

Faith always does a work in the heart first and then requires an action of faith for a manifestation to follow.

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Sowing in faith is required before the harvest can come. Reaping only follows sowing. Have you ever noticed that?

If a farmer said, "Well, I am just going to trust the love, grace, kindness, and mercy of God and expect a harvest even though I have done nothing to plow my field, plant my seed, or water my field lest I get over into works, a works mentality, or a performance Gospel." Would the farmer get anything? He would not even get enough food to feed himself. He would get no harvest and starve to death!

God only multiplies the seed sown! A man-ward side is required. (2Corinthians 9:10, Galatians 6:7-10) God will give you seed to sow IF you are practicing sowing. He expects some sowing out of you for any kind of a harvest to come to you. Harvest NEVER comes without sowing! (Genesis 26:12) It is the law of creation. Everything on this planet and everything in the kingdom of God operates according to this seed and harvest principle- giving and receiving. (Genesis 8:22, Mark 4:26-28, Luke 6:38) Seedtime and harvest is an eternal principle! Jesus taught us that faith operates like a seed. (Luke 17:6, Matthew 17:20)

Chapter 19: Fourth Step of Bible Faith- Right Testimony

4. She testified about it.

But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had been done in her, came and fell down before Him and told Him all the truth. Mark 5:33

And they overcame him (the devil and demons) because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony. Revelation 12:11

Some never do tell about the wonderful things God is doing in their lives. Jesus wanted the testimony. He did not tell the woman to be quiet about it. You have to tell it. It brings God glory and it is a weapon against all of hell's forces.

Go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you... Mark 5:19

Jesus ordered this man to testify to his friends about what great things were done for him on that day. Talk about your deliverance repeatedly just like the Psalmist did. (Example: Psalms 32:7, 18:2, 35.)

Boast and glory in your God about His goodness. (Ps. 34:1, 2, 44:8, Isaiah 61:6, 1Cor. 1:31)

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Don't be shy or be reserved about it. Shout it from the housetops! (Matt. 10:27, Luke 12:3, Isaiah 12:6, Ps. 47:1)

Testimony is a powerful weapon against fear, doubt, and unbelief. It quiets the mind and stirs the spirit in faith and power.

Thanksgiving for the great things God has done is like this. Before the visible manifestation, and after it comes, thanksgiving brings God glory. Abraham thanked Him before He could see it. (Romans 4 and Hebrews 11) That is when the wise according to the world can't see it. Then when they can see it and hear it, the testimony moves them to faith as well so they can receive. It is one of God's advertising methods and it can be powerful. One miracle can turn into thousands when testimony is given of it.

Testimony also keeps your mouth straight after your miracle so you continue to praise and thank God for it. Do you see that? Keep telling it. Keep testifying about it and it will continue to build you up and strengthen you. The next time the devil tries to put something on you, you are prepared. A strong defense will have been built in you and around you. A powerful weapon will have been developed in you against his lies.

Chapter 20: Faith Steps Revisited

Again, here are the faith principles we saw through the story of the woman that had the issue of blood in Mark 5. For the sake of our understanding and growth and victory in Christ, we had to see many other truths that vitally connect to a living faith. Many have been principles that are often overlooked and downplayed in the operation of faith, but the Lord wanted through this book to emphasize them and put them in their rightful place according to His Word. I have done that as the Lord has led and instructed me, and we are not done yet!

We saw the “specific” steps of faith that were taken by this woman that had the issue of blood that brought on a manifestation of God's power. Read this story one more time. This time, read it like you never read it before and allow the Holy Spirit to burn these truths into your heart.

She heard about Jesus.

Having heard about Jesus she came... (Mark 5:27)

As we studied, hearing not only implies that you will act on what you hear, it also means that you are willing to discard your wrong ideas and beliefs and exchange them with His Word and His promises. That is the kind of “hearing” possessed by this woman that was healed of the issue of blood.

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She said it.

"If I can touch his garment I will be healed." (Mark 5:28; See also Luke 8:44.)

We saw that your mouth has to agree with healing. Talk sickness and disease and you may never get healed. Talk sickness and disease after you get healed and you will probably lose it. People need to get their tongue in line with God's Word and keep it there because your tongue will affect your whole body according to James 3: 2.

She did something.

She came in the crowd behind Him and touched His garment. (Mark 5:27)

Faith has to do with actions that correspond to the faith as taught in the written Word and as led by the Spirit. (James 2:12-26 from Weymouth's translation and others. John 16:13, Romans 8:14) Real Bible faith demands action or it is a dead faith!

I am going to interject here that "*she received it!*" I didn't distinguish "*she received it*" under a separate heading because it is one truth we discussed throughout our study. She received divine healing power. She didn't reject or oppose healing power but she RECEIVED it. She did the exact opposite of what the people in Nazareth did in Mark 6:5, 6. She did the opposite of all the religious folks that gathered to hear Jesus, but rejected the healing power that was present to heal them

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ALL of them in Luke 5:17. Only one got healed that day, though it was being made available to ALL. The woman with the issue of blood was the only one that received healing power in the crowd that was pressing in on Jesus. Remember that the text in Mark 5 says that she knew in her body that she was healed of that plague. This happened because she received and laid hold on the anointing that Jesus had on him. (Acts 10:38, Luke 4:18)

We taught on the faith connection and how healing power was transmitted and manifested (received) in her body when her faith was hooked up to the healing power (anointing, grace and mercy, power) on Jesus. She received it! *Her receiving started with her hearing, saying and doing it. Each part was a further receiving of it until her body finally received it!* This is an important revelation. It starts with spiritual hearing that changes the way you think and the way you act. If your hearing stops at the ear-gate then it will accomplish nothing. You must take it further! Let your mouth become aware of it. Then your mouth gets adjusted to it (faith to receive) and that propels you into determined action and to victory.

The last of the "steps of the faith" of this daughter of Abraham (Cp. Rom. 4:12) is to *"Tell It"*! Jesus had her give the testimony! Don't forget to tell it!

To finish this section of our study, the story of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17 gives us an older Bible example of these same principles in operation. Go back and study it. You will see that David heard it, said it, did it, received it, and then told it boldly. It is a powerful story of conquest and victory. It was a faith victory! David is mentioned in the famous faith chapter of Hebrews 11, and **"this is the VICTORY that has**

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overcome the world, even OUR FAITH”!!!! (1John
5:4) Amen to victory in your life!

PART II: RECEIVING THE GRACE OF GOD

At this point in the book, you should already have a basic understanding of a faith that receives and what that means. It was essential to get that settled before we could proceed. Now we are ready to shift gears and focus even more on the grace side of our study and how faith connects to the grace provided in Christ Jesus.

To begin with, I need to address some things about Bible morality in order to set up where we are headed in this segment. I am going to make some statements and then we will begin to examine the Scriptures on them. If you don't agree with my statements, just keep reading until we begin to examine God's Word. There is a reason why we do this. In this teaching process, we want to start by striking your thinking with some statements and then proceed to establish what we are writing about with God's Word. Is that OK? Amen! Here we go.

Chapter 21: Grace, Love and Moral Standards

Some think that to "just follow your heart" is the right way to go. It is not the right way to go if it violates in any way God's moral standards as revealed in His Word. God does have strict moral standards. Some may not like the word "strict" but there is no way around this fact if you know your Bible.

Following your heart will not work if you were never taught moral principles in your home or if you chose to ignore them! Naturally speaking, no untaught human being will automatically know what to do according to Biblical moral principles. True morality must start in the home or learned later in life as an adult through the Word and by the Holy Spirit. True morality will not just happen. It is learned in power from the Word of God.

God's moral standards are revealed in the do's and the do not's in Scripture. Not only was the law of God given to Israel full of moral standards to live by, but we are commanded along many of the same lines in the words of Jesus and in the New Testament in general.

Paul gives us entire lists of moral directives concerning what Christians should practice and what they should shun or run from! (See 1Corinthians 5:11, 6:9, 10, 17 Ephesians 4:17-31 & 5:1-7, Colossians 3:5-9, Galatians 5:19-21, and others.) These are all moral "do's and do not's" in Paul's own words! It is an incomplete

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list because Paul often gives moral directives in his writings.

Jesus also taught about God's moral standards in Matthew 19:18-21 and the parallel accounts to this story of the rich young ruler in Luke and Mark. He also spoke about what was evil and would defile a person. (Matthew 15:18-20) These are all based on Biblical moral laws and principles!

Do not commit murder; do not commit adultery, and all the rest of the commandments did not go away with the grace that came through Jesus. The importance of this truth cannot be overemphasized because the way some teach today you would think that moral commands were wiped out by grace. What does the Scripture say about it?

It will become clear to you why we are sometimes calling “law” in Paul’s writings “moral Biblical principles or laws,” “ceremonial law,” or other phrases to identify his specific emphasis on law. There is much more to this subject of “law” than what is often taught in Christian circles. We will be studying different aspects of the law because Paul actually does this in His writings. Many have not understood this about Paul’s writings. Some want to make every reference where he mentions the law to be talking about the same thing when in fact he shifts in his writings between different areas, aspects, and concepts of law. In one verse, he may emphasize one thing about law and then a little later he brings up another aspect of law. I know this may be problematic for the average Christian, and some may disagree, but I believe the Holy Spirit will help us to

unravel it for you and make it easy to understand. By the end of this book, it should be crystal clear for you.

If we were to sum up Paul's statements on the law, then we have to say that we are not to live under the laws of the priestly or temple code, its blood sacrifice system, male circumcision, the dietary laws, and the feasts and festivals. The part of law that is still actively taught by all the New Testament writers were the aspects of law that have to do with Bible morality. The difference is that in Christ Jesus we have a higher rule of love. If we will walk in the higher rule of love then we will never break the moral code but uphold it and keep it intact. This is not my idea but the clear teaching of Paul and others in the New Testament.

Let me be blunt and tell you that some in Christianity have given completely new meanings to Paul's teaching on the subject of the law, meanings that are foreign to the Bible and are the result of a gentile mindset that has run amuck! These strange doctrines on the law need to be exposed and a clear scriptural perspective must be established.

Let me say it again; we have a commandment of love that supersedes all the moral commandments individually because one that loves will NEVER commit murder or adultery or violate the moral commandments or laws of God. You certainly will not covet if you are walking in love, and you will never steal either. To violate any moral commandment of the Lord one must FIRST step away from walking in love! The love commandment supersedes all other commandments because if you keep it intact you will never violate the rest. Does the Bible teach us this? Does Paul teach this?

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Romans 13:8-10 says it like this:

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves another has fulfilled the Law. For: "Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not lust;" and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love works no ill to its neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.

According to these verses, Biblical moral law didn't get thrown out the door because we are now under grace. The only possible way that anyone can read these verses and come to the conclusion that grace completely removed moral commands is by an interpretation fogged by preconceived notions and strange doctrines. God's moral commands are "summed up" in the command to love our neighbor as ourselves. To "sum up" in Greek (*anakephalaiomai*) means: *to sum up (again), to repeat summarily, to condense into a summary*. There is NO mention of deletion, removal, replacement, elimination, or exclusion in any part of this Greek word. The Greek word is literally telling us that love has condensed the law and summarized it into one commandment, and that is the LOVE commandment. It certainly does not mean that Biblical moral law has been erased from existence! God's moral commands or laws have not been deleted according to Paul! To the contrary, we uphold the moral commandments without breaking them because we walk in the higher commandment of love for our neighbor!

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Nowhere are we told to throw out Biblical moral commands, laws or rules. We are taught that Biblical moral commands will be fulfilled without breaking them IF we walk in love according to these verses in Romans 13:8-10.

Walking in love is integral to walking in the spirit, which is walking in the fruit of the spirit. If we will keep our love intact, we will not be subject to HAVING TO keep the "law." Walking in love, or "walking in the spirit," keeps us from every work of sin and death. (Romans 8:2, Galatians 5:13-18)

Faith works by love. Galatians 5:6

By this faith that works by love, we do not make the Biblical moral law of God void. Brace yourself for this next verse because it will make the wrong teaching of some to shake in its boots!

Do we then make the law void through faith? Let it not be! But we establish *(Gr. uphold and sustain the authority and force, to set in place, to fix or keep intact)* **the law.** Romans 3:31

Some overlook this verse! It is a mistake to think that we are making God's Biblical moral law void through faith. That is a foreign way of thinking in Paul, Peter, James, John and the rest of the Bible! Through faith that works by love and gains access into God's grace (Rom. 5:2), we establish God's Biblical moral law according to Romans 3:31 and we not do away with its

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mighty moral principles! Receive that in your heart and meditate on it! It is BIBLE, and Paul taught it himself!

The Greek word for “void” (*katargeō*) in Romans 3:31 means: *to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative, to deprive of force, influence, power, to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish, to cease, to pass away, be done away, to be severed from, separated from, discharged from, and loosed from any one.* This word is used by Paul as an antonym to the word “establish” that is found in the same verse because it means almost the exact opposite of “void.”

Faith has not rendered idle, inoperative, deprived of force, annulled or abolished any part of God’s divine moral principles, according to Paul! Yet, some are preaching today that Paul taught that we are no longer under moral principles because that was law and we are under grace. I wonder if they are even reading the same Bible I am! Where do they get such outlandish teachings? They didn’t get them from the Bible, Paul, or from the Holy Spirit, that much I can tell you.

If you read chapters 1 through 3 of Romans you will see that Paul is mainly emphasizing and focusing his teaching on God’s moral principles as revealed to God’s people. It is important to understand what area of God’s law he is discussing and not think he is including every aspect of the law in his statement in Romans 3:31. Again, you will see why it is so important to recognize these differences in Paul’s teachings on the law, especially when we begin to talk about the temple, its sacrifices, the feasts and festivals associated with temple worship, and the Levitical priesthood.

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What has happened to Christians is that when they are born again the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 5:5) His love commandment has been written in our hearts, and if we will walk by it, then we fulfill the Biblical moral aspects of God's law without having it as a yoke upon us. (Gal. 5:1, 14) Against the fruit of the spirit empowered by the Holy Spirit, there is NO law! (Gal. 5:22, 23)

God's Biblical and divine moral law is essential to keep this planet in check from complete moral decay and anarchy. Much of our society and its laws are based on moral principles that were gleaned from the Bible. That is why murder is still punishable by death in many places, and why theft is universally condemned.

The Biblical moral law of God is righteous (just); holy, spiritual, and good, and it always will be, as is written in Romans 7:12, 14, and 8:4. (See also Psalms 19:7-14.) Paul taught this! God's moral law or standards are never carnal, works minded, performance oriented, fleshly, or even evil!

Biblical moral law was established by God to make sin apparent or obvious. (Rom. 7:13) It pointed out the sinful nature in man before Christ and his tendency towards rebellion and disobedience to God's moral standards. (1Timothy 1:8-11)

The righteous in Christ Jesus have a higher rule of Biblical morality that encompasses and fulfills (but does not do away with) all the rest of God's moral commands. This is the love commandment! (Gal. 5:14, Romans 13:8)

Love in us is actually so powerful, and the ministry of the Spirit so glorious, that when you compare these

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new creation realities in Christ, the Biblical moral law of God begins to fade away in comparison! (The next few paragraphs are based on Paul's discussion about this in 2Corinthians chapter 3.) Believers in Christ are not having to keep, "do not commit adultery," because they don't even get NEAR adultery as they fulfill the love commandment! That is the glory of our position in Christ!

It is certainly not that now that I am in Christ I can go ahead and sin because all my future sins are already forgiven and there is no condemnation to me! Teaching and preaching like that is causing people to fall away because it minimizes holiness and our responsibility in Christ to live right before God. I honestly believe that the people preaching this error don't understand what they are doing, but that is the ultimate purpose of this error. We saw this in the first couple of chapters of this book.

You cannot even compare our place in Christ with the way the Israelites had to obey law because what we have in Christ far exceeds what other generations had. Again, I am teaching based on Paul's commentaries in 2Corinthians 3. Please read that chapter so you understand what we are teaching.

Israel had a ministry of death written in stone compared to the ministry of the Spirit in and through us. If you don't believe that Biblical moral law was carried out with a death penalty (ministry of death) for the violators, then you have never read the Older Covenant writings much. Under Moses and Joshua, especially, people often died or were put to death when they violated God's commandments. It was for sure a

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ministry of death in that sense, but the powerful truth is that Paul calls the law holy, righteous, spiritual and good. So, the problem was not God's law being the harbinger of death. The death part was the result of breaking God's law. Breaking His divine law would bring on judgment and death. This is the correct understanding of what Paul was teaching in 2Corinthians 3!

The question is: What is sin? Sin is "missing the mark" but it is also disobeying and rebelling against God's Word, "law" or covenant. The wages of sin are still death. (Rom. 6:23) The problem was not that the law itself was a ministry of death but the fact that it often led to the physical death of the violator.

Moses was responsible for preparing for divine service an unholy bunch of people that had little to no understanding of spiritual things. These were people that just had come out of centuries of slavery and had no spiritual depth. These didn't know what was right and what was wrong to any degree of proficiency. All they had as an example around them in Egypt was paganism and its extremely loose morality. They had assimilated much of Egyptian culture and their standards. They had to be trained, but it was VERY hard to train them in spiritual things because they were spiritually dead. They didn't have the privilege and responsibility of receiving eternal life inside them. They didn't have the Spirit of Christ in them. Training was all external and not coming from the inside to the outside as it is with all those in Christ.

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Do you understand that when you come to Jesus that God's laws are written into your spirit by the Holy Spirit?

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My Laws into their mind and write them in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not each man teach his neighbor, and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. Hebrews 8:10, 11

He wrote HIS LAWS into our innermost being by the Spirit of God, according to this verse and also 2Corinthians 3:3. His laws were written in our hearts not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God! If there ever was a generation that should live right and in holiness it should be the generation of believers in Christ Jesus! If there was ever anybody on the earth that should not commit fornication and not steal it should be the Christian! We have more power and more availability of the Spirit of God than any other generation before us! We are the generations of people that all the prophets wanted to see. (1Peter 1:10) We were and are to have more of God than anybody that has ever walked this planet except Jesus. If there was ever anybody on earth that is not supposed to lie, then it should be us because of the indwelling Spirit and anointing!

Let's look at the word "favor," which is one of the definitions for "grace." Anytime you see the word

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"favor" remember that, in Hebrew and in the Greek, they can equally be translated as "grace."

...With favor (grace) you will surround him as with a shield. Psalms 5:12

This should thrill you from your head to your toes! The FAVOR of God is surrounding you like a shield. Trust Him in this every day of your life. Favor is His grace and mercy on you, and flowing from you to others. It is a supernatural shield that protects you from all sides, but this MUST be believed and acted upon every day. His grace will not surround you like a shield if you are doing and saying things that violate the right of that shield to be a hedge of protection around you like Job had around him. (Job 1:10) The Lord is a shield and buckler to those that dwell in His secret place and abide under His shadow. He is that shield to those that trust Him and speak out that divine protection according to Psalms 91. To abide or dwell under His shadow is what Jesus was teaching when He said, **"If you abide in me and my words abide in you..."** (John 15:7)

As you seek Him and get in His WORD and act on it, His favor, His grace, His PRESENCE, goodness, love and mercy resides on you forever. (Psalms 23:6) This means that wherever you go during your day, you will find favor and grace before God and man. (Proverbs 3:2, 4:9) Even your enemies will be surprised because the Lord is ON you. That is awesome news! He prepares for you a table in the presence of any enemy. (Psalms 23:5) It is banquet time!

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His favor or grace will bring you victory, strength, blessing, healing, yes, and even money favors. He gave the Israelite slaves favor with their masters and they left Egypt with all the silver and gold of their captors! God was not about to let them leave empty handed! (Exodus 3:21, 22, Psalms 105:37) Did you notice that even though God gave them grace or favor with the slave-masters that they were also required to GO (do something) and ask the Egyptians to receive their miracle? If they would have stayed home and said, “Grace will bring it to me and I have to do nothing or else it will be works or a works mentality and a performance Gospel,” they would have left Egypt broke and empty handed!

Favor or grace from God will bring all you could ever possibly need or want. It is not something you have to bring to the table yourself, but it is something you must receive and take by faith for it to work for you. God will bring it to the table and spread it all out before you in banquet style (Psalms 23:5), but He will not make you partake of any of it. He will certainly not force it down your throat! It is up to you to take what He has provided on His table by taking it and putting it on your plate, using the fork and knife (or your fingers), putting it in your mouth, chewing it up, and then swallowing it. That is the part you must do or you cannot have any of the great treats He has supplied for you on His table of abundant provisions!!

Especially in big families, when mama puts the food on the table, you better serve yourself some of that marvelous food, and you better do it pretty quickly, or you are going to get precious little and starve. You better

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not wait until someone comes to spoon feed you or you will go to bed hungry!

Some Christians are waiting for the Father to spoon feed them His mighty provisions of grace and mercy. The grace and mercy are all the provisions on His table waiting for you to partake of them. He has spread out on His table a glorious feast, but many of His children will not do anything in faith to receive them, partake of them, to take possession of them, or to HAVE them. Jesus said “HAVE” faith in God. (Mark 11:22) You must have it in order to take possession of His provisions. The Lord is offering them to us freely and abundantly! Now HAVE them! Amen!

As with the Israelites, the Lord will often tell you what to do in order to step into your miracle! His favor or grace on you will bring you what you need and want that is according to His Word, but you are going to have to lay hold of it and partake of it. Your part is to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be ADDED to you. (Matthew 6:33) Here are some more Scripture references on grace and favor for your study: Psalms 30:5, Proverbs 12:2, Luke 2:52, Numbers 6:25-26.

Chapter 22: Understanding God's Grace

What is the grace of God? We have repeatedly stated that His grace is ALL His mighty provisions, but let's study grace a little closer.

We know the words "*grace*" and "*favor*" are both translated from the Greek New Testament word "*charis*." Everywhere you see *grace* you should see God's favor. We saw that favor from God can surround you like a shield. That is His all merciful and powerful grace!

From *charis* also comes the Greek word *charisma*. That is the word used for a gift, as in the "gifts" of the Spirit (1Cor. 12:7-11); His non-revocable gifts and callings (Rom. 11:29), and God's grace gifts which have to be received (Rom. 5:17). Note the following verses and how "*grace*" and "*gift*" are used.

Then having gifts (*charisma*) differing according to the grace (*charis*) that is given to us... Romans 12:6

As every man hath received the gift (*charisma*), even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace (*charis*) of God. 1Peter 4:10

All that is grace is also the gift of God. As with any gift, it must be received. This is a central part of any study of grace.

The New Birth was the free gift of God, but you never had it until you acted upon His Word that promises

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it to you. When we committed ourselves to the Lordship of Jesus over our lives is when we received His free gift. The New Creation was a gift of grace. All provided for us in Christ is God's free gift for us. (Eph. 2:8-10) Grace is what God has freely given to us in Christ and what He wants to do for all His people. The question is, will we accept His free gifts, and will we receive, lay hold of, and appropriate them?

Any study of grace can benefit from understanding first what grace is NOT. Favor from God is NOT what you can do for yourself or by yourself. Yet, this does NOT mean that you don't have a part to play in receiving, as we have repeatedly pointed out. Grace is not what you can provide or supply for yourself. He gives you the provision but there are certain spiritual laws that go into operation in order to receive His provision. It is NOT what is in your own strength and ability, and definitely NOT what is your own way, plan, or purpose. Whatever favor or promotion you think you merit is NOT His grace, but nothing in the kingdom of God is automatic! All of the kingdom of God is like as if a man should cast seed into the ground. (Mark 4:26-28) Nothing in God's kingdom functions apart from this principle. Jesus taught this! There is a definite part each individual plays in receiving this great and wonderful grace of God.

So what are some clearly taught definitions of grace in the New Testament, or God's mighty favor? These definitions will overlap each other but we separate them for closer examination.

1. *Grace is His favor towards us through ALL of what Jesus freely provided for us through His great*

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sacrifice and redemption. (Ephesians 2:4-10) Grace is His substitution, where He suffered in our place our death and curse. His finished work of redemption was so we could identify with and walk in His mighty new birth, receive His Holy Spirit, righteousness, life, glory, resurrection power, anointing, etc. (Romans 5:12-18, 6:1-6, Galatians 3:13, 14, 2Corinthians 4:1-6, 1John 2:20, 27, Philippians 3:10) In all this, His sacrifice MUST be received, applied, and lived in or it will do you no good at all!

2. *Grace is the redemption from sickness and disease, poverty, premature death and the entire curse pronounced on the disobedient under the law.* See Galatians 3:13, Isaiah 53:4, 5, Psalms 103:1-5, 1Peter 2:24, Psalms 91:1-16, Matthew 8:17, and many more. These truths must be believed, appropriated and acted upon in order to walk in them! His mighty grace is demonstrated through His provision and multiplication of the financial seed we are sowing. Again, notice that grace is activated by the part we play as the sowers of good seed! 2Corinthians 9:8 says that “all grace may abound towards you,” but you must first do verses 6 and 7 on giving bountifully, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver! The one that God manifests His love or grace to is the one that obeys His instructions! (See John 14:21-23, and also 2Corinthians 8:9, 9:6-10. 2Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 both speak about His grace and His provision! Compare this with Mark 4:26-28.)

3. *Grace is His plan, purpose, and calling for us.* (Eph. 4:7, Romans 11:29) We must be obedient to His plan, purpose, and calling or it will never come forth in

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our lives. These refer to what we are called to do and what we were born to do. These are non-revocable, though they are still accessed by faith and love so that they can function at their highest potential. Some of these graces are deposited in us from the time we are born physically. As an example, some people are born with certain abilities in public speaking, music and so on. It becomes evident very early in life. Some graces are added to our lives at a later time as, for example, when we get born again and are baptized in the Holy Spirit. I know about people that could never speak in public until after they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. I am one of them. Before I was born again I had NO ability to speak in public or write. These were gifts of grace that God gave me after the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

4. *Grace is His power at work in and through us.* (2Corinthians 12:9 with Romans 5:17- This is the GRACE Jesus was referring to.) Notice how grace and power are connected in 2 Cor. 12:9. The supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit are called gifts (Gr. charisma- from “charis;” which is grace or favor) in 1Corinthians 12:4-11. These are gifts of the grace of God to minister to others through you or me. These are special acts of God’s grace and power to be received and ministered to others. If you receive a gift of the Spirit, it is not for your benefit but for the benefit of the intended recipient or recipients of the gift. These are supernatural tools that the Holy Spirit will “grace” an individual with in order to minister it to whomever the Lord wants it for. I refer you again to 1Peter 4:10, 11 and Romans 12:6. You receive a gift in order to impart it to others. It is not

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for your benefit or aggrandizement but for the blessing of others. (Romans 1:11)

5. *Grace is His BLESSING on us.* Every favor and earthly blessing is ours according to Ephesians 1:3 in the Amplified Bible. See also our heritage of blessing from Abraham, through Jesus. It belongs to us in Christ! (Galatians 3:7, 9, 14, 29) Again, notice how the blessing is to be accessed through faith, as it says in Galatians 3:14. It does not come automatically. Faith is intimately involved with any manifestation of the blessing on our lives!

These are all great and powerful grace truths, but we have a part to play in accessing these great grace truths and in the application of them in our lives.

Chapter 23: Growing in God's Grace

As we have told you repeatedly, some (not all) in the church have misunderstood and misapplied grace and thought that it means that nothing is required on your part to get into a flow of this grace. It is truly a strange concept when one considers the many scriptures that oppose that way of thinking. I remember one man that said that grace was coming at him like a freight train. The problem was that the freight train of grace was not making any frequent stops at his house! Faith is what causes the grace train to stop at your house and deposit its many provisions!

In some amplified versions, and in versions that do not adhere to a word for word translation policy, the word “grace” is often translated as “unmerited favor.” First of all, it was merited by what Jesus accomplished for us through His great and awesome sacrifice. Secondly, it was not earned or merited by any human being. Only Jesus could pay the price that was due for our redemption. He earned and merited our redemption through what He accomplished!

Though this is all true, some leave the impression when they say “unmerited favor” that there is really nothing that you can do to get it or lay hold of it. That is where the deception comes in. The unmerited favor is now received and activated by your faith or you get nothing. According to James if we pray without faith and waver or doubt, we will get nothing from the Lord!

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(James 1:6, 7) God rewards faith, as it says in Hebrews 11:6. He rewards those that diligently seek Him by faith. *Faith is the “merit” system of God that is necessary for a believer to lay hold of the riches of His grace!* I could say it like this: “Faith merits the grace!” This doesn’t mean that you paid for the grace or merited the grace. Jesus already did that lavishly. It means that your faith was rewarded by God and you received a manifestation of it. God saw great merit to your faith! Have faith and get a manifestation of grace from God! Don’t have faith and get no manifestation of grace from the Father. The exception is when someone else is using their faith on your behalf. Grace and mercy can be extended to other people when faith is used on their behalf. The elders praying the prayer of faith and anointing with oil is a case of using faith on behalf of others. (James 5:14, 15) There is also the example of the disciples asking Jesus to heal Peter’s mother in law. (Luke 4:38, 39) There are other examples, but it remains the same. In all cases somebody’s faith was required, whether from the minister or the recipient.

Here is a verse we referred to often in this book because of its great importance to our subject.

Through Him we also have access by faith into this grace... Romans 5:2

Grace or favor is manifested when we access it by faith. Here is the problem among a large majority of Christians. Most know little to nothing about real Bible faith because they think faith means “beliefs” or to “believe” alone, and this is where they are mistaken.

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Faith is not having a conviction of truth alone. There is more to faith!

Here is a challenge and homework assignment for you. Study the words "faith" and "believe" (in Greek *pistis* and *pisteuo* which are derived from the word *peitho*. In Hebrew, "believed" (*heemin* from *emunah*) is found in Genesis 15:6. Paul translated this word "believed" (*pisteuo*) from the Hebrew to the Greek when he quoted this verse from Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4:3 and Galatians 3:6. Paul obviously had the Hebrew understanding of this word *heemin* in his thinking when using this Greek word *pisteuo*, or else why would he even bother to quote the Scripture found in Genesis 15:6? If Paul was coming up with a new meaning and definition for the word "believe", he would have avoided quoting this verse from Genesis 15:6! Yet many in the Church have given "*heemin*" a new definition by thinking that "believe" in the New Testament means "only believe" as in the exercise of the powers of conviction alone.

Look at these words from the readily available Strong's Concordance, Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew dictionary, and from any competent Greek dictionaries. It won't take you long to see that Bible faith is intimately connected to *trust, faithfulness, loyalty, trustworthiness, constancy, and perseverance* much more than it is to a belief, just believing, or having a "conviction" of what is true. Belief and having strong convictions will be a byproduct of faithfulness and trust in God, but it will never be the full essence of faith.

Faith is connected by its definitions and through the Scriptures to obeying God AND being fully persuaded

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that He is able to perform what He has promised (trust, assurance, and a refusal to stagger at the promises of God).

Faith is more than to have a "creed of faith." (Rom. 4:20-22) Creeds of faith are not what are meant in the Scripture by the word "faith." If all someone has is a creed of beliefs, then that person is no better off than demons! (James 2:19) Demons believe in God, but they are certainly not faithful to God or trust in Him. True faith is a commitment to the Lord. You are determined to obey His instructions and be loyal to Him, and you are persuaded of your trust in Him. Again, if this is different than what you have been taught or think, accept my advice and do an in-depth word study and find the truth on your own. Convince yourself! Don't take my word for it!

I realize that we all are growing in our faith, and that faith can grow. (2 Thessalonians 1:3, Romans 10:17) We are all learning to trust Him in greater ways every day of our lives, as long as we will walk in the light of His Word. Faith can grow and develop daily. We can also increase in the degree of God's grace that we are walking in.

Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 2 Peter 1:2

Grace, as well as peace (in Greek- *eirene*, which is based on the Hebrew word *shalom*), is multiplied through the REVELATION knowledge that comes from God and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek word for "knowledge" is referring to a precise and correct divine

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knowledge, according to the Greek dictionaries. It is not human knowledge, but knowledge that comes from the Holy Spirit into your spirit without the filter of your mental processes.

Interestingly, the Greek word translated knowledge, *epignosis*, is not expressing “intimacy” but revelation and understanding on a deeper level or to a higher degree. “Knowing” God or the Lord Jesus is not being “intimate” with the Lord but gaining understanding and wisdom from Him. The “intimacy” many want and desire in the Lord is better found in the word “fellowship.” The Greek word *koinonia* is the best word for the enjoyment and the realization of fellowship. (Vincent’s word studies)

Knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus is the Spirit bearing witness with your spirit concerning the things of God. (Rom. 8:16, 1 Cor. 2:10-16) It is the Spirit revealing God's wisdom and understanding to you out of His Word. It comes as revelation from the Word to you. It is when something is revealed to you from the Spirit of truth. (John 16:13) Our text reveals that as revelation increases in our lives, grace and favor will also multiply towards us.

It takes revelation from the Father to walk in higher levels of grace and favor. His favor is available in ever increasing amounts according to our growth in Him. This verse in 2 Peter 1:2 is found in all our Bibles! As you grow in the revelation of the Word, and you walk in it, you will have access to greater and greater levels of grace! It is not enough to have the revelation of it. You must also do the Word revealed to you by the Holy Spirit. (James 1:22)

But grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18

There is a growth process in the grace and favor of God. Notice how growing in grace is again tied closely to this revealed knowledge of God, "Jesus," our "Lord," "Savior," and "Christ." (Study "The Foundation of our Faith Series" from our website to get an in depth look at the meanings of these words. Go to our Articles page to get started.)

Here is another truth concerning grace. *Humility gets more grace and favor!* Can we stand some more manifestation of grace? Could we use some more grace operating in all of our lives? I say, "Yes, and Amen"!!!

But He gives more grace. Therefore He says, God resists the proud, but HE GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Therefore submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands... and purify your hearts, double-minded ones... Be humbled before the Lord, and He will lift you up... (James 4:6-10) ...And all being subject to one another, put on humility. For God resists proud ones, but HE GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God... casting all your anxiety (worry) onto Him, for He cares for you. Be sensible and vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking someone he may devour; which firmly resist in the faith... (1Peter 5:5-9)

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Look closely at all these facts concerning HUMILITY that is revealed in these two portions of Scripture. Remember that grace and humility are intimately connected according to these references.

Humility submits to God and His Word. God and His Word are one. (John 1:1-3) If you submit to God then you must submit to His Word. It is IMPOSSIBLE to submit to one without the other.

Humility also resists the devil! Humility resists any and every thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. It casts down those false imaginations and brings thoughts into the OBEDIENCE to Christ. (2 Cor. 10:5)

Humility is refusing to worry! Worry is pride! OH-OH! Note that you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God by CASTING all your cares and worries over on Him.

Humility is also treating and serving others with love, honor, and respect. Did you know that? That is what it means to “be subject” to one another. Subjection or “submission” does not mean slavery. It also does not mean that I have to submit to your leadership if you don’t serve the Lord and are not an example of faith. (Heb. 13:7) That is a big can of worms we just opened up with that statement! I wrote a whole teaching on this greatly misunderstood subject of "submission" in the free mini-book: *“True Authority: God’s Authority vs. man’s authority.”* You can find it on our Articles page. It’s a free PDF on our website.

Many Godly women have been wrongly taught that they have to submit to their husband even when his demands are contrary to God’s Word! No, she does not

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need to submit to ungodliness to be a good Christian wife, and I prove it from the Scriptures!

Others have been taught that if your church elder or pastor forbids you to get married, or get a certain job, that you have to submit to their demands. Since when have church elders or pastors replaced the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit that is the right and privilege of every believer? (Rom. 8:14, John 16:13) Do you have any questions along these lines? Read the free mini book because I can't give any more details here.

Humility is one great key to more grace and favor manifested in your life. Does that interest you? It thrills me to know this truth!

Humility is evident when one admits they are wrong or has sinned, and it is clearly visible when one allows correction and is teachable. Humility cleanses its hands, and purifies its heart from any double mindedness as James taught. These are the characteristics of the truly humble man or woman of God!

Pride is the exact opposite of these qualities. Pride hates to admit a mistake, will not repent of sin, despises correction and instruction, and does not want anyone to teach them anything! Pride is of the devil, and is in fact a primary component of his nature. (Is. 14:11-15) Pride thinks it was all by the power of "my hand" and does not acknowledge God's provision. (Deut. 8:17, 18) Pride is the "self-made" millionaire and the one that trusts in themselves as their source instead of trusting in God. True humility is also knowing intimately who is your Source of all supply (spirit, soul, body, financially, etc.), and who we are to trust and obey. (1 Tim. 6:17-19, Jer. 17:5-8)

Chapter 24: Grace and Works of the Law

Are U ready 4 this? Many in the church believe like this: One dispensation closes, and then a new one arrives with God doing things in a new way. This accepted (and mostly unchallenged) dispensation theology is where the idea came from that God no longer has any dealings with the Jews, and that the Jews were under law, and we are under grace. That simple statement is very misleading if left unexplained because of the definitions and associations many have put on the words “law” and “grace.” Don't even flinch and let's study the Word. I know you think you know some Scriptures that would seem to make these statements a fact as they are being presented by many today, but we need to reassess our definitions if we are to be truthful before God. Are you interested in the truth, or do you want to think you already know the truth? If I do not show it to you from the Word then don't believe it, but if I do show it to you clearly in the Word from the New Testament, then it will be your responsibility to believe it from now on. OK?

Yes, through Jesus came a MUCH GREATER grace than at any other time in history (John 1:17), and it would be error to deny it, but the sharp juxtaposing of law against grace is also error. Don't turn us off here but continue to read so we can give you the Word on it.

The implication, and the outright teaching of many, is that there was no grace in the law or in the Old Covenant. That is a foreign concept to the Bible. Grace

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has always been a part of the law and Covenant of God. Grace has always been present from day one in the Bible. Have you ever studied the Hebrew word for "grace" or "favor" (*chen*), and that God is gracious (*channun* and the form *chanan*)? These words are used over 180 times in the Older Covenant. That doesn't look to me like "grace" was an unknown subject to the people of God in the "Old" Testament! Look at these few examples: Exodus 33:19, 34:6, Numbers 6:25, Psalms 5:7, 84:11, 123:2, Prov. 3:21, 22, 34, and Micah 7:18.

Did you know that it was grace when God provided animal skins for Adam and Eve after they sinned? They could have rejected them but they didn't. Adam and Eve received God's free gift of animal skins to cover up their nakedness. Think about what I just wrote and look at these other examples. Each of the following could have rejected God's free gifts but instead they embraced them and received them!

It was grace and favor from God that Noah and His family were saved from the destruction of the flood. It was grace that delivered Israel from Egypt! It was grace that they were fed and cared for in the desert for 40 years, and their clothes and sandals never wore out!

It was grace that God called and led Abraham out of his native land, gave him the Promised Land as an inheritance, made a covenant with him, and his wife had a child in her old age! It was grace that provided food for the prophet Elijah by birds day and night when a famine existed in the land. It was grace that gave David victory over Goliath and the rest of the Philistines! It was all the work of God's favor and great grace. These were ALL gracious and merciful acts from God. Read the entire

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Psalms 136 and 145. Yet, ALL of them could have rejected God's grace and refused His gifts of deliverance and provision. They were smart enough to accept God's grace and it was a blessing to them and to multitudes.

Abraham could have said "NO" to God's command and missed out on God's marvelous grace.

Elijah could have disobeyed God and never gone to the brook where he would be fed by the birds. He could have died in the famine just like many others did. No, he chose the grace of God by obeying the Word of the Lord! Are you getting this?

Paul had other issues in mind, different than what we have generally thought, understood, or interpreted in most cases in modern times. Paul's teaching on grace and the law would be so much clearer to people without all the mistaken dispensational theology that has colored many interpretations and commentaries. Let's explore some of Paul's real and true reasons for what many have wrongly seen as his hostility to the law, and what the real issues were that he faced daily among the churches.

Here is a summarized statement of the issue: *Paul's main argument between law and grace had to do with gentiles coming to the Lord Jesus and they being forced to keep the law that was meant only for Israel.*

Paul's mission was to the gentiles and not to the Jews. Many "Judaizers" were coming in after he preached and taught in a certain place and were trying to get the gentile converts to God and Jesus Christ to become "full" Jews by circumcision and keeping the law, a law that was only meant for national Israel. Paul fought vehemently against such ideas.

And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question... Acts 15:1-2

A very big debate took place but the leadership of the Jerusalem church and the rest of the apostles agreed with Paul's teaching that gentile males that came to God through the Lord Jesus Christ were not required to be circumcised or keep the law of God given to Moses for Israel. (See all of Acts 15.) This was one side of the law and grace debate in Paul's epistles, one masterfully brought out by him in Galatians and in other epistles.

The epistle to the Galatians cannot be accurately studied or understood without knowledge of this debate, and the decisions reached by the Jerusalem church council in Acts 15. Galatians 2 begins with Paul confronting Peter and Barnabas over this issue. We will say more about this a little later.

The other side to this debate was Paul correcting his Israeli brethren that were trying to keep the law by rote (meaningless repetition void of understanding) and tradition, instead of by faith and trusting God.

What shall we say then? That the nations, who did not follow after righteousness have taken on righteousness, but a righteousness of faith. But Israel, who followed after a law of righteousness, did not

arrive at a law of righteousness. Why? Because it was not of faith, but as it were by the works of the law.
Romans 9:30-32

Some extremely important facts are revealed in this portion of Scripture for us. The law of God was "a law of righteousness" and not some bad or evil thing.

The next thing to notice here in Romans 9 is the fact that Israel was not arriving at this law of righteousness BECAUSE they were not acting on it in faith, but rather were doing it "by the works of the law."

So many wrong definitions have been preached and taught about the meaning of the phrase "the works of the law" that the truth about what it means may sound new to you at first, but it is not. It has been in our Bibles all along! Let the Word of God change your thoughts and allow the Holy Spirit to clear this up in your thinking.

It has been preached hard and long that there was something bad or intrinsically wrong with the law of God given to Moses, and that it was all a "works only" system, and that we don't have to do anything now because it is "all grace."

You may be thinking right now, "Yes, and what is wrong with that?" Read on to find out why this thinking that now "we do nothing under grace" is also very flawed and can lead people into serious error and unbelief.

The problem was not the law or God's teachings to Israel. The Hebrew word for "law" is the word "torah." This word can be better translated as "direction, instruction, or teaching." The problem Paul was seeing abundantly in his day was the same problem Jesus

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confronted numerous times among the religious Jews of His day as well. Frankly, it is the same problem we see repeatedly in traditional or dead churches today.

He will give to each according to his works: everlasting life truly to those who with patience in good work seeking glory and honor and incorruptibility; but to the ones truly disobeying the truth out of self-interest, and obeying unrighteousness, will be anger and wrath, trouble and pain on every soul of man that *works out evil*, both of Jew first, and of Greek. But glory and honor and peace will be to everyone *working out good*, both to the Jew first, and to the Greek... For not the hearers of the Law are just with God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. Romans 2:6-13

For the "grace only and never does nothing to receive" people that have misunderstood the teachings of God's Word, this portion of Scripture really blows a crater size hole in their doctrine.

Notice what Paul was pointing out. Paul was emphasizing here that only those that acted on God's Word (law) by faith were made righteous or justified. Note how he refers to *working out evil* and *working out good*. He was telling them that if they had the law of God in their hearts then it would also come out of them to the outside in visible works. You really have to read Romans chapters 2 and 3 to understand this, but it is Paul's clear instruction. Notice how "good work" and "working out good" is what those that were doers of the law or the Word of God were to do in order to be

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justified. It did not work by an outward show alone. Faith had to be involved. Faith is of the heart or spirit. (Rom. 10:10) It had to start on the inside and be worked OUT to the outside. This is the same thing Jesus taught about when He said that out of the abundance of the heart will be produced either good or evil things. (Matthew 12:33-37) Paul taught that we should **“work out”** our own salvation with fear and trembling. This has nothing to do with getting salvation on your own at all. Jesus got our salvation for us! The salvation was the free gift of God’s mercy and the riches of His grace that we received in the new birth. Now that He put this great salvation in us, we are to bring it out to the outside and let it shine brightly! True salvation is in the spirit first, but then it must be brought out or worked out from the inside to the outside in fruit that will be seen! (Philippians 2:12-15)

Please study this entire second chapter of Romans closely. It will correct much of the wrong thinking in the theology that now we do nothing "under grace" lest it be “works.” God expects us to do something after we are born again. He fully expects us to use what he has deposited in us for the glory of God! (See the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30.) God fully expects some fruit bearing out of us. He gets glory out of it! (John 15:8)

It should have been for Israel a "law of faith," but instead they made it a "law of works." (Romans 2:28, 29, 3:27-31- Please carefully note these verses!) *They replaced acting in faith out of a heart of love, obedience, and faithfulness to God, with something else, something Paul called "works of the law," something that was in*

opposition to Covenant faith. Paul was saying that something was wrong with the way Israel ended up applying the law of God. They had done something that made the law useless and unbefitting to them. Keep that in mind as we quote what Jesus said below because He said the exact same thing. Paul and Jesus agree!

Many in Israel made something out of the law that was different than God's true and original intention. What was the error and the problem with the way Israel was keeping the law? What had many in Israel done with the law that was so contrary to God and His Word?

Jesus has the answer. If you will receive the words of Jesus on this, it will clear up much of this controversy between law and grace forever, that is, if you are an honest student of the Word. I believe that you are or you may not have read this far. Read the entire chapter below because we will only give you a few highlights. Here is the answer to the dilemma of law vs. grace, one that never should have been a controversy to start off with.

Then Jesus spoke to the crowd and to His disciples, saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have sat down on Moses' seat. Then all things, whatever they tell you to keep, keep and do. But do not do according to their works, for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy and hard to bear burdens, and lay them on the shoulders of men, but they do not desire to move them with their finger. And they do all their works to be seen by men. And they make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their robes... And whoever will exalt himself shall be humbled, and whoever will humble himself shall be

exalted... For you shut up the kingdom of Heaven before men; for you do not enter, nor do you allow those entering to go in... Fools and blind... Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and dill and cummin, and you have left aside the weightier matters of the Law: judgment, and mercy, and faith. It was right to do these, and not to have left those aside... Blind guides, straining out the gnat, but swallowing the camel...For you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within they are full of robbery and excess. Blind Pharisee! First cleanse the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside of them may become clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitened graves which outwardly indeed appear beautiful, but within are full of bones of the dead, and of all uncleanness. So you also indeed outwardly appear righteous to men, but within are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” Matthew 23: 1-5, 12, 13, 17, 23, 24-28

There was a lot of this going on in Paul's day, and like Jesus, he was vehemently against what had in many cases become a dead Jewish religion that was producing no supernatural results. Study Romans chapters 2, 3, 9, 10, and 11 to get a clear picture of this. There are other verses in Paul's writings that refer to this. The Jewish religion had a form of godliness, a traditional religious outward form, but they denied the power of it. (2Timothy 3:5) Many were dead and undone. They left out FAITH, among other things according to Jesus. It was all mainly done by rote and by tradition with no

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power, and both Jesus and Paul were against it! These were the "works of the law" that Paul was totally against. He was against what was only an outward show with no power, no demonstration of God, and no faith!

This tradition and religion the Jewish people had made out of the law was contrary to the faith of Abraham and David as revealed in chapter 4 of Romans! Instead of walking by faith in God's Covenant they went about establishing their own ideas, practices and the commandments of men. These were the "works of the law" they thought would justify them, but it was very different than Abraham's faith based solely on God's Covenant! (Romans 4:1-5) They were not receiving or walking in God's grace provided in the Covenant by obeying His revealed Word by faith. They assumed they had God's approval on their manmade way of keeping God's law. That manmade way was opposed to the faith of Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the rest of the prophets. It was their religious works outside the Covenant that were the "works of the law," and never what they did in Covenant by faith as they obeyed God's Word, law or commandments. It was an absolute impossibility to ever get justified according to a manmade religion! This is was Paul's anointed and powerful argument and correction of the manmade religious practices that had permeated the Jewish religion. They were works that looked, smelled, and felt like the law of God but they were men's self appointed and self taught works that were completely opposite to the way Abraham and David kept the Covenant and were justified. (Rom. 4:1-24) If you understand this point,

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then the rest of the book of Romans will open up to your understanding.

Jesus and Paul were after an inner life of holiness, power, and grace that flowed from the inside to the outside, and not the other way around. Why?

Religion that is only external for a show before men, and their dead tradition, will never work for the glory of God. Men may praise other men because of their external and outward appearance, but the truth is that they are not living for God 24/7 and they are like white washed sepulchers and dead men's bones! (Mark 7:1-13) These were also the "works of the law" that can never receive the grace of God in Christ! It must FIRST come from the inside before it can be expressed outwardly in faith.

Jesus and Paul wanted to move people into a relationship with God in the inner man, one that in turn would affect everything outwardly by God's power. (Romans 2:28, 29) IT MUST START ON THE INSIDE! That was God's original intention with the Jewish people, but they generally made a religion and a tradition out of it with no power and no lasting results. That was never God's plan.

Jesus reveals the corruption that permeated the Jewish leadership, and that is what Paul does in all of Romans 2 and 3. Again, we see how much Jesus and Paul agreed!

Look at how Mark 7:1-13 records another rebuke Jesus gave to those bound up by religious tradition with no power. It is even more enlightening.

...Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, who had come... and had seen that some of his disciples ate their bread with..., unwashed hands. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the market-place, except they bathe themselves, they eat not; and many other things there are, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brass vessels.) And the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, “Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands?”

Let me stop here and point out that NONE of these things were revealed by God to Moses at Sinai but were the result of traditions that had been built into rules that had no basis in Scriptures. This is much of what became known as the oral law or Mishnah. Jews believed (and still do today) that God also gave these laws to Moses on Sinai, but there is absolutely NO scriptural reference to base this idea. It was mostly all tradition! To them, these oral commandments and traditions were as important as the Bible and they thought it was a sin if you did anything contrary to them. Do we have in churches today a bunch of manmade rules that have no basis in Scripture, and are churches doing things that God never said do in the Bible? Yes we do! This is as applicable today as it was in the day of Jesus. Let's go back to our text in Mark 7:

And he said unto them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors

me with their lips, But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men...' you leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men." And he said unto them, "Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition. ...making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do."

Here was the problem of many of the Jewish leaders and many of their followers at the time. They made traditions that took the place of the Word of God. They held dearly to men's ideas and theories rather than sticking to what God said in His Word. It was even worse than that. They rejected God's commands in order to keep their tradition. Sometimes they rejected God's commands in order to be "politically correct."

This sounds like many traditional and dead churches today, doesn't it? Many have quit preaching the Bible. They have removed Bible words from their messages and substituted them with the fluff and psychology of the world to such an extent that they no longer sound like the New Testament! They have lost any likeness to Jesus and His message!

What was the outcome of holding on to commandments invented by men and rejecting the Word of God? They made the Word void in their own lives. Instead of living power-filled and anointed lives as God intended, they were living in doubt, unbelief, and powerlessness. Instead of the blessing of God exploding all around them, they were in many cases as sick, broke,

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and disgusted as the rest of the world. There was no proof of their God among them in many cases! All they had was a lifeless religion and tradition that was not bringing healing or deliverance to the people of God! These were the "works of the law" that could help nobody. This was what Paul and the early church so valiantly and gallantly opposed. They were against all in the Jewish religion that was making the Word of no effect in the lives of people, just like we should be today about taking a stand against ALL the tradition in our churches that rob the people of God of His grace and blessings. I despise tradition with everything in me because it robs people from a life of power and victory. You should also despise tradition!

There was one more facet to this law vs. grace debate, and it was concerning gentiles trying to keep the law in order to get into God's grace through Jesus. That was a perversion of the truth, and it was, again, one Paul fervently opposed as seen in his epistles. Paul stated the following in Galatians 5:4:

Christ has become nothing to any of you who are seeking acceptance with God through the law: you have fallen away from grace. (Weymouth)

The believers at Galatia were pressured by the Judaizers to submit to circumcision and other laws in Scripture meant only for national Israel, and they were being told that without these things they were not saved! Paul opposed Peter and the Jewish believers that were with him over it to their face. (Galatians 2) He could never agree that any of these things were required by

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God for the Gentiles that had made Jesus their Lord and believed on His sacrifice as the way into the presence of God and into the blessing of God. This was such a strong dispute that it ended up at that church council we told you about earlier where Paul attended. (Acts 15) There was a very big and heated debate over this and finally Paul's view won out. He convinced them that circumcision and Temple worship, the laws and rituals meant only for Israel, that NONE of these were required of the Gentile converts. Actually, Peter also gave testimony of how the Lord first visited the Gentiles with the Gospel through Him at the house of Cornelius. (Acts 10) Obviously, Peter agreed with Paul and both their testimonies and their scriptural arguments won the day! James as the leader or pastor of the church in Jerusalem also agreed, and their conclusions were published with a letter sent to all the Gentiles that had received Jesus as Lord! Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas were sent from the church to read this letter and confirm it.

The book of Galatians is a mighty testimony of how this controversy was resolved through the teaching of God's Word through Paul's ministry. No Gentile convert to the Lord Jesus was required to be circumcised or to participate in Israelite Temple worship as a means of salvation. Gentile participation in Jewish feasts and festival was not to be demanded because Jesus provided a solution apart from all sacrificial Law for the entire world through the sacrifice of Himself. (Rom. 3:21, 22, 28, Hebrews chapters 8, 9, and 10) That was the conclusion of the argument!

Do you understand that the laws, rituals, the Levitical priesthood, and the Tabernacle and Temple

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worship of Israel were given ONLY to national Israel and were never intended for the whole earth? Study it in Exodus through Deuteronomy. There was never an order except for national Israel to make a tabernacle in the wilderness and then to build the Temple in Jerusalem for their worship of God. The world outside of Israel had no such command, ordinance, or law!

Circumcision was ONLY for Abraham and his natural descendants. (Genesis 17:9, 10) It was never intended for the entire world. It was limited to national Israel. Real Jewish men were required to serve and love God from the heart, a pre-Calvary form of heart circumcision (Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6), and they were required to be circumcised on the eighth day as well. Our circumcision in Christ is ONLY in the spirit, in the heart! (Rom. 2:23- 29, Col. 2:11) We males in Christ are not required to enter into covenant via circumcision. We enter via Jesus (our newer, much greater, and highly improved covenant- Heb. 8:6) and what He did for us! And all the males said, "AMEN!!!"

The feasts and festivals were given to Israel and their descendants. Passover, Tabernacles, the Day of Atonement, Pentecost and all the rest of them were never meant for those outside of Israel! Study the feasts and festivals and see if they were to bring in the Gentiles of the world into their feasts! Even though Gentiles may have participated in some of the feasts from time to time, they came because they wanted to and certainly not because they were required to. No, these feast and festivals were not required for the world.

I know that historically some Gentiles did join themselves to Israel, as far as worship of the One and

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only God was concerned. Some also participated to some extent in the synagogues and other Jewish feasts and festivals. Those that did this were called the “God-fearers.” Cornelius was one such God-fearer as were others mentioned in the New Testament. (Acts 10:2, 22) These participated mainly in the worship of God without ever becoming full- Jews by taking on full covenant responsibilities through circumcision. They could participate in many things, though other activities were restricted to full- Jews. These “God-fearers” were not required to be circumcised to participate in most synagogue activities.

Even today, no Jewish rabbi worth his or her salt will demand full conversion from a gentile in order to participate in Jewish activities. Generally speaking, Jews do frown on Gentiles participating on the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. Other than that, they can participate in just about anything else. Synagogues do differ on requirements for participation depending on if they are Orthodox, Chasidic, Conservative, or Reformed. The most liberal in this respect are the Reformed synagogues.

I attended and participated in the services of a small Jewish Reformed synagogue back in the mid 90’s for about two years. This happened during a wrongly taken “sabbatical.” I am saying “sabbatical” with sarcasm and disdain because it was more like an “exile.” Attending this Jewish synagogue was really the only positive thing that happened in my life during those years. It helped me in many ways. This Jewish Reformed synagogue was not a Christian Messianic synagogue at all. It was all Jewish through and through, and there was no mention of Jesus

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or Christianity. It was a great learning experience for me concerning Judaism and the Hebrew Scriptures, but I was never pressured to be circumcised or convert to Judaism. The rabbi knew me well and never even asked! This is a totally different attitude than the wrongly motivated and influenced Judaizers that were following Paul's ministry and pushing and pressuring Gentiles to convert and become full Jews and be circumcised or they could not be saved! That was and is an intolerable error that must be opposed if it ever pops up its ugly head today!

For now, I haven't found many Christian men willing to get their private part cut in order to become a full convert to Judaism! For true conversion, a cut is necessary even if as a Gentile you were circumcised as a child for medical reasons! It seems to be a rare occurrence for Christian men, but I have seen a few scripturally illiterate and untaught ones make this fatal error. I trust that NO Christian males will ever go the route of circumcision and full conversion to Judaism today because it would mean that you no longer need Jesus or what He did for us, and that is what Paul was driving home in Galatians 5:4!

Even the Sabbath was only for national Israel. (Exodus 31:16, 17) Nowhere does it say that the Sabbath was a requirement for the whole world outside of national Israel!

The wearing of the *tallitot* and *tzitziyot* (prayer shawls and tassels) and the *tefillin* (phylacteries) were never meant for those outside of Israel. (Deuteronomy 6 and 11) Jesus wore them because He was born a Jew and He observed Jewish law BY FAITH (Romans 15:8-13),

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but that does not mean that we must also follow these requirements of law only meant for those born Jewish. (Rom. 11:13-21) We are called the wild olive branches in Romans 11 that contrary to nature have been grafted in BY FAITH into the olive tree and receive its nourishment. “Receiving its nourishment” and doing those things meant only for national Israel are two completely different things! Don’t assume or add things to these verses! Don’t let people confuse you!

No injunction was given to the nations of the world to wear *tallitot*, *tzitziyot*, or *tefillin* because these were meant only for the Hebrews, Israel or the Jewish people. There is no reason for Christians to think that they MUST wear these to pray. It is error to demand any believer to wear these because of what we have been clearly seeing in the teaching of Paul and the conclusions that were reached by the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 for those not born of the stock of Israel. (I strongly suggest you study that chapter in detail.)

On the other hand, I will not judge those that *want* to use them as Christians because they find some merit for themselves by using these in prayer. (Rom. 14:3-10) *The key is that it is not to be pushed off as making one more or less spiritual for using them or not using them, and it is never to be presented as a hard fast rule for any believer in Christ.* Are we clear on this? I am.

God made a provision for the world through the awesome sacrifice of Jesus that required none of these things and brought a redemption that was never available before His great sacrifice was offered. That, my brother and sister, is grace beyond all grace!

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Just understanding these things clears up a truckload of issues about the controversy in Paul's writings between law and grace. The entire controversy hinges on understanding what I have just laid out for you.

READ THIS NEXT PARAGRAPH CLOSELY!

The grace was the fact that Jesus was our substitute, died in our place, and redeemed us. This was something He paid for that we can never, nor could ever earn! It is the FREE GIFT of God, a gift of abundant grace that must NOW be received by all. (Romans 5:17) None of it will fall on you like coconuts from a palm tree or (for you folks only familiar with non-tropical trees) like ripe cherries from a tree! You have to lay hold of this grace by trust, commitment, obedience, loyalty and faithfulness to God. As I wrote before, that is what the words "faith" and "believe" mean from the Greek and the Hebrew. In the Greek it is "*pistis*" and "*pisteuo*." In Hebrew, it is "*emunah*" and other grammatical forms such as "*heemin*" which is found in Genesis 15:6. That verse is quoted by Paul in Rom. 4:3, Gal. 3:6, and in Hebrews 10:38.

This was grace UPON grace! (Found in John 1:16 in some translations other than the KJV.) One translation says "grace on top of grace." God provided His grace for the people of the Bible before Jesus ever came and died for us. Grace was not new with the New Testament! (I repeat these verse again for your study: Exodus 33:19, 34:6, Numbers 6:25, Psalms 5:7, 84:11, 123:2, Prov. 3:21, 22, 34, Micah 7:18, and others.) The grace God has provided because of what Jesus did for us was added on top of that older but good grace! It was not "bad or no grace" versus a "good grace." That is not right. It is grace

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UPON grace! God added an immeasurable amount of the riches of His grace on top of the grace He had already demonstrated to His people before Christ.

Now, by the same kind of faith Abraham demonstrated, we can access this magnificent grace from God through Jesus our Lord and what has already been done by Him for us. (Study Romans 4:12 through 5:2.) Our faith, our trust, and commitment to Him as our Lord, brings us into this all inclusive and powerful salvation purchased for us. (Eph. 2:8) That kind of faith is what connects us to the righteousness purchased for us through His blood. (Romans 3:24-26)

Chapter 25: Grace and the Fulfillment of the Law

Fulfillment of the law came through Jesus, but it was not a doing away of the parts of the law that have to do with Biblical morality as we have studied. The aspects of law that had to do with temple, blood sacrifices, Levitical priesthood and all the rituals associated with them were completely done away with because of the sacrifice of Jesus offered one time for all. (Hebrews chapters 8 and 9) This is what some have termed, "the ceremonial law." That came to a complete end with Jesus' perfect sacrifice! That part of law was to serve for only a short span until the perfect sacrifice of our Lamb could come! (Galatians 3:13-18, 1 Cor. 5:7) He was the perfect Lamb of God offered once for all, and forever! (1 Peter 1:18, 19) The book of Hebrews deals extensively with this.

Read the following closely because it will demand you to think differently. That was the "old Covenant" that was done away with; the covenant of the temple, animal sacrifices, and all its rituals. (Hebrews 8:1-13) The Renewed (the meaning of "new" from the book of Jeremiah 33) Covenant in the eternal blood of Jesus has come forth, and it has brought with it better and greater promises. (Hebrews 8:6) Jesus offered the eternal sacrifice that never needs to be repeated again! (Heb. 9:14)

As I have told you, the moral aspects of law still exist on the earth, and you better thank God that they do!

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Let's harp some more on this essential point. Based on the moral aspects of the law, we have many secular laws in place in the U. S. and around the world. Paul commands the churches to abstain from certain things and to do certain things. These were things that were already found in God's moral laws in the Hebrew Bible or older covenant writings. Take a look at Romans 13:8-10, Galatians 5:18-21, 1 Cor. 5:7-11, 6:9-11, Ephesians chapters 4, 5 and 6, and Colossians 2:16-23, 3:5-25, and others.

Biblical moral law is still in the New Testament. These were not ripped out of the Bible when Jesus was raised from the dead! Biblical moral law is still on this planet, and God knows this world needs it today even more than ever before.

And we know that the law is good, if anyone uses it lawfully, knowing this, that law is not laid down for a righteous one, but for lawless and disobedient ones, for ungodly and sinful ones, for unholy and profane ones, for slayers of fathers and slayers of mothers, for murderers, for fornicators, for homosexuals, for slave-traders, for liars, for perjurers, and if any other thing opposes sound doctrine... 1Timothy 1:8-10

Did you notice that Paul said the law was good if it's used lawfully? Did you know that this really goes cross-grain to all the people that somehow have an aversion to the law God gave Moses, and even think that the moral law was somehow wrong or flawed. The problem wasn't the moral parts of law, it was men and women that did

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not have the Spirit, which were spiritually dead, and had made a tradition out of it with no power.

Let me state it again: Thank God for civil laws that are based on the moral laws of God, or we would have anarchy and chaos on this planet even worse than it is now! Ask the generation of Noah before the flood if that is not what happens without a law in place to curb sin! They were without any law and chaos ruled and anarchy prevailed. They were spiritually dead people doing what they do best... SIN! They sinned with "gusto" until finally this world was judged and the flood destroyed all life on the planet, except sea creatures and those in the ark. Without law, sin ruled with no restraints.

Law had to come, and law is good, but it really made sin apparent. (Romans 7:13) It made sin stick out like a sore thumb, and that is its job. The law of God is still here on this planet, and it is still expressed in some ways by the righteous laws of the land. Of course, there are unrighteous laws in place, but we are not referring to those.

There is another side to this, one rarely discussed among Christians, and that was the fact that God made His moral laws known to others in Covenant with Him even before Abraham.

The book of Job was written before the time of Moses, yet Job justifies Himself before God by using as his defense what we have come to know as the Ten Commandments and other moral principles outlined in the law that God gave Moses. Study it for yourself in Job 31 from different translations. The question is: Where did Job get these principles of God's Word or teaching (Torah or the law)? According to many scholars, Job was

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a contemporary of Abraham. So he lived more than four centuries before Moses.

Here is the answer. If you go study the laws laid down by God given Adam and his descendants in Genesis 1- 5, and to Noah and all his descendants in Genesis 9:1-17, you will see some of the principles later restated to Moses by God for Israel.

In the early 1990's, I did a whole study of about 50 pages for a Master's in Business Administration class on Business Ethics concerning these laws that were evident in all the earth before God gave the Ten Commandments and the whole moral set of rules and regulations to Israel. Let me brag a little and tell you that they were so impressed with the study that the faculty made it a permanent part of the library at the university! Oops! I repent for bragging! I'll stay humble.

The Jewish rabbis were well aware of these laws and called them the laws given to the sons of Noah (B'nei Noah), or the Noachide laws. They actually deduced from the Hebrew language in the commandments given to Adam and Noah many elements of God's moral laws given to Moses, and believed they were included in these commandments. These were considered universal laws that God had put in place to govern mankind. Based on obedience or disobedience to these commandments people were to be judged. This may be new information for you but you can look it up online on Wikipedia.com under the heading "Noachide Laws" or "Seven Laws of Noah" for further information.

The seven laws as listed in the ancient Jewish writings of the Talmud (Sanhedrin 56a- which quotes from much older Jewish sources) are:

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1. Prohibition of Idolatry.
2. Prohibition of Murder.
3. Prohibition of Theft.
4. Prohibition of Sexual immorality.
5. Prohibition of Blasphemy.
6. Prohibition of eating flesh taken from an animal while it is still alive.
7. Establishment of courts of law.

Some scholars believe that the conclusions reached by the Jerusalem church in Acts 15 were based on these Noachide commandments considered as universal laws for all mankind. These commandments were the basis for what they were going to demand out of the Gentiles converts to the Lord Jesus, but in a very condensed form. Other scholars (and some that are not very scholarly) deny this and refuse to accept it. I will not fuss over this if you don't believe it or disagree, but there is an interesting and seemingly real connection between the Noachide laws and Acts 15. You can come to your own conclusions about it. It is a somewhat controversial subject for some in Christianity but it is there nevertheless.

Here is something for you to consider. If the laws given to Adam and Noah (and everybody on earth has descended from these) and their descendants were not similar to the Mosaic moral code of law, then how did the heathen kings Pharaoh and Abimelech in Abraham's time (about 400 years before Moses) know that having another man's wife was evil or a sin? (Genesis 12 and 20) These laws given to Adam, and later to Noah, must have been passed on to their descendants, though often

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they ended up being perverted, forgotten, ignored or even disavowed. That is the only explanation.

How did Abraham know to give his tithe to the priest of God in his days before the law was ever given to Moses commanding the people of Israel to tithe?

How did Abel know to give God the first fruits offering before there was ever written down the law of the first fruits that God gave to Moses on Sinai?

There are other examples in the Bible if you will hunt for them. This is why the ancient rabbis believed that Torah (or the laws and teachings of God) were revealed to Adam and Noah and their descendants, and finally given and written down by Moses and passed on to Israel and their generations. It is a great explanation, and it makes Bible sense to me, but I am not dogmatic about it so don't get hung up here if you don't see it like I do.

Here is an additional bit of information from history and archaeology. The Hammurabi Code of moral and judicial injunctions was preserved on some very ancient clay tablets and on a human sized stone stele written in the cuneiform script. These are dated to before the time of Moses. They give us the laws enacted by the sixth king (Hammurabi) of Babylonia around 1700 B.C. or earlier. In it are contained the moral code or laws to be observed by the people of the Babylonian Empire, evidently building upon the earlier law codes of Sumer, Assyria, and Eshnunna.

There are apparent parallels in these earlier codes to the Noachide laws and even to the Law of Moses. Moses enacted 613 commandments (mitzvot) as directed by God compared to 282 laws established by Hammurabi.

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There were other ancient law codes as well, but the Hammurabi Code was the best of them until God gave the 613 commandments of Torah to Moses on Sinai. Again, you can find articles online on the laws given to the sons of Noah, but our question remains. Where do you think Hammurabi and the older codes derived so many moral and judicial injunctions? Everything points to the original injunctions given to the ancestors of all humanity, Adam and Noah!

Here is another point about law we need to understand clearly. I have mentioned it before but I need to add something else to it.

After the destruction of the Temple in 70 A. D., the daily blood sacrifices, Temple worship, and all the functions of the Levitical priesthood in the Temple, ceased to be operational. All the laws given by God to Moses and associated with the Temple and worship there became completely obsolete. That left Israel with basically only moral and judicial commandments (about 200 of them), though the Jews found new ways to keep the feasts and festivals without the Temple and blood sacrifices. *I say this so that you understand that to keep the whole Law today, especially for the believer in Christ; it is truly not possible because nobody can keep the whole law!* Nobody can keep the law as given to Moses today!

We will say more about those Biblical moral laws that still could be observed today. We will show you a MUCH better way in the next chapter than trying to keep the Biblical moral laws, so stay tuned!

So indeed the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Then that which is good, has it become death to me? Let it not be! But sin, that it might appear to be sin, having worked out death to me through the good, in order that sin might become excessively sinful through the commandment. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, having been sold under sin. Romans 7:12-14

So the law itself is called holy, just, good, and lo and behold, SPIRITUAL! The law is spiritual? Many in the church thought the law was carnal or of the flesh. That verse will really irk the people that somehow think there is something evil, fleshly, carnal, or wrong with the law. Some erroneously even thought that the law itself was a curse because of error in interpretation and context! (Galatians 3:13) It is the curse OF the law that we are redeemed from. It never said that the law IS the curse! We are redeemed from the curse pronounced against all the violators of the precepts of the law. The law itself was spiritual and holy (not a curse) according to the above Scriptures in Roman 7:12-14! Oops! Did I write these verses above? Did I make these verses up or did Paul write and teach this?

The problem was not with the moral aspects of the law. That was all good and right. Sin was the problem. Spiritual death was the problem. Not having the Holy Spirit was the problem. Not having the new birth, the new creature on the inside, was the problem. Having a limited system of temple, animal blood sacrifice, and natural priesthood was the problem. God wanted a permanent solution. He wanted us to be His temple, and

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He wanted every believer to be a priest and minister of God, something impossible under the Levitical priesthood. Jesus dealt permanently with the sin problem, and now we have the new creation on the inside, we are born of His Spirit, and we can live in the Spirit instead of by the dictates of the old sinful nature, and we are all a royal priesthood before Him. (2 Cor. 5:17-21, John 3:5-7, Romans 8:9-16, 1Peter 1:23, 2:9)

Chapter 26: Grace and the Royal Law of Love

We now have on the inside of our spirits a new nature in Christ, and the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and we can walk in newness of the Spirit and not the oldness of the letter of the law. (2 Peter 1:4, Romans 5:5, 7:6)

The love "law" is the royal law of this kingdom we live in! (James 2:8-12, Colossians 1:12, 13)

As Christians, we have a commandment that supersedes all the moral law of God given to Moses, and that is the commandment of love, or as James called it, the royal law.

For, "Do not commit adultery," "do not murder," "do not steal," do not bear false witness, "do not lust," and if there is any other commandment, in this word it is summed up, in the words, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does not work evil to the neighbor. Then love is the fulfillment of Law.
Romans 13:9-11

Paul is quoting from Exodus 20:13-15, 17, and from Leviticus 19:18. Did you notice the last phrase, "Love is the fulfillment of law?"

The way Jesus fulfilled the law was by walking on the love commandment and thereby superseding all law, and Christians are commanded to do the same.

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This is how Christ is the end, fulfillment, or conclusion of law for the one that trusts and obeys Him, and follows the dictates of the Spirit, living from the inside out by faith, instead of by rote or tradition. (Romans 10:4) It is when we acknowledge what He did for us, recognize the higher way He opened for us in the Spirit through the New Birth and the New Creation, that we are no longer under any law. Law is not necessary for the righteous but for the unrighteous. "Law is not laid down for a righteous one, but for the lawless and disobedient ones." (1 Timothy 1:9) As long as we will live in the righteousness He purchased for us by His blood, we live above the dictates of law. We are His righteousness and we must now live according to the dictates of righteousness! (2 Cor. 5:21, Rom. 6:12-22)

Let me show you another way Jesus fulfilled the law.

Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, till the heaven and the earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall in any way pass from the Law until all is fulfilled. Therefore whoever shall relax one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven. But whoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven. Matthew 5:17-19

Among the rabbis of Jesus' day, "to destroy the law" was a phrase they would use against a fellow rabbi that they thought was misinterpreting the Scripture. They

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referred to a fellow rabbi that gave a correct interpretation of the Scripture as, "fulfilling the law."

Jesus was teaching that He did not come to misrepresent or to incorrectly interpret the Law. His purpose was to correctly represent and interpret it. In this He was fulfilling the Law.

He adds to the above paragraph in Matthew 5:

"Till the heaven and the earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall in any way pass from the Law until all is fulfilled."

What in the world is a "jot" or "tittle"? It only really makes sense in the Hebrew language, but I am not going to get technical about this here, though I could.

Simply stated, the Hebrew New Testament, translated from the Greek by Franz Delitzsch, says "yod" for "jot", and "kotch" for "tittle." The "yod" is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and the "kotch" is the decorative marks used by scribes upon certain Hebrew letters resembling a crown. Jesus was saying that not even the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet or even the decorative marks of the scribes used to decorate a letter in Hebrew would pass away till all would come to pass. This sounds to me a lot like other Scripture. Look up some examples in Isaiah 55:11, 1 Kings 8:56, and 1Peter 1:23-25.

Jesus fulfilled the law (or Word) throughout His life and ministry by being obedient to God according to what the Scripture had prophesied concerning Him. Many things were said about Jesus in the law and in the prophets, and He was the fulfillment of many promises

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from God as to the ONE that was to come as Messiah and Lord. Over and over you read in the Gospels that He did such and such that it might fulfill that which was written! (A few examples: Matthew 1:22, 2:17, 23, 4:14, 5:18, 8:17, 12:17, 13:14, 35, 21:4, etc.) Jesus was the personal fulfillment of what the Word said about Him in the Law and the prophets!

Because of what Jesus does in us by the Holy Spirit when we turn our lives over to Him, there is no need to "keep" the Law of Moses, that is, as long as we will walk in the greater law of the love commandment.

Notice here how Jesus condenses all the law and the prophets into two commandments. Keeping this will cause you to never have to deal with all the rest of the commandments because LOVE of God and your neighbor as yourself fulfills it all!

Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law? And Jesus said to him, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*" (Deut. 6:5) This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" (Lev. 19:18) **On these two commandments all the Law and the Prophets hang. Matthew 22:36-40**

Notice Jesus' words that the entire LAW hangs on these two commandments.

Look at 1John chapter 2 through chapter 4 and note that was clearly teaching the same thing.

And by this we know that we have known Him, if we keep His commands. The one saying, I have known Him, and not keeping His commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that one. But whoever keeps His Word, truly in this one the love of God has been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him. 1John 2:3-5

Did you see that "His commands," "the truth," and "His Word" are used referring to the same thing?

If you know that He is righteous, know that everyone doing righteousness has been born from Him... Everyone practicing sin also practices lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness... Little children, let no one lead you astray; the one practicing righteousness is righteous, even as that One is righteous. The one practicing sin is of the devil, because the devil sins from the beginning. For this the Son of God was revealed, that He might undo the works of the devil... By this the children of God and the children of the devil are revealed: Everyone not practicing righteousness is not of God; also the one not loving his brother... And whatever we ask, we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments, and we do the things pleasing before Him. And this is His commandment, that we should believe the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as He gave command to us. And the one keeping His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He gave to us... And we have this commandment from Him, that the one who loves God

also loves his brother. 1John 2:29, 3:4, 7, 8, 10, 22, 23, 24, 4:21

Here it is again: It is not enough to BE the righteousness of God in Christ, as we taught at the beginning of this book. (2Corinthians 5:21) That is where it all starts, but the Lord expects that righteousness to come out in works of righteousness. We are clearly taught that we must also PRACTICE righteousness once we are in Christ!

To practice sin is lawlessness. For the individual that practices sin, they will have to confront the blunt force of God's law. The law is meant for the lawless and the disobedient. (1 Tim. 1:9) Everyone that does not practice righteousness is not of God! Mark down the fact that not practicing righteousness means that one does not love the brethren. The opposite is true. If we practice righteousness we will love our brethren. I say again: Righteousness and love will put you in a place above all moral law!

As we stay in the love of God, we supersede all moral law, that is, we are on a higher level than trying to keep it by ourselves, either by some tradition, or by a religious ceremony with no power. We are no longer by ourselves and on our own! God is love and love is in us! (Romans 5:5)

Love does what is right and good and does not do evil towards anyone. Love is in you because God is in you, and He is love. (1John 4:4, 16) Walking in love, which is also walking in the Spirit, fulfills the righteous demands of God's moral law for the believer in Christ. (Romans 8:4)

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Study Galatians 5:14-23 and you will see that walking in the Spirit is walking in the fruit of the Spirit, and against these there exists no moral law. To be led by the Holy Spirit through your spirit is the key to walking in victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. He will lead and guide us into all the truth. (John 16:13, 17:17) The truth is the Word of the living God, and as we abide in that Word, we become disciples, followers, or His imitators. That is when you get revealed knowledge of the truth that will manifest God's power and make you free! (John 8:31, 32)

When we walk in the fruit of the Spirit, we will not violate any moral law. This means that the bad consequences of not keeping the law cannot touch us. We don't have punishment for violating law if we don't break it. Jesus bore the punishment of our peace. (Is. 53:5) He was whipped in my place, so now I can go free from the penalty of breaking law. Even if I miss it and sin, I can run to my Advocate, the Lord Jesus, confess my sin to Him, and His blood will cleanse me from sin and all unrighteousness. That way the curse can never touch me, that is, if I will stay in the light as He is the light! (1John 1:7- 2:1) That is real and true grace! The Just One died for the unjust (us before Christ) even when the unjust did NOT deserve it! The unjust deserved death and hell, but Jesus suffered both in our place so we can go free, live a victorious life on earth, and have a place in eternity with Him! That is grace, oh precious and sweet grace!

We'll say it again. We supersede the law by walking in love! We have come up higher in God than trying to keep the law by ourselves or in our own strength by

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religion or tradition. Now we have the Greater One in us to lead and guide us, to empower us, and to manifest Him through us. This is a grace and a newness of life like this world has never known!

Chapter 27: Only by Grace

God opened my eyes and ears even wider to more on this subject, and He wants me to address it from the Scriptures. We will repeat a few things and a few Scriptures out of necessity and move on from there.

I saw in a night vision some people in the Spirit that I could tell were good and honest Christian brothers and sisters. They were singing a catchy little tune that went like this:

Only by grace,
Only by grace,
That's all you ever need,
Only by grace...

I heard them singing it like a hymn or theme for their lives, as they were riding along on a horse drawn sleigh of all things. I can still hear the melody. It was a "sing-a-long" type song.

It was humorous to me because my idea of transportation has NEVER been a "horse drawn sleigh." No donkeys, camels, cows, or llamas for me! Give me something with an engine. A car, motorcycle, plane or motor boat will do just fine. I do not go along with the idea of "let's go backwards in time to save the environment and use bicycles and horse drawn buggies." Alternatives please!

These saints in the vision seemed to be riding along with much satisfaction and a "lo que será será" (for all you non-Hispanic folks: "whatever will be will be") attitude that we will address as we continue in this study. The Lord spoke to my heart clearly about this together

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with a strong rebuke. I want to share it with you but let's see some instruction from the Word first. Some of these things were covered earlier, but a little review is very important so we are all on the same page as we study.

And He said to me, my grace is sufficient for you..
2Corinthians 12:9

Paul was being attacked by a demon spirit sent by satan to harass him. It was not something God sent him. If you have a Bible version that says "God sent him a thorn in the flesh" or something similar, throw it away because the original Greek text of these verses leaves NO room for doubt or argument. A translation that has said or implied that God was behind this thorn in the flesh is doing a great disservice to the Body of Christ, and should be blacklisted as rife with the traditions of men and injected with religious wrong thinking. What part of the words "messenger of satan" do they not understand? Who gave Paul this messenger or "angel" of satan? The word for "messenger" (Gr. *aggelos*) does not imply God at all in this case because we are told that it came from satan and not from God. (12:7, 8)

Satan sent this demon spirit "messenger" to be a challenge to the message that Paul preached. He was full of the revelation of God in Christ and the devil was not about to let him get away with anything without using his faith in the covenant or in the grace of God. Paul had received massive revelation of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God had revealed the Word made flesh, His sacrifice, resurrection power, and the authority invested in the church. (See for example the entire book of Ephesians,

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Colossians, Philippians- chapters 2 through 4, Romans- chapters 3 through 8, 10, 12, 1Corinthians chapters 1-3, 6, 11- 15, etc.

Satan always comes to steal the Word that is sown in the heart. He uses a variety of things to attempt to steal it, things like affliction and persecution, pressures (or lusts) to get one off the Covenant provisions sealed by the Blood of Jesus. (Mark 4:14-19) Testing and trials with evil stuff will eventually try to come to every child of God standing on the Word. You will be challenged if your stand is strong! Paul was no exception. Paul had more than his share of persecution, tests and trials. (2 Cor. 11:23-33) Paul enumerates a lot of opposition through persecution and affliction by people and circumstances in the chapter leading up to this "thorn in the flesh". He explains that behind all the trouble was this "messenger of Satan." He also tells us that the devil sent this demonic emissary "because of the abundance of revelations" he had received. (12:1-7)

Paul knew it was the devil behind all his troubles and he also knew that he was helpless in his own strength to get rid of this harassing devil. He petitioned the Lord three times to get rid of this demon for him. The Lord answered him with the famous "My grace is sufficient for you." Some seem to think that this means "just grin and bear it" or "sit there, wait, and do nothing in faith." If you think that this sentence means "when you get to heaven everything will be better," then you have completely missed the answer of the Lord to Paul.

The word translated "sufficient" here had been grossly misunderstood as "put up with it" or "lo que será será!" Was Jesus telling Paul, "Just be a good little

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trooper and accept it because you can't change it?" Did Jesus infer, "My grace will help you suffer through it or put up with it?" NO! The Greek word here for "sufficient" is *arkeo*. The definition is: to be possessed of unfailing strength, to be strong, to suffice, to be enough, to defend, ward off, to be satisfied, to be contented. (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon)

If I said nothing else, this definition should immediately bring to you some understanding. The word does NOT mean "just be happy and put up with it." Did you notice the definitions "to defend", and to "ward off"? That means that the Lord was telling him that whatever was included in the word "grace" would ward off and defend Paul against that messenger of the devil. It meant that God's power (unfailing strength) would come on him and be available to him to defend himself from the messenger of the devil, and also to ward it off. To ward it off means that it would be run off. It meant that Paul had available to him something that would make the devil split! Not only that, but it would work so well that he could be satisfied in it and even be contented regardless of circumstances. That sounds a whole lot like the words of James when he taught to **"count it all joy when you are confronted by tests and trials"** because you know that faith and perseverance will always win! (James 1:2-5)

Another key to our understanding here is the fact that the Greek word for "sufficient" is a verb and not a noun. It is an action word and does not mean nor imply "passivity." The word does not imply "just sit there and I will give you strength to bear it all." It is an action word

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of "doing something about it." It means that something could be done about the messenger of satan.

Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament says the Greek verb *arkei* is an old word of rich meaning, perhaps kin to the Latin word *arceo*, which means, "to ward off against danger." Interestingly, this word is akin to the Greek word *airo* and has the idea of "raising a barrier." The word also means to "*lift away by removal, to put away, put away,*" to simply "*to remove.*"

The more you study this, the more this sounds like **"submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee"** (James 4:7), "give no place to the devil," (Ephesians 4:27) and Paul's teaching on taking up the armor of God so that you can resist and stand up in the evil day against principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits in high places! (Ephesians 6:10-17) God was not telling Paul just sit there and bear it all because my grace will help you suffer it graciously or without complaint! NO! God was saying, "I have provided for you all you need to win!" God was telling him that inside this grace was all he needed to overcome this evil messenger of satan!

Here is where people get all fouled up. Some are teaching and thinking that God was telling Paul, "Grace alone will do it without any action from you." Notice the Scriptures we just quoted above in James and Ephesians, and please note that nowhere in the New Testament does it say, "God will do something about the devil for you." Let's see these verses above a little closer.

Submit therefore to God, resist (take a stand against, oppose) **the devil and he will run from you as in terror** (the meaning of "flee"). James 4:7

Who is to do the submitting to God and who is the understood subject of this sentence? YOU, that's who! We do the submitting to God and we do the taking a stand against the devil. Nowhere in this verse does it say God will do anything about the devil. Why is it that God will do nothing about the devil when he comes against you? The Father will do nothing about the devil because through the great and awesome sacrifice of Jesus HE ALREADY DID SOMETHING ABOUT THE DEVIL! Jesus already defeated the devil and stripped him of the authority he stole from the first man Adam. The second Adam (Jesus) took it all back! (Rom.5:12-17, Col. 2:15, Eph. 1:19-23, Heb. 2:14, 15, 1 Cor. 15:22, 45, 1John 3:8. Read and study my book "The Story of our Great Redemption: Beyond Human Imagination!" for a detailed account of these extremely important facts. Get it on our Resources page. It is also available in Spanish.)

Now it is up you, the born again child of God, to do something with the authority that has been already provided in Christ against the works of the devil. Get is straight once and for all in your thinking: If you don't resist the devil, God will not do it for you. It is wrong to think that He will resist the devil in any way or fashion for you. He will not do it for you! He has provided the authority and dominion through Christ's defeat of hell and death, and now YOU must do the resisting and the rebuking or NOTHING will get done. The gates of hell

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will not prevail against the church WHEN we stand up and take our place in Christ. (Mat. 16:18)

God will back you up when you operate in the Name that is above every Name, the Name of Jesus, as you enforce the defeat of hell and death. (Phil 2:9-11) All heaven, earth, and hell MUST obey a command according to God's Word when delivered with faith in the dominion and authority (the Name) of the risen Lord! (Acts 3:16) Angels will respond to the Name and every demon force will flee when we operate by faith in the provision of authority and dominion in Christ.

Give no place (foothold, territory, spot, location, opportunity) **to the devil.** Eph. 4:27

The understood subject of this sentence is again "YOU." We are to give no place, territory or opportunity to the devil. This infers that if the devil has any territory or foothold where an individual is concerned then they are the ones that gave it up to the devil. God didn't give the devil the place or territory, and He will do nothing to get it back for you UNTIL you do the resistance and opposition in the Name of Jesus and take your stand on the Covenant. That is when God will get behind you with all the power it may take to get you into the winner's circle as an active reality.

Though we are overcomers and more than conquerors already through what Jesus did for us, the victory that overcomes the world is OUR FAITH. (Rom. 8:37, 1John 4:4. 5:4) Something is required of us. Faith must be hooked up with the provision in order for it to

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come to pass in your life. We must act on the Word in faith or NOTHING happens. (James 1:22, 2:26)

In Ephesians 6:10-17 the understood subject is always YOU. YOU be strong in the Lord. YOU take up the whole armor of God. YOU resist and withstand the devil in the evil day. YOU take up the, breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, shield of faith, the helmet of deliverance (salvation), the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, and you put the shoes on your feet of the great Gospel of peace (Going back to the Hebrew word shalom- nothing missing and nothing broken)! The great grace of God is the provision of the armor but God will NOT put it on you! God provided the war suit and now He wants you take it, put it on, and use it and win! The grace is the Word of the Covenant, provision and power of God. The grace is what Jesus accomplished for us through His deaths (spirit, soul, and body), resurrection, ascension into heaven and sitting down at God's right hand. That is the FREE gift of God. The grace is the legal defeat of all of hell and death. Now it is up to you and me to receive the benefits of that awesome sacrifice.

When the Lord told Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you" now begins to take on a whole new meaning when seen with the light of the truth of God's Word. Watch here what this revelation the Lord was sharing with Paul actually meant, as we quote again this verse in Romans.

For if by one man's offense death reigned by one, much more they who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. Romans 5:17

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This verse does not say that we will automatically reign in life by grace. It certainly does not say that the abundance of grace will work without your participation! The abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness ONLY work for them that RECEIVE these awesome provisions. Did you notice that?

Without receiving the gift or the grace there is NO reigning in life. The word "gift" should have told us that it is something that will not work automatically. There is participation in the receiving of any gift. If someone gives you a gift but you don't receive it, what happens? NOTHING happens! You are going to have to get yourself into action somehow. You will have to stretch your hands out to take the gift and unwrap it and use it or you will never get to the gift, and it will never benefit you.

Have you ever given a gift to someone and they just refused to use it after they opened it up and saw what it was? I gave someone a really nice gift one time only to realize that they never used it. What a waste! They kept it at their house but wouldn't use it because it was too nice. That is certainly not honoring the gift or the gift giver! Actually, it is insulting and it is frustrating. Frankly, I wished I could have taken back the gift and given it to someone else that would appreciate it. I wonder how many Christians have frustrated (disesteemed, neutralized, violated, cast off, brought to nothing) or made vain the gift or grace of God by not receiving it and holding fast to that according to the Word? (Gal. 2:21, 2 Cor. 6:1, 1 Cor. 15:2)

As we studied earlier, the word "receive" in Romans 5:17 is very significant. It is the same Greek word used

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in Mark 11:24 when Jesus tells us that the prayer of faith involves "believing that you have received." The Greek word is "lambano," which literally means: to take, employ, use, lay claim to, seize, obtain, to take upon one's self, to lay hold of, apprehend, appropriate to one's self, and even more along the same lines. You must use the free gift and the abundance of grace or you receive nothing. You are going to have to lay claim to it and obtain it.

Just like your salvation, though a free gift from God (Eph. 2:8), it did not just happen to you without your participation. The New Birth did not happen to you until you accepted the free gift and received the salvation in Christ. Had you thought like many do about the things of God, "Well, if God wants me to be saved, He will just do it", what do you think could have happened to you? A person that continues to think like that will eventually die and go to hell. Why? They did not lay hold of and appropriate the free gift Jesus made available. This works in exactly the same way across the board. It works like this for healing, deliverance, and every single provision of the covenant. Nothing happens until it is applied and received.

It is not only by grace as some espouse. Look up the following Scriptural references. Grace is accessed ONLY by faith! (Romans 5:2) It is ONLY by faith so that it can be by grace! (Romans 4:16) It is abundant grace in conjunction WITH faith and love that gets things done in the kingdom! (1 Tim. 1:14) It is the Word of His grace MIXED WITH FAITH that causes you to profit! (Acts 14:3, Heb. 4:2) It is grace THROUGH FAITH that works to your benefit! (Eph. 2:8) Grace will

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only be on those that LOVE the Lord Jesus in sincerity. (Eph. 6:24) We prove our love for the Lord Jesus and the Father by being doers of what He tells us to do! (John 14:21-23) It is by RECEIVING the promise of the Spirit through FAITH that we will enter into the blessing of Abraham that belongs to us in Christ! (Gal. 3: 7, 9, 14, 29)

Grace and help in the time of need is OBTAINED and FOUND and then it will do something for you! (Hebrews 4:16)

As we seek FIRST the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things are added to us. (Mat. 6:33) We "ask (first) and you it will be given to us. We seek (first) and we will find. We knock (first) and it will be opened to us!" (Mat 7:7. 8)

We draw near to God FIRST and then He will draw near to us! (James 4:8) It is NOT God pursuing and running after man. NO! He only did that ONCE when He sent Jesus to the cross to die in our place. He loved us first by providing the great work of Christ as our substitute, but now He expects us to receive what He is offering, to take, appropriate it, and walk in it! It is God that provided the great sacrifice of Jesus and all the benefits of the covenant sealed in His Blood and He is now saying to us, "Come to me to receive what I have provided!" Yes, He loved us first by sending Jesus to the cross, but He is not running after anyone to get in on the sacrifice. It is your choice whether you get into it or not! (Deut. 30:19, 20) We have the choice of blessings or curses, life or death.

Jesus said to first **"Come to ME... and I will give you rest."** He did not say, "I will give you rest" and then

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"come to Me." The "Come to me" is BEFORE the "I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28, 29) Jesus said, "**He that is thirsty come to me and drink.**" (John 8:37) He did not say that He gives you a drink and then you come to Him! That is backwards!

The father of the prodigal didn't run after the prodigal nor even send a "posse" after him at all! The father didn't call him on the "phone" either. Don't add something to the words of Jesus. Look at what that story says. It was when the prodigal realized the hog-pen existence he was living in that HE DECIDED to return to His father's house and then the father ran to meet him!! (Luke 15:11-32) He remembered the goodness of his father and it led him to repentance. (Romans 2:4) Somebody may have talked to him about the goodness of his father though there is no indication of it in the story. It was the prodigal that drew near to his father FIRST and then the father responded by running to meet him!

It is by seed sowing and reaping in faith according to 2Corinthians 9:6-7 that you get over into the "God is able to make all grace abound towards you" of 2 Cor. 9:8! Forget anything Paul taught about grace in verse 8 if you are not doing verses 6 and 7! See Mark 4:14-28 in this regard of "sowing and reaping" together with Phil. 4:15-19 and Gal. 6:7-10.

There are MANY more verses that could be added to this list because they are all over the Bible.

In the vision I told you about at the beginning of this chapter, I saw these Christian people singing this song of "only by grace." When they finished the song, looking so pitifully satisfied, as I woke up out of the vision, the Lord Jesus spoke up in my spirit saying with a strong

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and loud voice of rebuke, "NO, it is not ONLY by grace! It is by grace AND faith!" When I got up, I knew what I had to do. This book is the result.

The Lord is very much against this wrong idea of "only by grace" on many levels. He is not at all in agreement with it because it is leading some saints astray, and it is a violation of the principles of God's Word. Many believing this deception are getting lazy with their faith and have thought that using their faith with actions can be getting into a "works mentality" or "doing something by works." We know this book has straightened out your thinking and believing according to the Word and removed from you wrong ideas and doctrines about grace, but this chapter will end up by revolutionizing your thinking according to God's Word if you will let it.

Chapter 28: The Obedience of Faith

We have already referred to the Hebrew and Greek definitions of *faith* and *believe* in this book. For an in-depth study get the free article, “*The Foundations of our Faith*” on the Articles page. Getting the right definitions into your heart are very important, because you will hear some that espouse a "grace" gospel (though it is a deviation) talk about "believing God," "receiving by faith" and using their faith, but their definition of faith is seriously incomplete. They espouse a half-baked idea of faith!

Faith is NOT belief alone. Have we said this enough times? Did you get it? Faith does not mean that you know what you believe. Faith is more than confidence, assurance, and being convinced or fully persuaded of the truth, though it does intimately include all these things. Faith is also “speaking of things that are not a though they were,” the confession of faith, trusting God and His Covenant Word, acting on the Word, being faithful and loyal to God in an unreservedly committed relationship and fellowship with Him, and a whole lot more than what we have thought of as being faith.

Faith is also OBEDIENCE to God and His Word, and it is expressed in ACTIONS based on the Word! Study James 1:22-25, 2:16-26! Faith is NEVER a passive word! These last definitions of faith, as obedience to God's Word and the fact that faith is expressed in works or corresponding actions, is where those that espouse wrong teaching in this area of grace

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have big problems with their understanding of the subject.

In the famous faith chapter of Hebrews 11 we are told much about what faith is, what it will do and produce and how it acts by stating the following concerning it in verses 1-35:

“Faith is the SUBSTANCE of what is (earnestly) expected and the PROOF of things not seen. Faith and the Word are the creative substances God used to CREATE the heavens and the earth. Faith will BRING an offering to God, OBTAINS witness, and God testifies of your gifts. Faith will HAVE a good testimony. Faith will MOVE you to prepare or act on what God says, and MAKE YOU AN HEIR of righteousness. Faith will OBEY God, RECEIVE the inheritance, and cause you to DWELL in your land. Faith RECEIVES strength to conceive, JUDGES HIM FAITHFUL who has promised. One can even die by faith! Faith SEES the promises, EMBRACES them, and CONFESSES something in regard to them. It OFFERS up the best to God, reaches a conclusion that the impossible is possible like it was in Isaac. Faith will receive, bless, worship, make mention, and give instructions. Faith will hide you from destruction, cause you to REFUSE evil and doubt, CHOOSE the right thing, LOOK to the reward, FORSAKE “Egypt” and ENDURE without quitting or giving up! Faith will keep you, and make you pass through any obstacle into victory. Faith will make the “walls” to come down, keep you from perishing, SUBDUE kingdoms, WORK righteousness, OBTAIN promises, STOP the mouths of lions (the devil and demons- “like a lion: 1Peter 5:8), QUENCH violence,

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ESCAPE the edge of the sword (weapons), out of weakness be MADE STRONG (like Paul against that “thorn in the flesh”-- “when I am weak then am I strong”), MAKE YOU VALIANT in battle, cause you put to flight enemy armies, and even get your prematurely dead raised to life!” (Heb. 11:1-35) Each statement about faith in this paragraph is addressed in this mighty 11th chapter!

That is certainly far from “sitteth and waiteth because it will just happen as it falleth on thee without participation on thy part” mentality of the “grace only” teaching of some. It is GRACE coupled and joined WITH a living and active FAITH that will bring you a manifestation of God's promises, and never forget it!

There is an additional point to what we have been studying, and it is the fact that every promise of God is conditional. Check them out and you will see that they are never automatic. Yes, they are yours as a divine inheritance (Ephesians 1:3, Col.1:12, 13), and they are available to every believer (2Cor. 1:20), but the conditions for every promise must be met or you never get any benefit out of them. The grace is the wonderful provision of all of His mighty promises, but it is faith that meets the conditions and requirements of every promise and gets in on the benefits.

Identify the conditions to each one of the following promises:

Whatever you ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you. John 14:23

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You will never get to the "He will give it to you" unless you follow the instructions on the front end of this verse that requires that we ask the Father in the Name of Jesus. Then you are going to have to understand that asking in prayer must always be done in faith or you get no results. (Mark 11:24, James 1:6-8)

Lay hands on the sick and they will recover. Mark 16:18

If you never lay hands on people (the action of faith, the obedience of faith), fully convinced that they will recover, you will never get in on this mighty promise of the Lord Jesus. Jesus began these instructions by stating, "These signs will accompany them that believe in my Name..." Believing is therefore trust AND obedience.

There are scriptural references in the New Testament where obedience is intimately connected to believing and disobedience is connected to unbelief and doubt. Let me give you two more references to get you started in your study of this vital truth.

And to whom did he swear they would never enter into his rest, except those who were *disobedient*? So we see that they could not enter because of *unbelief*. Hebrews 3:18-19

In these verses it is the disobedient that were in unbelief. There is no separation of disobedience from unbelief.

But not all have *obeyed* the good news, for Isaiah says, Lord, who has *believed* our report? Romans 10:16

In this verse, it is those that obey the good news of the gospel that believe the report Isaiah gave of the Messiah Jesus!

In the final words of Jesus before His ascension as recorded by Matthew, He said to His followers that they were to be, "**Teaching them (all the people) to *obey everything I have commanded you...***" (Matthew 28:20) Do you understand that if you teach people to obey the Lord Jesus that you are teaching them to believe on Him? Something else is important here. Jesus commanded many things in the Gospels to His disciples. He said that we are to teach those that come to Him to OBEY what He commanded. Are people doing that today? Is the new teaching on grace that is floating around the churches doing that? Obedience to the Lord is taught in the entire Bible. It is an inescapable truth from Genesis to Revelation.

Regrettably, some mistaken teachers try to make a distinction between pre-Calvary and post-Calvary obedience. This is a false concept to say the least. It would disagree with Jesus' own statement after His resurrection in Matthew 28:20. EVERYTHING Jesus taught His disciples as commandments were pre-Calvary, and He commands them to teach people the SAME obedience to them post-Calvary! Nothing has changed in respect to obedience!

In Romans 10:16, we saw that Paul connected the concept of obedience to the Gospel with the report of

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Isaiah in Isaiah 53:1. Paul saw no discrepancy or difference in the mention of obedience to the Gospel by the prophet Isaiah and the revelation of Jesus Christ he had received. Obedience means OBEDIENCE in Paul and in all the older writings of the Hebrew Bible. To try and make them different is a perversion of the truth.

Jesus said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!" (Luke 11:28, 8:21) He also said, "If you love me you will obey my commandments (plural)." (John 14:15, 14:21-23) Again, we teach people to love the Lord by teaching them to OBEY Him. People that do not love the Lord will not obey Him.

If you obey my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have *obeyed* my Father's commandments and remain in his love. John 15:10
NET

According to this verse from the mouth of Jesus, it takes obedience to His commandments (all of them) to REMAIN or to abide in His love. The very clear implication is that if you do not obey His commandments then you will not remain or abide in His love. Obedience to God's Word, the Gospel, and the Lord Jesus and His Spirit are requirements to staying within the confines of His love. Without obedience one is outside of the love of God and over into the enemy's territory. This doesn't mean that God quits loving you, but it does mean that whatever provision, grace, mercy and so on from God you should have as a result of obeying the Lord will be unavailable as long as you remain in disobedience.

With flaming fire he will mete out punishment on those who do not know God and do not *obey* the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will undergo the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his strength, when he comes to be glorified among his saints and admired on that day among all who *have believed-* and you did in fact *believe* our testimony.

2Thessalonians 1:8-10 NET

Paul teaches us in these verses that it is the disobedient to the Gospel that will perish as opposed to those that have believed the Gospel and will be ushered into His presence at His coming. If disobedience to the Gospel leads to eternal destruction, then what is meant by "all who have believed" in these verses? If your answer was, "To believe means that we are to OBEY the Gospel," then you are right! There is no such thing as believing the Gospel without also DOING or LIVING the Gospel message! Years ago, I heard one man of God say it like, "You only believe what you do!"

And by being perfected in this way, He (Jesus) became the source of eternal salvation to all who *obey* Him. Hebrews 5:9

Jesus is only the source of eternal salvation to those that OBEY Him. This means that He is not the eternal source of salvation to those that DISOBEY Him. You may not like this verse, and it may go very contrary to your thinking, but there it is in black and white!

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Here is another verse in Hebrews that refers to this truth.

For we are made partakers of Christ, IF we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.
Hebrews 3:14

Are we going to agree with Scripture or not? As for me and my house we will believe the Word!

Therefore, remember what you received and heard, and obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will never know at what hour I will come against you. Revelation 3:3

Note that right in the middle of receiving, hearing and repentance is also this concept of obedience. Jesus is here speaking to the church at Sardis in the book of Revelation. These were Christian people.

Jesus said to the church at Philadelphia, **"I know your deeds... you have obeyed my Word..."** (Revelation 3:8) Jesus did not say, "I know what and how you believe." Jesus knew their deeds or what they were doing. Their doing was in the fact that they OBEYED the Word. It is faith translated into actions of obedience to God's Word that Jesus looks at AFTER you are born-again. Your beliefs are completely meaningless UNLESS they lead you into action according to God's Word. Beliefs according to God's Word must be demonstrated by obedience to the Lord.

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Here is another verse on obedience in the New Testament. It is right straight from the writings of Paul in Romans.

Through him we have received grace and our apostleship to bring about the *obedience of faith* among all the Gentiles on behalf of his name. Romans 1:5

"Obedience of faith" means just what it says. Paul was called by God according to the grace of God to produce this obedience to the Gospel which is an integral part of "faith." *Faith is a part of obedience and obedience is a part of faith. One cannot exist apart from the other.* If the grace message you are hearing is not leading you to obedience to the Lord Jesus and the Word of God, then it is a wrongly taught grace. The grace is for the bringing about of the obedience to the faith! Disobedience to the Gospel or the Word of God means that there is no faith in operation and you are outside the grace of God. Obedience to the Gospel or to the Word means that faith is in operation and you are in the grace of God.

Paul even went on to mention the fact that what Christ had accomplished through him was in order to bring about the obedience of the Gentiles to the Gospel message. (Rom. 15:18) According to Paul, even your confession to the Gospel of Christ is connected to your obedience. (2 Cor. 9:13) Peter said that we are set apart by the Holy Spirit for OBEDIENCE to the Lord. (1 Peter 1:2)

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Someone reading this may think we are saying or that we believe then that salvation is earned or that it can be obtained by what you do or by works. Absolutely not! If you run off and say that then you lied about us! Jesus paid the full price for our salvation and that was something we could never accomplish for ourselves, but we get into this salvation and stay in it by faith and through faith. (Ephesians 2:8-10) Once I receive Jesus as Lord of my life, NOW begins the obedience side of the Gospel. That is the VITAL side we were talking about in the first few chapters of this book. I was born again and now I should and must obey Him. Will you do what He tells you to do, or will you disobey His Word to you? Jesus said:

"Why do you call me 'Lord Lord' and do not the things that I say? He that comes to me, hears my sayings, and does them (puts them into practice) is like the man that dug deep and built his house upon the bedrock." Luke 6:46-48

In Matthew, another similar statement of Jesus is:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of heaven- only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven." Matthew 7:21

We must get this straightened out in our thinking! Once you are made a new creation in Christ Jesus by faith in what He accomplished for us through His death and resurrection, the Lord expects good works out of us. Many have missed it here! Many only know Ephesians

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2:8 and 9 and think that is a great Scripture to use for a "grace only" Gospel of no works, but they neglect the very next verse! Here is:

For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus *for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do them.* Ephesians 2:10

Here is the question this verse answers: Why were we created in Christ Jesus as His workmanship? So we could float on "beds of ease" and never get anything done for His kingdom, and refuse to obey, do, practice or live according His Word now that we are born again? No way! God's purpose in the new birth was FOR GOOD WORKS so we may DO them! God has performance and productivity in mind for the true believer in Christ Jesus. That is the VITAL AND LIVING side of the Gospel and our redemption in Christ.

Jesus told the one talent man that hid his master's money instead of putting it talent to work, "**You wicked and lazy servant...**" (Matthew 25:26) The ones that were blessed and commended by the Lord were those that did something with what the Lord had entrusted them with and gained an increase with from their talents! May this resonate in your spirit forever: God is looking for production and performance out of the believer! May this statement make all the proponents of an unscriptural type of grace cringe so they wake up to the truths of God's Word!

When Jesus addressed the seven churches in the book of Revelation chapters two and three, to each one of the churches without exception, He said, "**I know**

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your works.” (Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19, 3:1, 8, 15) He never mentions His grace one time! The issues He was addressing with the churches had nothing to do with His marvelous grace provisions, but they had everything to do with HOW they responded to what He had already provided for them by His grace. Were they faithful with what He had given them? Were they acting and doing what He had commanded? Were they LIVING what He had already put in them? Were they taking a stand on His Word and fulfilling their mission? Jesus never addresses anything concerning the “grace” they had believed and He had provided, but what they did with what He had given them!

When you get to heaven and have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ as a believer, He will not address the grace at all but will judge you according to the things that you did in your body! (2Corinthians 5:10, 11) You can say you believe the grace all day and He will still look at you and say, “I know YOUR works! What did you DO with what I gave you in your life while on the earth?” That is the basis of our judgment as believers. The question on that day will be based on if you sat on your laurels and think grace does it all for you or did you actually put into practice in your life what He so marvelously provided by His grace? He expected and required performance out of His people in the book of Revelation when addressing the seven churches that originated among the gentiles and it is no different today! He was, is, and will be the original fruit and works inspector!

Did you know that even the world without Jesus will be judged according to their works and the fact that their

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names are not written in the book of life? They get a double judgment. Not only did they reject the Son of God as Savior and Lord, but they did evil and practiced the works of the devil and they will be judged by their works so no one will have any excuse before God. (Rev. 19:11-15) It will be a day of doom and gloom for the world when they are judged and cast into the lake of fire. See also Rev. 21:8. Men did not repent for the evil works of their hands, even though they saw the destruction that came upon the earth. (Rev. 9:20, 21)

Works are important and do matter on the earth. One way or the other, what people DO (not what they said they believed or mentally assented to concerning grace) will be judged by God and the Lord Jesus! We need our minds renewed to what the Scripture says in this area so we stop believing in fairy tales built around "air castles" based on a twisted so-called grace message!

Study the references to "good works" and what it says about producing "fruits" in Paul's epistles and in the rest of the New Testament. They are both talking about the same thing.

When you understand the grace of God in truth (in the right and correct way according to God's design), the gospel of the Lord Jesus will bear fruit through you. (Col. 1:6) The Gospel message includes bearing fruit and doing good works! This means that now that you saved by grace through faith, the Lord is looking for fruit from your branch! (John 15:1-8) He is the original fruit inspector extraordinaire!

Paul goes on to tell us in Colossians 1 that we must walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and please Him in

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all things by bearing fruit in every good deed or work. (Col. 1:10) Is that clear enough? I know it is!

It honors and glorifies the Father greatly when we (the branches) produce much fruit once we are connected to Jesus (the Vine). (John 10:1-10) The opposite is also the truth. It greatly dishonors the Lord when we do not produce fruit after we are born again or are connected to the Vine, the Lord Jesus.

Good works and good fruits are expected and required of us AFTER we are born again! This is the vital or living side of our faith! Again, the grace that we could never provide for ourselves was in the fact that the Father sent Jesus to the cross and to hell in order to pay the penalty for our sins and separation from God. That was something I could never get by anything that I could do, earn, or work up. No "work" of yours or mine could ever accomplish that! That is why it is impossible to be a good human being and make it to heaven based on how good and nice you were as a human being.

All our righteous acts before we came to the Lord Jesus were all a bunch of filthy rags. (Isaiah 64:6) It was all worthless as far as our salvation was concerned. But now that we have received the free gift of salvation and the righteousness provided by God through Christ Jesus, we must become obedient to His Gospel and Word, and we are required by the Lord to proceed on to good works as a demonstration or proof of having a living faith in the risen Lord instead of an unproductive and dead faith. (James 2:26) FAITH demands that AFTER you believe on Jesus, that you also become obedient to His Word and produce good works or good fruit or your faith has become NO faith.

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Jesus said that you will know what people actually believe in their heart by the kind of fruit they produce in their lives. (Matthew 12:33-35) I believe in Jesus' Name that this has become abundantly obvious to you.

I challenge you to study the hundreds of promises of God and note that there are always pre-conditions somewhere in the record! This is not “bad news” but great, good, and very positive GOOD news because if you meet the pre-condition of the Lord then the manifestation will be forthcoming.

Why are there pre-conditions on His promises anyway? If there were not pre-conditions anybody could get in on them including the devil. The pre-conditions are never in place so that His children get left out! He desires for His faithful children to possess ALL the land of promise! (Hebrews chapters 3 and 4, 2 Cor. 1:20, Eph. 1:3) The Lord doesn't want His enemies and those that will not follow Him and His words to have them! Unbelieving and rebellious ones will be left out of any part of His promises and blessings! Only the obedient and faithful will get in on them! This was always God's plan since the Garden of Eden.

God told Adam and Eve from the beginning what they should and what they should not do. They disobeyed God's command and they died the deaths! (Genesis 2:15- 17- Hebrew) This means that from the beginning there was a pre-condition to staying within the sphere of the life and blessing of God. This holds true in the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. It will be this way until the time that Jesus comes back for us and we receive an immortal body like the one He has now; one that sin and death can longer touch! That is our

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blessed hope! (1John 3:2-3) Until then, pre-conditions will continue to be required on this planet!

Let's look at a few more Scriptures that reveal that His promises have pre-conditions that must be carried out in order to receive the benefit of the promise.

Is there is any sick among you, let them call for the elders of the church, and let them be anointed with oil in the Name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will heal the sick, and if they have committed any sin it will be forgiven them. James 5:14, 15

A sick person will not get healed if they do not follow these instructions. There is divine order and divine instruction to get a manifestation of God's healing power. This is not the only way to receive healing but if this is going to be the Scripture you act upon, then the instructions in it must be followed. If the prayer is said in unbelief or doubt, if the sick never made the effort to call, and if they are not anointed with oil by faith in the Name of the Lord (See Acts 3:16.), the sick will not get well.

Even for salvation you had to meet the conditions of the promise of your salvation or you got nothing out of it.

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as (your) Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

You had to believe, embrace and lay hold of His provision in your heart and confess His Lordship over

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your life or you got nothing. Right? It was simple. You met the condition and you received the promise!

For he that wants to love life and to see good days, let him restrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile. Let him turn aside from evil and do good. Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears open to their prayers. But the Lord's face is against those who do evil. 1Peter 3:10-12

The apostle Peter is quoting from the book of Psalms and he is writing to Christians. Notice the conditions that need to be acted upon IF you are going to live a long, healthy and blessed life. Here they are by the numbers: 1. Restrain the tongue from evil, and the lips from speaking guile. 2. Turn aside from evil. 3. Do good. 4. Seek peace (in Hebrew: *shalom* – the meaning can be summed up as: “nothing missing or broken”) and pursue it.

It is IF you obey the Word and listen diligently to the Lord your God that the blessing will come on you. That's the faith part of the equation! (Deut. 28: 1, 2, Gal. 3:14) We lay hold of the blessing of Abraham that we have been blessed with through faith. (See also Gal. 3:7, 9) Every blessing and every promise is conditional. Begin to identify the provisions and conditions in God's Word. Reject the conditions and never get the provisions! Act on the conditions and walk in the provisions!

Here's a new scripturally sound hymn or psalm to replace that deception ridden tune of "only by grace" I

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told you some saints were singing in the vision the Lord gave me:

By grace and faith ("faith" defined as "to trust, be faithful, loyal, and obey the Lord and His Word")

Seated with the Son

By grace and faith

Victories are won

By grace and faith

Inheritance is yours

By grace and faith

Blessings are assured

Chorus:

Receive His Grace

Lay hold by faith

In His embrace

There is no other way

Grace is truly yours

The provisions He gives

You are only assured

By grace and faith

Be mightily blessed in Jesus' Name!

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Dan A. Rodriguez is the author of books, articles ~~and a daily post for www.danrodriguez.org under the auspices of The Awakening Church International, Inc.~~ His first book was published in 1977. The Lord has graced his life with the ability to communicate the truth of God's Word through the written page and through public ministry. Brother Rodriguez has served as the senior pastor of two churches, taught seminars, and led a Bible school that graduated many pastors and ministers. Brother Rodriguez has ministered the uncompromising Word of God through hundreds of podcasts, television and radio programs, and has preached in churches and in meetings around the U. S. A. Today, he continues to write, teach, and preach as the Lord leads.

For invitations to minister, good testimonies of how this ministry has helped you and blessed you, prayer requests, and any other inquiries, please contact us at: contact@danrodriguez.org.