



Simply Grace

God's plan has always been a
Person.

by Dean Chicquette
and Linda Chicquette

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DEAN CHICQUETTE
LINDA CHICQUETTE



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This book includes stories in which people's names and some details of their situations have been changed.

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We dedicate this book to our LORD Jesus Christ.

Also...

*to our grandchildren—
Mikayla, Anica, Fletcher,*

and any great grandchildren yet unborn.

*Our prayer is that you live to enjoy and share our Heavenly Father's
amazing grace through your lives of love and service, for in the end,
that is all that really matters.*



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Simply Grace is the result of how God's Spirit has led our lives and thoughts over the past forty years defining the Person of Grace alive within and living us. Without the electronic age and all the Biblical help available, this work would not have been published. Our thanks and gratitude go out to our LORD God for enabling so many to sacrifice so much that we might easily enjoy the depth and breadth of the word of God.

Above all, we want to thank Jesus, through His resident Spirit in union with our spirits, for guiding us into some clarity concerning how we can live in this world. We acknowledge Him in all our ways and trust He will continue to direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

We stand in awe of God's Grace found only in Jesus our LORD. Through prayer, our countless encounters with Him

have blessed us to experience Him in the persons of His love and the Grace in which we live.

Special thanks to Linda's parents, Robert and Aileen Conrad, and Dean's parents Lionel Chicquette and Carol Kline.

Finally, all our praise goes to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, our last family of a new origin, who has called us to an eternal relationship with Him. Our hearts instantly embrace Him and have invited our minds to continually be amazed at His purposes unfolding before our eyes. May our lips ever praise Him for He is good and love for eternity.

I, Dean, have to give special mention to Linda who patiently waited for me to figure out electronic publishing. The process was too cryptic to understand at first, resulting in her name as co-author not appearing on the first two paper and first three electronic publications. Here it is!

PREFACE
CHANGES TO 3RD REVISION



We have made grammatical changes by changing some words and phrases in hopes of increasing the understanding and flow of the text.

He, Him, Himself, His, You, Your, Yours and the nouns God, LORD, Jesus, are all capitalized as in the New American Standard Version of the Bible when referring to God. Who and whom are not capitalized.

We have taken liberties using capitalization for emphasis and to direct the reader to stay focused on the Person of God, Jesus the Christ in whom we find our eternal existence.

PREFACE 4TH REVISION

We hope this edition is more readable and clear in its intent.

As we have read and reread this book we find our hearts are both blessed and encouraged. Our prayer is that you too find encouragement within these pages as well as the way to constantly obey our LORD.

All our joy is in coming to know Him who first loved us and then letting His will to love others through us blossom as intended.

FOREWORD



There is a fresh wind of revelation sweeping across the body of Christ in this hour. It is not new, but it is fresh. Some call it a Grace Awakening. This massive “grace awakening” is coming like a tsunami wave of revelation and visitation about to sweep over the body of Christ. The watchmen, intercessors and prophets all over the world are saying they see it on the horizon (though many are not sure what to call it yet). The water level is already rising and it is bigger than most of us even realize.

Dean has captured this theme in a powerful and inspirational way. But more than just as a theme, Dean introduces us to Jesus as Mr. Love and very clearly invites us to see Jesus, know Jesus, receive Jesus, and share Jesus, as Mr. Love.

Some teaching about grace seems to overlook and ignore

the need for repentance and faith in Christ in order to become a child of God, and declares all will be saved. Not so, here. Dean has very efficiently shown how pervasive and powerful the grace of God is, and yet clarifies the need for us to believe it, in order to receive it. For it is Christ Himself Who invites us to come boldly before His throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

It is not about rituals or religion but about relationship. It is about a free and unencumbered life of fellowship with our Creator/Daddy. It is about being awakened to a deeper understanding of who He is and what He has done for us. It is an unveiling of a God Who is gracious, merciful, and full of compassion; Who loves us, enjoys us and wants a level of relationship that few have deeply explored, and I would dare say none have fully explored, but more and more are discovering.

This kind of relationship was the Apostle Paul's magnificent obsession. He wanted to know Him. He said He was willing to throw everything else away and consider it as rubbish in order to "be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection." (Philippians 3:9,10)

But just knowing about God is not enough. And just knowing about His love is only the beginning. In fact Paul went on to say, in his letter to the Ephesian Christians, that his prayer for them was "that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love

of Christ which passes knowledge.” (Ephesians 3:17-19) He was not referring to information about God’s love but about knowing God’s love by experience. You are invited.

Jim Wies

INTRODUCTION



Simply grace and grace alone is the clarion call to life eternal through Jesus Christ our LORD. Grace is not a set of special teachings that provide a clean conscience, or an offer to try harder, but grace is the eternal Person gifted to us once and for all. Jesus is the eternal living One, the Christ of God, both fully man and fully God. He, through a single act of obedience, has gathered up every rebellious human and crucified them. God's favor on humanity is His resurrected Son. In Him, we find our life, identity and our eternity.

Within these few pages, you will learn His method of making you right and how you can stand before Him blameless for eternity. But first, you must purchase an ax, go to the midst of your internal garden of hopes and dreams and find the tree of 'I can do it!', better known as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Set yourself square against it and

take that fateful swing to the root of self-effort by simply receiving the gift of God, Mr. Grace Himself, as the author and finisher of all your faith, hope, love and dreams.

He is not only the author of your faith - He is your faith. His act on Calvary, says 'no' to self-for-self. He, taking up His residence in you, is your 'yes' to self-for-others. Laying down your efforts to be right with God, you are accepting God's gift of grace to be right with God through Jesus. By faith, His life becomes your new life. His grace has replaced your efforts to be better.

He, the just One, lived by faith in Father to do the impossible. After receiving all the blows of man and God's passion, He hoped beyond hope to be restored to His first place with the Father. He believed the Father was able to raise Him from death. Now, His faith in His Father is shared with you. You have His hope of your bodily resurrection.

You are His praise, and you are His crown of glory. You adorn Him both now and forever. You are His prize and His bride. You share in Jesus' obedience to the Father and sit at the table of the eternal LORD of lords and King of kings. From this position you live. That which is yet to come is as good as done, yes and amen, in Him. You are fitted by Him to be His expression of love. Your duties are already laid out and you are called to participate in His love being poured out into the whole of His creation.

You can trust Christ for that which is not seen. Through Him, you discover where doubt and fear replace His promises. With Holy Spirit, the voids of life are filled. You trust God and live as a testimony to others. In union with Him, your life becomes an 'us' for others, not in word but in deeds and truth. You put aside the 'effort to please God'.

Rather, in His pleasure, you are obedient to truth and give, as He gave Himself.

Everyone who believes he has Jesus, has given up trying to be the source of his own goodness and has begun his eternal trusting. I say, 'begun' because faith, hope, and love are eternal. Let us look at love. But before we do, let me relate a story from my life.

Between 1968 and 1970 I worked in a hospital in Salt Lake City. Almost daily I had to prepare to transport a person or two to the morgue. There I logged them into the registry with a drawer number, wrote their name on a toe tag and sent them into the cooler.

On one occasion my friend and I had to take a man, about 34 years old, to the morgue. I was all of 140 pounds dripping wet and my friend not much bigger. The deceased man was about six feet tall and 190 pounds. To my surprise, he was looking very healthy. In all fairness, I would say he looked healthier than I had ever looked. He was warm to the touch and limber. When I asked the nurse about his time of death, she said he had died 18 hours earlier. I interjected that he was warm to the touch, had good color, and was limber. Up until then, the hundreds of people I had taken to the morgue were cold, gray, and a bit stiff. So you can see my concern.

With the sheet on which he laid, my friend and I ventured ahead and hoisted the man onto the gurney. I continued to believe the man was not dead. I had to check his pulse, none. Checked for breathing, none. I was still not convinced that he was dead so I did something I had never done before and insisted the nurse come to the morgue with us and sign him in herself. She was a quiet young lady, but what came out of her mouth shocked me. I was not moved and declared he was not

going to the morgue unless she came with us and signed him in. I personally thought my next job review would not go well with a record of putting a live man in a cold storage bin.

She came, and as she was signing him in I tagged his toe. All but one of the eight storage bins were in use. His drawer was the lowest on the left. My friend took hold of the sheet at his feet and I had the bulk of the man. As we hoisted him off the gurney and toward the metal bed awaiting him, I had to straddle the slab. As I was trying to do so, I lost my balance. My friend decided to throw the man's feet onto the slab. Having done so, I was left with virtually all the man's dead weight, which by the way seems much heavier than live weight. I found the sheet ripping through my fingers. Before I could bend down and place him politely on the slab, he dropped about three and a half feet. In the very instant his back slammed into the slab he sat up and coughed two deep coughs.

Instantly, I was running in place. I asked the nurse if she were sure that he was dead. After hearing some lame scientific excuse, I accepted her medical opinion and pushed him into the cooler saying, "Well, he is now." Instantly I was out of there. Days later, I peeked into the cooler only to find that his body was gone which did not settle well with me.

So it is with Jesus. He died a real death, but a little while later the tomb was empty. It leaves us with a problem. How can we prove He is alive? A couple centuries after His resurrection, some of his followers used Jesus' name to cast out demons, heal the sick, and raise the dead. Why would a demon obey a dead man's name or why would someone return to life if the one on the other side did not have enough life to share with the dead? Conclusion: Jesus is risen!

You have a problem. You have been declared dead by God, yet you feel warm, look pretty good, and act like just about everyone else. It is very hard to think you are dead. In Christ Jesus, you are not dead, but alive, fit for eternal living. It is a paradox, you are either living with Him by His grace or are the living dead. What is offered you is an eternity of sharing His life or living forever with nothing. Which do you prefer, Mr. Love or total nothingness and it going on forever?

Ponder this for a moment and then ask yourself, "What would keep me from walking out of that tomb with Him? What would keep me from living with Him for eternity?" Nothing other than not letting Him have rule over you for His purposes. If you don't want Him ruling your life now, you will not like that idea any better later. Is this the time to say, 'Practice makes perfect?'

Simply, grace is the person Jesus. No one else has been offered to us. It is sort of a pass-fail, take it or leave it thing. Either you have life eternal in the Person Who conquered death or you continue enjoying dying with no end in sight. Waking up after your physical death, you end up conscious, but living without anything to cling to. God's desire is that you cling to Christ, like your life depended on it. Oh! It does.

I must have put at least a 1000 people in that morgue during the two years I worked in the hospital. As I peeked upon their lifeless bodies I did not see any accomplishment worthy of gaining back the life they had just lost. My conclusion is that you do not become worthy of eternity with God by accomplishments, not even because you have successfully died. His death accomplishes everything. He is the worthy One. In Him, you are worthy. Outside Him you are nothing.

By joining Him in His humility unto death, you are graced by the glory of His living.

To breathe is to live and to live is to love. Love is your destiny. That destiny is found in the capability of another. There is nothing He desires that He cannot accomplish. Standing alone you are naked, empty, and bankrupt of the slightest power to do what you are asked by God. In union with Him 'we' are not only commissioned but empowered. This is not just some random energy you need to learn to direct, but the very ability of God spoken and going about its eternal business. When you humble yourself and yield to His word, you fall into alignment with His purpose and process. It is a single purpose wrapped up in two commands. First, love the LORD your God with all you are and have. The second is to love everyone else with all you are and have.

The goal of His life is to give life. The goal of your Father for you is that you give your life (Jesus) to everyone you meet. Not by word alone but by action, preferably by action. Have you visited those in prison, watched after the fatherless, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, or comforted the bereaved? Have you freed the housebound, washed other people's dirty clothes, or feet? There is no end to love. Where words end, actions begin. How can you do these things when life is biting at your heals? Just love the one in front of you.

To do this you must first disengage from a sense-of-self based on your thoughts and skin, and place that sense-of-self in Christ. Holy Spirit joined to your spirit is your new creation and your new identity. (I Corinthians 6:17) When did you die with Christ? When did you rise up with Him? When were you seated with Christ in heaven? (Ephesians 1:7, 2:6) Now, now, and now, and now.

As you come to trust and rest in Father's doing, you also are privileged with what is called prayer and praise. Prayer simply means to communicate with God. (I Thessalonians 5:18) From life experience, we all know that clear and productive communication is a lifelong skill building process. As His children, we become better at prayer as we pray, which includes listening. As you pray, you give thanks in all things to God. This is His desire for you. Praise is declaring His nature, purpose and character. Feel free to pray and praise Him in every way and without interruption. Pray, He transforms you into God's gift by giving Himself through you.

PART I
LOVE



CHAPTER 1
KNOWING LOVE THROUGH
ACTION



We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (1 John 3:16 NAS)

The call of LOVE is to love. The message of LOVE is to love. The motion of LOVE is to love. There is no escape, if you are joined to LOVE, you will love. If you do not love, you are not joined to LOVE. It is that simple and that direct. You are not called to give mental assent to a set of teachings by a local group of believers, but you are called to love at the cost of yourself.

Obedience to God is acting on the belief that God is present for others through you. In receiving Christ, you will die to your old way of living as a self-for-self and take on His Person of being a self-for-others. You don't come to Christ to

escape hell or some other discomfort, but to die from your flesh-self-identity and be made into His person of love. When you put your faith in Christ, you were not instantly transported to heaven to escape trials, but you were invited to dive into this life of struggle and be of assistance to others in their struggles.

Sometimes it is easier for you to think that loving, with a sacrificial love, ends at death and then comes the reward for all your sacrifices. But the heart of God is eternal. His glory is in the face of His Son whose death is functionally eternal and is removing all the consequences of sin. By His joining His Spirit with your spirit you are birthed to love others for eternity. You are not possessed with love now to be possessed by greed and self-indulgence later.

God breathed His love into you, there is no end to the breath of eternity. With that breath comes all you need on the inside, and all you need to share His life on the outside with others. He has gifted you with eternal living while in this temporal body. Begin to live His eternal loving by His Eternal Spirit through this temporal body.

John equates love with light. He reports he was told by Jesus that God is light and in Him there is no darkness, not one bit. He also equates hate with darkness. God being total light means there is no hate in God. Because God is love, God loves. It is not just His character, it is His Person. See Jesus' person and you see love. See Jesus and you see Father. There is no difference. What seemed to be the worst thing that could have happened, the crucifixion of Jesus, God's Son, was God's passion poured out. With one eternal act for all of the creation, God was able to level the playing

field and change everything from root to shoot. Now all things are new.

His entire wrath (passion) has been poured out on His Son at Calvary. Let me 'quote' Him again, "I, God, am empty of hate." Everything that separated you from God has been removed. When you trust this is the truth, nothing but love awaits you. Hear Him say, "Just join Me in trust, remain in Me by trust, and walk Me out by Trust. Trust you have eternal love, then remain in that love and love."

The passion of God has been completed. It is finished. Now, in newness of life, get on with loving your neighbor, friend, family, children, husband, wife, enemy, no joke, yes your enemy, the one who plots your demise. Put on the armor of God and you will be prepared to defend the Kingdom of God with His love. Take up earthly swords and you shall die. Fear breeds self-protection, love breeds the protection of another at the cost of self. There is no fear in love.

It is profound to understand God cannot be other than Himself, light. He does not change, no, He cannot change. God is loving you with the same love He was loving Christ on the cross. What does your cross look like? You will find out. It is not the cross you make up for yourself, nor are you prepared for carrying your cross by mental and physical practice. Your ability to do love comes from His ability to love through you. The power of God at work through you is His very skills birthed in you, in and for the moment. If you are re-created in light, you remain in the light. If you remain in the first creation, you remain in the dark.

Can God's arch enemy be light for a while and then, when he chooses, act from the dark? No, he cannot change himself. He does not travel from light to dark and back again. Yet you

have often thought you were caught in between your ability either to love or hate. It seems as if it were up to you to harness your light and shine, or you might do darkness. This thought is the father of lies talking in your head. God's 'no' to that lie is the truth. Jesus is the truth about God. Once joined to the LORD, you are light, not the source, but the reflection. That is why, once you are joined to love, you love. You, who are full of light, cannot do 'dark'.

I'm sure you are asking something like, "How then do I sin?" Well, you do sin, and there is a reason. This reason will become clearer to you in a while. For now, you are invited to live a life of being pure, clean, and eternally in union with Christ Jesus. Be God-conscious, not sin conscious. I know you do not want to sin. You and Father are on the same page concerning sin. For now, do what you want to do, love. Because you do not have to sin, replace the effort of trying not to sin with doing what you really want to do. Love God with all you are and freely benefit your neighbor with all you are. Love - loving.

Many people think of love as some warm fuzzy feeling, but love is not a feeling, nor a word, but action with deeds of truth. Eternal Life is Jesus loving, only now, in and through your body, by His Spirit within you. As you abide in love, you remain in the light and there is absolutely no way for you to stumble while in the light.

When you see a need, you see love begging you to take action. The eyes, seeing need through you, are God's eyes. The ability to love those in need is God's ability. You have only one choice. It is not a choice between doing good or evil, it is the choice between letting God do His thing through you or you trying. You either trust Mr. Grace or trust your flesh.

Most of your doubts, concerning God's call, sound reasonable. More than once you have said of the beggar by the side of the road, he does not deserve what I have, he's just a drunk or drug addict. He will waste what I give him. By saying no to love, you dam love. You are saying no to God, who is begging to love through you.

Jesus wants everyone to be perfect, just as His Father in heaven is perfect. He said this right after He said His Father treats the just and unjust equally. If you begin to judge when and where to love, you have not been completed in love. Are you double minded? Does your identity bounce between a willful flesh-self and an obedient spirit-self? Love never changes.

Are you acting out of fear? Grace defeats fear. You are not called to act from fear. Grace defeats the acts of fear. You are asked to act out of who you are, a child of God, trusting in Jesus Christ. The mystery is Christ in you the hope of glory. This hope is birthed in your spirit. Everyone loving his neighbor is offering them the knowledge that they are loved and complete in Christ Jesus.

You are His love, loving. You are not called to try to love, but to be love. You are called to be a human being. The fruit of your root will come to fruition as you remain in Him, not when you try to gain a position before Him. Perfect love has put away all fear, even the fear of sinning. The spontaneous living of God's Spirit is available for you, right here and right now. Live God as God lives you and you will not sin. Trying not to sin, or trying to be like God, or trying to do evil are all from the root of the lie. What is that lie? The lie says in many forms, "You can get God to love you by doing things that He might do if He were here. That is, try to mimic Him." Wrong!

That type of living comes from doing, not from being. You are now a child of God. You will not become a child of God by trying to do right things. When are you His person of love to the world? Is it when you preach or prophesy or speak in heavenly languages? Is it when you try to do Godlike things? No! It is when you see a need through His eyes and fill it to overflowing, even if it costs you dearly.

But fear may think, "I'll be broke and no different from them overnight if I give to everyone that asks." Here comes the time for great wisdom. Jesus did nothing that He did not see the Father doing. You, with eyes on Jesus, cannot do God things apart from Jesus again doing what He sees the Father doing. As you come to cooperate with Mr. Grace, gracing through you, you enter into His rest. You do what He is doing. That is His rest. It is almost like doing what has already been done. There is no rule that can cause you to love God's loving at the right time and in the right way. His person, through His Spirit in you, will open your eyes at the right time. When you see, you will obey. Receive your sight.

Yesterday, at the coffee shop, I was chatting with a Christian friend. Three young men came in. I wanted to go over and pray for them. I continued the conversation with my friend for an hour while musing over what Father was doing. As Linda and I went to leave, I could not help but join them, comment on how joyful they were and I said, "May the LORD Jesus Christ, whom I serve, bless you." Each of them lit up with smiles and with hands out we touched each other's 'Yes' to Mr. Love, loving. I left encouraged. They too were encouraged.

You are called to love. Love does the loving. Love is God giving you this one occupation, to love. It is time to love. In

Christ, you know you are worthy of His love and able to pass it on. You are capable of loving everyone equally. He has invited you into His perfection. Be a human being, just like you were re-created to be, root to shoot.

Father of all light, creator of each breath, sustainer of every hope, the author and finisher of my faith, let me put aside loving in word and tongue, and love with acts of charity and deeds of truth that relieve suffering.

CHAPTER 2
SEEING JESUS AS MR. LOVE



*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments;
and His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3 NAS)*

In general, humanity reacts to the word obedience like Maynard G. Krebs reacted to the word work. WORK! Why do you shun from the command to obey God's commandments? There are many reasons, but some common thoughts that hinder are, "I can't do it! I'll fail! No one is perfect! I cannot even remember all the commandments. Which one! Some are outdated. Well, aren't they?"

Somehow, deep inside, you know you cannot 'do God'. What do I mean by 'do God'? One day a ruler of Israel came to Jesus and gave Him the title of 'good teacher' to which Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone." Jesus as the perfect human declared He

could do nothing but what He saw the Father doing. He did not say He did what He knew Father would like Him to do. Jesus was a slave to what Father was up to. Jesus could not say He was the author and finisher of His own obedience. Your call to obedience is a call to tag along with Him who is obedient to Father. Jesus said that if you remain in Him and He in you, you will produce much fruit. You too can do nothing of yourself.

The call to obedience almost always calls you to stand before Jesus, like this ruler of Israel. There you discover that you cannot 'do good' and that all good comes from God, therefore you cannot 'do God'. What He does through you is what you can do. What Jesus does is what the Father is doing. What the Father wills is being done. The Father is the Good One being done through obedience. Our obedience is Jesus' obedience to the Father's specific acts of loving. In this way, you come to know Jesus as Mr. Love. Love, first to last, obeys the Father.

You cannot initiate good because the only good in the universe is a Person, no, the Person, God. He alone is good and initiates and accomplishes good. His call to obedience is not a call for you to dig deep into the resources of your mind or skill base and conjure up good behavior. His call to obedience is your time to surrender to what Father is doing as love personified. You obey His desire to love when you humble yourself to His loving others through you. This is specific in time, person, and place. It is authored by the author and finished through that same author.

Father loved the Son because the Son loved the Father's commands. Jesus kept God's statutes. He came to complete the Law and the Prophets. Jesus summed up the Law and the

Prophets in two commandments, 'Love God with your whole being and love your neighbor as yourself.' That's all there is, simple and ever so spontaneous and dynamic.

You are asked to obey God in several ways: prayer, praise, and action. If in the midst of prayer or praise there comes time for action, your first and last act is an act of love.

Many years ago I decided I needed to pray more, so with renewed effort, I left my two boys playing upstairs and I went downstairs and knelt by the couch and began to pray. A few minutes later our younger son, proud of something he had accomplished, put his tiny hand on my shoulder and with great enthusiasm began pleading with me to come see what he had done. To my shame, I waved him away saying, "Don't bother me, I'm praying." My heart still breaks thinking of this. In that very moment, God said, "Wrong." But I was determined to 'do God'. Oh, if only that moment were clothed in today's wisdom. I would drop everything just to be able to pick up that bundle of joy, hug him, kiss him, and let him lead me to his victory.

Have you ever thought that putting God first is your ultimate good? Oh! God put man first. That act was His ultimate good. This too, is your call. Your loving is horizontal first, then vertical. When walking out love, your feet will get dirty and your soul will be drained of all self-effort. You will collapse exhausted only to be resurrected to perform the impossible.

You are the beginning of God's purposes. The whole universe waits for the manifestation of the children of God. Loving others is the beginning and the end. It is the will of your Father that you love everyone and all of creation. In the

end, the Son hands the ‘whole’ over to the Father so that He can be the all in the all. (I Corinthians 15:28)

Jesus is Mr. Love. Do you know Him? You know if you know Him. Others will know if you know Him when you declare His love through your actions.

To see God is to see Him in the face of Jesus. To see Jesus is to see the embodiment of love obedient unto death. Now, through those who trust Him, He still dies to self-gratification in order that others may receive a glimpse of love. You become what humanity can see of God.

You are to look to Jesus and live. His living is doing love. Don’t wait for more of this or that before you feel qualified to love. You don’t need more prayer, discipline, schooling, years of reading the Word of God, nor some special word, prophecy, or ordination. Your opportunity to ‘do God’ is always right before you. Every person has a need. You have the resource.

Right now, I am penning this portion of the book at my favorite coffee shop. Just moments ago, one of my most favorite baristas was cleaning some tables. I bantered with her concerning my eyes and how poorly they work after typing before a computer screen for any length of time. She informed me she was, with corrective eye lenses, almost legally blind. I motioned for her to come close, reached out my hand and taking hers prayed that Father would give her new and perfect eyes. She responded by gently sloughing off the prayer saying she prays a lot for other people too. I said this was my prayer for her and in a gentle, but commanding voice, said, “This is your time to receive.” Her face lit up, and she agreed. I cannot describe in how many ways I know this was God loving her.

You can appreciate each encounter with another person as your call to reach for the fruit of eternal life, pluck some Mr. Love, take a bite, then turn and share it with those by your side or simply douse someone with His light.

Love is an eternal, life-giving stream flowing through you. As you turn to Him the flow increases. Whoever passes by, can drink. You are sharing Jesus, the eternal spring of life, again and again to a parched universe. The world, now refreshed, will turn within to discover an eternal spring of the same eternal life flowing out from itself. Jesus is not just a message of love, but love eternally personified. It is your time to get personal. Your eyes can be His eyes of love looking into others saying, "Hello in there!"

Father, let me see Jesus' face, the bruised and battered face and my inclusion in Him. In seeing His face, let me recognize that the flesh I thought I was, has died once and for all time, so that the new me can live joined to His Spirit, Spirit with spirit. As I rest in this glory, trusting the potency of Your dying, let me rest in the power of Your rising up. Thank you for taking Your residence in me by Your very Spirit through which I can now proclaim You as Father, even Daddy, and love those You send my way. Let me see what you see when you gaze upon humanity. Let me know when to say, "Hello in there!"

CHAPTER 3
KNOWING JESUS AS MR. LOVE



*And we have come to know and have believed the love which
God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love
abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16 NAS)*

Your home is where you abide. Where do you abide? One of the most obedient servants of God I know lives in a home that for me would be hell. I have another friend who has an unwavering faith in God who lives in a house where God is treated like a famous picture. Yet his life is alive with the living strokes of love. There is another man whose head cannot get itself wrapped around Jesus, but his heart has a good hold on the eternal One. Just a few days ago he prayed for a man's foot to be healed and it was.

I also know a young lady who is as good as homeless, but cannot wait to share her treasure, Jesus, to all those less fortu-

nate than she. Because of this, I must conclude, Jesus pops out wherever people live. For those who know Jesus the Christ as Mr. Love, they too become, as they abide in His home, love personified. You can always have your way when your way is His way.

Not long ago I had some cross words with a perfect stranger. I was immediately evicted from my house of peace with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Before I got home I knew what I had to do, and shared the idea with Linda. She agreed with the plan and the time. The next day, with the purpose of publicly repenting, since I had publicly defamed, I purchased some flowers, a friendship card, and a gift card for \$50. On our way to the woman's home, Linda prayed for the stranger to be blessed and receive my repentance with kindness. I just wanted the experience to be genuine and to stand calm, even if she railed on me.

We knocked on her door and when she opened it, I was overcome with humility and tears. As I handed her the flowers I declared my sin to her, then pressed the card and gift card into her hands. With tears in my eyes and a broken spirit, I repented of my sin and told her I was totally wrong for speaking to her that way. She softened and we said our good-byes. I went away at peace while at the same time deeply shaken. Then too, on reflection, I realized I financially could not afford to be rude and insensitive, much less to suffer the wounds of my soul before the God of love.

Your home is the place to which you love to return. You too can return home to love by simply receiving God's grace, His Son Jesus the Christ. After that, you can also take up residence in this crazy world and begin your eternal opportunities to love the unlovable.

Coming to know Jesus is discovering your home and knowing how to return if you should venture away. Earthly distraction leads you back to the heavenly attraction. But to arrive for the first time in your eternal home, you must die. Now that sounds awful. I have often said, “I don’t mind dying. I just don’t want to be there when it happens.” It works that way when it comes to dying before God because of your sin. You have actually died with Christ, and you didn’t feel a thing. Unfortunately, many think because they did not ‘feel that death’ that only Christ died, leading them to conclude that Jesus was the only one who came out of the grave. Not so!

Galatians 2:20 says, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (KJV)

God is love. Jesus is God’s love personified. Because you share in His resurrection, God is multiplying His ability to love the whole world. Every generation is gained by God loving them face to face. You know this to be true. In the dark of the night, when something goes bump, you look past yourself for comfort. This is how you are wired. That One, just past the fear, is your home calling out, “Return!”

You know Jesus when you see Jesus in the eyes of those you love. You declare life worth living and each day as good when you declare Jesus. Remember, you cannot ‘do God,’ but He is eager to express Himself through you. Are you prepared

to be all that Jesus in you is prepared to be? Keep your heart on Him and He will, through you, put His heart on others.

Father, let me know Mr. Love, not as a historical figure, but as the eternal Person of love, of life. I ask you to put off this flesh and put on the Spirit of love that I might obey the law of love and of life in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER 4
RECEIVING JESUS AS MR. LOVE



But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, (John 1:12 NAS)

You cannot give away what you have not received. Every day you wake to receive what others have toiled to bring you. From the clothes you put on, to the food you eat, all are prepared for consumption. You receive what is given or you die naked, cold, and alone. What makes you believe that receiving from God is difficult or humanly impossible?

Jesus, as a historical figure, did not work the works of God apart from God working His works through Him. Every person in Jesus' life was necessary to bring you the good news of His life and to invite you to walk with Him by Holy Spirit. Being totally dependent on His Father is not an exceptional

story. He is not a super prophet on steroids. He was, is, and always will be God personified as Mr. Love. Without Him, you have no sure destiny. With His appearing and reappearing, you are sure of your destiny. With Him, you have an eternity with Him. Without Him, you have an eternity without Him. What you have now is what you will have later. Do you have Him? Is He your destiny?

Knowing about Jesus is not enough.

Coming to embrace Him through obedience will bring you face to face with Mr. Love. Go one step further, receive eternal life and you will receive the Son, God's love. If you think you do not have eternal life in Jesus, God's Son, then you are squaring off before Father calling Him a liar. God has declared, as if in a court of law, that everyone who has the Son has life. You have life, and this life is in His Son Jesus the Christ. If you believe on His name, you can know right now that you have eternal life. This is what believers call being saved. They know they are saved right now because they trust God's testimony concerning His Son which says they are saved. God says so and you trust He is telling the truth. That trust is all you do and wa-la, eternal life!

Father's heart has been and always will be, the cross of His Son of glory, God's heart adorned in LOVE. Receiving Jesus is your re-birth. It is your right and authority, and destiny. You have the ability to see a need and do what God is doing. He has given, is giving, and will continue to give His Son to everyone. Why not believe this? Lean into your need and find life. Lean into another's need and let them experience life. Give

life. You are a child of God right now. You can act like the child you are.

His death means nothing unless you died with Him. His resurrection means nothing unless you have been born of His gene pool. Literally! You are now a new creature, of a different seed, complete, and destined to live as His child, full of His glory and of His grace, without spot or wrinkle! You are now, right now, born into His eternal giving. His death has no meaning unless it creates within you a new heart, a pure heart, a perfect heart, and it has. If you have the Son of God, you, because of that union, have it all. By losing what you thought you had, you are blessed with God. Awesome! Like unbelievable, but totally receivable. Remember, what your head cannot get around, your heart instantly embraces.

Does receiving love cost you anything? Let me repeat myself, yes, everything! You will be transformed from a flesh-you to His Spirit-you. Your flesh-self died! Yeah! Praise God! Everything you thought you had has been put to death in order that the new you can live out from your Spirit-spirit union each moment of the day. The old wineskin is off, the old cloth is replaced. You have new wine within and a new wineskin. You live from your new desires, God desires. You are His Person personified. Any other faith or trust falls short of His purpose and circumvents His processes.

By now you know that Mr. Love is seen in His doing. You also know He works His works through you. You can of yourself do nothing, but you can receive Him. In receiving Him you receive what He is doing. He has your flesh to live through. Flesh cannot shorten the arm of God. You began your life in Christ in the Spirit, now remain. A better flesh is

not what perfects you. The blood of God's Son has made you complete. Walk out the perfection you have.

Don't rush out and try to get rid of anything. Just let Him rush in and consume everything that cannot withstand His fire of love. You are not called to find and destroy your idols, just let your heart be singled on His person and let Father be your ultimate good. If you have the living God, let Him have you. If you possess Him, let Him possess you. You too will be a doer of the Word and not just a hearer.

Mr. Love, Jesus, I call upon Your most holy name, asking You that now, at the depths of my soul, I may trust that You will deliver me from the need to think of myself as a 'flesh person' and to let me settle in on this truth, that I am in union with Mr. Love and I no longer live except in my trusting You. Let me put off what You have put off and put on Your Person.

CHAPTER 5
SHARING JESUS, MR. LOVE



*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another,
even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (John
13:34 NAS)*

Jesus calls you to love one another. You have the Spirit of wisdom and know when to love the one being loved. You know when and when not to lay down your life. You have that wisdom because you remain in Jesus and share Mr. Love.

There is a commandment and it is both the oldest and the newest commandment. God spoke it in the garden of Eden, ‘Please don’t try to be like Me. Just be what I have made you. You are good enough. I love you.’ Christ received that message from Father. Before the foundations of the world, He was declared the Christ, the promised seed of a man not yet

born to Abraham. Abraham embraced Jesus (whose name means ‘God saves’) by letting God save Isaac. Every person of faith lets God save. God has given you everything you need to sustain life as long as He wants you to live. He has given you godliness in the mean time, not by trying to be like God but by receiving the heart of God and sharing it with others.

Somewhere in this journey of life, you have been invited to a conversation. This conversation is a little one-sided. You can receive what He is doing through you. You can rest or try. You can ‘effort life’ or let life ‘effort you’. Really, it is either Jesus in you living out through you to others, or failure. You are invited to receive the flow of His loving others so that He can continue to share Himself with the whole universe. As you agree with Him, your heart falls in cadence with His heart. His shed blood becomes your right to shed your blood.

When love has been born in your heart, there is only one choice: to follow, remain, obey. You no longer ask what you can get from loving, but you rejoice in knowing you share in Christ’s immediate sufferings by being a helping hand to your neighbor.

Father of wisdom, You know what it is like to give and give and give to the ungrateful. As I remember Your coming to me and taking residence in me, in my own poverty and disquiet, let me not delay, block, or dam Your call for me to obey from my heart the desire to love in deeds and truth. Let me rest in Your doing and boldly act with Your purpose. Let me see You in them.

PART II
GIFTING



CHAPTER 6
KNOWING HIS YOKE IS EASY



*Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle
and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls.
(Matthew 11:29 NAS)*

To learn from God takes a one to one relationship that changes your status quo. The word of God can set the stage, but only as you walk with God from the ‘inside out’ can you learn about Him. If your God is angry, or if you experience Him as revengeful, your soul will find no rest. Your learning is not complete. Like John says, love completed in you separates fear from you. We are not talking about transitory fears like ‘will it rain, flood, be a scorcher?’, but the fear of wondering if you will have what it takes to do what He has called you to do. Fear stops you from being valiant and joining in what He is doing. When yoked to Jesus, Jesus has taken the

lead. You just follow. His gift to you is Himself, not as an influence, but the very cause and the outcome.

A couple years ago my nephew and I saw a man walking down the street with a pizza box in hand. I knew I wanted to help him to his next destination. It was a planned event by Jesus to teach me His yoke. The lessons I was to learn by this encounter were so deep and profound I am still putting it all together.

After catching up with him, I asked if I could take him where he was going. He said he wanted to go to the next town to the East. I was ready to do so and committed to accomplish the same. He jumped into the back seat, continuing to eat the pizza. He even offered some to us. We politely refused.

I love to discover people's histories so I asked questions concerning him, his family, where he grew up, and more. In a short time I heard his stories clashing. I noticed he was not totally there and yet he was such a lovely spirited man. He exhibited no bitterness over his difficult life. But I could not trust him, he was saying what he thought needed to be said in order to be accepted. He first said this and then that, he was double minded.

About five miles from our destination he asked me to take him further east to the next town. He then began to beg me to be his friend. He asked if he could live with me. He said he would be a good friend. My spirit was crushed. I had never had someone beg me to be their friend. He was but a child at heart, asking for a safety hug, a big long overdue hug. At that time in my life, I lived by a rule of not bringing anyone to stay in Linda's and my home. Well known friends and family, yes, but strangers, male or female, no.

Did I mention my heart was crushed, even ground to the texture of talcum powder? Even now, as I pen this story, I hear his plea for friendship, for a love from another human being that would validate his person. He wanted to be my friend. He wanted me to be the source and ground of his reason for being. Love was calling me to yoke up with Christ and without fear let the Spirit of God love him to health, even just a nudge in the right direction would have been a miracle for both him and me.

Having arrived at the second town, I directed the conversation to where I could drop him off. I offered him money, but he said he had enough. I forced it on him in hopes it would salve my vacant soul. He took it and then asked if he could buy my nephew and me some dinner. He did not want to say goodbye. I was torn, reached into the back seat and shaking his hand, said goodbye. As I drove off, my spirit cried out to get out and pray with him. After all, he had confessed Jesus was his Savior and he was my brother. I was wondering if I had just had a divine visitation. The least I could have done was pray for him. But I had not done the least. I loved him with words and not truth. My heart knew the truth.

I remember when I begged Jesus to be my friend. He didn't refuse to take me home. I drove away undone. I had guilt for not taking my Savior's yoke and 'saving' this man from loneliness, at least for a night or two.

A few months later I met a man in need of a meal. After taking care of his meal and tip I asked him to pray for me. He prayed to Father Abraham for me to know that God was my friend, just as he was a friend to God. I was dazed and wept on and off for a few days. I had never had the guts to ask God to be my friend, Savior - got it—but to be my friend? The

whole time I was becoming comfortable being God's friend, I could hear the man crying out for me to be his friend. I still wonder who I really met that day. Was he trying to deliver some eternal pizza? A few weeks later I met another man, well, he stayed over and the next day we took him where he needed to go. It was easy. We were learning what the yoke of Jesus is like.

Father, the friend of the homeless, comforter of those in the wilderness of their lives, cast Your yoke upon me as I walk beside You.

CHAPTER 7

KNOWING GOD AS GIVER



For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. (John 3:16-17 NAS)

You might be asking, “How can I come to know God as giver?” You might be pondering, “Well, what then exactly does He give?” The answer, of course, is that He gives Himself. His life for your life is called salvation. Okay then, but what is salvation? I took the liberty to look the word up in Webster’s Dictionary. Here it is; “to save is to keep safe, to stop things from dying or being hurt, damaged, or lost, to stop things from ending or failing, to make things that are in

danger of failing, successful, to keep things from being lost or wasted.”

Doesn't your world need to be safe, have an end to dying, damage, and loss? But it is ending, even failing to be what it was meant to be. It was meant to be fruitful and successful. It was not meant to be wasted. It is the same with your soul. You need safety, health, freedom from damage, success, and never being lost or wasted. This is salvation. Only God has the ability to do this.

Humanity's ways only practice failure, loss, damage, and waste. Your efforts produce the same. Not one of your ways results in God's proposed and determined ends. It is by God alone that this whole universe will pass from death to life. Every effort that is out of step with God will be straightened. Jesus came to be the author and finisher of the salvation of the whole world.

Is your life caught up in His processes? Dwelling only on what salvation means for you individually will miss the whole point of salvation. Jesus died for the whole world, not just you. You may be surprised to discover that He is not your 'escape out of hell card'. But you are offered the right to believe that you abide in Him, right now. He is God getting out of heaven and living once again in personified forms through those who believe.

Hell is taking a hike from Christ. Where to? To a self without Him? Caught up in itself for eternity. Your hell is the same. If you are caught up in your flesh-self you are in hell while in this flesh. Later, you are still in hell, only without your flesh. When you are possessed by God's Spirit, you are a new creation. You live from a different self and for a different purpose. You are either living in the lie or have passed over

into Truth. You do not go back and forth. You are His or you remain the child of Mr. Lie. Today you can choose life and remain in Him.

Until you begin to perceive God as the eternal giving One, you will, at best, be a glorified self-for-self. But you can even graduate from being a selfish receiver of God's salvation. How? Join, by faith, in your Father's eternal giving of His Son through all His children. Join Him in forgiving sins and reaching out to heal. Yes, the children of God have both the unction and the responsibility to forgive sin and reach out to heal, share salvation to the lost. How?

Father's way is the loving way. Jesus' way is the way of obedience. Spirit's way is the way of revelation, the type of revealing that joins the parts and makes everything whole, complete, and perfect. Receive Father's love. Receive Jesus' obedience. Receive Spirit's proclamation and complete your part of this world with love.

The word 'receive' is a beautiful word. It implies two actions taking place at the same time. There is a giving and an ability to take. There is a giver and there is someone who can take what is given. Father has given us His Son. He has been given to everyone. He is not standing at some eternal door handing out chunks of Jesus to each person passing by. He gave all of His Son at once to everyone. There remains no other gift. His grace is His Son Jesus. He has given Jesus to you. Your only choice is to take Him or leave Him. To take Him is to receive what has been given. When you receive Jesus, you take what God has offered. To share the Jesus you have received is to grace others with love.

What about your will? Your will is either agreeing with God who offered His Son's life and now His living in you and

through you, or not. If you receive Jesus, you are in God's will. If you postpone receiving Jesus for a better time, you reject God's grace. By resigning your ways, like Paul did, to the trash heap, you will offer the moments of your life into the hands of the living God. It is both frightening and exhilarating. He did not come to save you from a messy life, but to graduate you to a meaningful eternity. You died in Him, now live in Him. Watch what He does with and through your psyche and flesh. Watch. Watch. WATCH!

Father, let me so join You in Your ways that not one foot, hand, or fingerprint of myself can be found in all I do. Let only Your Person be seen as the author and finisher of all my doings. Let You be seen, adored, and embraced. Glory to You now and for eternity! Amen!

CHAPTER 8
KNOWING THE GIFT AS
UNEARNED



For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (Ephesians 2:8, 9 NAS)

There is no boasting in receiving what God has given. You neither produced the opportunity nor earned the worth. But you will make a choice. By default, if you do not receive Jesus, you will choose to live your plans and purposes. If so, you design a thing, and with other people's blood, you press to complete the projects you imagine. When you proclaim you have pulled yourself up by your bootstraps, you will still find yourself facing the ground with your back bowed to God.

Before coming to Christ, I was totally exhausted from trying and confused by a lingering sense of God's presence.

That presence was so impersonal, I cried out in desperation, “Jesus, if You are there and want me, You can have me, but here is the deal. I give up trying to be good enough for You.” Before I could finish saying, “If You want to change me, You can have me,” Jesus, by His Spirit, came through my front door, crossed over to where I sat and gently, but ever so emphatically, slipped into my soul and body, and I into His care. Instantly I was changed. Had I chosen Him? Well, yes. Had He chosen me? Absolutely. Was I saved? You don’t have to ask me. I will tell you so.

In seconds He healed my one leg that was about half an inch shorter than the other. He also straightened them out a bit. I’m not as bow legged. I was happy. Now that was different. Life was worth living from the inside out. Everything was the same, but totally different. The impersonal presence of an austere God had turned into the loving personal God of Jesus within. His Holy Spirit filled me with hope, faith, and love. I knew Jesus was the answer and the Spirit was revealing all of Himself in me. The devil was out and defeated.

I called Linda to share with her my experience. She was happy, though she didn’t completely understand what had just happened. She watched for a couple of weeks. I expect she was watching to see if it would last. It did. Two weeks later, at two in the morning, she, looking just past me and talking to God said, “I want what he has.” Before she completed that prayer I watched her change. She was aglow, at peace, and happy. That was new. It has been some forty-four years from that moment. She is still new. What God does is good!

You too can know you have God’s gift of eternal life. That is Jesus. Everyone who has Jesus knows so. You know the difference between self, living for self and His living in you,

for you and through you for others. Jesus, the name above all names, means Jehovah is salvation. He does not give you salvation, but He becomes your salvation. Christ in you is your hope of glory. Not self-glorification, but the gifted ability to house, walk and talk out the glory of God that was and is seen in the face of Jesus. You are meant to be the proclaimers of His reconciliation.

Let me say it as plainly as I can. You have a choice to believe what I have just shared or not. If you do, you too will know you can put your trust in Jesus. You can stop trusting an illusory self. You will be living from a different source and share a different life. You will know you know you are alive in Him. You will share the love of God that has been shed abroad in your heart. Even more, you will find that you do not have to try to be sinless. You are living love. The desire and effort to be better than God has made you is the sin, it is the human effort to be good that is lawlessness. I did not say you have license to sin. I just said when you sin, you will suffer like hell for it. You might try to be better, but it will instantly bite your heel. In the very next moment, you can stomp the head of trying. The submitted human is victorious.

You are a child of God. Live from being, not from trying. For you, there is no condemnation. Walk in the Spirit and the flesh will follow righteousness. Try to fix the flesh and you have already sinned. Some have said to God, "Your Son in me is not sufficient. I must fix the flesh, then You can live through me." No, everything God has for you is gifted to you. He is your immediate reward. You may do many things, but you know they do not complete you. They may be very good things, but they can never again be your ultimate good. Only Jesus is your ultimate good. Only God is good! By experi-

encing all this, you come to know grace is not earned. Grace is gifted.

Father, let me settle for nothing less than the highest You have for me. I embrace Your embracing me and rest in You walking out my life as I walk out Your living as me. Holy Spirit, I receive all the knowledge of the things freely given by Jesus to and through me. Let Your eyes, ears and words be mine as well. Let my proclamation of You be transforming, as You by Your Holy Spirit are ever fresh and ready to change everything to work according to Your design.

CHAPTER 9
RECEIVING THE GIFT OF GOD



Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."
(John 4:10 NAS)

You are basically a knower, a wanter, and a chooser. In these ways, you reflect your God. You also know, want, and choose. But unlike your choices, His choices always come to pass. His will is never thwarted. What you want might happen. What He wants happens. God happens when you choose God.

Jesus asked the woman at the well for some water. He was offering eternal life. Imagine God offering you some very special water that is, in fact, alive, both on the outside and on the inside of you. Once on the inside, it would grow to where

it would gush out of you like Old Faithful, only without having to take a breath in between each gush. God offered this woman something beyond her imagination. She would become something greater than Jacob's well. She would have what everyone needs. She would embody the eternal giver. She would gush up without interruption. She would gush God.

Jesus offered to her His ability to save, to be part of her character, makeup, even nature. She, with one gulp of Him, would have it all and give the same. Then being complete beyond measure she could 'waste' herself on everyone she met and have lost nothing.

Father, through Jesus, pours into you the everlasting well of His Spirit of love. Once joined to you, it gushes forth that which satisfies not only every human heart but satiates all of heaven. All this has been, is, and will continue to be gifted throughout eternity. What is offered is God Himself and of God there is no end. God is the giver, the giving, and the given. The gift is God's grace, His Son. You have the One to hang on, to depend on, to attach to and walk with. You have been gushed on, now it is your turn to gush out.

Father, I live in the paradox of living, filled with the strength of Eternity yet sensing my poverty. Let me walk out Your bounty. Let me act as a giver of the gift. Let me see what You are doing. Let me draw so near to You that I am involved with what You are doing. You, in me, are enough. Let the feelings of emptiness inspire gushing. Let the gushing be enough.

CHAPTER 10
THE GIFT ABOUNDS



But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. (Romans 5:15 NAS)

Adam's act killed you. In his dying, you died to God. One simple act changed it all. Not one thing was the same. Even farming was transformed into a cycle of life, death, and decay. The best herbs were dead herbs reproducing death. The best day was a dead day. Their one act affected everyone ever conceived. Not one escaped! Because of Adam and Eve's one act, you get to be self-conscious and without God. You get to miss out on the way God would have you experience Him. Just because you were physically born of Adam's gene pool, you get to live dead, if you want to, for

eternity. Adam and Eve's death is what you are living if you live without Christ. You are one of the dead, living by feeding off one another. Your best breath smells like rotting flesh.

God has a better idea than to let you rot for eternity. He offers an antidote. He really offers something much more than an antidote. He offers you transformation. He wants to outdo Adam and Eve's undoing. He wants to skip to the end and begin at the end. He has, in Jesus, given everyone eternal living. In Christ, you are instantly transformed into His genetic offspring. Outside of Christ, you still get to live eternally, but without the means to stop the decay.

There is a method of escape, an all-inclusive act. That act is where Jesus, perfect in every way, condemned Mr. Sin and his children on the cross. Dead and gone, one and all. You did feel it but you died in His death and are given a choice. He is eager to express Himself, through you, a choice to join for eternity the eternal giver, or stay dead.

Because He was raised up from the dead, you all have, in Him, eternal living in God. The gift of God is eternal life, that is co-living His Son as one of His children. When you have the Son, you have life. When you put your trust in Him for eternal living with and in Him, you live! The good news is life eternal in God's Son doing God things by and through us.

You can have eternal death, also known as hell. Let me define hell. Hell is any freely chosen identity, other than God, going on forever. The things you now desire to complete you, will vanish. All your idols will perish. Only one thing continues and that is God. Not one thing other than God Himself continues. You, in Him, continue. You, outside Him, get to decay into nothingness, but it takes eternity to get there. If you have practiced saying no to God's gift, His Son,

you get nothing! You will be left with trying to fill your eternal void with the memory of the things that once filled your dead heart. Nothing will be left to obstruct the void. You have practiced your whole life letting your activities, and possessions delude you into thinking you are alive. Once they are gone, so is the delusion.

Don't you find it amazing that your everyday experience is decay in every way, and yet you think you will not decay for eternity? Where did that genius come from? You are a knower, a wanter, and a chooser. Choose His kingship. Receive His kingdom.

Some know they deserve to continue in this state of shame and death forever. Their greatest hope is that they do not have eternal living. Like when they die, the lights go out. That would be one way out, but it's not available. There is a better way, His way, which is standing with you and right before you.

Choose Jesus!

The Grace of God is sufficient for all. His act is the act of offering Eternal Life to all. Like the gush of that eternal well, so is this one act, your act. It takes only the slightest willingness to let Him embrace you and carry you into His eternal self. He has accomplished what you cannot accomplish. In turning to Him, humbled and totally empty, you receive the eternal living One who fills all and is in all. From start to finish He is both for you and He has destined His ways to live through you. He, living you, is eternal life.

He died to transform you into a brand new you.

Father, I come to take what you have gifted. I am humbled, even as if eradicated. Somehow this 'old I' has perished with Jesus by that one act on the cross. I will continue to be transformed into a new creature and creation. Accept me as I am and let me be what You are doing through me. As You gifted Jesus to me, so I give You full sway to gift me to others.

PART III
GRACE



CHAPTER II

PERSONAL GRACE DEFINED



But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. (Romans 11:6 NAS)

Simply Grace and grace alone stands in direct contrast to works. The word works carries with it the idea of energy and toil. It is like the harvesting of an agrarian effort. If you prepare the soil, plant the seed, practice weed control, and gather the harvest, what you gain above the planting is your wage. You have earned by effort your reward (wage). You may boast about your efforts. “See what I did!” In juxtaposition, Father is boasting about His Son saying, “See what I did!” Now you know why you cannot boast. The LORD your God is the victor. You are His wage.

Your boasting has only to do with what Jesus the Christ, the gift of God, has done. What has He done? He has done

everything needed for you to gain and live His life. He is all you need for living this life in godliness. You can boast in the cross of Christ by which you were separated from fleshly living to the obedience of Christ. He, in you, is the hope of glory. This is the mystery God kept secret, the cross in the heart of God.

In contrast, if you could purchase God stuff by your efforts, then your efforts are worth more than the gift of God. God becomes a distributor to you and what is stored up for you becomes yours on demand. God, in the form of His Son, is that One who is stored up for you. There is nothing else in the store of heaven. God has no other options. Without gaining Father God, through Christ, you have nothing. Thank God He did not confuse us. Even the simplest can receive one thing.

Years ago I spent five weeks in Costa Rica. I had a couple thousand dollars to spend. Shortly after arriving, I went to the local store to find out it did not matter how much money I had, what I wanted was not on the shelf. My favorite things were somewhere in the United States of America even though my money was in Costa Rica. I had the something, money, but they had nothing I wanted. Until your death, you may have power, money, and fame. But death only purchases you a ticket to your 'Costa Rica'. The things you want are still in the 'United States of America'.

Your efforts cannot match what God has made available. What it takes to purchase the presence of God is God's Grace. He gives you the means and the result of His means. His design is for the thing you gain to be permanent, not transitory. Everything purchased by your efforts is transitory, for the value of your efforts wanes with age and deteriorates with

time. Really, even now, your purse is empty. Not because you cannot put forth an enormous effort, but because you cannot afford what is freely offered. It takes your dying to trying, to gain His life of being.

Trying is the sin of Adam locked up in your flesh. Only the divine death separates you from the effort. Grace is that gift-ing. When we rest in the gift and say, "Yes!" His death becomes, literally, your death. His life becomes that in which you remain. You are freed from flesh self-effort to live Spirit. Just one act by Him, through you, has the eternal weight of God's one act through His Son bearing down on it, working life out through it.

Think of Mr. Grace as waiting outside a store saying, "If you want, you can take Me home."

You might ask, "Why You?"

He might answer, "I am everything you need."

Responding, you could ask, "Like what?"

Grace might say something like, "I'm of the greatest value! I surpass the value of all the things on every shelf of every store. I AM all you need."

You might ask, "How much will it cost me?"

He replies, "I'm free. But I will cost you everything."

Father, it seems impossible that You offer what I can never purchase and flood me with benefits I have never imagined. Concerning these promises I trust You. Let me be taken captive by Your Son's trust in You. Jump into the driver's seat. I am committed to what You are committed to do in and through me. Let's go!

CHAPTER 12
KNOWING PERSONAL GRACE



But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!” (Acts 8:20 NAS)

No matter what anyone says to you, the only way to know Mr. Grace is by having a personal relationship with Him. He has completed you. Though not recommended, you can call upon the LORD Jesus for things. In doing so you fall short of the benefit He offers. He is the ultimate benefit. He is the gift. The gathering of things and experiences, even great knowledge, fall short of His goal.

While working in the hospital, I passed by the room of a man who was dying. He was in a semi-comatose state for over a month until his death. Day and night he chanted, “Five doctorate degrees and what has it gotten me.” Now, some

years later, his mantra rings in my ears. He was a brilliant, but empty man. I have concluded, that anything you can get your hands or mind around in this life, vanishes upon death. I am equally convinced that your spirit embraced by God's love is eternal life.

Even the gathering of spiritual gifts is not your highest good nor His highest destiny for you. He never wanted you to have an abundance of good or God things. His desire is for you to have the One who is the highest possible good. The One thing. When you seek first the all, you receive the all in all.

Your things are traded in for the person of God. The things you possess are exchanged for His having purchased you. You are delivered from being possessed by things and the need for things is replaced by His possessing you. In this, you come to know and humbly accept that you are created for His good pleasure and He considers you His greatest good. You are His wage. You are His treasure, His goal, His reward. In turn, He is yours.

Your death in Jesus was God's required event for Him to gain you in ways yet unimagined. He purchased you to come to know Him. You do not have to mimic what was done by the death and resurrection of His Son. That work is done. In Him, you have received your wage for sin, the death to a flesh-self. What happens next is eternal living. He wants you, by faith, right now, to live from His resurrected Spirit-self. Not the final resurrection you will experience with an eternal body, but the union we now share with Him by His resurrection. What we will experience is so much more than what we can imagine.

In living as a Spirit-spirit, His wants become your wants.

You no longer have to try to become something other than what you are in Christ. You will not try to do God stuff by flesh effort. You can spontaneously do what God is doing through you. As you are motivated by Spirit, you will turn from the flesh trying, to resting in God's doing. Just remember, He is still behind the wheel. You will go where He is going. Like today, Linda was at her favorite park picking up dog poo.

When you know Him, you come to know yourself, not as a god, but as His child prepared for Him to work good through you. Is that an opportunity for Mr. Love to love through you? Amen! Is this a chance to give to the unloving one what you wanted for yourself? Is He driving me to my own Golgotha? He is the first to get out, open my door, and with me resume His love for those who hate love, saying, "Forgive them. They do not know what they are doing." That life is your person with the Person given to the persons. It is personal from start to finish.

Christ joyfully received all of the Father's passion toward sin, not just sins, but Mr. Sin himself. The war is over, the time to love has come. We are called to be peacemakers. Your personal grace is love personified then and again through you right now. Knowing personal grace is what some have called the replacement life. For you, it is letting life replace each opportunity to fear and hate with love and acceptance.

In the end, your personal grace is being gifted with His living, not with demands. As He walks, you walk. You began in the Spirit by accepting Christ's life. You cannot get better by making the flesh better. You are asked to walk out His walking. You live from done, not from trying to be qualified to do.

In summary, knowing Grace is knowing the living God. In this knowing comes rest and from rest comes God gifted abilities to do what is next. With what is gifted in the moment, you do in the moment. What you receive, you pass on. Get and give, this is the process. This process began at the beginning and continues each moment of what we call eternity.

Father, let me know You as Mr. Grace, gracing others through me. Let me know the wealth of Your abilities being poured out on the world. Salvation has been won. Let me be a clarion call to that truth.

CHAPTER 13
RECEIVING PERSONAL GRACE



For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; (Ephesians 2:8 NAS)

Grace is not grace unless it is personal. Grace is the gifting of the one thing you need, but cannot gain. Some define grace as unmerited favor. It is and much more. Grace is Jesus Himself. God wants His Son to be your treasure, not things. Being gifted with the One ‘Thing’ (Person), you instantly gain all there is to gain. In that moment you begin to really live what He through you, is determined to live.

I had heard about Ross Perot for years, but until I sat with him for half an hour he was no more than a report. For me, he became a person. I had all sorts of opinions concerning what I had heard about him, but until I sat with him I did not have

my own opinions. I had no 'us' to deal with until he was personal.

Concerning relationships, it takes the 'us' to place you nakedly before your opinions. You can graduate from a state of knowing about God to being in a relationship with Him. Before you can be possessed by God's living intention, (making you His child from root to fruit) you need to be exposed to His creating you as an eternal 'us'.

You have known from birth that you were destined for great things. If it were otherwise, you would never have tried to become anything special. Until you meet God in Person and side with His design for you, all of life is either a striving to be better or an abdication to rebellion. Some people try to do better. Some try to do worse. Either way, they both try to be the author and finisher of their destiny.

How are you trying to improve? Through diet, exercise, education, child rearing, occupation, or is there another program you have devised? Against human effort, grace stands face to face with it and says, "No!" There is a better way, an easier way, it is Father's way. "I am the way, the truth, and the life ," says Jesus. "Come to me and you will get to sit down with Father and Me and have supper. After that, you can decide if you want to remain with us or not."

His program excludes your feeble wants and includes you in His wants. You become His wants. You, in your freedom to choose, can always choose to try or trust. If you die trying, you get to keep on trying, but with no resources. If you die trusting, you continue trusting with more resources at your disposal than you ever imagined.

When you try to become the author of your outcomes, God becomes impersonal, the 'problem,' the unattainable

goal. When you trust God has attained and retained you, He, through you, reaches His goals. When you walk His walking through you, He is no longer a problem, but an infinite, awesome mystery to be explored.

Remember, God is both the author and finisher of your faith. He is your grace. Long ago He purposed which of His good works you were invited to walk. He knows your steps from before you were born. When God puts a desire in your heart, it is the desire Christ will accomplish by and through you. You were called from your mother's womb to a task. You, with Christ, are set aside to be all that He in you is prepared to be through you.

The call to love one another is His universal call. Specifically, He has ordained the ones He wants you to super bless. Would you like to know exactly which people He wants you to love?

He desires you to bless those that curse you, publicly deride you, physically abuse you, and joyfully terminate your life. The specific times, events, encounters, and people are God's gift to you. I'll bet you were thinking something different. Like, bless grandma, write a happy birthday card for a friend, right? Well, do that too, but be prepared to have Father place in your face those who need your love the most.

His Grace will abound.

Father, I understand my receiving is only as good as my giving. The library of my life is filled with the stories of those who stopped talking about You and have taken You at Your Word. Now, through their lives, they pour You out again and again. Let me never think as much of gathering as sharing what has been gathered. Let my joy be completed after the harvest. Let Your doing through me be that of Gracing.

PART IV
RECEIVING IT ALL



CHAPTER 14
GRACE, YOUR REWARD



*And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of
God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (2
Timothy 1:6 NAS)*

You know a person favors you by giving you their time and possessions. They gift you when they leave their agenda and join yours. If they leave their home and their efforts to gain and retain their own comforts and comfort you, that is the definition of grace. Even though the individual acts of God's grace to man are unlimited, you will come short of His desired goal for you if you fail to recognize it is God Himself that has been given to you. He is your life which is right at your core. He has enjoined you with the desire for eternal life with Him. He left His home to come to your

home, take up residence with you, and gift you with all His riches.

I had a very vivid dream over 30 years ago that speaks directly to this event. In the dream, I was a king. I was sitting in a large hall by myself with only a few dim candles lighting a few shields on the wall. I was not only alone but lonely. Fear played with my insides. There was no food.

I heard a pounding on the castle's gate and timidly walked through the dark night to investigate. I had no sword with which to protect myself. It felt like the end. Hesitantly, I opened the gate just enough to peek out. There, to my surprise, stood a messenger holding the reins of three heavily laden camels.

He said, "I have come from the King of Kings with gifts. We are also your servants. We have all you will ever need, and have come to share them with you."

Looking past him I noticed a caravan winding down the lane and disappearing down the road leading to a turn by a mountain ridge some distance away. I instantly knew the castle could not hold all these gifts. Besides, I expected it was a lie, a trap.

With a fearful heart, I invited the servant of the caravan and a couple more servants into the courtyard. Each controlled three camels. I shut the gate after them, asking if the others would be okay. They assured me they would, but I could leave the gate open if I desired. I did not desire to do that.

Once in the castle hall, with my guests, I noticed a difference. The hall was almost totally lit. I marveled at all the spears, swords, shields, helmets, breastplates and tapestries adorning the walls. The dining table was still empty, but the

guests soon went to work setting out candles, plates, silverware, and fresh fruit. I sensed a meal was coming, the likes of which I had never known.

The servant said, "The King of Kings is with the men and gifts outside the castle wall. Should I invite Him in?" Still full of fear and dazed, thinking by His coming I'd lose everything, I replied, "Not right now. Maybe later."

The dream ended there, but since then, every few years, it will reappear in my mind's eye. Step by step it has changed drastically. I have learned that even though everything I ever needed was at my fingertips, I had to accept each gift, one by one as specifically needed. It took a specific gifting to me, by my LORD Himself before I began to understand His way of gifting. It was by His grace that I was enlarged enough to contain the total while experiencing a part. There is another analogy I'd like to share.

Like Santa Claus, God gathers up everything you need, throws it (Christ) into a single bag, and delivers exactly what is needed when you are willing to receive it. You are graced by God and specifically, at the right time, gifted with what you need. Do you need a car to go safely to work? You can either receive Christ in the form of that gifted car or see the car as something other than grace personally gracing you.

When you remember that the earth is God's and all the fullness of it, you understand He graces you with Himself in various ways. So you too grace others in specific ways. In fact, you have been prepared to be a specific type of help most of the time. Did Israel need to remember the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob? God sent them prophets. When they received the prophet, they remembered. When they turned to hear, they began their journey back to their home of

homes, even to the Holy Place. They received every promise by receiving the King of Kings. You too can receive Him who is the all and in all.

Father, let me quickly shed from my heart the petty fears that fill my mind, heart, and to receive You and Your caravan of treasures at my door. Let me embrace Your embracing. Let me receive Your gift and Your gifting.

CHAPTER 15
GRACE, YOUR CALL



Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that. (1 Corinthians 7:7 NAS)

Your capacities, interests, motivations, and desires, shape your days. How you dance through today's opportunities is way different from anyone else's dance given the way they act with the same environment. God is not asking you to give up who you are, to act like He would act, given your life choices. He continues to remind you that each event is fitted for you. A hammer in your hand may chip rocks, while a hammer in another's hand may drive nails. The hammer may be the same, but the use and outcome varies. God is inviting you to be as He is concerning His desired productivity through you. It is God designed and God driven.

The outcomes of God-sized projects are God's desired ends. He is the first and the last. With Him you enjoy the in-between.

How then do you fit? How do you enter into what God is doing? What part do you play? To answer these questions is not difficult. The will of God is manifold. Intercede for the holy ones of God, abstain from any form of fornication, give thanks in every situation to God, put to silence foolish men by your well doing, and suffer if suffering comes. Before these, there is the first commandment of Christ which is to love the LORD your God with all your mind, soul, body, and strength. Then, love everyone else with the same. To be specific, you are to love your enemies, those who use you, and those who are spiteful, tarnish your name, or in any way stand against you. You are to be His grace to others, every other. This is how grace through you becomes personal.

Most likely there are more people hungering to hear of the grace of God in this generation than have ever lived upon this earth. Each generation must discover all that God, through Jesus, offers. He desires to equip you with Himself so He can continue reconciling the world to Himself. In a way, He offers everyone the same hammer while their life's work can vary beyond imagination. He is, through you, love one for the other. Yes, the Spirit loves you, and you are the Spirit of love to others.

Father, here is where I collapse, resigned to be what
You have designed.

CHAPTER 16
GRACE, GAINING THOSE
YOU LOVE



Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return. (Luke 6:38 NAS)

Even though it is in giving you get, God is not asking you to give in order to get. Jesus gave Himself to gain you. You are the prize for which He gave Himself. He called you to surrender to love and to love others. You can think your loving will end with personal gain. Oops!

Over the past few years we have watched multi thousands who love their god, then kill their neighbor to prove their value. You have been told they do these acts in order to gain eternal life. In their wake, you have seen children suffer brutal executions. In the end, it is nothing more than people killing

people, even children killing children. This is child sacrifice, this is worshipping the gods Baal and Ashtoreth all over again.

Your personal grace that qualifies you to live with Mr. Love was not gained by hate, nor is it maintained by killing. Neither do you qualify to gain Christ by loving, but you, once humbled by His love graced through Jesus Christ His Son, are born of love to love. It becomes repugnant for you not to love. Your reward becomes those you have loved.

OKAY THEN, WHAT DOES LOVE LOOK LIKE?

So we have come to know and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother. (1 John 4:16-21 NAS)

When you have stopped trusting in your hands and firmly placed your trust in His hands, you are delivered from fear. The nail scarred hands of Jesus the Christ is enough. There remains no more judgment against you. If there was any debt

to be paid, it has been and is being paid by the eternal blood of Christ. His loving you sets you free to love all those who hate Him, just like you used to hate Him.

Everyone outside of Christ is trying to earn or work their way into God's presence without experiencing fear. You, once you trust Jesus, will know what His blood has done, does, and will do. Christ did not die because you forgot to pick up your socks. He died because you hated Him and wanted Him dead, out of the way, made into a myth, and damned.

The Gift of God is God living for you. Your rage on Christ was only the preparation of His Father's ability to justly exercise His passion against your hate and rebellion and send it into an eternal time out. His work is finished and in this you can rest.

When people dump their wrath on you, like you have them, Love rejoices for the opportunity to grace that one hating you. Right there, grace is yours to share and you can do the impossible. Trusting love to love through you, when you hate even the idea of being kind toward your enemy, is their opportunity to receive the grace of God gifted through you. If you do not realize you are a child of love, then you most likely have not received Mr. Love. He has already been offered in the life of Jesus Christ.

*Love does **no** wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:10 NAS) (Emphasis mine.)*

If you have received the unmerited favor of being loved by God through Jesus Christ then you too will love everyone else

no matter where they are standing in faith toward God. Why? Because you believe you have passed from death into life.

Mr. Love does no wrong to you, in you, nor through you. He plans to do the same for and through everyone else. You are now safe.

Father, thank You for Jesus. What an awesome gift with which You have graced me, Life eternal in union with You. I did not gain it by hating and killing people but by simply turning from my efforts to please You and receiving the gift of Your Son Jesus the Christ.

PART V
SIMPLY GRACE



CHAPTER 17
GRACE'S EMBRACING YOU



*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free
from the law of sin and of death. (Romans 8:2 NAS)*

What is the law of sin and death? What is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus?

The law of sin and death is simple, if you sin, you die. You don't have to sin big or many times, just one time, ignorantly or on purpose. Then you die. In reality, it is worse than that. It is as simple as being born. You die because you were born. There is just something in this flesh that starts out growing strong, then it grows weak. Every week there is a new diet or exercise program to fight dying. Haven't you noticed that all these priests of health grow old and die?

You may also notice how many preachers like to tell you of all the horrors of hell, stoke the fires, let the sulfur pour

through the congregation, and then ask if you would like to take out a fire insurance policy, titled Jesus. The death they want you to be afraid of is ever lurking, but somehow, if you accept Jesus, you can avoid it. I've been there as a parishioner and even stoked the fires as a minister. The whole exercise is meant to scare you into doing something, or at least feel real guilty for half an hour or so.

I have also overheard several people trying to encourage others into accepting Jesus so He can fix their marriage, children, finances, or health. If you are convinced He can do it, you will say a sentence or two which somehow makes Jesus release the goodies. Then, when the goodies fail to show up or run out, you know you have sinned and need to get tight with God again. There is always a reason to believe you are not right with God if being right with God means everything is just the way you like it.

But what is the law of death? Where did it come from? Really, does it matter?

THE LAW OF SIN IS SIMPLE, YOU WILL FAIL!

If you do not do what God is doing you fail. The law life is doing what God is doing. But, because you want to run your own life, you sin. You would rather run your life aground and ask for help, than to allow yourself to become a servant of God and obey His every desire in the moment. The law of sin is simple, every time you try to do God things, *you will fail*. From then on you will have to keep on trying and you will keep on failing. Once you have taken 'control' of your life, it is yours to run, but you flat out do not have what it takes to run your own life. Your best hope, when living like this, is that at

the end of your days you will simply fall asleep and forget to dream, without postmortem confrontations with God. Just lights out.

Your best hope for eternity is exactly what you fear. Lights out. This paradox haunts all of humanity. We all try to ignore death, but death is our only escape from the fear of death. Even those hoping for a heaven don't want to die to get there. You end up seeking life to escape death and seeking death to find peace.

Trying to be better is sin and the death that causes us to seek death. Trying to be better off is really trying to be like God who controls both life and death. Sin is missing the mark, which is obedience to God in every moment.

The law of sin is death. This is any way of living in which you try by continual effort to improve your environment, your outcomes, or yourself.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS

First, it is an eternal divorce. You may ask, from what? From trying to improve yourself. You are not broken, just dead. Without Christ, you are dead no matter how much you try to liven things up. Being conscious, self-directed, motivated, or active, is not the definition of being alive. Being alive is God living you according to His will, every moment of every day. Death is losing everything you thought you had or could gain. It is coming up double dead. First, you are dead by your separation from God and then dead by the law of sin: trying. You live the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus by doing what God is doing. If you have Jesus in you, the hope of Glory, His life becomes your living. The law of the Spirit of

life is the Person of God in the form of Christ Jesus. Does He have you?

NOTHING EQUALS NOTHING

Years ago people thought a shortcut to enlightenment would be to create a sensory deprivation environment. By shutting down what was stimulating your senses, you could get to the proverbial ‘I think, therefore I am’ or God. Those who tried this method found out that without stimulus their thinking was chaotic. After a while, they could not keep their stories straight. The void they had tried to avoid their whole lives was in their face. There were no toys to play with. No music to remember. No goals to achieve. Many went crazy.

The law of sin and death is tricky. It begins by tempting you to latch onto almost anything to keep your senses active. Over time, it idolizes the things that keep you from having sensory deprivation and turns them into ultimate things. Religion is but another way to gather things like rituals, pet doctrines, emotional highs, or ‘holy’ sensations. If you can have a never-ending stream of good thoughts and feelings, like living off one ‘wow’ to the next, you will last forever, right? No! It is off to the eternal deprivation tank, an eternity without stimulus.

MORE ABOUT THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST

First, I have to say to you that coming to Christ for eternal life is a bit ridiculous. He has already given everyone eternal living. I know this is bad news for you who are wanting the lights to simply go out. Even worse, after death,

you will fall into the hands of the living God. You have always been in His hands. Okay, you have been worried, afraid, sad, mad, murderous, hateful, and much more but He still had you. In fact, He has never left you and He will never leave you. For you who hate Him that is hell.

The law in Christ Jesus is that you must die (really you already have) with Him on that cross. It is a done deal. God's law legally places everyone on that cross with Jesus. Mankind thought they were putting to death God's efforts to control their lives by pouring out their wrath on the body of Jesus the Christ. All the while it was God judging everyone to death right then, in His Son. In Christ, we all experience our eternal place in the deprivation tank, devoid of stuff. No one is going to be sent there. Everyone who is still attached to their flesh is already there.

That is just the beginning of the good news. Jesus was raised up from the dead and lives, never more to die. We, who died with Him, have also joined in His eternal living. Through Him, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is ours. Just as He lives, we too live with Him. (Galatians 2:20) He calls us to become conscious of that union. He asks us to receive Him as the truth about ourselves, rightly dead and rightly alive in Christ Jesus.

Father, let me be so grounded in the death of Jesus that
I can live the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER 18
YOUR EMBRACE OF GRACE



Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all. (Mark 10:15 NAS)

You may have noticed how two people sitting right next to each other can read the very same thing and get something totally different out of what they read. Sometimes it helps to point out what a verse like the one above did not say. For me, it did not say, "...cannot enter in" but "shall not enter in". It is all about choice. Everyone can enter into the Kingdom of God, but only those who are like a child will want to enter.

With that you can conclude whether you are a child or an adult. You need some sort of desire, wish, or want to enter into God's Kingdom for you to receive the Kingdom of God like a child would receive it. This verse could mean that

everyone who is like a child is a Kingdom taker and will receive what they want. You not only have to know a thing is given, but you must also want it, just the way it is given and without modification.

You have probably known people who look at the menu and when their order is taken they say something like, “I want number six except for the russets, so it is more like number four with the starch of number seven. I want everything on its own plate except for the butter which I want in a cup.” The same waitress with a child asks, “What do you want?” To which the child replies “Number 1, a grilled cheese sandwich and chocolate milk.” The adult did not receive what was offered. The child chose what was offered. That is a Kingdom taker.

Jesus, as Jesus, in the Jesus way, is offered. The menu to eternal life is simple, “Take the Son of God.” A child who takes Him at His word gets Him. It takes a child only a split second to take an ice cream cone.

What stops you as an adult from taking an eternal ice cream cone?

EMBRACE GRACE!

Father, thank you for turning the heat up so much that I realize I want that eternal ice cream cone. I take Him just as He is. Let His sticky reality not only coat my insides but dribble down my face and permanently stain my clothes.

CHAPTER 19
GRACE SHARED THROUGH LIVING
GRACE



...to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

O kay, you are now coated on the inside and outside with the eternal ice cream cone. It so refreshed you, you cannot help but share its benefits. Every time someone asks, “What do you want to do?” You share your love for the eternal ice cream cone. Besides it’s free, available every moment of every day, and did I mention, it is free? That eternal ice cream cone is so good! Soon you have others fixed on the eternal ice cream cone. Some well-meaning adults strongly suggest for you to get a hamburger because it is really much better for you. They want you to eat education with a large dose of technology. Then you can have your ice cream

cone, but really, they would rather have you skip the eternal ice cream cone all together.

I found myself with my Jesus, my eternal ice cream cone when I was about five years old. We were living with my mother's parents in Wisconsin while my dad was going to DeVry Technical College in Chicago. The house we lived in was a two story home with an apartment upstairs. Coming in the side door I could turn an immediate right, go up a few arching steps, then travel up to a landing passing a window looking out to the backyards of the neighborhood. There, with the sun casting shadows down the stairs I would, like the Pied Piper, gather several of the neighborhood children and tell them stories. Right there, was my cathedral. In those moments I was totally me from the inside out. It was an Eden experience. I was candid, transparent and even naked to the core—congruent.

What I said was less important than the moment. The outcome was not a consideration. I and Jesus in me were loving those children through fiction, embellishments of a life not yet lived. Just until a few moments ago in prayer, I had forgotten those defining moments. Even the audience, though exhilarating, was not the event. The act of storytelling was my communion with Him Who had formed me and told the stories through me. We were happy, doing happy and I feel His passion when I share my stories.

You, somewhere in your memory, have that place where it all fit saying, "This is me!" In that moment you knew it was the 'us,' God and you, being natural. It was like hugging the God of love right in public with onlookers saying something like, "I want that!". When you were settled in that place, you were with Mr. Grace. It is in getting back to that moment,

that ‘us,’ where you grace others and live out from there that you fit.

Jesus the Christ, living in you, is His way to get out and visit the world. The ‘happy’ He shares is His union with you which brings peace and love to light. This is the light with which every person has been lighted, being light to others. Honoring this intention is to accept grace taking residence in you and living out through you.

Your praises of His goodness and the riches found in Him unlock the mystery of God to every nation, tongue, and people. Jesus, Mr. Grace, in His new body, you, becomes the message. He again has the ability to walk up to your neighbors, meet them face to face, and grace them. This is His plan, to grace the world, even the universe by being with you, and with you eat that great big, dripping, sticky eternal ice cream cone right out in public. Each moment becomes genuine. Your union with God becomes the expression Father has been waiting for.

God wants many children.

Why? You know why... to grace the rest with the best.

Let me say it plainly. Obey love from the inside out. If that frightens you, you, like Adam and Eve, are hurriedly sewing fig leaves to cover your nakedness before God shows up.

If you become like a child, you can receive what has been given, with no modifications. You can walk in His way prepared for you from before the foundation of the world. Father’s way is Jesus—in Jesus, by Jesus, and through Jesus. Receiving Jesus is receiving His way, and the way back to your personal Eden, that ‘us’. You are His. He has purchased you. Nothing can separate you from His ability to fulfill His intention of love.

You are set free to sit at the top of your steps and tell a story or two.

Father, let Your abilities transform me from a self-seeking adult to a love-dripping child that everyone is happy to see.

PART VI
NEED FOR GRACE



CHAPTER 20
LIVING CHRIST'S LIVING



Everyone who commits sin commits lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness. (1 John 3:4 NAB)

...who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (Titus 2:14 ESV)

Confessing Jesus is the Christ, then acting like a devil is nothing new. In the Gospels, several times, demons declared Jesus as the Christ, even the Son of God. But they continued to act like the demons they were. Knowing this, you can conclude that just to know who Jesus is, is not salvation. To know about Jesus, the Bible, or go to local gatherings, is not salvation. Jesus even declared that many will appear before Him pointing out all the miracles they have done

through His name. Jesus did not say that they, in His name, did not do miracles, but He said,

“And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”(Matthew 7:23 ESV)

Even to boldly use the name of Jesus, without a personal relationship, is lawlessness. You must know Jesus personally. Then you will do what He is doing. Doing what you want to do is lawlessness.

Sin is made evident by lawless deeds. Salvation cures lawlessness. Salvation means for you to be made whole, complete, healthy, and sound. Saved people are all this. Because of this, they are ready for every good work. When you are possessed of God’s Spirit you are passionate for good works.

Here is the fruit of the Spirit of God: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*; and there is no law against doing these things. With these come acts of righteousness. When you see someone hungry, you feed them. When you see them naked, you clothe them. If someone is thirsty, you give them a drink. If you see a stranger who needs protection from the elements, you invite them in. You also visit those in prison and those who are sick. Do you see? You are gracing them. To know Jesus is to love your neighbor. If you do not love your neighbor, you hate them and do lawlessness.

Father, in Your gifting of grace to others through me,
let me not depend on methods and systems to
accomplish Your intentions. Let me rest in You.

CHAPTER 21
WHAT DOES SIN DO?



Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. (James 1:15 NAS)

Sin is the seed of death. Sin's fruit is sinning. The end of sinning is death.

I hope this sounds familiar. Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of sin. Their sin was their disobedience. You may have heard it said that what you take, takes you. You take it and before long you are possessed by that which you thought you possessed. It is like a person taking the occupation of a doctor. They chose to be a doctor, but that choice sends them through years of schooling, huge debts, and working under the dictates of governments, insurances, and care facilities. What they thought they would possess has, in the end, possessed them.

Take the seed of sin, plant it in flesh and you have, even while walking and talking, death. You have the sentence of death in your flesh while you live. Your flesh can cut you off from God and estrange you from your Father. If you join yourself to the flesh, you are dead, even though you live.

If you want to return to Father, you are caught in a trap. Your flesh is the mess. Father cannot keep what He is bent on removing. The flesh hates Spirit and loves independence. The flesh wants to be the deciding factor in every situation. Flesh thinks it is the author of its destiny and the creator of its future. It will kill to live and hate to justify. This is lawlessness, this is sin, and this is death.

Sin can justify sinning, even when it comes to grace. Fleshly reasoning goes something like this, *"If I try and fail and ask for forgiveness, God's grace abounds and I am blessed. Since grace abounds when I sin and God is glorified, I might as well sin, so God can be glorified."*

You are called to be holy in everything you do, yet some teach that you must try to do good and when you fail, God's grace will take over and make things right. When you preserve your fleshly freedom and wrestle with your fleshly desires, you sin. Living like this causes God to be the servant of your sin. This is arrogance. This is not the good news.

Adam sinned and all died. You have all sinned more than once. But Adam only had to sin once. That one sin, by Adam, effected the death of all. All have died. By Christ's one act of obedience, the same 'all' are made alive. Sin tricks you into thinking you are your flesh, which makes you independent of any god or demon. You think you are the master of your destiny. False prophets tell you that you can do anything you

really try to do. If you do not succeed, these prophets say you did not try hard enough. Try harder.

Some years back I attended a three-hour talk by the Dali Lama. At the end, he proclaimed he would give blessed enlightenment, in an instant, to anyone who wanted it. There were at least 3,000 people at the gathering. I thought to myself, "This should be interesting. 3,000 people instantly enlightened. Now, this is going to be something to write about."

He then added that you must do this, that, and another thing. If you do these three things, 'I will enlighten you'. Well, to my knowledge no one was talking about their enlightenment as we shuffled out of the auditorium.

You have seen the same thing with today's false prophets who say God loves you and will save you... **if**. If what? It varies, but in the end, they are saying it takes your flesh behaving in a special way for you to get saved. Take away all the fluff and they are simply saying that the flesh saves. They begin by saying God saves and in the end say the flesh saves. They say, "Do this and you will live." They say, "You can even believe in your believing and God will have to save you, because you believe; your belief saves you." Some say, "You have absolutely nothing to do with being saved because only God saves and He only saves those He chooses," with an implied, 'Sorry about the rest of you.' Are you beginning to see all the ways the flesh reasons?

Why is it, that even after you have faith that God has saved you in His Son Jesus Christ, your flesh wants to add its signature to the contract? Christ's blood is the only signature on the eternal contract. That contract reads, "YOU ARE

SAVED!” If you read anything into God’s perfect contract other than this, your flesh has led you off to sin and death.

What does sin do? It condemns you to an eternal battle of trying not to be dead. Look at it this way. Every time you try not to be dead, you are already thinking you are dead. For a moment you act as if you are dead by trying to be alive, even though you have eternal life in Christ by His finished work on that cross. Sin makes you try while the cross crosses you out.

The very same ability with which Father raised Jesus from death is at work in you, freeing you from having to try to make your flesh holy. Your flesh will die. I hope that is not a shock to you. After the planting is the rising up. What comes up is not what is planted.

Trusting is what Adam should have done. God said he should not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Simple, right? *“That tree kills. I don’t want you to die.”* Adam should have thought, “Okay then, no eating of the fruit from that tree. Done. Move on. All is well. God’s loves me so much, He pointed out the one and only poisonous plant in the garden. Hallelujah!” Every one of God’s commands is His way of protecting you from death.

Every time you try to do good, Mr. Evil has already convinced you that you are not whole, complete, perfect, and you need to try to be something other than what you are. Sounds like his chat with Eve. “If you change, you will be better. Don’t trust God, trust trying. Don’t trust what God has done, trust in what you can do.”

Mary, Jesus’ mother, was told she would bear a very special Son and how it would happen. She pondered a bit and then said something like, ‘I trust You. Do your thing.’ Where was she when we needed a lady who would trust God in the

garden? Surprisingly, her incredible act of choosing God's will was birthed from a dead spirit. Talk about a miracle! How much more, once you know you are in Christ, can you choose to let God have His way? Even though your flesh is dead, your Spirit-spirit can say, "I choose Your choosing me." That sort of Spirit makes you alive with Christ, just as Jesus with Mary.

Sin, once conceived, births doubt. Not so much doubt in God as doubt in yourself. When you count yourself short of being God's child, you doubt God. First, you check yourself out, looking for the resources to do God things. I hope it was no surprise when you found yourself bankrupt. You were not created to be Godly without God being Himself through your flesh by way of your Spirit-spirit union. Like Mary, your 'yes' to His request is sufficient. The rest is up to Him. Being joined to His will is sufficient.

You have the ability to embrace the impossible.

EMBRACE GOD!

Father, may I say 'yes' to Your creative ideas and leave the rest to You as we do what is next. Let me remain pregnant long enough to deliver your purposes. Let me let You take control of Your promises.

CHAPTER 22
AGREEING WITH GOD



...that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:21 NAS)

Repentance sounds big. You can conjure all sorts of ways to feel bad about what you have thought or done. There are times for you to reflect on your behavior, but repentance should be coming to know the mind of God and agreeing with Him. A time of repentance is not a time to wallow in shame, but a time to be transformed. The second you live outside what God in you is doing, you do lawlessness. Return, find out what He is doing. Where, who, and how is He loving? Join in His program, purpose, and process. Repentance is nothing other than agreeing with what God wants to do, when, and how. It is always a time to repent.

Sensing lack is not a time to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and try to figure out how to fill that sense of lack. There is nothing to fix. You are where you are supposed to be with the opportunities to love those in front of you. There are situations where you need to escape. The crowds, more than once, tried to kill Jesus. He escaped continuing to obey Father. Wisdom is a grand companion to have. Pray for wisdom. Receive wisdom. Do wisdom.

When you loose the bonds that bind the broken hearted, visit the sick, feed the poor, pay better than fair wages, cover the cost of health insurance, execute justice, listen to both sides of the story before passing judgment, help people get dental care, eye care, medicine, or keep weights and measures constant, these are but a few of the ways He loves. When you do such acts, it proves you are living the Spirit of love.

There is no heavenly law against doing good, but it isn't natural. It is extraordinary! This type of behavior creates hope, affirmation, boldness, confidence, and more acts of love. The end of love is doing love. Lawlessness steals, kills, and destroys. Sin takes away what people need, lets them die, and on the way to their grave, robs them of faith, hope, and love. Trying to become, kills.

The world system is based on lack, shortages, inconsistency, and fear. Living from a sense of lack is the basis for fear. Co-creating lack is the sin. It is because of this, the love of many waxes cold. But you, in Christ Jesus, have all it takes to live. You live from the storehouse of love and gush forth love and abundance. Fear kills. Grace brings abundant living.

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; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you. (Titus 2:11-15 NAS)

Looking at the hope laid before you, you share, give, and do abundantly more than all this. You step out and share your life, time, and resources. You do justice. You do not make others do justice, you do justice. Equity is the foundation upon which all your conversations spring. You are His possession. He has desired you to be like Him and spend your lives for others. Greed produces fear, covetousness, and an economy based on lack. Earthly riches are built on the foundation of debt. Heavenly riches are built on overflowing abundance. There is no end to love. Love cannot be bankrupted.

You resemble God's character when you rest from trying to be better, safer, more productive, wiser, or any act that tries to fill a lack. God in Christ has come to pour out His abundance through you to others. In Him, there is no lack.

Let me be as plain as possible. When you sense a void and try to fill it, you sin. When you sense the void and rest in Him who has everything under control, that void will be transformed into abundance. Again, whenever you stumble into

darkness, shine your light. You will be amazed at what you see.

LOVE ALWAYS WINS!

Agreeing with God is not a one-time act. It is your very way of life. Jesus spoke the truth when He said that if you remain in Him and He in you, the Father would love you and He Himself would love you. In this overflowing abundance of Love, you will bear much fruit for others to consume.

Because the King is in residence within, your destiny is to feed the world with the fruit of life. You are a branch of the tree of life. You are strengthened to bear His fruit.

Father, like the burning bush, so consume me that I rejoice in being consumed and yet never die. Every life ends with a garage sale. Let my garage sale begin today and continue with each breath You gift me.

CHAPTER 23
TRUSTING GOD



What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? (Romans 3:3 NAS)

Now, this is awesome. God's faithfulness to you cannot be nullified by your unfaithfulness to God. After all, even the trust you have in God is only because Christ Jesus was given to you. Receiving the gift may be smart, but you had nothing to do with the gifting.

I know a man who changes this city. He drenches himself in the Word, in praise, and leans into Holy Spirit for hours. Once out in public, he dumps Jesus' love on everyone. I mean everyone, and indiscriminately. Sometimes he will get up early and stand at the main intersection leading out of town with a sign reminding people that Jesus loves them. If he enters a restaurant he is constantly looking to see whom he may

encourage. A few weeks ago he left town. The town is not as happy. It is true for me. I miss him a lot. He trusts God for everything. When he gets more than what he needs, he gives it away. He is a conduit of Father's love. I meet Father's love when I meet this man. After a visit, I'm tight with God. He is the living example *that it is not the man who has too little, but the man who craves more who is poor. (Seneca)*

You too can be, in your own way, a conduit of Father's love. It may not be as public as the man I just mentioned, but it can be every bit as encouraging. You see, everyone who is faithful is encouraging. How much more is God encouraging! He who speaks His life into your life every moment of every day tops all other types of encouragement. He speaks from the inside out and with His written word He speaks from the outside in.

TIME TO GUSH GOD

Like most people, the first time you hear a new thing, you try to fit it into what you know. After hearing it several times, you realize it is something new. Then, over time, you speak it out, over and over, until it becomes yours. By then it is so much yours, you most likely have forgotten where you first heard it. It is this way with coming to know, from the inside out, that sin is trying. Trusting is godliness.

Father, let me quickly embrace Your truths. As You share them with me, let me find them to be so rooted in me that I spontaneously live Your specific desires to Love specific people in specific ways at specific times.

CHAPTER 24

DOING OBEDIENCE



...for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5 NAS)

Obedience is the antidote for disobedience. What Adam and Eve ‘did’ in their one act of disobedience, Jesus, by one act of obedience ‘undid’ and accomplished much more. The Law of Moses, and obedience to it, never had the power to purge the guilty conscience. It afforded people hope in a better future but never touched the soul’s need for a new life.

Your need for law is to your shame, not your glory. Every

legal act is trying to bring you back from where you have wandered. Today, His law has been substituted with man made rules. You design programs to introduce equity by castigating equality. You love rules so you can judge the law breaker and feel safer. You make innocent people criminals by your traditions, but ban the declaration of truth in the streets and schools. You pass tens of thousands of laws and you cannot recite the 613 laws of God. You declare that ignorance of the law is no excuse while you willfully ignore God's laws. By your own judgment, you are judged. Is there an adjective for you other than arrogant?

You neither look to heaven for peace, nor to your heart, but to your hands. Your hands, like the mercy seat of God, are cupped to receive innocent blood, but they show no mercy. Your evil ways are justified by the corroding fear in your soul. Even that which you would defend with your life is worthless in your sight. You speak peace, peace, and launch destruction. You do not know God, His heart, nor His way of grace and peace.

You need grace, not for yourselves but for your neighbor. The grace of God shed abroad in your hearts is prepared to die for obedience. How is it you will so easily lay down your life for disobedience and run like a coward before the cause of mercy? Dress with mercy and you will receive mercy. Fill your hands with peace and your hands will never be empty. Love God and mankind and you fulfill the law of God.

Father, I am willing to be made willing. Make me obey
from the heart Your law of love found in Christ Jesus.
Obedience is better than sacrifice. Let me obey.

PART VII
GOD'S WILL



CHAPTER 25
GOD HAS A PLAN



And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:40 KJV)

It is no longer a mystery. To receive everlasting life is to receive Christ Jesus. Any other program is not God's program. He jealously watched over Abraham's seed, Jesus, for millennia. His gift to all nations is the One. His desired plan has always been this One Person. His desire is to plant that seed into every human heart. In your soul that seed matures. At harvest time, Father will have many wise, safe, loving children, through which to bless all of creation.

In His writings, you will find Him declaring the end from the beginning. Not only has Father declared His plan, but also His way. His door is open. The way is straight and level. His

design stands without modification. What He has spoken is and will come to pass. He is not your project. You are His project. His hands are reaching for you. Who can stay His hands?

God wills a will that never fails. What He wants never contradicts Who He is. Your will, placed in His care, has the power to do what He is doing. Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, you experience His grace and mercy. Do you see the love embodied in Jesus? The same is embodied in you. Believe and put your trust in Jesus that you are living His eternal living.

Let Father have your exact address. Talk to Him. Listen to what He has to say in His writings. Commune with those who, like yourself, walk with Jesus. Be prepared to give God-sized gifts. Walk fearlessly into God-sized problems. Receive God in His God-sized results.

It is good, as you see people loving on people, to let them know you saw their kindness. Say so! Bless them. Encourage the tiniest act of caring for others. Build each other up in doing well. Embrace every God-shaped effort.

Every God-sized opportunity begins with opposition, both from within and without. As some say, "It is a grace growing moment." People want to take you out of your temple of trust, dragging you down into their world of trying. This is your opportunity to stay put and become a lighthouse of hope, faith, and love. Proclaim your peace.

Serving God's way is an ongoing transformation. It is good to begin each opportunity with giving thanks to God. He is in control. He sends the sick, the broken hearted, the hungry, the downcast, and the very angry soul to you. He sends to you those He plans to heal, instruct, empower, disciple, and

commission to His service. The temptation to run from those He sends is your opportunity to repent. Turn around and do His will to those right in your face.

He has a plan for you. You walk up to the cross. You die. You rise in Christ. You are filled with Holy Spirit and live in another's life and call. You do what He is doing in and through your flesh, which is the same thing He did while in His flesh on earth. You do not have to do anything to be right with God. Jesus made you right. He has prepared you for the slaughter. His fire of love is ready to consume you.

Let me say it one more time. God in Christ is not preparing a warm fuzzy life for you. He calls you to co-live His life for the lost ones right in your face. You have no excuse to hate. You have every right to love, encourage, and embrace those whom most people often deem 'unlovable'.

God's plan is to have many children whose joy is doing mercy. Who rejoice in well doing. Whose peace is His gift in each moment. These children love justice and co-create the same through embracing problems with a God solution. Those who follow Him, put down their swords and forge them into plowshares. They relinquish the right to be right and in their bodily intercession reclaim the lives of the lost, those who have lost their way, their hope, and their God.

Father, Your will is for Your plan, which will be accomplished. Accomplish through me whatever part of that plan You desire. May You and only You be Magnified.

CHAPTER 26

GOD CALLS YOU TO JOIN
HIS PLAN



Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions.
(Colossians 1:24 NAS)

Paul speaks boldly to the Colossians. You may even think his words are out of place. On the contrary, they are foundational. They rest on God's bedrock and are in line with Jesus the Cornerstone. If this is true, which it is, then you too are called to fill up that which is lacking in Christ's affliction. You are not called to bleed for humanity's guilt, but you are called to suffer. Your sufferings create openings through which Father's love can be seen, felt, and appreciated.

The message of God's love to humanity began with the creation. His specific love for you was announced by His

recreation through Jesus' blood shed on the cross of Calvary. His continuing love for others is experienced through 'your' afflictions. The souls, slandered for the love of their Christ, suffer, but that affliction works a great work in the heart of the accuser.

Father has called us to share in His suffering. At Calvary, He boldly said, "I'm wrong!", when he was perfectly right. He took on your judgment against Him and poured out His righteousness on you. You judged Him wrong. He judged you right. Through Jesus, God's love for you is making you right. When others persecute you, you can be wrong, even if you are right. As you are afflicted, His righteousness is seen by His loving through you. As you live out His Self for others, the others live.

Now, joined to Christ, it is your time to love the unlovable, give to the thief, embrace the striker, accept hate, forge relationships with those who destroy relationships, stay bound to those who want to break up and be a slave to those bound by fear.

This is a God-sized calling. This life, down to brushing your teeth, is a God-sized calling. His time and Person are in you. You know your real wants. You are dressed in obedience to faith, hope, and love. What you practice here, you will continue to use in eternity.

Father, it is Your plan, Your afflictions. Here is my heart, mind, and soul.

CHAPTER 27
JOINING YOUR WILL TO HIS WILL



And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:17 NAS)

O ften your want is a passing thing. You want this, then that. Your will only remains constant insofar as you continue to want, even covet. Your getting leads to wanting and wanting to get. The human desire has a million endings and a million and one beginnings. What you seek, through things, is only trashed by the things you seek. Every desire has rust at its core.

In contrast to your will, Father's will remains forever. His wants never change. Times may change, events may vary, earthly resources may abound or dwindle, but His will is constant and remains. His plan for your life is for His will to be your want. Your wanting what He wants produces both

immediate and eternal results. You doing what He is doing produces His desired end. Your participation has its authority in His authoring. What He purposes through you is seemingly done by you. But the wise wink their eye knowingly.

Everything you can seek and desire in this life ends when it has been gained. The satisfaction vanishes with your next breath. With the next breath, you seek more of something or a repeat of the last joy or sorrow. You desire to become, instead of BE. Enter His rest and be the child you are, living from Spirit wants and acting with Spirit wisdom.

Join the Eternal Will in action. That which had no beginning, has no end, and calls things that are not as if they were, and they are. Join His greatest desire and fulfill His infinite work. Lose all you have and gain a new life, one that never ends. Hug His hugs and walk His walk. Fix your eyes upon Him and the things of earth will grow strangely dim. At the same time abide, remain, adhere to, and embrace His living through your life experiences.

Bloom where you are planted. Transform the manure in your garden into fruit fit for consumption. Love God, yourself, spouse, children, fellowship, stranger, and enemies. Make your neighbor your mission field. Give your life to crossing the street, discovering what your neighbor needs, and share. All are called to their neighborhood, whether here or there. If you leave here, once there, you are still here.

Father, Your Will is eternity itself. Let me begin eternity now.

PART VIII
GRACE REPLACES SIN



CHAPTER 28

GRACE AS THE FOUNDATION TO A
NEW LIFE



*for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable
but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word
of God. (1 Peter 1:23 NAS)*

The Word of God is His person The Christ, His grace. Meditate on this for a few million years and you will still fall short of its import. What He is expressing is His fullness, not just His fullness, but His overflowing, His plenitude. It is jam packed. No container can hold Him. Only one expression defines Him, grace, His gift. His favor for you is His Grace. His favor for you changes everything.

You cannot contain Him who is love. But He fills every nook and cranny of our lives with His goodness and kindness through His grace and love. You are filled to overflowing with His eternal outpouring of love. Where is His judgment? He

has judged us worthy of His love through His Son Jesus the Christ.

Jesus taught His disciples to look no further than the fruit. The fruit defines the tree. If you see evil, it is not God. God's fruit is different from any other tree's fruit. God fruit brings life and in such abundance that you, neither individually nor corporately, can contain it. Bathed in? No, rather baptized in love, you too fruit the same fruit of love which proves you are part of that tree of life, God Himself.

You can fruit love because you are joined to the tree of love. This ability to love is no more than a cup's ability to overflow what it cannot contain. Whatever the size of a container, once filled beyond its capacity, it spills out what it cannot contain. This is your experience with God. This is your experience of love.

Think of a tower of wine glasses stacked one on the other. First, a huge foundation of glasses are laid out and upon this, the next row is stacked. This layering continues upwards to one glass at the top. Then, as the top glass is filled to overflowing it spills into the cups below. Once they are filled past their capacity they spill over into the glasses supporting them. Over time all the glasses are filled to overflowing.

God personally continues to pour out His love into that first glass, Jesus. From there, His love pours out on those that follow Him. Everyone under Him is filled to overflowing. Layer upon layer is filled. Generation after generation overflows with His Love. There is no end to His loving. If there could be an end to His loving, then there must be an end to God himself. By definition, there is no end to God. If God's love were not everlasting then the one referred to as God is at best but a god. But His love is everlasting.

Upon grace and grace alone He has chosen to build every tomorrow.

Once, a friend of mine, asked me with anger and judgment, "Why only one way? Why not Buddha, Mohammad, Krishna, Zeus, and all the other gods and prophets?"

I said, "So people like me will not get confused."

It is easy for you to get confused, but you do have a choice, well a dilemma. You can either continue making sin your god or receive Jesus as God, who chose you. You have been chosen in Him. You were chosen by physical birth to be a child of Mr. Sin. In the same way, you were chosen in Him, by the second birth, to be a child of Mr. Right.

When you were with Mr. Sin, you were out of Mr. Right's control. Once you receive God's gift of grace, you are out of Mr. Sin's control. Either way, you are out of control. When you were a child of Mr. Sin, life was unworkable for you. Your best produced sin, shame, sadness, and failure. If not those, then these--greed, fear, and anger. In Christ, you experience faith, hope, and love. You can trade the first seven experiences for the last three.

The life birthed in Mr. Sin leads to efforts to live better, even trying to live better forever. The Life of Mr. Right, seeded within you, leads to rest while doing more for others than you ever imagined.

Father, let me choose Your choice, Christ the foundation of the New Life.

CHAPTER 29
GRACE AS THE MEANS TO A
NEW LIFE



If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. (John 15:7 NAS)

To abide in a home you must first know it exists, know its address, and have a key to the front door. Then you must traverse the threshold, enter, and start living. You might travel from it for work, play, or necessities, but you return. That is abiding.

Know Jesus, God's eternal gift. Know He stands before you right now. Take Him out of your hiding place, turn around and agree with God that Jesus is the best God has for you. Turn that key. Open the door. Walk in. Take Jesus' very words and make them your own. Share the same. That's all there is to it. That is abiding. Now what?

Ask for what you NEED in order to continue to live and

follow the Word in your heart. Ask God for whatever it will take for you to share with others both the temporal and the eternal. Ask for opportunities to love. Ask for stuff to stuff the pockets of others. Ask for health to do for others. Ask for time, energy, and the appropriate skills to bless others. Ask for Mr. Grace to be the grace you give to others. This is His will. You have what you ask for.

You start each God-sized task, like cleaning the floor, with either a sense of “I can do this” or a sense of “He can do it.” Both statements are true if you know it is He who is your ‘I can’ and you are His instrument. It takes Him to do you and you to do Him. We are both totally dependent on Holy Spirit and He is totally depending on you. It is totally up to Him while it is totally up to you. We are slaves to His request and independent at the same time. In Him we do what we want, knowing it is His want.

We are called to become aware of all His Person and resources. We do not change at our core but we do respond to His desires to love as we are aware of those He wants us to bless. Because of this, it is His love that defines your meaning. You are both the object of His love and the temple from which He loves others.

Father, let me recognize Your Grace as my meaning.
Abide as my meaning as I abide in that which You
make meaningful.

CHAPTER 30
GRACE RESULTS IN A NEW LIFE



“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. (John 15:5 NAS)

You are not the vine. You are the branch. You are attached to the vine in order that you can bear much fruit. Only as you abide in Christ can Christ bear fruit through you. Of yourself, you can do no fruiting. Really, and literally, you can of yourself do nothing. Your spirit, even with His Spirit, cannot initiate the things needed to accomplish Father’s desired end. Just as Jesus in His earthly ministry could only do what He saw the Father already doing, so you are to do what the Son is doing. His face is before our Father just as our face is before Him.

Grace received culminates in a new life full of His grace

and truth. You become new in Him and He becomes real to others through you. Jesus is Mr. Grace. He is dependent, as the vine, on the Father, as you are a dependent branch on Him who is the vine. Your union with Him is the foundation upon which you live. Union is union. One.

He in you completes you. Your sharing Him completes others. Your efforts to please God, apart from God's immediate design, fail to do what Father is doing through Jesus right now, by His Spirit, through you. Your efforts to complete anything He has started fall short of His design. Every time you try to make His promise happen, you make a mess, like Abraham taking Hagar to raise up a son.

Yes, all things work for your good as you love the LORD. That is grace in action. You are not called to need grace, but to give grace. Your call is the expression of Father to this dying world. You are His Spirit embodied, gifting the world with the knowledge of Jesus' life as well as His words. Simply put, your life is letting God love through you. He does this through you, just as you are.

Father, let me so know your fullness as to end all need for gathering, and to press on and give, give, give. May Your every desire to encourage, clothe, feed, and set free spontaneously find a way through this humbled soul to others. May I seek for others what I have sought for myself. May I join in their emptiness only to enrich them with Your abundance and through Your perfection.

PART IX
RELATIONSHIP FIRST
TO LAST



CHAPTER 31

RECEIVING ETERNAL LIFE



...for “Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved.” (Romans 10:13 NAS)

Your whole life is made up of the coming and going of relationships. You have gathered comfort and shared the same. Every day you pass on the good received.

Today I shared in Father’s joy of encouraging a young man. During my prayer time, I sensed I should be at my favorite coffee shop at 10 am. I was tempted to go to the store first, but Holy Spirit pressed in on my heart not to go. Soon my brain agreed. Taking a back road, I changed my direction and went to the coffee shop. I sat outside at a place where I could see the door. For 15 long minutes, I waited. Finally, at 10 AM exactly, a man, who had exited his car, walked to the front door of the coffee shop just as a woman ran up. He opened

the door for her. She kindly received his offer. As he went in I caught his attention and said, “You deserve to be happy today.” With a big smile, he said, “Thank you.”

My heart leaped within. I could only imagine he would go to work and bless someone else, who would not express anger at a co-worker, and that person would not go home and kick their dog, who in turn would not bite their neighbor, who could go on to win a marathon for his mother.

You have a greater call than this. You have a call to bless those who curse you, figure out ways to destroy you, turn hearts against you, and strike you. I simply blessed one who had blessed. Imagine how much greater the result of blessing one who has injured you.

You may find such a call beyond your imagination. It may sound incredulous, even ignorant and foolish. Presidents have declared this teaching of Jesus, to love everyone, as impossible. They have scoffed at it and suggested that it is something to do in the way distant future. Such thoughts do not change the truth. Jesus died for the ungodly. That means you qualify for His love. Guess what you get to do? Give eternal life.

Father, let my love be genuine because of its origination in You. Let the Love they receive have Your fingerprints all over It.

CHAPTER 32
RECEIVING THE SON



But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, (John 1:12 NAS)

Several times you have heard the call to embrace Jesus the Christ. If you have not done so, what is stopping you? Name it or even make a list. After doing so, ask yourself in all honesty, “Which one of those list items will survive my death?” Have you taken hold of a hope other than Father’s hope? He has taken hold of you. A simple conversation with God declaring your desire to call upon the name of the LORD (Jesus) is enough. Your surrender to God’s grace is not a call to do better, though you will. It is not declaring God to be God of your life, for He is your God, whether you know it or not. Receiving the Son is not giving your life to God, for

He has already taken it and executed it in Christ on the cross. It is simply receiving what He has given, the risen life of His Son.

The joy of having eternal life is the starting place for your walk with your LORD and also the very foundation upon which you walk each day. You may have a giggly feeling, and at times you may not. His joy in you bypasses human understanding. You will learn that circumstances do not dictate His joy in you. You have begun this new life victoriously. Every day is His re-invitation to join in His victory and to walk in His gifting of grace.

After receiving the Son, you may be tempted to be perfected by improving your flesh. You did not come to know His love for you by your flesh behaving. You simply received what was given. Trying to 'do God,' slaps God in the face and declares Him insufficient to do you. You declare His arm short. In the end, you will learn His arm is not short. He wins.

You call God a liar every time you try to improve the flesh. You will learn that your spirit joined with His Spirit is complete, even perfect. He redeemed you for Himself when you were worth nothing. By His only Begotten Son's holy blood He purchased you, a dead corpse with a dead spirit, with no relationship to truth and life.

The second you say YES to His YES, you have the right to be His child. You have it all. You are complete. You have peace with God and are embodied, love. Every moment, you have opportunities to let faith, hope, and love gush out of you onto a parched soul and watch Jesus pop out and start loving a whole new group of unreached people.

Jesus' name means God-Saves. Believe this, only God saves. Jesus is your salvation, not your way to get a thing

called salvation. If you have Him, you have life. Tell me, do you have life?

How can you know if you have life? You will just know. You will have the witness in yourself. If you simply believe on His name, you can know you have life eternal. How? The Bible tells you.

Do you have His Son? Do you trust God's Son? Are you agreeing with God? Has Jesus received you? Embracing His Son as your eternal life is trusting God. Let us look at I John 5:9-13.

9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son.

Verse 9 uses the word testimony. When you give testimony in a court of law you are declaring what you say is the truth. You trust men's testimonies. How much more should you trust God's testimony concerning His Son?

10 The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.

Verse 10 declares you should say the same thing He says. If you say something different, you are asking that your testi-

mony be accepted over God's testimony. When you do not believe God, you disagree with His declaration and call Him a liar.

11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

Verse 11 proclaims God's testimony. It is short and direct without explanation. His declaration of what He has done is in the past tense. It has happened. It is not going to happen. It has happened. What has happened? God has given you eternal life. That life is His Son Jesus the Christ.

12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Verse 12 says that you have Him and because you have Him you have life. If you do not believe what God has said, you do not trust that you have His Son nor His life. But if you trust Him you have Him. You have Eternal Life.

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Verse 13 makes God's claim sure and certain. You who have trust in the name of the Son of God, Jesus the Christ (God Saved you), you can rest assured you have Eternal Life.

To put it another way. Everyone has a right to consider themselves a child of God. For some weird reason, some ignore that right, others disown that right.

God has saved all, in Christ. Those who agree with God experience that truth. Those who disagree, or postpone a decision in favor of God's testimony, will not experience that truth. You can, right now, experience the truth by simply agreeing with God.

What comes next? A life of agreeing with God. He has called you to obedience and to obey is to agree. Jesus declared that when the Holy Spirit would come that He would convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He went on to explain. Of sin, because people do not trust Him Whom God has sent. That would be Jesus. Sin is not trusting and not trusting is sin. He calls all to obey. Not some and not a select few, He calls all.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. (I Thessalonians 5:23, 24 NAS)

He calls. He is faithful to do. To do what? He will sanctify you from inside out and from head to toe. To be sanctified

means you are set aside for His service. Your spirit, soul, and body will be used and preserved complete.

Father, I come to You as Your child. You have declared that in Jesus I am Your child and without fault. I agree with You. I am, right now Your faultless child.

CHAPTER 33
RECEIVING PERSONAL GRACE



We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (1 John 3:16 NAS)

You cannot receive what is not being given. Jesus' love is shared by His having once, laid down His life for you. Naturally then, we who have faith can join in the program and share our personal grace. It seems foolish to think that proclaiming Jesus to people can raise them from the dead. Especially a death they did not know they were living, but it can. You can proclaim Jesus as their sufficiency. This is the Good News. He is all sufficient. You have eternal life. There, I did it!

He laid down His life to join Himself to you. He, through

you, lays down His life for others. Not the laying down that purchased salvation, but the laying down that calls the dead out from their grave. Hear His voice! Get up and live!

All you can ever know of Father is seen in the Son. He has called you to put away your fire and to let His fire consume the confusion in your heart. His fire is the breath of life itself burning out everything that blocks Him from having His immediate way with you. You are called to enjoy Him and to share Him.

Your relationship with God through Jesus is a call to share in the dance between you and the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Years ago I had a very vivid dream. I was in a great hall with a dome in the center. Dining tables were set all around the hall, three steps up from the grand black marble dance floor. The center of the dome was the universe itself with every galaxy looking down. Those around the tables were in white robes. Everyone looked to a door at my left. Out came Jesus. He went to the marble floor with His bride and began to dance. The dance was the music. I was humbled watching. Such beauty I had never before imagined. As I wondered why I was not dancing with Him, for I had been taught I also was His bride, I found myself dancing with Him.

He was teaching me to dance. He put His hand square on my back and gently pressed to my right side. He said, "When I do this, turn to your right," He did the same on the left side. We were not touching except for His hand in mine and His other on my back. Soon we were twirling around the floor making our own music.

Then as He pressed His hand on my back toward Himself He said, "When I do this, come toward me." I moved toward Him only to find Him retreating. I was both sad and frus-

trated. I wanted to crash into Him and be lost in Him. He continued by saying, "What I am going to do next may be frightening. I am going to take my hand off your back." When He did so I moved backward looking for His hand to once again press against my back. I kept going backward but, for the longest time, there was no hand. I looked at Him, almost in tears. He was looking to the side with regal head turned up just slightly. I felt like everything was up to me. I remembered how, on earth, that did not work out so well. Then, just at the right time, He pressed me toward Himself and I again wanted to crash into His arms and get lost in His embrace. But He moved back and we continued to dance.

You too have a dance to dance. You have other ways to be with Him, in union with Him, and yet in relationship with Him. You too can make music. By placing your attention on what He is doing, the whole universe looks on and marvels at His creation.

All you have to do is show up to enjoy all of eternity. To dance with God before His creation takes only one thing. You have been called to the wedding feast. Just say YES, Show up. Learn to dance. Let the world watch. Let the universe sigh. Let the angels smile.

There are as many ways to receive personal grace as people, but there is only One Person who is Mr. Grace. That Person is the historical Jesus of Nazareth also known as the Galilean. You don't have to believe the good news that God's rule has come to earth. No one can force you to do so. It is up to you. He has invited all people to discover that what He has said is true. That is all you can do. Humble yourself before Him and call upon His name. Let Him be your eternity.

Jesus, let us dance! Let the music of our dancing fill the lives of all who look on. Encourage them even when I delay and You press on and we continue the dance. Let them desire to dance with you as well.

PART X
WRAPPING IT UP



CHAPTER 34
GOD IS PERSONAL



For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:12 NAS)

What you experience now is not what you will experience in the hereafter yet you have everything you need. Live as if you are complete even perfect. Being perfect does not mean you are sinless. It means you have been completed and are completed in Christ Jesus. Trying to live a sinless life, means you see yourself as a child of Mr. Sin. Oops!

If you are incomplete now, you will continue to be incomplete. If you practice trying to be better, you will become an expert at becoming better. But you will never arrive. This way of living is in stark contrast to God's Truth in action. You

have been called perfect and complete by God. Just as it took a leap of faith to believe that God, in Christ, HAS saved you, so again you have the choice to receive His Word or not, which declares you perfect. To be completed in Christ is to be perfect.

We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. (Colossians 1:28 NAS)

This scripture is not asking you to become complete but to learn, with all wisdom, that you are complete. If you fear, you have not been completed in love. The flesh has fear, breeds fear, and births fear. Mr. Love raised us up from the tomb of fear (flesh) and placed us with Him in the heavenly places. It is Christ Who completes you, not your flesh trying to be sinless. Christ in you does not try to be sinless but just does what He has always done, obeys the Father. You, in union with Him, want what He wants. Just do what you want!

I was talking to a brother in the faith last night. He admitted that he was an alcoholic. His drinking satisfies him until it wears off. Then he craves alcohol. I asked him what he wanted. He admitted he did not want to drink. Through our conversation, it became apparent that he suffered because he drank. He craved alcohol, which for a time, eased his suffering. Then again he would suffer. I asked him a second time what he wanted. He said that he did not want to drink. So, knowing God was done with drinking booze through this man's lips, I said, "Why don't you do what you want to do?"

You know what you want! As one who trusts Christ for eternal life, you can trust your wants to match His wants. If you believe God in you is sufficient, you will complete God's

wants. He in you is prepared to do what He wants. By His will, He made you. By His power, He can use you. If our Father were speaking, He would be saying something like, “I am not asking you to trust Me for a resurrection from the dead and an eternal life with Me. What I am asking of you is infinitely more difficult. I am asking you to trust Me to live you.”

You can repent from trying to be the finisher of the Author’s authoring. Every Old Testament story is either about a person who trusted God and God prevailed or someone who distrusted God and God still prevailed. Your unfaithfulness in God’s ability has no power to make Him unfaithful. What He has proposed, HE WILL DO! He just asks you to give yourself over to Him for the task. Now that is a God who is personal.

Is this call something you want to ignore, God calling you, just as you are, to be so Holy Spirit possessed that what you do is His immediate willing? Each person’s call in Christ eclipses any prophet’s call. You who walk in the Kingdom of God have the call to witness the works of His mighty hand and proclaim that which you witness. You not only participate, but it would seem, as in the life of Christ, as if you initiate what God is doing.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2 NAS)

At every point, our fleshly thinking can be transformed into God’s thinking. God has one will and it is good, acceptable, and perfect.

Father, let me rest in Your one Will experienced as
Your good Will, Your acceptable Will, and Your perfect
Will.

CHAPTER 35
YOU HAVE THE GRACE NEEDED



And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2 Corinthians 12:9 NAS)

Grace is sufficient. Mr. Grace is all sufficient. Flesh, yielded to Mr. Grace, expresses the very capabilities of Christ. Your flesh, doing God capable things, shows God is with you. When you are humbled, He can be bold through you. It is in your humility, you glorify the Son. Any other boasting is pride and God hates and sets Himself up against the proud. The destruction of the proud is inevitable. The flesh ends and so then the boasting. The pride ends with the flesh. But God continues forever. The proud depend on their flesh. The flesh depends on methods. Sing this way, dance

that way, teach these things, press in this way, call upon the LORD with these words, study so long each day, and pray with authority. These are but a few of the methods the flesh suggests. In contrast, the humble depend on God. I said the humbled by God, not by self or sin. In the presence of God, Israel's enemies defeated themselves. In the presence of Israel, their enemies defeated Israel.

Pride always announces a humiliation. Once humbled, you can repent of trying to do God-sized stuff by the flesh. You can be spiritually anemic, physically weak, find no resources at hand, feel adrift on an ocean of undefined possibilities, and still be transformed, in the moment, into a spiritual person doing God-sized things. You are called to be a child of God, through humility before God.

How do you become His child? Believe on His name. How do you function as a child of God? Be led by the Spirit of God. Will the world recognize you? No more than it recognized Jesus. Even so, the whole creation is eager to know you. While they are in a crooked world, they will know you are harmless, blameless, and they have no right to rebuke you.

Christ is the end of your flesh having to produce right living. Fleshly fears and weaknesses are but jumping stones from which God graces you with every spiritual blessing.

Father, let the tiniest event I face, be Your God-sized victory!

CHAPTER 36
RECEIVE THE GRACE GIVEN



For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17 NAS)

You reign now. Those who have no confidence in the flesh get to do what God is doing. He is first and always loving, for God IS love. You, once joined to the LORD, share in His love, loving. You personally know words alone are not enough, so you share your life. You have eyes to see the need and know how to turn to Mr. Grace. The more incapable you might feel, the greater is His power to perform His strength. Be strong in the LORD!

Christ's greatest victory was dying. Father's victory was raising Him up from the dead. You are asked to have that

same mind in you that you found in Him. He humbly obeyed, even the obedience that led to His death. This is God's way. It was a one-time event that continues. He, in you, still humbles Himself to the will of Father and by His Spirit in you continues to give, and give, and give. Only something has changed. He can no longer die. He lives forever through His children, who carry on, not only His Name but His family business.

You, in Him, have received the overflowing abundance of Mr. Grace. This gift, of being made right, brings you to the same victory in life that Jesus won. You have overcome the spirit of self-for-self and remain in, through, and by the Spirit, a self-for-others.

Hear and see what He is doing. You have opportunities to express love, faith, and hope right where you are right now. Who are you ready to hate? Love them! Who are you ready to cheat? Bless them with abundance. Who do you want to dishonor? Raise them up and be their friend. There is no end to the possibilities. God's gifting is God being Himself. As a child of God, join in His abundance of Grace, gracing the world in which you live.

Father, take me far from the limits of flesh and the bankruptcy of human efforts and press me into Your capabilities found in Christ. Here is my soul. You are welcome to it. Gift, by Your Spirit, peace, joy, love, long-suffering, and every Spiritual function as 'we' love. Let me be Your victory!

CHAPTER 37
A SIMPLE PRAYER



If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. (John 15:7 NAS)

Prayers is talking to God. As Christians, we can talk to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. You can tell God what you understand from His Word. You can tell Him your struggles, problems, hopes, and dreams. But most of all, you can rest and listen.

He has told you what is good and what is required of you: to love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with Him. Jesus declared that the Father sends life-giving rain on the just and the unjust equally. Then He declared, “You will be perfect like your heavenly Father is perfect.”

The time to be holy is now and the ability to be holy is Christ in you, your hope of glory. You are called to be perfect,

now. But you cannot obtain perfection as if it were some commodity. Holiness is like purchasing a Steinway grand piano and sticking it into a corner. You too are set aside by our LORD for our Master's use. Rest until He uses you. The lamp-stand in the temple of our God does not, for eagerness to serve, run over to the altar and try and do altar things. Be what God has made you and is living out through you.

You are created to rain love on everyone equally. In this way, you are perfect just as your Father who is in heaven is perfect. Yes, it is enough we are like our Master. It is a gift greater than any could have imagined. You are bound to Him, living His love on everyone, without discrimination and being no respecter of persons.

In light of this, your prayer is simple, "I agree with You LORD, Your ways, purposes, and processes. Thank You for setting me aside for Your use. I cannot wait to feel your hand on my life so I can know you are using me."

Father, let the prayer of my heart be pure and complete. Let my desire to be used of You not run ahead of Your need to use me. But once in Your hand, let me rest in Your doing, and rejoice in Your ways. Thank You for being perfect and complete in Your love.

CHAPTER 38
LIFE AFTER LIFE



Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4 NAS)

Walk in newness of life. When? Now! What an awesome humbling fact that God's full intention for you is to walk in a new life while in this old world. This new life is no longer a mystery. It is Christ in you the hope of God's resurrection glory and the resurrected Christ living through us. Now is your day of salvation. Not tomorrow or after you paint that accent wall in the bedroom. Right now, right where you are. This day is but one day of the rest of eternity.

How can I trust that today is a God filled day? Believe that when Christ died, you died. He has come again in your flesh, by His Spirit joined with your spirit. That is a sort of mini resurrection as depicted in your physical baptism. By the way, if you believe in Christ and have not been baptized, it would be a great way to declare your faith in Him.

So then, your baptism is your public declaration that He lives, and you get to tag along. This is profound. I have a cousin who was eight years younger than my father. My cousin's father had died when my cousin was very young. My dad took him everywhere. My cousin felt big and capable, but it was my father who carried him through life's experiences. He is now the age my father was when he died, yet by his words my father still carries him. So it is with us and Jesus.

You are not just publicly declaring Jesus died and rose up from the grave, as much as you are also declaring that in Him you died and rose up to sit with Him in the heavenly places. Right now, you are where He is and He is where you are. By faith, you have already begun to live His living through you. You have already been set aside for your Master's use, He in you and you in Him. That union defines your abilities. Your flesh no longer defines you. Your self has changed from a flesh-driven self to His Spirit-driven self. Time to get into the back seat and leave the driving to Christ.

C. S. Lewis said, "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.' " All that are in hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek, find. To those who knock, it is opened.

Father, let me renew the desire of my heart for Your
will to be done.

CHAPTER 39
EXPECT RESISTANCE



Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. (John 15:20 NAS)

Odd as it may seem, prior to surrendering to Christ, you hated love. You, being unable to love yourself, concluded that God could not love you. It was right then, in the midst of your hating Him, He accepted you. Yes, He pitied your slavery, but He never pitied you. He had a plan for you to live love, both now in this world of hate and confusion and later in eternity. The entrance fee was Christ outside you, loving you. The prize is Him in you, loving others.

Jesus knew, while on earth, that people sought to kill Him because He did what the Father was doing. His obedience

flew into the face of every other human. He was living the way you were meant to live. If you had been there, you would have hated Him too. The hate He received was because He was successful where you were powerless.

He rose from the grave. He hung around for 40 days. Then He disappeared from sight. On Pentecost, He came back in the form of Holy Spirit and took residence in and among His disciples. Once you trust Him as your life, you are also baptized by His Spirit. By Holy Spirit's abilities, you can will God's will.

Every act of a flesh-bound person is an act of a self-for-self, even if it costs someone their life. But if you express being a self-for-others, you might become the object of their hate. Strange, but true. You will be persecuted. On the flip side, if they would hear Him, they will hear you. You are like your Master inside and will receive the same treatment on the outside.

Coming to Christ is not an escape from hell. Instead, you will boldly dash into a fiery pit with Him and seek the lost, comfort the broken hearted, heal the wounded soul, and free the captives. Your call is to battle. Not with human hands filled with steel, but with a truly human heart overflowing with the water of life, loving all with whom you come in contact.

Father, I receive you. You have received me. Let 'us' receive them.

CHAPTER 40
LIVE GRACE TO OTHERS



No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. (1 John 4:12 NAS)

Finally, let His love flow through you. You do not see what God sees. You do not know the worth of one soul. You cannot produce the least grace for those for whom He died. But you can share grace to all equally by acting through love. Not a self-serving faith, but a faith that serves.

Your crown of glory is decked with the smiles of all those who live in His presence because of your obedience to the call to love. It is time to live grace to others. It is always time to do that sort of thing. Do everything He wills. Skip the need for direction, or voices, or unctions. Your life is in His hands.

Just live. Do what is next. Embrace each moment with your heart, with thanksgiving, and with obedience to love. Father has called you to be wise with what He has given, Jesus. Wise enough to receive Him. Wise enough to share Him. Wise enough to hold back from sharing until His breath blows. You are wise in the LORD. You can do the next thing. Is it done in love? It is enough.

To live grace now is dynamic and challenging. Your boat will rock and you will rock everyone else's boat. Your boat may be tempest-tossed and look as if it is sinking. At times, maybe for years, there will be nothing but calm with no wind and your sails will seem to be rotting before you. But as soon as you are blessed with the breath of God, what was lifeless will, in an instant, be driven to behave perfectly. You will do what He is doing in a storm, calm, or fair winds.

It is His breath breathing you that both initiates and completes Father's will. As the breath blows, do. As the breath rests, rest. It really is too simple to explain. Your union with Him dictates His doing love through you. The power He uses is your spirit agreeing with His Spirit. The vehicle He uses is your body, soul, and strength.

Total dependence on Father led Jesus to be the eternal grace gifted to humanity. Your total dependence on Jesus leads you to grace that humanity for which He died.

Father, breathe upon me that I might breathe upon others.



THE BEGINNING

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