



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No. 2, January 13 , 2015 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is **a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

WHO would I like to see CHANGED/TRANSFORMED?

Quickly the mind prints out a list of 'THEM' and 'others'— for 'THEY' are the ones with problems! "I sure hope THEY change— for 'they' are the cause of my unhappiness!" Such is the belief of many; **but in reality**, this is a tragic deception. The good news is that you/we can ESCAPE the trap! The road to freedom starts here: Relationships are built around (1) rights, (2) expectations, and (3) responsibilities. **Draw a triangle** and place those three aspects of a relationship on each of the sides. **The truth is that** MOST of our relationship problems are the result of arguing or fighting over rights and/or expectations. The violations can be real or imagined— but in our view, someone has wronged us. We are OFFENDED!

We then demand our rights and/or pout when our rights/expectations are not met. If this path is continued, the results will be deepening hurt, anger, resentment, bitterness, frustration, depression; and destructiveness in relationship with others; and/or destructiveness on the job; or with the ministry one has. **Now, of course, we justify these**

emotional pits and/or excuse them by blaming him, her, or them— we are but the innocent victims of others. **Moreover**, when two or more people are relating around each other's real or imagined faults and failures— **all such participants have a continuing supply of 'ammunition' to shoot at each other until hell freezes over!**

BACK TO THE TRIANGLE! We have only been discussing rights and expectations— what's missing? That's right, when we are focused on fighting for and demanding our rights/expectations— WE FORGET ALL ABOUT our God-given responsibilities! We push them aside and excuse ourselves from them— because, after all, the other person/people are not carrying out THEIR responsibilities to us!

WHAT A HORRIBLE, doomed-to-failure way to live— accusing others and defending self; defending self and accusing others; blame-shifting and putting up smoke-screens to hide/excuse our own failures; confessing the real or imagined sins/faults of the other person; and **gathering an army of supporters to promote 'our' side!**

ALL of these, instead of obeying Scripture and only confessing OUR OWN faults, (James 5:16; 1 John 1:9)!

The longer these sin-filled, satan-pleasing tactics are used there will be growing hardness of heart, resentments, bitterness, hopelessness, destruction of families, destruction of churches, the name of Christ will be blasphemed among the heathen, and above all there will be a deepening REJECTION of Jesus Christ!

UNSEEN/UNCONFESED REALITY: When we are fighting such wars with such tactics— **No one is focused on heeding their God-given responsibilities!**

TRUE, we would all 'say' that we would like to have peace, contentment, progress, happiness, and joy in our relationships and/or ministries.

1. HOWEVER, if our joy and peace is dependent upon a circumstance, or him, her, or others CHANGING— then forget it! 'They' may never change! So get used to the rest of your life being mercilessly sabotaged by circumstances, or by him, or her, or them! And remember, if we do not leave this destructive path of living— it is quite likely that our physical and emotional wellbeing/health will also increasingly suffer.

2. THERE IS A BETTER WAY TO DEAL WITH LIFE. This way is NOT MUCH TRAVELED! Nevertheless, there are a few pilgrims on this path; and when you find them— they have peace, joy, love, happiness, contentment, hope, and much more. **In fact**, they may be in the midst of life that is filled with serious trials, tribulations, sickness, slander, and/or persecutions. **And yet**, they are calm, peaceful, loving, and even rejoicing.

***** THEY KNOW A SECRET— A SECRET THAT FLOWS FROM GRACE! *****

This grand secret overflows from being genuinely BORN OF GOD. **AN EXAMPLE:** In a work setting, the true and living God used an unnamed individual to introduce Ed to the LORD Jesus Christ. **Ed testified**, “From the day I became a Christian I poured my life into learning what the Word of God had to say to me as a husband and father, then putting it into practice as best I knew how.” Ed further stated that his wife and daughters were UNRESPONSIVE both to the gospel and to him. **For TWO LONG YEARS he only received REJECTION.** However, because the Holy Spirit was residing IN HIM and he was obeying the promptings of the Holy Spirit— in spite of his difficult circumstances, Ed was more and more DRIVEN into the Word of God.

And, of course, God revealed to Ed that he was to LOVE HIS WIFE in the way that JESUS loved him. Ed testified that the rejection he constantly received from his wife was hard to take. Frankly, he did not FEEL LIKE loving his wife.

HOWEVER, OUT OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD, Ed walked all over his feelings (Feelings from a 'wounded' heart that was screaming from his UNMET rights and expectations!) **AND SO HE diligently sought to** love his wife in the same manner as Jesus loved him.

Ed testified, that his obedience became PLEASURE; and that his obedience took on the BRIGHT COLORS OF JOY! (Ed, is Dr. Ed Wheat, author of Love Life for Every Married Couple!) His testimony reveals the TRANSFORMING POWER OF GOD'S GRACE in the redeemed when the indwelling Holy Spirit is not grieved nor quenched.

THE CALL OF GOD to salvation results in daily Christian living because of **an infusion of divine life** (Romans 5:5) by the Holy Spirit! Our new master passion becomes as Paul's own testimony: ***"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*** (Galatians 2:20) Thus, by the grace of God we HEAR (Receive and act upon) the call of JESUS: ***"Deny yourselves, take up your cross daily, and follow Me!"*** (Luke 9:23) **We Experience TRIPLE CRUCIFIXION:**

1. Christ was crucified in our place— ONCE and for all, fully paying our sin debt!

2. We are CRUCIFIED— even as stated in Galatians 2:20 and in Galatians 5:24!

3. The world crucified to us and we to the world— as stated in Galatians 6:14!

In another place, Paul testifies, **“I die daily!”** Again, Jesus calls His followers to, **‘Deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow Me!’** In Christ, we are DEAD to sin’s dominion— Romans 6:14-22!

THE RESULT IS THAT the normal OVERFLOW of such salvation MIRACLES is that we are motivated by the mercies of God (Romans 12:1-2) and empowered to 'die' to rights and expectations! The HOLY SPIRIT, as it were, moves us to build an altar and lay all our rights and expectations there. THE HOLY SPIRIT moves and empowers us to fully embrace our God-given responsibilities— all as acts of worship to Jesus Christ!

{Jesus is always worthy that we so honor Him and walk in His steps!}

And so, regardless of what happens and regardless of what 'he' or 'she' or 'them' do— these ‘secret-finding-souls’ are at peace, even anointed with joy! They avoid becoming traumatized victims. **By yielding to and drawing from the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, these dear saints walk IN THE STEPS of Jesus.**

JESUS came to earth **and He** 'laid aside' all of His 'rights and expectations' **and He** only did His Father's bidding. His world was full of hating and hateful people. However, nothing nor no one was able to get Jesus away from His focus on HIS GOD-GIVEN RESPONSIBILITIES! And, thus, no one has ever lived who had such deep and abiding peace and joy.

OUR JOY is found in HIS STEPS: 1 Peter 2:19-21(NKJV) *“For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently?”*

But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:"

Jesus not only came to this earth to take upon Himself our sin and become our sinless substitute— He also came to MODEL how to live! AND BY THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT, HE EMPOWERS EVERY SAINT TO WALK IN HIS STEPS!

Let us no longer grieve or quench the Holy Spirit! Let us be being filled with the Holy Spirit. Let us WALK IN HIS STEPS!

We also have a GREAT CLOUD of witnesses of frail humans, no different from us, but walking in the Spirit— though they were bloodied and in prison, they SANG UNTO the LORD and against all odds, won the day! SO CAN WE!

John G. Miller, in his book ***QBQ! The Question Behind the Question***, has made a significant 'change' to a famous quote: "**God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can change, and the wisdom to know— IT'S ME!**"

CHRISTIAN— 1. Kneel at the Cross! **2. Leave** your 'rights and expectations' there! **3. Walk** in HIS STEPS! **4. And experience His joy and peace!**

BUT WHAT IF as best I know I have dealt with every known sin in my life; I have flooded my soul with the Word of God, and even with PRAISE UNTO THE LORD, etc, etc.... but still I AM IN A DENSE FOG of unrelenting troubles, trials, tribulations, sickness, you name it— OK... So you feel 'kin' to Job! (That is certainly a genuine possibility!) **WELL, THEN, LET US DO LIKE JOB:**

In the dark nights of the soul and in the agony of physical suffering and great loss, and INTENSE SPIRITUAL BATTLES— JOB CONTINUED TO WALK WITH GOD. JOB walked with God— not with perfection, but **with unrelenting tenacity**: “... *Though GOD SLAY ME, YET WILL I TRUST HIM.... when HE has tried me, I shall come forth as gold... I esteem the words of HIS MOUTH more than my necessary food... I know that my REDEEMER liveth... I shall see God...*”

THE RESULT: Job was not only sustained during the DARK NIGHTS of the soul, but he was IN GOD’S TIME, given a glorious deliverance!

AND SO IT WAS also for those set before us in the GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES: Hebrews 11:1-40! Many of them got great deliverances IN THIS LIFE; but for others, not so much... as to deliverance in this life: Hebrews 11:33-40.

Nevertheless, they **ALL OBTAINED** a good report through faith.

The answers are not DOWN IN EGYPT! KEEP THE FAITH!

The Race of Faith, Hebrews 12:1-4: “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside** every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, **and let us run** with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus**, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **For consider Him** who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.”

Grace to one and all! James Bell

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

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**** WEDNESDAYS:** PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM; **IN Ladies Sunday School Room**

**** NOTE:** Jody Allen is ministering to **young Children**, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service. **YOUTH GROUP:** Wednesdays 6-8pm... led by Byron Smith

☐ LADIES BIBLE STUDY— January 22, 11:00am, The Life of David! - 1 Samuel 16:14-23 - Cindy Bell, teaching. {Meet in Ladies Sunday School Room: Come in FRONT doors of the church auditorium or the SIDE door at the top of the IRON STEPS!}

*** EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study!** {Study in 1 Thessalonians}... Come to back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning... walk forward... till you smell the coffee!}

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18 —

1. 9:30am Sunday School **2.** 10:45am Worship Service

3. LORD'S SUPPER // NO LUNCH

4. HOME MEETINGS IN THE EVENING— Held at the Allens, the Browns, and the Carrolls]

SUNDAY, JANUARY, 25—

1. 9:30am Sunday School
2. 10:45am Worship Service
3. Noon— Fellowship, Covered-dish lunch
4. 1:00pm— Early afternoon worship service