

Your Capacity
and God's Ability

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ came to earth and finished the work of redemption so we might have life that is more abundant. Our whole purpose is to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to glorify God.

Soul winning and serving one another were meant to be outward expressions of abundant life working in us. It is simply a matter of working out what He is working in, until we become testimonies of His grace and love.

This booklet will show that eternal salvation is worked in us, but we work out our salvation when we actively believe and receive from God. We have a capacity to become salt and light to a hurting and dark world when we experience, express, and reveal the life of the Word through God's ability.

Chapter One

KEEPING DIVINE APPOINTMENTS

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13).

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

In Philippians 2:12-13, Paul sets forth the im-

portant principle of obeying God in the absence of the pastor. It is most commendable when a congregation will attend church faithfully and will pray and honor the local assembly in every realm. But it is even more commendable when we obey God from the heart when we are all alone with no one watching us. Then Paul proposes an interesting topic that has often been misunderstood among Christians: "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

How can we "work out" our own salvation? Jesus Christ describes this process in one of the most practical provisions that the true child of God can experience. In Hebrews 12:1-2, He says: I am the Author of your faith." God tells us, "You didn't start the work that is being done in you—I did. And you will do absolutely nothing to finish it. I am the Finisher." Still, the key is to 'work it out'.

To "work out" your salvation means to believe it so much that it is manifested in and through you. You reveal godly confidence, peace, and boldness because of the Finished Work. In John 6:28 and 29, Jesus says "This is the work of God...that you believe." Believing the truth comes first.

"Work out your own salvation...." No one

can work out his own salvation, in terms of performing good works. No one is ever going to work out what he has heard from the Word and make it “happen” by his own efforts. The great truth is that we have to believe when we receive the truth until it becomes integrated and internalized. We have truly believed when a specific truth is used, experienced, expressed, and revealed in our lives. This is what it means to “work out” our salvation.

Accountability to the Pulpit

The pastor’s responsibility in preaching the Word of God is to stick with that theme, doctrine, or truth until it has been worked out of the believer. It must be integrated in our souls as we internalize divine truth. There is no benefit in hearing even the best of messages unless that message is imparted and then worked out through the Word of life and the Holy Spirit.

Whatever the pastor preaches combined with your own vertical relationship with God is what God is working into you. The message that is preached in the assembly where you are called is the message God wants to work into you. Both the pastor and the congregation will be accountable for the messages, because that is what

God wants to work into them.

What is presented from the pulpit is not just a sermon. It is not just another church service. It goes far, far beyond that. That is why church attendance three times a week is so vital. I am dogmatic about that, because I have to introduce you by name to Jesus Christ, before you go in alone to the Bema Seat. I will be held accountable before God for preaching the whole truth. It is the same for any pastor with his congregation. Every pastor must realize that he will have to give an account of his people according to Hebrews 13:17. We should never be indifferent about faithful attendance.

Some people react to a message that is convicting, because they do not like the preciseness of the whole counsel of God. Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Sometimes grace teaches us what not to do—a 'negative' message. The positive result is that we then can live filled with the Word of God in this present evil world.

The most spiritual Christians in this universe are those who obey the Word because they love God—even when no one else takes notice.

The Need to Seek the Lost

Recently while soul-winning, we arrived at a building where loud rock music was playing. When we knocked on the door where the music was coming from, a lady answered.

I said, "What's your name?"

"Angel," she said.

"Nice to meet you," I said.

Then, as we slowly presented the Word of God to her, I began to weep. Tears came down my cheeks. I told her about grace, how salvation was a free gift—I presented the whole plan of salvation. Then, I asked, "Would you like to accept Jesus?" And she said, "Oh, yes." We all knelt down with her, and she received Jesus Christ as her Savior. That was a divine appointment.

You never know what is behind a closed door. By going there, we were working out what the Great Commission has worked in us. It is very simple. A pastor shared the Great Commission with me years ago, and that doctrine was worked into me. Although he was just a man, he was used by God to work that in me. Today, our ministry is the result of working out what God has worked in.

Chapter Two

THE KEY TO PEACE: ACQUAINT THYSELF WITH HIM

In marriages, families, and friendships in a godly ministry, problems continue because doctrines that were presented from the pulpit are not received by faith and then immediately worked out. God is the Author and Finisher of our faith. We cannot finish it, and we cannot live up to His demands. But we can become what He wants us to be. We can grow in grace and knowledge of Him. He must do the perfecting.

According to Psalm 17:15, when we finally awake in heaven, we will finally be satisfied because we will be like Him. Full satisfaction will never come to us until we get to be with Him.

Job 22:21 says, “Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee.”

“Acquaint” actually means this: Be absolutely on the road to knowing Him as an inti-

mate friend, not just as an acquaintance.

God says, "If you know Me, you will be at peace, and divine good will come to you." Divine good cannot come to me if I do not have peace, and peace cannot come to me if I don't really know Him intimately in my walk.

Peace Makers, Grace Givers

Consider the following passages:

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto [God]: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

"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.

"Be not overcome with evil [(infection)], but overcome evil [(infection)] with [divine] good" (see Romans 12:18-21).

"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

"And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

A peacemaker is a grace taker; and a grace

taker becomes a grace giver. Galatians 6:10 says, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

These scriptures have become guidelines for dealing with other people. I have used them throughout my ministry. When a problem arises, I just pray and pray and pray and give grace in the situation as much as I can. I am not bringing this up to praise myself, but to praise the Word for its clarity. Instead of letting those problems with people overcome me, I overcame them with divine good through grace.

Quieting Your Enemies

Here is the key. Good has come to me because of the peace promised in Job 22:21. When dealing with a problem, it is best to consider Proverbs 16:7: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

I read that passage one time when I was going through a lot of private, emotional pain. I realized that the issue was not my problems. The key to peace was to see that my ways please God. So if I make sure all my ways please God, I will have peace in spite of problems. Even my

enemies will be at peace with me.

Proverbs 15:1 says that a soft answer turns away wrath. God says you can still give an answer, and you can still tell the truth. But pause and do it softly, in love, without raising your voice, and that will turn away the wrath.

By His Word, God is giving us a supernatural way of life. In business, in marriage, and in whatever we are called to, God is giving us a Cross philosophy, a resurrected life psychology. He has given us the face of faith, a head crowned with grace, a mind crowned with mercy, and speech crowned with silver.

Now, we work it all out, and this is how: As soon as we hear doctrine, we obey it, as it says in Psalm 18:44. This means the truth is received and believed so deeply that it is ready to be revealed in us immediately, whenever and wherever it is needed.

Chapter Threë

SALVAGED FOR SUCCESS

Do you know what revival is? Revival is this message in practice: God's provision in process, men's obedience in spontaneity. God's Word in life, God's Spirit in power, and God's plan in our purpose—that is revival.

God works His character into each Christian as we work out our salvation. The word salvation means to be salvaged from something. So while salvation is eternal, the salvaging comes while God is working. He is constantly doing things in us, even though we have eternal life forever. He is salvaging us from something. We are always being salvaged. Even when we don't fail, we are being salvaged from failure.

To Will and to Do

How do we get salvaged from failure, from problems, and from dilemmas? It happens by working out what God has worked in us. We

keep actively believing what we have received, and it becomes resident in the memory center with residual power through the Holy Spirit. Specific categorical truth is now available for revelation when the plan of God calls for its manifestation. In other words, it is in there, ready to be recalled.

Those who strive in their flesh keep failing. Their problem is that they never let God work in the doctrine that they hear. God cannot work it in because they are not careful how they hear; they are passive listeners. The ears may hear it, but the precise truth never gets into the memory center.*

“Work out your own salvation, My beloved, for it is God that worketh in you.” It is God who is working in us, toward our faith, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. What’s more, God provides the will to do what He works in me.

Experience Your Faith Potential

Philippians 2:14 says we are to “do all things without murmurings and disputings.” “Murmurings” speaks of disputing within yourself the capacity and ability to have something happen. In this case, murmuring isn’t referring to

outward murmuring against someone, although it could result in that. It speaks of disputing your own capacity and God's ability. You do not work out your salvation because you have a low spiritual self-image.

As an illustration in a recent Bible College class, I gave two students ten dollars each. It was a gift. What they did with the money was their business. But they both were given the same amount. In the same way, each of us has been given faith from God. What we do with our faith in allowing God to work in and work out His plan is what makes the difference.

We all have the same measure of faith. God gives each of us the gift of faith and tells us that we can do anything we want with it. Each of us has just as much as anyone else in the world. We can either use that faith to do very little or use it so well that God will one day reward us and allow us to reign with Him forever (Matthew 25:14-30).

*Read *The Hearing Heart*, by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1996.

CONCLUSION

Blameless does not mean faultless. Most assuredly, we are not faultless. None of us are, and we can prove it so quickly. But a person who is born again is blameless. We are blameless because Jesus Christ took the blame Himself by voluntarily taking every sin that we have committed or will commit upon Himself at Calvary. He died as us so we could become as He is, therefore we are blameless.

We are harmless because, as sons of God, we show and manifest the light of obedience by receiving the Word of God in this wicked, crooked, evil world system. We display God's light in the midst of the entire world system, which is totally and completely embedded in and enveloped by darkness (1 John 5:19). And as lights, we must let Him shine.

If we are to be lights while we are God's ambassadors in Satan's world, then we must believe the Word for it to be worked in, to keep it

in, and to work it out. When the Word comes out of our memory, it does no harm to others. Instead, it only serves to reveal Christ and to heal.

God never told us to just speak the truth. He said, "Speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). He said, "Let your speech be seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6). "Salt" means "resurrection seasoning." Our speech must be seasoned with resurrection seasoning, and it must be spoken in love. Our lives must be lived inside the kingdom of love, speaking from the source and by the means of the Kingdom of God.

We are not the author of our own salvation, and neither can we finish it. But by God's grace, we must be the means of God revealing His work in us.