

A woman with blonde hair is sitting in a grassy field, looking down. In the background, another woman is lying down on the grass. The scene is set in a rural landscape with hills and trees under a cloudy sky.

alive
magazine
MAY '19

Life

THE GIFT CHRIST GIVES US

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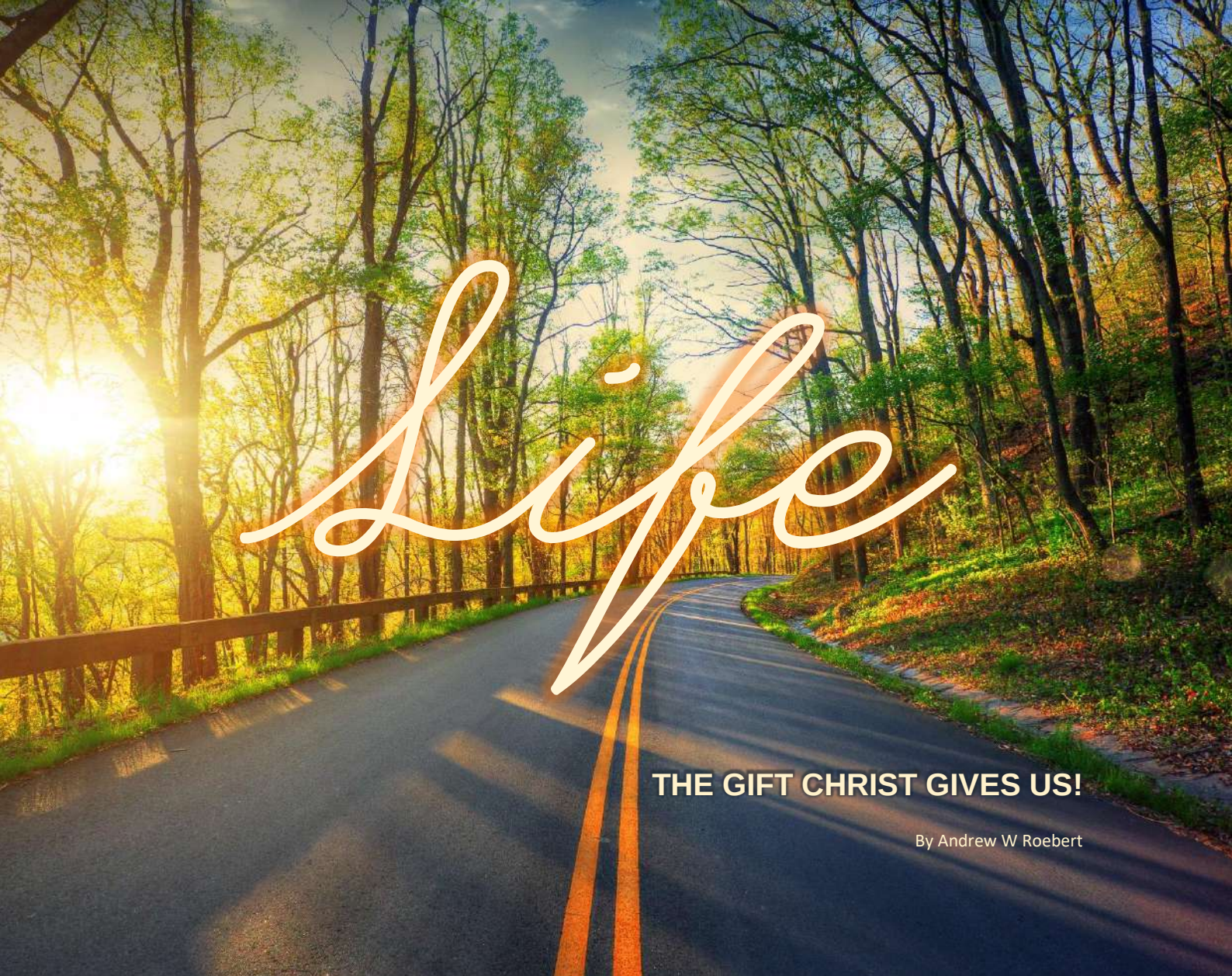
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Life

THE GIFT CHRIST GIVES US!

By Andrew W Roebert

John 11:25 *Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me (Added: that is a choice in our minds) will live, even though they die!'*

Life is what Jesus came to give us when He came to earth in human form to die and to rise from the dead. Life is our portion, our right, our privilege and our inheritance. The Bible actually speaks of abundant life that we can enjoy.

How often we settle for so much less. We settle for survival and 'lifeless' living, when He paid the ultimate price to give us real, true and abundant life. Humanity is often like 'Dead Men Walking'. We can physically alive, but dead in every other way.

The question is: 'How can we know more of His life in our daily lives?' What causes us to miss out and not experience this life? Is there something we should take note of, or is there some aspect that we should be

aware of that can help us to move from a place of death to a place of life?

The Apostle Paul writes about this aspect in the book of Romans and gives some direction on this point. The Apostle Paul mentions several laws that apply to the situation and we will take a look at four that he mentions. Perhaps in what he says we can find a key to enjoying more of this life that the Lord has in store for us.

SCRIPTURE READING: Romans 8:1-2

(You may want to read Romans chapter 7 and 8)

Romans 8:1-2 *'Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.'*

4 laws that the Apostle Paul mentions in the book of Romans

1. THE LAW OF GOD.

In Romans chapter 7, we see how the writer repeatedly mentions the law. The word 'LAW' appears more than 20 times in one chapter in my translation. He sums it up towards the end of the chapter. In **Romans 7:22** *'For in my inner being I delight in God's law.'*

God's law or what we shall call the 'LAW OF GOD' is the overarching law under which we all live. God commanded the world to be a certain way.

He also gave commands or laws as to how we should live. An example of this would be the law that we should not kill (murder). This law does not only apply to Christians, but most humankind oppose the taking of innocent life. Paul, the writer of Romans, goes on to say that the law is holy (v12), the law is spiritual (v14) the law is good (v16). I believe that the LAW OF GOD was birthed out of His love for humanity.

With the coming of Jesus this aspect took on a new dimension. We see this in Jesus' answer to one expert who asked Him about this.

Matthew 22:35-40 *One of them, an expert in the law, tested Him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind'. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

So, we have the LAW OF GOD into which we are born and under which we find ourselves. Ultimately, I believe that the 'LAW OF GOD' is a demonstration of His love towards us.

2. THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH.

Another law we see mentioned is the law of sin and death. In fact, it is mentioned more than once.

Romans 7:23 it speaks of the 'LAW OF SIN'.

Romans 8:2 it speaks of the 'LAW OF SIN AND DEATH'.

Other scriptures make mention of this aspect.

Romans 6:23 *'For the wages of sin is death!'*

Romans 3:23 *'For ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'*

1 John 1:8 (Amplified version) *'If we say we have no sin, we delude (deceive) and lead ourselves astray, and the Truth is not in us.'*

Romans 7:21 *'So I find it to be a LAW, that when I want to do good, evil is ever present with me and I am subject to its insistent demands.'*

Every man, woman and child who was ever born or ever will be born has a problem with SIN. The Good News is that God has provided an answer to our sin problem.

2 Corinthians 5:21 *'For our sakes HE made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in HIM.'*

So, we see this 'law of sin and death' that Paul mentions in his writings.

3. THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE.

Christ came and died so that this law could become a reality on our lives.

Romans 8:2 *speaks about this: '...the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus...'*

Here we see a different dimension. Here is another law that gives us all the hope we need. It's a law that changes the dynamic in every situation we may find ourselves in in the course of life. It is clearly illustrated in the verse.

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

Jesus has turning things around for us. Through Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit, there is another law that comes into effect and this law has the power to set us free from the other law.

4. THE LAW OF THE MIND.

In Romans 7:23 we see another law mentioned: the 'LAW OF THE MIND'. Our minds play a very important role in our daily lives. The Bible tells us that as a man thinketh - so is he. In essence the 'LAW OF THE MIND' gives us the ability to choose between the 'LAW OF SIN AND DEATH' and the 'LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS'.

In Romans chapter 8, Paul describes two classes of people. Those who live according to their sinful natures and those who live according to the Spirit. Which class you belong to depends on what you decide in your mind and who you will submit to as a result.

Romans 7:23 (Amplified version) *'But I discern in my bodily members a different law at war against the LAW OF MY MIND (my reason) and making me a prisoner to the law of SIN which dwells in my bodily members.'*

We have this ability to reason. It is a God-given gift, but reason itself will draw us away from God. It is for this reason that we have to be aware of this law of the mind. If we rely purely on reason, it will take us down the wrong road.

Our minds need to be brought under the control of our spirits and the Holy Spirit, so that it will not lead us astray. Our minds need to be set, programmed and renewed according to the Holy Spirit and not our own natures.

You see we can choose unforgiveness, grudges, anger, offence, hatred, pride and selfishness and reap the results of the relevant law, OR We can choose to forgive, release, be tenderhearted, love, humility and kindness and reap the results of that relevant law.

Romans 8:6-7 (Amplified version) *'Now the MIND of the FLESH [which is sense and reason without the Holy Spirit] is DEATH. (Death that comprises of all the miseries arising from sin, both now and hereafter) BUT the MIND OF THE Holy Spirit [the mind controlled by the Spirit] is LIFE and soul peace both now and forever.'*

5. CHOOSE HIS LIFE.

CHOICES we make in THE MIND, determine whether we live under THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH, or we live under THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS. THE GOAL is to live in THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS! - Romans 8:2 "The law of the Spirit of LIFE in Christ Jesus."

HOW?

Hebrews 8:10

(Amplified version)

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will imprint My laws upon their minds, even upon their innermost thoughts and understanding, and engrave them upon their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be My people.

3 important points

Point 1

God's law no longer comes to us on stone tablets, but is written in our hearts.

Romans 7:6 *'So now we serve, not under obedience to the old code of written regulations, but under obedience to the promptings of the Spirit in newness of LIFE.'*

Point 2

This teaches us that we are to be led by the inner promptings of the Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit knows the mind of God concerning our lives and circumstances.

He (The Holy Spirit) will reveal God's will for us and lead us into His fullness as we follow His promptings. To PROMPT MEANS TO REMIND US OR GIVE US A CUE. It does not indicate force or control or manipulation. God

sets before each of us LIFE and DEATH and encourages us to choose LIFE, so that we and our descendants may have lives He has carefully planned for us.

Romans 6:12-14 *Let not SIN therefore rule as king in your mortal bodies, to make you yield to their cravings... Do not continue offering or yielding your bodily members and faculties to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but offer and yield yourselves to God, as though you have been raised from the dead to perpetual LIFE and your bodily members to God, presenting them as instruments of righteousness. For SIN shall not have dominion over you, since you are not under the Law, but under Grace.*

Point 3

SOW TO THE SPIRIT.

Galatians 6:8 *For he who sows to his own flesh, will from the flesh reap corruption. Decay and ruin. BUT he who sows to the Spirit, will from the Spirit reap life - life eternal.*

Galatians 6:7 *Don't be deceived and misled. God will not allow Himself to be mocked, for whatever a man sows, that and that only is what he will reap.*

Ephesians 5:18 *'Keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit!'*

Listen to and obey His voice
(often gentle nudging) Choose
the LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN
CHRIST JESUS and walk away
from THE LAW OF SIN AND
DEATH. Speak life, choose life
and reject sin and death and do
not entertain it!



WHY IS LIFE SO HARD?

www.gotquestions.org

Life *is* hard. It is harder for some than for others, but we all must cope with being imperfect people in an imperfect world. Accidents, disasters, illness, heartache, loss—the ways that the human heart can suffer are myriad. Even Jesus agreed that life is hard, but He didn't stop there. He said, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Life was never supposed to be hard. When God created the world and placed the first man and woman in it, life was perfect (Genesis 1–2). Bodies were perfect. The temperature was perfect. The first couple's relationship was perfect, and they had everything they needed or wanted. They even had the presence of God with them. They lived in paradise.

Enter sin (Genesis 3). When Adam and Eve chose their own way over God's, everything changed. Perfection was marred, and life became hard. As a result of humanity's disobedience, God cursed the perfect world He had made so that it turned on the man and woman. Thistles sprouted where flower beds had been. Food was no longer available everywhere they looked. They must now forage, plant, struggle, and reap in order to survive. Sin ruined everything. Now "the whole creation groans" (Romans 8:22, NAS), and we groan with it.

Sin still affects our world, and life is still hard. Sin has a ripple effect that carries its destruction to others. Consider this example: a man gets drunk. That's one sin (Proverbs 20:1). He comes home and beats his wife and children: more sin. His wife suffers a broken nose that will cause her difficulties for the rest of her life. The children are so traumatized that they run away, eventually getting involved in drugs and prostitution. More sin. One son gets in his car and, under the influence of drugs, ignores a stop sign and slams into a bus, killing six people. Their families will now grieve the loss for the rest of their lives, and others will be affected by their pain in various ways. The fallout from one sin continues to spread, impacting countless other people who then impact other people, and the legacy goes on. That's only one sin. Multiply that by tens of millions, and we start to understand why the world is so messed up and life is so hard.

Another reason life is so hard is that this is not our final home. Those who belong to Jesus are here on visitor's passes. We became citizens of another kingdom the moment God adopts us into His family (John 1:12). We are ambassadors, here on assignment for our Father, the King of kings (2 Corinthians 5:20). We're not supposed to feel at home in this world. We don't belong here, so it's only natural that we often feel like aliens and strangers (Hebrews 11:13). Life is hard many times because those who've been redeemed and transformed by Jesus Christ live with a deep yearning to go home (2 Corinthians 5:17). But as obedient children we remain faithful to our assignments until our Father calls for us.

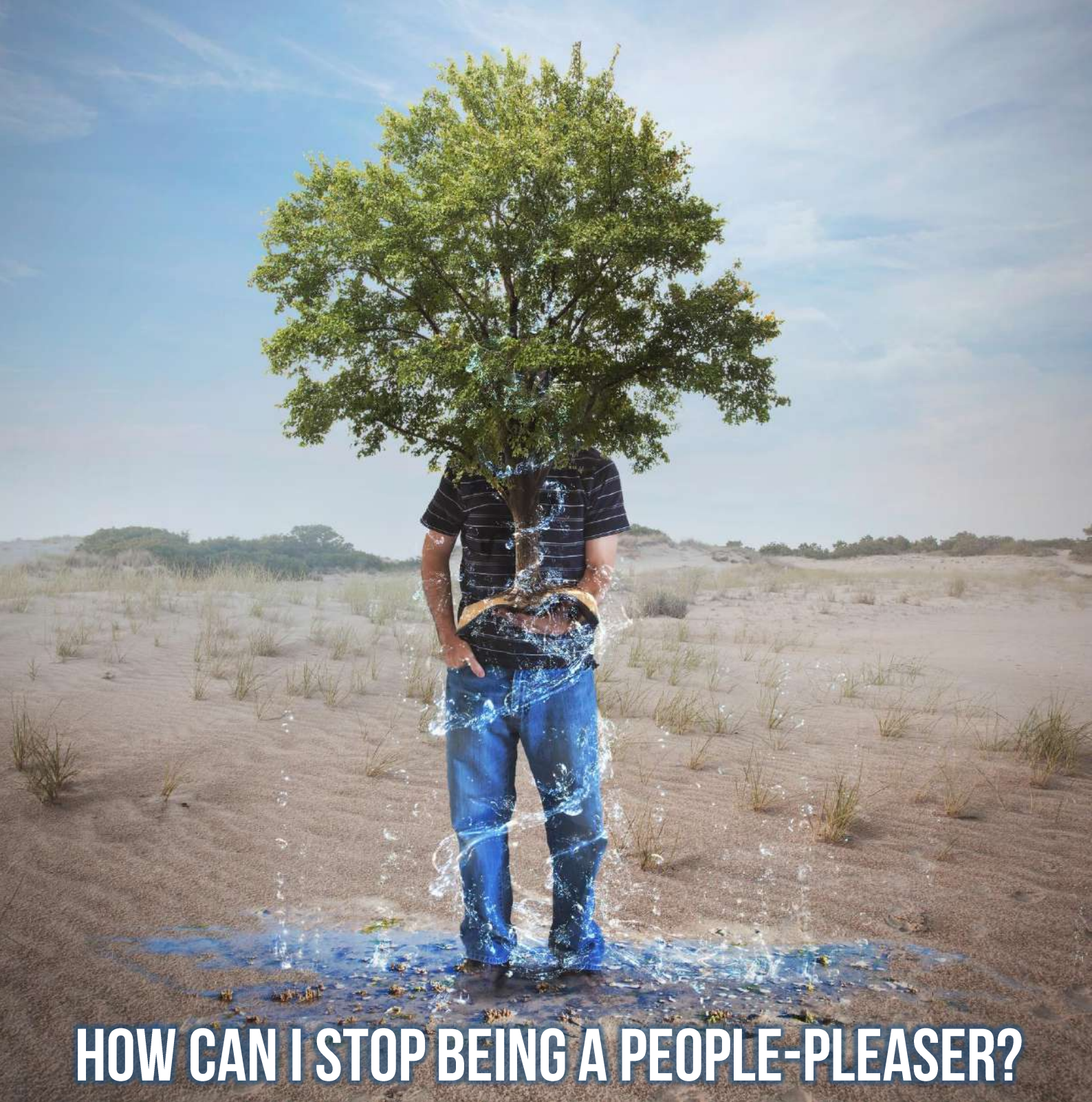
When life is hard, it is a reminder that this world is not our final destination. As difficult as circumstances may be, Paul called them "light and momentary troubles" (2 Corinthians 4:17). Paul and many of the first-century Christians knew how hard life was in ways that most of us never will (2 Corinthians 11:23–29). Some of their struggles are showcased in Hebrews 11, a chapter that reminds us that, as hard as our lives are, many have it worse.

As we grow through troubles, we develop the character of Christ—who also struggled much during His time on earth (Isaiah 53:3). His example of selflessness, endurance, and trust in God is an example to us: "Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart" (Hebrews 12:3).

Life is hard, but Christ is our advocate (1 John 2:1), our intercessor who pleads our case to the Father. He knows what it feels like to struggle through difficulty, depression, fear, heartache, and the host of human situations that make life so hard (Hebrews 4:15). Life is hard, but the Holy Spirit is our comforter who helps us and stays with us forever (John 14:16).

A zebra stands in a field of tall, dry grass, looking towards the right. In the background, there are rolling hills under a cloudy sky. A large, thick, black line starts from the top left, loops around the zebra's head and back, and extends upwards, creating a sense of movement and perhaps representing a path or a journey.

Life is hard, but it is brief. Compared to eternity, our earthly lives are like a mist that vanishes with the morning sun (James 4:14). What we do during this time on earth affects the rest of eternity. We can grow bitter, hard, and waste our struggles. Or we can endure (James 1:2–4), grow, learn faith, develop compassion for others who are struggling, and wait for our final reward. At that time, we will hear our Savior say, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord!” (Matthew 25:21)



HOW CAN I STOP BEING A PEOPLE-PLEASER?

www.gotquestions.org

People-pleasing is the motivational force that drives a person to make decisions based solely on the level of approval they believe they will receive. Related to people-pleasing are codependency and enabling; within a biblical framework, people-pleasing borders on idolatry.

People-pleasers have learned that it feels good to be liked by others, so they steer their words and actions in the direction that offers the most approval. On the surface, people-pleasers appear to be selfless, kind, and

generous. However, beneath the surface, they are desperately insecure and believe that approval equals value. They eventually find that trying to please people all the time is not only exhausting, it is impossible. Some people-pleasers may start manipulating relationships and situations in order to gain the rush of satisfaction associated with creating pleasant responses in others. So the term people-pleaser is actually a misnomer. People-pleasers strive to please everyone because they are trying to please themselves.

Some people, by nature, are more prone to people-pleasing. Compliant, sensitive types are often keenly aware of the responses of other people, so they gauge words and choices to avoid negative feedback. Sometimes they view this trait as positive, comparing their people-pleasing with the selfless actions of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Acts 10:38). However, the difference between Jesus' unselfish service and the actions of a people-pleaser is motive. Jesus lived to glorify and obey His Father (John 8:29). He loved, gave, and served people, but He was also not afraid to say what needed to be said, even when people got angry. He often rebuked people in public for their hypocrisy and lack of faith (e.g., Matthew 23:15). He seemed to care little about how well His audience would receive His words. He spoke exactly what needed to be said, even when it led to His death (Mark 15:1–2; John 18:37). Jesus was the opposite of a people-pleaser.

We can take steps to stop a habit of pleasing people by first acknowledging it as sin. When our guiding force is popularity, we have switched gods, and that is idolatry. When we allow anything to control us other than the Holy Spirit, our hearts have erected a shrine to a competing god (Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:16, 25). Seeking praise from fallible human beings rather than seeking God's approval is a slippery slide into error. John 12:43 tells us that, even in Jesus' day, some people believed His message but refused to follow Him because "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." People-pleasing can lead to eternal separation from God when we allow it to dictate our choices.

ONCE WE RECOGNIZE OUR PEOPLE-PLEASING INCLINATIONS AS SIN AND REPENT OF THEM, WE MUST FIND AN ALTERNATE MOTIVATION. FIRST CORINTHIANS 10:31 TELLS US THAT OUR MOTIVE IN EVERYTHING SHOULD BE TO GLORIFY GOD. WHEN WE DEVELOP AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM THROUGH SAVING FAITH IN JESUS, HE BECOMES OUR FOCUS. WE SWITCH ALLEGIANCE FROM SELF-WORSHIPING TO GOD-WORSHIPING. OUR GOAL IS NO LONGER PLEASING OURSELVES BUT PLEASING HIM (COLOSSIANS 1:10). WE FIND GREAT FREEDOM WHEN WE BREAK THE VISE-LIKE GRIP THAT PEOPLE-PLEASING HAS ON OUR LIVES. RATHER THAN TRYING

TO PLEASE A HUNDRED VOICES, WE NEED LISTEN ONLY TO ONE (JOHN 10:27). AT THE END OF EVERY DAY, ONLY ONE QUESTION IS RELEVANT TO A CHRISTIAN: "LORD, WAS I AS PLEASING TO YOU TODAY AS I KNOW HOW?" WHEN THE ANSWER IS "YES," WE CAN BASK IN THE PLEASURE OF GOD. WE FIND OUR VALIDATION IN WHO HE SAYS WE ARE.

Another important step in overcoming an addiction to people-pleasing is to guard our hearts against covetousness. Envy feeds people-pleasing when we covet the approval or popularity of someone else. This is most evident in teenagers idolizing rock stars and athletes, but adults are guilty of this, too. People-pleasing based on envy is more prevalent than we realize, and most of us can find traces of it somewhere in our lives.

People-pleasing prevents us from being all God has called us to be. It silences us when we should speak and threatens us when we do speak. An insidious form of people-pleasing in the church today is forecast in 2 Timothy 4:3: "For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear." Preachers whose desire is to draw crowds and sell books cultivate the sin of people-pleasing and call it "ministry." Drawing crowds is not a sin, but when the motivation is to please people and not God, there is a problem. If the apostles had been people-pleasers, they would never have been martyred for their faith.

We cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). We cannot be fully devoted to the gospel of Christ and also fully devoted to the approval of people. They will not merge. That may be one reason Jesus made discipleship such a narrow road. He said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Part of denying ourselves is crucifying our need to please people and have them like us (1 Thessalonians 2:3–5; Galatians 1:10).

We say with Peter, "We must obey God rather than human beings!" (Acts 5:29). It is not our job to make people happy. Rather, we are to live as the best people we can be, serve the Lord in every way He calls us, die daily to our own selfish desires, and receive our reward from Him (1 Corinthians 4:5). When that is our life goal, we will stop being people-pleasers.



Raise Your Children to be Generous

SeedTime.com

On a Spring day in 1998, I reluctantly notified our mission chairman that I wouldn't be able to make the Mexico Mission trip. My reason? I did not have the \$500 deposit and didn't have time to raise the money. However, that same day, my daughter called, "Dad, I know that you really, really want to take this trip, and it just so happens that I have an extra \$500. I want you to use it for your deposit."

Recalling that conversation still makes me misty eyed, not because I was able to take the trip, but because our daughter made such a generous offer. Knowing that Jaime, a struggling cosmetologist, did not have ANY extra money punctuated the bigheartedness of our girl, and being the recipient made me realise that my wife and I had raised a remarkable young woman. Lest I shortchange our other three children, allow me to state that all four of our children, now in their thirties, are generous with their hearts, their time and their money.

I wish I could pinpoint the exact strategy my wife and I used to raise generous children, but I must confess that such a strategy never existed. However, we did a few things right, so I will share three tips, some of which we did pretty well and some of which we could have done better.

1. Walk the walk.

Children learn by watching their parents. Period. Jesus was teaching this principle when he said that students cannot be greater than their teachers (Mat 10:24). Our children learned generosity as they watched my wife taking hot soup to sick neighbours, baking holiday treats to give away at Christmastime and simply giving of herself any time any of us have had needs. Myself? Although I have been doing better in recent years, generosity has never come easy for me. Still, in spite of my self-centred nature, I was acutely aware of the fact that my children were watching how I treated the restaurant server and how I responded to red poppy collections at stop signs. Such awareness, I am sure, prompted my own generosity and (I hope) encouraged our children to do likewise.

2. Involve your children in giving.

Our church, for years, gave homemade Christmas gifts to the inmates at a nearby minimum security prison. Coordinating with a prison minister, we (children included) were allowed to deliver those

gifts to the prison and then participate in a Christmas worship service with the inmates. The gifts consisted of homemade Christmas cards and homemade cookies. For weeks before Christmas, our children's Sunday School classes made hundreds of homemade cards. In the meantime, parents and children made dozens of homemade cookies. Janice devised an assembly line approach for our family: some mixing, some placing on cookie sheets, some timing and removing from oven and some putting the cooled cookies in plastic bags. The highlight of our Christmases during those years was taking our children with us to deliver the gifts and participate in the service.

3. Make giving a requirement.

"Just a minute, Joe. Isn't 'required giving' an oxymoron? After all, if it doesn't come from the heart, is it really giving?" Good point. But Proverbs 22:6 tells us to "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it." We train our children to study, to work and to treat others as they want to be treated. Should we not also train them to give? Of course! And such training does not mean handing them a quarter as you walk into the church building...that is a lesson of how to be a courier. Because we taught our children to earn their own money (by paying them

for certain responsibilities), the offerings they gave to the Lord were true gifts. Did we militantly force them to give every single Sunday? Not at all. In fact, we should have been more diligent about it...something I hope you can do better than we did. Candidly, getting all four of them into the car on Sunday mornings was challenging enough without always remembering their offerings. However, in spite of our inconsistencies, the giving they did as children stayed with them when they became adults.

It is more than money.

I want to close by emphasising that true giving, while it is a discipline, is much more profound than a simple transfer of goods. When you train your children to be givers, you are molding their hearts; hearts which will develop into generous spirits as they enter adulthood. When our oldest son Josh was a high school senior, he saved his pizza delivery money for months so he could spend it on vacation. But, when we encountered a needy family while en route, he gave it all to them.

Who knows? Maybe your son will do the same. Or maybe your daughter will someday offer to pay your deposit on a short-term mission trip. I hope so.





HOW'S YOUR FRUIT?

Cindy and Steve Wright (MarriageMissions.com)

The first thing we check when couples enter our counselling room is their fruit. If their fruit reveals arguing, jealousy, outbursts of anger, and so on, we know they are not in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Oneness in marriage is impossible in the flesh.

“The fruit of the Holy Spirit contrasts sharply with the fruit of the flesh. ‘The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.’ (Galatians 5:22-23)

Notice, this is the fruit of His spirit, not something we create on our own. Christians do not possess these wonderful virtues in and of themselves. We exhibit them because Christ lives in us. Couples controlled by the Holy Spirit naturally produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit. **ONENESS** is a **NATURAL BYPRODUCT**. ” (Don and Sally Meredith)

So, here's the question again, “how's your fruit?” Is your spouse experiencing the benefit of the fruit of the Spirit that is coming forth from within you? If not, something is very wrong.

CONTRASTING FRUIT LISTS

If you look the contrasting lists over in Galatians 5:16-26 you'll see quite a difference. We're told to “walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are **AGAINST** the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are **AGAINST** the flesh **FOR THOSE ARE OPPOSED TO EACH OTHER...**” Among the “works of the flesh,” which “are evident” are “enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness,” etc. When you read this list you sense darkness.

But when you read the fruits of the Spirit, you sense light and the presence of God, with the fruits being “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” What a difference!

INNER ALARM

In the devotional, The Word for You Today (Nov. 23, 2015), the author says:

“When you knowingly do wrong, the Holy Spirit who lives within you will trigger your conscience and an alarm will go off inside of you. If you’re wise, you’ll repent of your sin and make things right.”

“...Many of us have security systems in our homes. When we open the door we have 30 seconds before the alarm goes off and the police are called. God has given you an alarm system that works the same way; it’s called your conscience.

There are 3 things you can do with your conscience:

- (1) Turn it off.
- (2) Tune it out.
- (3) Allow it to guide you and walk in the blessing of God.

The writer to the Hebrews said, ‘Pray for us, for our conscience is clear and we want to live honourably in everything we do.’ (Hebrews 13:18) That should be your prayer today, and every day.”

Is that your prayer —to live honourably in all you do? Is it to display Spiritual Fruit and NOT deny the work of the Holy Spirit within you?

Note what we’re told in James 1:26: “If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.”

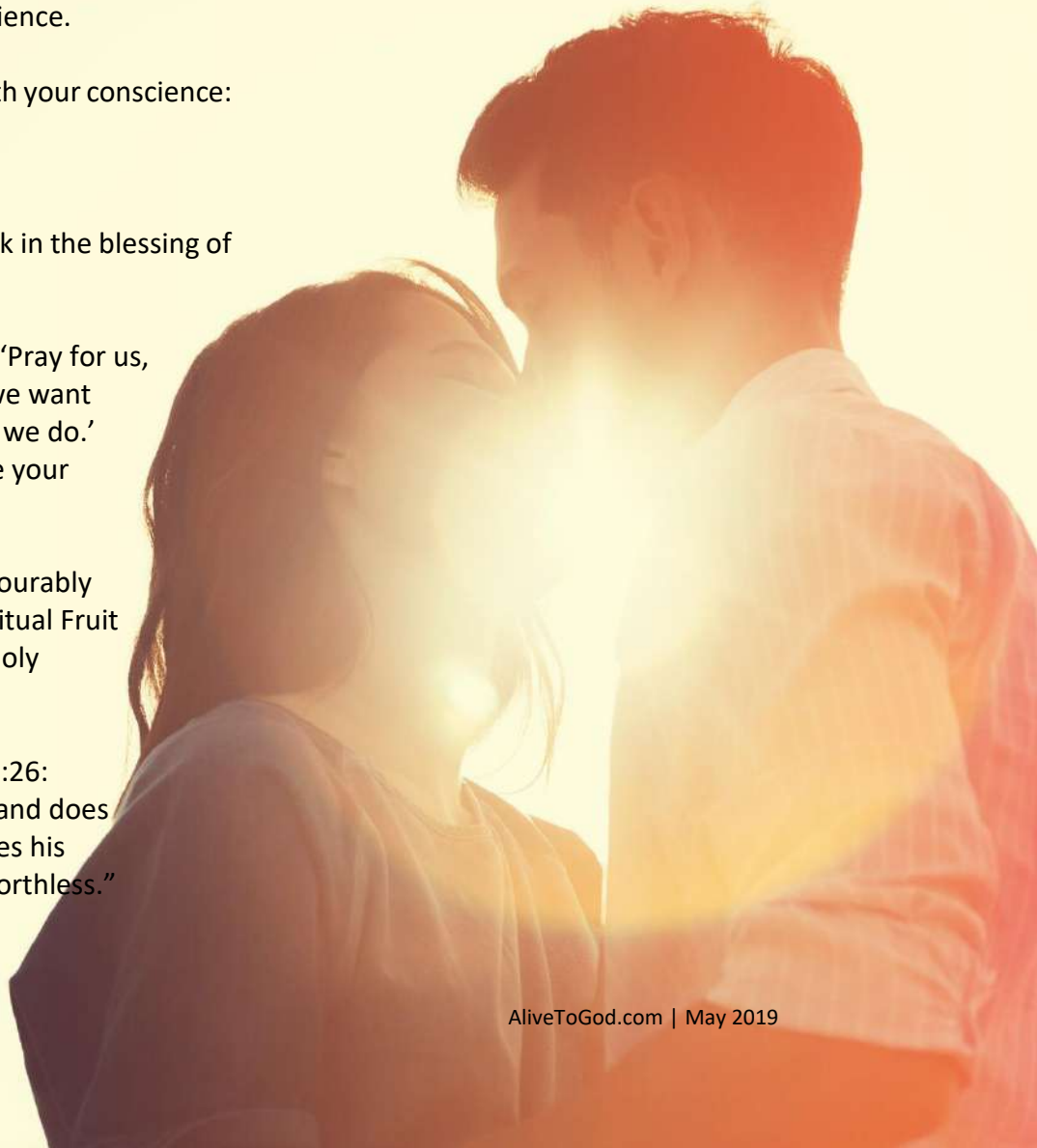
HEAD AND HEART ISSUES

In another Word for Today devotional thought (December 5, 2015) there’s a thought we should all consider in light of scripture:

“Your Bible knowledge may be a hundred times greater than someone else’s. But if you’re not a hundred times more loving, patient, joyful, gracious, forgiving, etc., what good is it? A head full of doctrine and a heart devoid of love will just turn people away from Christ [including your spouse].”

Are you acting out as a “deceived” spouse —one who does NOT “bridle his tongue” and “turns off” and “tunes out” the Spiritual alarms going on when you do and say what you shouldn’t against your spouse, and more importantly against our God? Or are you acting as one who blesses your spouse and family and everyone who witnesses your lives together with God’s peaceable fruit?

God gives us all free choices. PLEASE choose well. May peace on earth begin in your marriage!



ASKING GOD FOR HIS FAVOUR

By: Andrew W Roebert



Wanting God's favour on our lives is one of the most important things we could desire. When God is with us we can know His favour in our lives. The dictionary tells us that favour is goodwill, approval and partiality from one person to another. If we can know that we are in line for goodwill, approval and partiality from God, what more could we want? I believe that we can ask God for His favour on our lives and on the lives of those around us.

1. THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND HIS FAVOUR

Having the favour of God on our lives is closely linked to knowing His presence in our lives. These two different aspects go hand in hand. Moses, in the Old Testament understood this. He did not want to move without the presence of God, because the presence of God was a sign of the favour of God.

Exodus 33:16 *If You don't go with us, who will ever know that I and my people have found favour with You, and that we are different from any other people upon the face of the earth?"*

The presence of God in our lives is the most important thing in our lives. When we know His presence we will know His favour!

2. ASKING GOD FOR FAVOUR

I believe that we can ask God for His favour. Once we understand how much we need His favour on our lives, it should become something that we desire. As such we can begin to ask God for His favour.

Matthew 7:7-8 *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."*

There is another prayer in the Old Testament indicating that we can ask God for favour.

Numbers 6:24-26 *'May the Lord bless and protect you; may the Lord's face radiate with joy because of you; may He be gracious to you, show you His favor, and give you His peace.'*

3. THE NATURE OF GOD'S FAVOUR

God's favour is His goodwill and His partiality towards us. The Bible tells us a little about God's favour. Perhaps one of the most important aspects is that God's favour can be something ongoing and perpetual in our lives.

Psalm 30:5 *His anger lasts a moment; His favour lasts for life!*

It is great to know that God's favour does not come and go but rather it is available to us throughout our lifetimes. Strangely, however, few people can actually say that they know the favour of God on their lives. Perhaps this is because they do not ask God for His favour and don't expect it to happen?

4. THE RESULTS OF GOD'S FAVOUR

What happens when we experience God's favour on and in our lives? Well I believe that it can touch every single aspect of our lives. I believe that we can know the favour of God on our lives, on our businesses, on our jobs and on our health and on our families.

Psalm 30:6-7 *In my prosperity I said, "This is forever; nothing can stop me now! The Lord has shown me his favour. He has made me steady as a mountain."*

Another great result is the possibility of friendship with God.

Exodus 33:17 *And the Lord had replied to Moses, "Yes, I will do what you have asked, for you have certainly found favour with Me, and you are My friend."*

5. HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

How can we know God's favour on our lives? Is there something we can do to attract God's favour? There is one particular scripture that gives us an indication.

Proverbs 3:4-6 *If you want favour with both God and man, and a reputation for good judgment and common sense, then trust the Lord completely; don't ever trust yourself. In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success.*

Proverbs 11:27 *If you search for good, you will find God's favour.*

Romans 4:12 *Abraham found favour with God by faith alone.*

Here we find some keys:

- 1. Trust God completely.*
- 2. Don't trust yourself.*
- 3. Put God first in all you do.*
- 4. Search for good.*
- 5. Have faith.*
- 6. Don't forget to ask.*
- 7. He will favour you with success.*

6. MORE AND MORE FAVOUR FROM GOD

I believe that God has more and more favour in store for us. God is the God Who knows no limits and there is no limit to the favour that God has for us.

Proverbs 4:18 *But the good man walks along in the ever-brightening light of God's favour; the dawn gives way to morning splendour.*

2 Corinthians 3:18 *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, Who is the Spirit.*

7. A TIME OF FAVOUR

I believe that we are living in a time of favour from God. Now is the time to ask God for His favour and to begin to expect and anticipate that that is exactly what He wants to do for us.

Isaiah 61:1-2 *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the suffering and afflicted. He has sent me to comfort the broken-hearted, to announce liberty to captives, and to open the eyes of the blind. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of God's favour to them has come.*

The time of God's favour has come. Now is the time. Let your faith begin to rise within you and let your heart be strong and let us not look at what we can see with our eyes, but let us look to God for His favour!

8. THE CIRCLE OF BLESSING

The Bible tells us about the opportunity that we have of living in the circle of God's blessing. What a wonderful place to be.

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