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FROM SAVING GRACE TO EMPOWERING GRACE

COLLINS PREM

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FROM SAVING GRACE TO EMPOWERING GRACE

Session 1

**Relationship with God**

There has been a great emphasis in the body of Christ in recent years on teaching faith and confessing His word to bring faith. I believe in speaking what God’s Word says, and believers need to have faith in God. But I also believe that an important key has been missed.

“Having faith in others means developing relationship with them to the point where you know them so well, you just completely trust them.

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Once we simply get to know God better, we will find it easy to have faith in Him to provide what we need. And since everything we receive from God comes through faith in Him (including our salvation), knowing Him intimately becomes very important! Really, everything we receive from God comes out of knowing Him. It comes out of knowing that you are in perfect union with Him (Ephesians 4:24). You are one spirit with Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:17).

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One of the reasons the Christian life has been so hard for a lot of people - is because they have not really developed personal relationship with God. They don’t know Him intimately.

When you really know a person is trustworthy, it’s not hard to believe him or her. I personally believe that faith is a direct result of knowing God better. It’s not hard to believe God and His Word if you really know Him. And when you believe God’s Word, it’s not hard to receive from Him.

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The word of God is simple. There’ s nothing hard about the Word of God. The biggest problem is that people don’t really hear.

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You may have been believing and praying for healing, and you know that the Bible says, “By whose stripes you were healed” (1 Peter 2:24). You probably know all about faith teaching, how to confess the Word, and all the related principles. Yet you’ve got this nagging doubt that you can’t overcome. It is a fear inside that makes you wonder, Is God really going to heal me?

First John 4:18 says that **“perfect love casteth out fear.”**

If God loves you enough to send His only son to die for you, then doesn’t He love you enough to bring about His will in your lives? You may know some things about God, but if you really knew God’s love for you, you wouldn’t doubt Him so easily or question His willingness to help you. He couldn’t be discredited so easily if you really understood how much He loves & cares for you.

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Our relationship with God is no different. He wants us to be assured that we can trust Him to act in our best interests no matter what the situation. We got to know God & His nature so well that no one can talk us out of His goodness toward us.

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**Consequences of Sin**

In Genesis 3, we read about sin entering the world. Of course, you know the story. God created Adam and Eve. He was fellowshipping with them and walking with them in the cool of the evening. Satan deceived Adam & Eve into sinning, and they both knowingly sinned against God. When they saw that they were naked, they hid themselves from God.

**7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.**

**8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.** Genesis 3:7-8

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Why do you think they hid themselves? I’m sure a lot of explanations could be given, but ultimately it was their fear of some retaliation from God. They were ashamed of what they had done, so they hid themselves.

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Notice the scripture doesn’t say that when Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they received total revelation of all of the depths of sin. It took mankind thousands of years to explore and discover the depths of unbelief or sin. They didn’t just instantly come into the full knowledge of all kinds of sin.

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Adam and Eve, by our standards, even after they sinned, were still so pure that it would have blown most of us away. It doesn’t say they understood anything about perversion.

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It took a while for people to figure it out, sin had devastating effects on mankind from the very beginning. unbelief was not only a transgression against God, but it also created an open door for Satan to come into people's lives. Sin has both vertical and horizontal consequences.

Sin's vertical effect is a transgression against God. Until the Law came, however, God was not imputing man's sins to him, and sin did not have an effect on man's fellowship with God. Sin's horizontal effect is that it allows Satan access to our lives in some form. Even though God wasn't bringing judgment fully upon sin before the Law, sin was still destroying the human race.

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**Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?** Romans 6:16

Even though God wasn't bringing full judgment upon sin, sin allowed Satan to come in and destroy the human race- physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

**1.Diminished Life Span:** In the days of Adam, people lived to be up to 969 years old. Two thousand years later, in the days of Noah, God said in Genesis 6:3,

**“My Spirit shall not strive[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-141a)**] with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”**

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The only thing that the Bible says they knew when they ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was that they were naked.

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**2. Nakedness:** Did Adam and Eve lose their clothes when they ate of the tree? Of course not! Adam and Eve weren't one bit more naked after they were before they ate of it.

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It says in Genesis 2:25,

 **"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."**

They did not have a stitch of clothes on before they sinned or after they sinned. They were not any more naked after they sinned than they were before they sinned. What changed was their perception of it. All of a sudden, they knew they were naked. They had never thought about it before. They were never conscious of their nakedness before.

Man was created to be so God conscious that he honestly didn't even notice himself. There was no self-consciousness. Man was totally God conscious, not self-conscious. That's the way God created us to be.

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**9 Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?”**

**10 So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.”**

**11 And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?”** Genesis 3:9-11

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Now, you may be wondering what being naked has to do with anything. To us, that reason may not look like a really good reason for Adam and Eve to hide themselves. But according to the Scripture, that's the only thing they recognized that made them run and hide from God.

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I think the reason this is so important is because God wasn't naked. God was clothed. Did you know that in the Word of God, there is no reference to God or an angelic being ever being naked? They're always clothed! God wears garments. Did you know we are going to wear 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clothes throughout all eternity (Rev. 19:8)? We're going to have actual robes of righteousness made out of something like white linen that will shine. No one in heaven goes around naked.

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**3.** **Fear of Rejection:** Adam and Eve were accustomed to seeing God and angelic beings clothed, then suddenly, when they ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they recognized they were not clothed. When someone recognizes he or she is different from other people, a carnal, natural reaction is always fear-fear of rejection.

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I believe rejection for being different is the root of all racial prejudice. In my opinion, it is really an ignorant thing for a believer to have racial prejudice. If Christians would just use their heads, they would realize that in heaven, they are going to be with everybody! I think it is foolish to think that people are substandard because of the color of their skin.

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They want to be accepted! God created us for acceptance, to be loved just as we are. He didn't make us for rejection. Nobody likes rejection. People hate being rejected, because it hurts.

God didn't design us with the emotional capacity for rejection. We aren't supposed to get to where we just live with it. We can and should get to the place where rejection won't overcome us, because we learn how to give it over to God.

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When we recognize we're different, there's fear that if we're not like everyone else, they may not accept us. So, we all tend to gravitate toward what's considered average or normal to please people around us.

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God's heart to think that the creation He made would be so fearful of Him that they wanted to hide from Him. But that's exactly knowledge of sin does.

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**4. Forever Debt:**

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Knowledge of sin will make people feel guilty, and when people feel guilty, they avoid the one whom they are indebted through their sin.

We don't like to be around people who constantly remind us of negative things in our lives, and the mere mention of God---the One to whom we owe everything--- will have us running for the hills if we have sinned.

Knowledge of sin-the knowledge of good and evil-will make us want to run from God instead of to Him. Adam and Eve should have run to God when they sinned, instead of running from Him. But that's the same thing we all tend to do. That is what preaching religion will do, it will make us run from God. We run from God and try to get away from Him when we sin or feel unworthy.

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**5. Deception:** It also blinds or deceives people.

In 2 Corinthians 10:12, the Bible says it is not wise for people to compare themselves to other people. That scripture instructs us that it is not smart to measure ourselves against those around us.

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That's a terrible standard of comparison. People are going to be compared to Jesus (Rom. 3:23)! Unless they measure up, they need a Savior. But it is human nature for people to compare themselves to others to excuse their sin.

There are many sins that used to be totally unacceptable by anybody's standard, even in the world.

It is a grave mistake to openly advocate something God condemns just because someone else advocates it-no matter how rich and powerful they are or what position they hold.

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Why do we deceive ourselves into thinking it doesn’t matter whether or not we sin? Let’s look again at Cain. When Cain killed a man, God protected him instead of bringing wrath upon him. This was not because God approved of what Cain had done but because of His goodness.

Romans 2:4 says,

**“The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.”**

God wanted to show His love and mercy to the human race even though man deserved judgment. He wanted to show love and mercy in order to draw mankind back to Himself.

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But man began to misinterpret what God was doing when He protected Cain instead of bringing judgment upon him. The second murderer mentioned in the Bible is Lamech, Cain's great-great-great grandson. When Lamech killed a man, he appealed to God and said, Genesis 4:24

"If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold."

In other words, 'If God protected Cain like He did, certainly God is going to protect me even more." God didn't say that; Lamech said that! Lamech was saying, "If Cain got by with murder, then I'm going to get by with murder. I'm more justified than Cain was."

People started interpreting God's patience and goodness as though He condoned and excused sin. People began to say, "Well, sin must not be so bad." This was never the message God intended to convey! But when sin deceives people, they will think and do incredibly foolish things.

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**Knowing Jesus**

Because we have not really understood the nature and character of God, we have not understood how God deals with us. Therefore, we have not been allowing God to truly manifest Himself in our lives by meeting our needs.

**His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.** 2 Peter 1:3

God said all things that pertain unto life and godliness. The all things include healing, joy, deliverance, prosperity, and anything you can think of that results from our redemption. These "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" come through "the knowledge of Him."

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**For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he**. Proverbs 23:7a

If you have a wrong impression of God, you will expect the wrong things from God- like…judgment, punishment, and withholding of what you are asking for in prayer. You'll get what you expect or believe. Jesus affirmed this in many places, including Matthew 9:29**: "According to your faith be it unto you."**

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Many believers have the wrong attitude and concept of God-who He is and how He operates in their lives. Many people have things mixed up in their theology. Satan is using that misunderstanding to keep them from experiencing the fullness of what God has provided for them through Jesus Christ.

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If we can receive this and let God reveal Himself to us in the way Jesus revealed His nature and character, then we will come to truly know who and what God is like. And then we'll find out faith isn't something hard. In fact, it's really hard to disbelieve God once we really know God and his nature.

For people who really know God intimately and have true revelation of His nature, it would be impossible for them to believe it when Satan says God won't bless them or their faith won't work for them.

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We know what God is like when we look at Jesus. Once we understand the true nature of God and how much He loves us, the love of God will be shed abroad in our hearts. I believe that will help us to have new relationship with God, something we've never had before.

I also want to say that don't excuse sin. I'm not saying God doesn't care whether we sin. But Jesus is the payment for that sin and has borne all of that sin, so it no longer separates us from God.

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**God Provides everything in Christ**

One of the biggest problems in the body of Christ is that we learn the mechanics of how Christianity works---we learn about faith, we learn about confession of God's Word, we learn about giving and receiving, and so forth.

We learn all of these things to do, and many times we try to put them into practice without really knowing God. The mechanics of Christianity do not produce the "all things" that we need from God for our lives. The fruit of the Christian life comes out of knowing God and believing in the finished work of Christ. Faith comes from knowing Him, and knowing Him is the basis of everything else in Christianity. Remember, 2 Peter 1:3 said that through the knowledge of God, He has given to us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

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People wouldn't have to know all of the ins and outs of prosperity techniques, because if they're really seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, everything else would be added to them (Matthew 6:33)!

God gave us faith to overcome the devil, tear down his kingdom, and see people born again, healed, and delivered.

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God didn't give us faith so we could have things. God gave us faith in order for us to know Him. Then, because His divine life is flowing through us, cars, houses, boats, would find us. They would come as byproducts of our faith in Him. They are the extras that come after seeking first the kingdom of God and knowing Him. If we really start believing the finished work of Christ, and know that we are already blessed with all the spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, I believe God would shower more upon us than we could ever use.

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We also must be careful not to focus our attention on the mechanics of how things work. I'm not saying that faith and prosperity are false teachings, but they can actually be used to destroy people if they don't have their lives focused on the central figure of all of life--the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we are more concerned about the mechanics of how to work Christianity and all of the things we have to do than we are in knowing Jesus, our Christianity doesn't work. On the other hand, if we know Jesus, and we really know his nature, it is amazing what we can get done and how blessed we become without knowing a lot of formulas.

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**Knowing Jesus through His Word**

It's sad, but many times when people learn things about God, over the years, they start to substitute the knowledge they have about God for intimate relationship with Him.

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The truth is we can live in a realm where we are SO intimate with God that things will work for us. And I believe that's the life God intended His children to live, that is why we are talking about knowing God. If we really focus on knowing God and know that you are in union with Him, everything else will work out of that revelation of truth.

We need knowledge of God's Word because His Word reveals His true nature and His promises. But when the Word becomes technical details and formulas concerning the mechanics of Christianity, we have lost our focus. We are doing things in our own strength and not His. We are trying to impress Him with works instead of being impressed by His works and who He is.

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Those who are struggling to receive from God just need to continue renewing their minds with the Gospel and trust & rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ. When they really know Him through the cross and the resurrection, they will be totally convinced of His love and His commitment to them. Then they will have no fear that He won't meet the needs in their lives.

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**Understanding the Old through the New**

When people don’t look at the whole Word of God, examining the OT in light of the NT, they generally get an OT picture of God as a God of wrath, judgement, and punishment. But wrath and judgment are not the essential nature of God.

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God’s nature is not judgment. You can’t find that in the word of God. He does judge and He is just and holy. But scripture reveals to us in 1 John 4:8 that **“God is Love.”**

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Love is God’s real nature. He doesn’t just have love or operate in love; God is love. Love is the true character of God.

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**1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1**

**14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14**

**Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father…” John 14:9**

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Jesus is the walking, living Word, and when we see Him, we see the Father. So, the problem many Christians are facing is that they are seeing God through the OT instead of through Jesus. They misunderstand and are confused about who God really is and the relationship He wants with them because they see Him according to the OT.

In the OT, God had to deal with mankind and sin in a different manner. But when Jesus came, He brought the true revelation of the Father to mankind, and He operated very differently.

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It is clear in the WOG that it never was God’s desire to have to deal with mankind so firmly. That never was His real nature and character. But because we haven’t known this, we have mixed impression of God. We have not seen Him in His fullness.

Most of us don’t really recognize or understand the depth of the love, mercy, and compassion that God has toward us. This mistaken impression of God keeps us at arm’s length from Him. That’s why it so important to harmonize all of the WOG. Only then can we get a firm understanding of His true nature.

**God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the**

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**Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.** Hebrew 1:1-4

In verse 3, it says Jesus is the brightness of God’s glory and the express image of His person. In other words, Jesus is an exact representation of God, His true nature revealed.

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We know that the love, mercy, and forgiveness God offers to us in the NT through Jesus Christ were always available to mankind, even in the OT. But man’s response to God’s goodness in the OT forced Him to deal with mankind more harshly than He desired. As we harmonize the Old and NT, we are going to see clearly – that God does not have a dual nature, He is not schizophrenic! God always Love us, God had always been merciful to us and His grace was/is always towards us.

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FROM SAVING GRACE TO EMPOWERING GRACE

Session 2

**Legal vs Vital**

Let us read 1 Timothy 1:16

“I was captured by grace, so that Jesus Christ could display through me the outpouring of his Spirit as a pattern to be seen for all those who would believe in him for eternal life.”

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We will learn how knowing God’s nature which is displayed in His Son Jesus Christ will empower you to live not only a God kind of life, but also equip you to fulfill God’s purpose.

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I realize that there are many believers today who need his wisdom as well. Not in relation to high school graduation or college graduation, but with regard to the spiritual life in Christ.

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Sometimes when folks receive Jesus, they look at it as “mission accomplished” because they believe they’ve hit the ultimate spiritual jackpot! And in one sense, they’re certainly correct! At that very moment, they experience God’s total forgiveness and receive everything they need for life and godliness.

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Yet at the same time, this moment is similar to a high school commencement ceremony. It’s really a beginning, more than an end. When Jesus promised to give us “abundant life,” He wasn’t suggesting that this was the last stop on the trip, but rather the first of many!

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The very day you were saved, grace was powerfully at work in your life. But your encounter with grace was only the beginning of a life-long process of learning to live IN and FROM the wellspring of God’s grace.

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When you first got saved, it was mostly the LEGAL aspect of grace that overwhelmed you. The fact that our sins are forgiven, sin and death have been defeated over our lives, and we’ll never face God’s judgment are all things that should never cease to amaze us.

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But there’s more to grace than just it’s LEGAL dimension. The legal aspect is critical, because it means that we’re no longer guilty and completely set free based on the price Jesus paid for us! But the VITAL nature of grace is equally important to grasp.

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Just what’s the vital nature of grace? It’s the power God gives us to walk with Him daily and fulfill His destiny for our lives!

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But grace didn’t end at that moment of truth. God’s unmerited grace is what saved you, for sure! But it is the unlimited grace that empowers you to live an abundant, supernatural and otherwise impossible life!

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I like to say that the Christian life isn’t a difficult life to live. It’s an IMPOSSIBLE life to live!

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The fact is that there’s only ONE person in all the universe who can live the so-called “Christian life” successfully. The only person who’s able to live the Christian life with 100% success is Jesus!

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And that’s the miracle of God’s vital grace in your daily life! God isn’t asking you to live an impossible life. He’s asking you to allow Jesus to live His life IN and THROUGH you! And we so badly need to grasp this! We need to understand that while His legal grace saves us, His vital grace empowers us.

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* Saving grace is what carried you, but you’re now carrying His empowering grace into every activity of your life.
* Saving grace was done for you, but empowering grace is God’s presence in you and through you.
* Saving grace operates vertically, from heaven to earth, but empowering grace operates horizontally, through you to others.

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All Christians seem to understand that we were saved FROM something, but many Christians don’t understand that we were also saved FOR something. Philippians 1:6 says that there’s a work in us that God started, and which He’ll be faithful to complete in us.

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Hebrews 12:2 refers to Jesus as **the “author and finisher” of our faith—the “fountainhead and conclusion”** of our faith.

**We’re God’s “workmanship” created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do**! **Ephesians 2:10**

You’re God’s workmanship created in Christ to do GOOD works…not DEAD works…GOOD works!

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Good works: what you do as a result of knowing you’re loved and accepted.

Dead works: what you do to earn God’s love and acceptance.

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And Galatians 2:20 says **that we’ve been crucified with Christ, and we no longer live, but Christ lives in us through faith.**

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**Walking in the Power of God’s Vital Grace**

Three things that’ll help you consciously walk in the vitality of God’s grace each and every day.

1. **Expect the POWER of grace in your daily life.**

The inward change has already occurred! The moment you trusted Christ was the moment everything about your inner spirit was radically transformed.

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And the moment we venture back into that jungle of religion – that legalistic way of relating to God is the moment the joy gets sucked right out of our lives.

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The fact of the matter is that you’re on a journey with Jesus. The internal work has already been done. But the journey is now about learning to allow the life of Jesus to be expressed through us more consistently as we grow.

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The moment you trusted Jesus, you were as righteous as you’ll ever be. But you weren’t instantly as mature as you’ll ever be. And that’s the journey!

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If you don’t understand this primary foundational truth – to expect the power of grace every single day of your life, no matter how well or poorly you’ve recently performed – you’ll be paralyzed in your growth process.

Why? Because you’ll be thinking like this:

I performed so well today! God must be pleased with me! (But then something negative happens to you and you feel ripped off. Where was God? I thought He would treat me better today based on how impressive my behavior has been!)

OR…on the other end…

I performed so poorly today! I gave into that lust, greed, pride, anger… God must be so disgusted with me! (And you condemn yourself, convinced that you’ve disqualified yourself from receiving his unmerited blessing and power!)

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The first scenario, “I’ve performed so well that God owes me a blessing,” leads to what’s called self-righteousness.

The second scenario, “I’ve performed so poorly that God must be mad at me,” leads to what’s called self-condemnation.

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The Gospel of grace is designed to keep us out of each of those ditches! When we’ve “performed well” – we give all the glory to God for His power working in us!

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And when we have not “performed well” – we worship Him for the cross where that sin was already paid for 2000 years ago…and we stand back up on our feet and keep going!

We must learn to expect the power of God’s grace in our lives every day…regardless of our recent track-record. Because by definition, grace is completely and utterly disconnected from our track record in the first place, which is precisely what makes it grace! It’s not earned or enhanced by our obedience or success…and it’s not threatened or diminished by our disobedience or failure!

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Let’s train ourselves to wake up every single day – no matter how we feel in the moment – with an attitude of confident expectation. An expectation that our good and gracious Father has a dump-truck load of grace that He’s ready to pour out into our lives that day! An expectation that He’s tilted the universe in our favor. An expectation that because He’s the source of EVERYTHING, He’s made us inlets and outlets of EVERYTHING!

1. **Embrace the PROCESS that grace unleashes.**

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Discipleship under the New Covenant is much different, and much better, than it was under the Old.

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For the ancient Jews, to live as a disciple meant that you would find a mentor and meticulously study their every move. And over time, you’d train yourself to “imitate” the mentor in such a way that you emulated their disciplines, their skills, their talents, their strengths.

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So, when Jesus was hanging with His disciples on the last night before He went to the cross, He turned this Old Covenant way of discipleship on its head.

After He’d eaten a meal with His friends, He pointed to a vineyard and gave them the keys to a new way of understanding what it means to be a disciple. He told them that in this New relationship they were about to experience, it would be much like the grapes hanging on those vines!

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Jesus famously said in John 15, **“I am the true Vine and you are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing.”**

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And we know that a few weeks later, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit would fill the believers in a permanent way like never before! They would now permanently be IN CHRIST, and He would permanently be IN THEM. No more coming and going!

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And hence, the New Covenant way of discipleship would begin! And just like the covenant it was grounded upon, this new way of discipleship would be SO much better than the old way!

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Instead of the disciple striving to imitate the best qualities of the Master, the Master (the Vine) would begin to allow the disciple (the branch) to actually become ONE with Himself! To exist in union with Him…as part of Him. It’s not imitation, it’s actually participation. It’s the difference between PRETENDING and PARTAKING.  Pretending leads to acting while partaking leads to enjoying.  Jesus didn’t come so we could PRETEND to have abundant life, He came so we could PARTAKE in abundant life!  I don’t pretend to have peace, I PARTAKE in His peace.  I don’t pretend to have joy, I PARTAKE in His Joy!  I don’t pretend to be blessed, I PARTAKE in His blessing!

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This is why Peter says that we have now become “partakers of the Divine nature.” It’s why Paul tells us that “whoever joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.”

It isn’t that we become God. But we DO become spiritually unified with Him as branches to the Vine.

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Here is a quote that you can chew on…

**“In trying to become perfect, some have lost perception of their perfect union with the perfect one.”**

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And this process is exactly what Jesus described to His disciples as everything was about to change from Old to New!

We need to embrace the fact that fruit comes in seasons. Fruit is not always visible in every season. It doesn’t mean there’s nothing going on internally. There always is! But depending on the season, and the type of fruit, it will be evident at different times and in different ways.

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Jesus and Jesus ALONE is the Author and Finisher of your faith. He is the One who will be faithful to complete the work He’s begun in you! You’re His workmanship – His masterpiece – not your own!

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And if you’re going to experience the joy of an authentic life in Christ, you need to walk by faith in the fact that even when it isn’t yet harvest season, He’s working every single day under the surface to produce great things through you up around the corner!

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Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:8 that, **“The wind blows where it pleases. You cannot tell where it comes from or where it’s going. And so also it is with the Spirit of God!”**

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What I’m questioning today is not the WHAT, but the WHY and the HOW!

The “Why” question has to do with motivation. Are we motivated by external religious pressure, dysfunctional perfectionism, moralistic performance-ism? Or are we motivated purely by the security and unconditionality of God’s radical grace toward us?

And the “How” question has to do with the means by which we grow. Are we pulling ourselves up by our own boot-straps, white-knuckling our way to become a better version of ourselves, frantically wondering whether God’s pleased with our progress? Or are we resting in His all-sufficient vital grace, trusting that we’re exactly on schedule and that He’s faithfully at work under the surface getting ready to produce a crop in due season for us to bear?

This makes a HUGE impact in how you experience your day-to-day relationship with God!

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The Christian life is about fruit-bearing, not rule-keeping. And once you begin to expect the power and embrace the process, you can begin to…

1. **Enjoy the POSITION that trust and obedience place you in.**

The truth is that we care greatly about walking in obedience to God. But we also care greatly about NOT putting the cart before the horse.

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You see, for those stuck under the Old Covenant, Law-based way of thinking and operating, they exist under an “if/then” mentality with God.

Just like the Old Covenant was an “if/then” covenant, many Christians operate with the same mind-set today. God told the ancient Jews “If you do such and such…then I will bless you with such and such.” It was an “if/then” system. A “this-for-that” arrangement.

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But again, this New Covenant – this New System – has now completely replaced the Old. Under the New System, God’s completely rigged things in our favor. And He’s done this by killing our old inner man…the corrupt, sinful spirit we inherited from Adam.

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And God – through faith in Christ – crucifies that old man and raises us to new life spiritually. And because of this “new creation” that we have become by grace, we now operate under a “since/therefore” system with our Heavenly Father, rather than the old, obsolete, “if/then” system.

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In other words, our obedience comes not from fearing that God won’t bless us if we don’t obey Him. Our obedience comes from a grateful response to the reality that He has already unconditionally blessed us in Christ! It isn’t a response to the demands of His rules, it’s a response to the supply of His grace.

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Rather than “IF I do this, THEN God will bless me,” the mind-set has completely changed to “since/therefore…”

In other words…

SINCE God has already blessed me with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenly places in Christ, THEREFORE I choose to live from the resources of that blessing! I choose to be a blessing!

SINCE God has crucified my old man and given me new life and new identity in Christ, THEREFORE I choose to live in this new way!

SINCE God has graced me as a partaker of His divine nature, THEREFORE I will draw my power from Him, trusting Him to produce fruit through me in season!

SINCE God has paid the price for every act of disobedience I ever have or ever will commit, THEREFORE I desire to obey Him with an obedience from the heart…not motivated by fear, but by gratitude!

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There are two reasons why I love to obey God. One is gratitude, and the other is wisdom.

There’s wisdom in walking according to God’s ways of doing life!

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And if I trust that God knows what will truly fulfill me – then I can more easily deny the false promises of the world, the flesh, and the devil in favor of obedience to Him!

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Obeying God isn’t about earning a reward…but at the same time it’s SO rewarding! Obedience puts us in the best position possible to enjoy the blessings of God. Paul told the Galatians that we reap what we sow.

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Now, this isn’t talking about our standing with God. That’s safe and secure. There’s nothing we can do to dismantle or disrupt the way God feels about us – or His acceptance of us.

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It’s certainly possible to bring negative earthly consequences into our lives if we choose to live foolishly rather than wisely.

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But when we’re living obediently, we’re positioning ourselves to reap the most positive earthly consequences possible.

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**Live in the New**

We have been saved “from something” and “for something.” God has “brought us out” to “bring us in.”  We’ve been “PURCHASED” (Jesus-priest) and “PURPOSED” (Jesus-king). There was a divine intention that brought about our redemption.

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We must be moving from…

The Outer Court to the Holy of Holies.

* Passover to Tabernacles.
* 30-fold to 100-fold
* Little Children to Fathers.

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The difference between saving grace and empowering grace is the difference between being a child of God (immature) and being a son of God (mature). “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16), BUT “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Romans 8:14).  It’s vitally important for us to know the difference.

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A child’s position signifies the relationship with the Father, but a son’s position speaks of the maturity of that relationship. A son manifests the character, personality, and glory of the Father. **“Creation eagerly waits with anticipation for a manifestation of sons of God.” Romans 8:19**

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So, what’s the difference between a child and a son? Out of these verses and others in Galatians, Romans, and Corinthians we conclude the following:

* A child is immature. 1 Corinthians 3:1
* A child is incapable of handling his inheritance. Galatians 4:1
* A child is led by what appears to his senses (elements of the world). Galatians 4:3
* A child is in bondage. Galatians 4:3
* A child doesn’t act on his rights. Hebrews 5:12
* A child must be cared for. Galatians 4:2
* A child owns practically nothing, although he’s master of all things. Galatians 4:1
* A child is kept under guardians. Galatians 4:1
* A child must be led by others. Hebrews 5:12

 Whereas:

* A son is grown up. Romans 8:14
* A son is the master of all things given to him by his Father. John 17:10
* A son cares for others. John 6:38
* A son possesses all things. John 17:12
* A son needs no guardian. Luke 2:49
* A son is led by his Father’s will and Spirit. Romans 8:14

* A child is a slave, but a son is a prince.
* A child is bound, but a son is free.A child is a burden, but a son is a burden bearer.
* A child is a liability, but a son is an asset.
* A child consumes, but a son contributes.

 A child knows what he’s been saved from, but a son knows what he’s been saved for.  He’s moved to the next level of grace.

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| **Religion** | **Gospel** |
| Makes slaves | Makes sons |
| Tells you what is wrong with you | Tells what is right with you |
| Tells you who you aren’t | Tells you who you are |
| Condemns you | Affirms you |
| Is given to the old man to try to get him behave | Is given to the new man to show him his new identity |
| Highlights what was wrong with you in Adam | Highlights what’s right with you in Christ |
| Keeps you immature | Grows you up |

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Grace is God’s “Plan A” for us and There IS NO “PLAN B!!!”

Which means that we need to know what this new life means and how this new life works

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