



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No. 5, February 3 , 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."***

AN UNFOLDING OF THE HEALING WAYS OF GOD IN MARRIAGE!

SHOCKING NEWS: There are circumstances over which we have NO CONTROL! There are circumstances we can positively or negatively impact by the choices, decisions, attitudes, and/or actions which we personally take. Thus, it is critically important that we focus on godly responses to all circumstances.

SHOCKING NEWS: We can positively or negatively influence other people; but we cannot change them! We cannot control their attitudes, words, or deeds, etc. However, if we are Christians— we can experience God's enabling grace so that we are personally being transformed and changed more and more into Christlikeness— regardless of what 'they, he, or she are doing!

Over the last 40 years I have been privileged to engage in discipleship-counseling with many, many couples. And along the way, I have also been a 'fellow pilgrim' seeking to apply the Biblical principles which I shared with others. I have witnessed many sin-wrecked marriages healed— to God be the glory! I have witnessed many others proceed into destruction. **In every case, the following has been true:**

1. In every case where the couple continued down the road to further destruction, the following was always true: One or both

insisted on confessing, and JUSTIFYING responses of anger, bitterness, resentment, a refusal to forgive; and they continued their 'finger pointing' at the faults (real or imagined!) of their spouse. **BY THE WAY, MORE SHOCKING NEWS:** We are commanded to confess OUR OWN sins; not the sins of the other person!

SHOCKING TRAGEDY: Because of the real or imagined failures of their spouse, those on the road of destruction justified their own refusal to obey God's Word. **In other words, they would each protest:**

"The reason I do not love my WIFE with Christ's redemptive, forgiving, sacrificing, serving, unselfish love is because she does not submit, etc., etc."

OR: "The reason I do not submit to my husband is because of all his failures, etc."

WAKE-UP REALITY: THE SIN OR FAILURE OF 'THE OTHER PERSON' NEVER JUSTIFIES A SINFUL, REBELLIOUS-AGAINST-GOD RESPONSE!

THOSE COUPLES WHO CONTINUED in failure,

- 1) **Refused** to deal with their own heart needs.
- 2) **They** looked for sympathy.
- 3) **They** would speak negatively against their spouse to others.
- 4) **They** refused to embrace their God-ordained responsibilities.
- 5) **They** refused to walk in the steps of Jesus.
- 6) **Sometimes they** would even 'demonize' their spouse to others, as they sought to hide or justify their own sinful attitudes and actions. By such paths, these couples kept giving each other more and more ammunition with which to 'shoot' each other.

II. In every case where **HEALING in the marriage developed, the following was true:** The healing usually started with just the husband or with just the wife. The healing often started with the most 'offended'... deeply, genuinely wronged party. In any case, either the husband or the wife embraced this mind-set:

- 1) ***From the Word of God I will find out and embrace my God-given responsibilities.***
- 2) ***I will do my responsibilities as acts of worship to Jesus. HE IS WORTHY!***
- 3) ***I will leave the results with God!***

4) *What my spouse is or is not doing* does not change my call, my assignment to live to please Jesus by being a channel for His supernatural life!"

Sometimes, both husband and wife start down this glorious road simultaneously; but usually it is just one of them.

5) Those on the HEALING WAY deal with ‘percentages’ in this fashion: It matters not who IS MOST to blame. It only matters that I deal with MY failures and that I yield to the Word of God and the empowering Holy Spirit to embrace my God-given responsibilities. **How this works out:** Let’s assume that in God’s accounting with a particular troubled marriage that the husband is 75% to blame and the wife is only 25% to blame. **Reality and the way of healing:**

**** Unless the couple submits to godly counsel, they will ‘see’ the opposite of reality!** Because, ‘everyone proclaims their own goodness’... openly admitted or not, the husband will place most of the blame on his wife and the wife will place most on him. **With this strategy, hell will ‘freeze over’ before such ones run out of ammunition to shoot at one another!**

**** In contrast, in the HEALING WAYS OF GOD each will simply deal with their own contributions to their marriage failure as if it were 100%... while forgiving the failures of their spouse. In other words, each one must deal exclusively with their own sins of commission, sins of omission, sins of attitudes, etc... and begin to fully embrace God given responsibilities; and leave their spouse’s failures (real or imagined!) with God!**

6) IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES, STRAIGHT FROM THE WORD OF GOD, IS AN UNFOLDING OF THE HEALING WAYS OF GOD IN MARRIAGE!

Embrace them and BE HEALED!

Embrace them and be re-kindled in love!

Embrace them and be strengthened with a God-given ‘Hedge’ of Protection! **Embrace them** and MODEL Jesus to a watching world!

Embrace them and MODEL and TEACH them to a needy world!

Embrace them model Christ to your children/grand children!

Embrace them and draw upon grace to HEED them as an ACT OF WORSHIP to JESUS... **REGARDLESS of how your spouse responds!**

Embrace them— not so you can be happy; but so that you may PLEASE the LORD!

Embrace them and MODEL and proclaim them to any who attempt to seek sympathy from you as they UNLOAD ON YOU the failures of their spouse.

7) SPIRITUAL WARFARE ALERT: If you ‘take up an offense’ against their spouse, if you ‘side with’ a friend instead of giving them Godly counsel— **you will help the cause of destruction and open up your own self to serious spiritual battles!**

Here is just the pure Word of God, unfolding foundational attitudes and actions for husbands and wives to carry out one toward the other.

It is utterly impossible to walk in these paths and not experience miracles from God— even if your spouse does not, you will! Let us carefully read and apply these Scriptures— to fail to do so is to invite DISASTER!

Faith responses to God’s Word will yield miracle fruit!

Excuses, rejection, and/or rebellion against the pure Word of God will yield increasing heartache and coming judgment.

***** WIVES: Ephesians 5:22-24— “Wives, submit** yourselves unto your own husbands, **as unto the Lord.** 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” **Ephesians 5:33b— “... and the wife see that she reverences** her husband.” **Colossians 3:18— “Wives,** submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.”

1 Peter 3:1-6— “In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some [husbands] refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives. Don’t be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. **You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.** This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands. For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.” (New Living Translation)

***** HUSBANDS: Ephesians 5:25-31— “Husbands, love your wives,** even as Christ also loved the church, **and gave himself** for it; 26 That

he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loved his wife loved himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but **nourished and cherished it, even as the Lord the church**: 30 for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.”

Ephesians 5:33a— “... nevertheless **let every one of you in particular** so love his wife even as himself...”

Colossians 3:19— “**Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.**”

1 Peter 3:7— “Likewise, **ye husbands**, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

REALITY: I must not only read these Scriptures, I must APPLY them in faith. **Faith is acting upon the Word of God in obedience.** Faith that is not expressed with obedience is not Christian faith. Jesus is very clear when He speaks: “And why call ye me, LORD, LORD, and do not the things I say?” (Luke 6:46) “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15) **True Christian faith issues forth the fruit of obedience to the Word of God by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.**

URGENT ALERT: *In the quoted verses ALMIGHTY GOD does not allow for any ‘loop-holes!’ He gives no place for excuses. My required loving faith obedience to Jesus as LORD is not altered or lessened just because my spouse may not be obeying his/her God-ordained responsibilities.*

Real or imagined, we sometimes think/feel that our dearest loved ones, (especially a husband or a wife), are **majorly mistreating us**. If ‘they’ or if ‘he’ or if ‘she’ would just straighten up, our lives would be just fine. **But since ‘they don’t do right’ we often feel justified** in our responses on anger, resentment, bitterness, criticism, depression, etc. **THE TRUTH:** Loved ones may indeed mistreat us, even persecute; and so we have sorrow, pain, and tears. **However, none of that has the power to steal JOY or HOPE or to cause any of the above negative responses in us or from us!**

In reality JESUS has given us an opportunity to manifest life transforming miracles by heeding and obeying the following Scriptures:

Matthew 5:44-48— “**Love** your enemies, **bless** them that curse you, **do good** to them that hate you, and **pray for** them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 **That ye may be** the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 **For if** ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 **And if** ye salute your brethren only, **what do ye more than others?** do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

Note: Since this is God’s standard for how to treat enemies, how we are to treat family could not be less!

ROMANS 12:14, 17-21— “**Bless them** which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 17 Recompense to no man evil for evil... 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. **19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath {Leave the field clear for God’s wrath!}: for it is written, Vengeance is mine;** I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 **Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**”

Walking in faith-obedience to these Scriptures by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit will yield much good fruit!

1. Life will be simple! For you only have one thing do to— LIVE TO PLEASE JESUS! Keep yourself in the love of God, in the steps of Jesus, and leave the results to Him!

2. In spite of tears and pain, your life will have joy, rejoicing, and song. ‘He’, ‘She’ and/or ‘They’ will not be able to shut your mouth from praise. They can’t steal your joy. They can’t cause you to be angry, resentful, bitter or depressed. **They can’t rile up any aspect of your Galatians 5:19-21 ‘FLESH POTENTIAL!’**

[The works of the flesh are: ¹⁹Now the doings (practices) of the flesh are clear (obvious): they are immorality, impurity, indecency, Idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger (ill temper), selfishness, divisions (dissensions), party spirit (factions, sects with peculiar opinions, heresies), Envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I

warn you beforehand, just as I did previously, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.]

WHAT ‘HE/SHE/THEY’ can do and often do is to give you an opportunity to respond in the Spirit or to respond in the flesh— to manifest Galatians 5:19-21 (the bondage of the flesh) or Galatians 5:22-25 (the fruit of the Holy Spirit)!

**** If we respond in the Flesh**—that’s our choice to resist, grieve and quench the Holy Spirit. It is our choice to please and listen to our carnal flesh and satan himself. If such is one’s continuing lifestyle, such ones are not saved! (Gal. 5:21; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 5:3-6)

**** When we respond in the Spirit**—that is the Christian’s responsibility, privilege, choice and power by the indwelling Holy Spirit; and God gets all the glory for His previous and present grace!

**** When we respond in the Spirit with faith-obedience to the pure Word of God** we are able to live in unhindered fellowship with God. Moreover, like our LORD JESUS CHRIST and like saints throughout the ages **our lives will be especially marked with joy, rejoicing, and with a supernatural resilience!**

RESILIENCE: The ability to bounce back after being pressed or stretched; the ability to recover strength, spirit, good humor! Don’t miss this: 2 Cor. 4:7-18.

SERIOUS WARNING: When we cover our own sin, excuse our sin, or rationalize our sin, or blame others for our sin, or fail to agree with God that our sin is sin— we turn that sin into **DEEPER SIN**. Adam's sin of eating the forbidden fruit ‘turned to iniquity’ when he said in Gen 3:12 ...,“The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me...” **Realized or not, that *blame-shift* was a subtle accusation that his rebellion was God’s fault!**

Verbally or ‘under my breath’— if I criticize and/or back-bite others, ultimately I am blaming the good providence of God who permitted their ‘wrongs’ to be dumped on me! I am refusing to walk in humility. I am refusing to walk in the steps of Jesus, who responded to wrong done to Him with, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do!” **Moreover, when focused on wrong done against me, I am not focused on my God-given responsibilities!** (See earlier pages for Scriptures which unfold some of those responsibilities!)

When I deny and hide and justify my carnal responses by pointing to ‘their’ failures— I may convince a whole army to sympathize with me.

However, in GOD’S SIGHT, I am adding iniquity to my own sin.

Psalm 38:1, 4— For months King David excused his sin and refused to repent. However, ultimately he cried out, “O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. **For mine iniquities** are gone over mine head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.” For quite some time, **David had hid/excused his sin.** But praise God, there came a day when David was troubled by his own iniquity. Hope, Forgiveness, JOY and usefulness in God’s Kingdom revived! (Ps. 32, 51)

LET EACH OF US diligently SEEK to see if we have covered or made any excuse for any sin. Let us join with David in praying, “**For I will declare MINE iniquity;** I will be sorry for MY sin.” (Ps. 38:18)

So be it in each of our lives! Grace to 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.

**** WEDNESDAYS:** PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM; **IN CHURCH AUDITORIUM, COME IN FRONT DOORS**

**** 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— February 5, 11:00am, The Life of David! - 1 Samuel 17 - 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!}

***** SUNDAYS— February 8, __, 22**

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

***** SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY 15—**

1. 9:30am Sunday School
2. 10:45am Worship Service // LORD'S SUPPER
3. Noon— No meal; No 1pm service
4. 5:00pm— HOME FELLOWSHIP/BIBLE STUDY GROUPS