

# *Loving Yourself*

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

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

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Grace Publications is a ministry of  
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## INTRODUCTION

As a young man from a small town in Maine, I made a discovery that changed my life forever. I discovered that God Almighty was available to me, to love me, and that I could receive Him into my life.

Imagine it! The One who died on Calvary, shed His blood, was buried, and rose again; the One who is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient; the One who has all patience, all mercy, all grace, all joy, all peace, all wisdom, all knowledge—this One was available to *me*, loving me personally! That was quite a discovery, and I am so grateful to Jesus Christ for it.

Then I discovered that all I had to do was be available to Him, and that was a wonderful discovery. But for a person to make himself truly available to the Lord, he needs to recognize his value in God's kingdom. Unfortunately, not recognizing the value of souls, including their own worth in God's sight, is what prevents many

people from going forward.

Many people never consider going to the mission field or even to a local outreach because they are too busy considering their own shortcomings—what they *don't* have, what they are *really* like. What they need to discover is that God is the one who first loved us, who made Himself available to us, and who is utterly dependable to see us through.

This booklet shows that to love ourselves is to honor the One who created us and to highly esteem His plan that includes us. By trusting Him for each step that we take, we can love others and make ourselves available to them as we are available to God. But we can only love others to the extent that we love ourselves.

*Chapter One*

YOU ARE A MEMBER  
IN PARTICULAR

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

“For the body is not one member, but many”  
(1 Corinthians 12:12-14).

The Word of God says that there is one body—just one—but many members, and we are all baptized into one body by the Holy Spirit—regardless of where we came from. So whether you are from Seattle, Chicago, Baltimore, New York, Ghana, Budapest, Hong Kong, or a little town in Maine, if you are born again, you are a member in particular of the Body of Christ. We are many members, part of just one

Body—that is it.

A very precious phrase in 1 Corinthians 12:13 that could easily be overlooked says that we have all been made to “drink into one Spirit.” It is not that we drink “from” one Spirit but “into” one Spirit—inside of God, glorifying Christ. We all are made to drink, and it becomes experiential—an experience of being inside of Christ—because we are drinking into the Holy Spirit’s glorification of Christ.

### *God’s Availability to Us*

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:4-6).

In this passage, the Bible says that because of God’s great love for us and the richness of His mercy, when we were dead in sins He quickened us together—not separately, but together—with Christ. Now, that is the availability of God for us.

He quickened us together.

He raised us up together.

We are seated together.

Those who truly understand what it means to be a member of the Body of Christ are those who walk, experientially, in the Holy Spirit of the living God. They understand the power and the tremendous provision of dogmatic, absolute togetherness: oneness that goes beyond likeness.

In the Body of Christ, there is not one person whom I do not need. I need each one deeply, with all my heart. No matter who you are, where you are, or what you do, if you have been born again, you are a member in particular (1 Corinthians 12:27).

God tells us to love each other with the same love wherewith He loves us. Among Spirit-filled Christians, when one weeps, we all weep. And when one rejoices, we all rejoice (1 Corinthians 12:26). Why? Because we are members of one another. There are many of us, but we are just one body. Not one member but many, all born-again, all sealed with the Holy Spirit, all with the provision of having a God who became available to us by becoming a man.

### *Dependability and Availability*

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

This passage speaks of dependability. Think of it! The God who created the universe has made Himself available to us by His promises. He has promised that if we will simply trust in Him and not ourselves, He will reveal Himself to be utterly dependable.

The Word of God teaches us about the riches of grace as we learn about God’s availability to us.

The Lord has taught us His Word in our togetherness, in the uniqueness of our unity, experienced by the power of the grace of God, and enjoyed through the Holy Spirit of God, because He is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10; Psalm 18:12).

As believers, you and I have no past in eternity except that we have always lived in the eternal “is” of God. Can you imagine it? The only record of our lives in eternity says that we are perfect. We made the discovery of God’s availability to us and accepted Christ as our Savior, by grace through faith and not of ourselves. Then we realized that the availability of God’s love for us was also to everybody in the entire world. Therefore, in Christ we have received His vision for the lost. Understanding that all men

have sinned, we take up our Cross and go into all the world with the message of the glorious Gospel—that Christ paid for the sins of every man and woman in the unlimited atonement (1 John 2:2 and 2 Corinthians 5:19).

*Chapter Two*

## MADE ACCEPTABLE IN THE BELOVED

God desired from the beginning of time that we would accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. Because of this, the Father placed His Son in a position where He would always make His love available to us, personally. And because we are hid with Christ in God in the eternal “is” of time, the Father must always be available to us, because of His commitment to Jesus Christ in our behalf.

“A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary” (Jeremiah 17:12). God’s throne room is our hiding place.

### *Why We Forsake Not the Assembly*

But in Jeremiah 17:13, we read, “O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken

the LORD, the fountain of living waters.”

“Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of the Lord? let it come now” (Jeremiah 17:15).

The people mocked Jeremiah. In their unbelief, they challenged God’s authority by saying, “You’ve been telling us we’re going to be judged. Now let it come!” the people said in anger.

And then Jeremiah made a wonderful statement:

“As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was right before thee” (Jeremiah 17:16).

Jeremiah turned to the Lord and said, “I didn’t run from Your call on my life to be a pastor, Lord. I have and I will follow thee. It’s very painful that these people accuse me when I tell them that judgment is coming. But as for me, I will follow thee. I don’t desire judgment. But You know, Lord, that what I have spoken is right.”

He said, “No matter what they say, with their not loving me and their forsaking me, they brought pain into my life. But I will follow You.

And You know very well that what I have spoken is right. I don't care what they say. It is right, before You."

### *Here Am I*

In the midst of a great trial, the pastor, Jeremiah, discovered that God was available to him. He discovered that God loved him personally even though the people rejected him. And when God spoke to him, Jeremiah became very available to God. No longer was he fearful of the people, trying to hide in his own inability. He was now saying, "Here am I! Here am I! Use me, Lord."

In the twenty-second chapter of Genesis in the first verse, Abraham was told early in the morning to take his son to Mount Moriah and offer him as a sacrifice. Early in the morning, God said, "Abraham, Abraham," and he replied, "Here I am." And he said it again in the twenty-second chapter in the eleventh verse. *Here I am.* That is all that God wants. Abraham could go ahead because he trusted God's love toward him.

Jacob said in the forty-sixth chapter of Genesis in the second verse, "Here am I." God said to him, "Jacob, Jacob." And he replied, "Here am

I—just as I am: deceitful, crooked. But here am I.” After wrestling with God, Jacob, too, realized that God was for him.

In Exodus 3:4, God called to Moses, who had spent forty years in the backside of the desert. “Moses! Moses! We’ve been separated for forty years. But I haven’t forgotten you.” As a man, Moses had no confidence in his own image. He had deserted God because of his flesh. But when God called, he immediately said, “Here am I. Here am I.” And because Moses got to know God’s character, he became the meekest man on the earth.

In 1 Samuel 3:4, the Lord called to young Samuel in the night. Several times the boy heard, and he responded, but he thought it was the voice of a man. Finally he understood, and he made himself available to the One who was calling him. Again God said, “Samuel! Samuel!” and he replied, “Here am I. I’m just a little boy, but here am I.”

Did Samuel, who was just a child, understand the tremendous voice he was hearing? Oh, the power in the voice of God, the power in the voice of God’s call. No matter how it comes or where we are, it descends upon us in the transcendence of His foreknowledge and His love,

knowing every detail about our life.

Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up on a throne, seated, with His train that filled the temple, in Isaiah 6:1. And after he had been cleansed and purged from the particular sin of his individuality, the Lord said in verse 8, "Who will go for us?" Isaiah said, "Here am I. Here am I."

### *Responding to the Call to Love*

It is tremendous when we begin to understand that one of the greatest things in the world is to hear God. Second, it is to know God's voice when He speaks. Third, it is to trust God for His call. And fourth, it is to say "Here am I."

If your marriage needs strengthening, your marriage needs the Lord Jesus Christ to touch it and come in and take it over. What do you say? Instead of defending yourself, or listing all of your faults (or the other person's faults), just say, "Here am I." Perhaps your family needs to acknowledge some problems and become one in the togetherness of God's will. It begins by a declaration: "Here am I. Here am I. Do what You need to do with me, Lord."

The Holy Spirit may have convicted you because your temperament isn't what it should be. All of us are tempted to live in the carnality of

the old sin nature at times, and we despise it and hate it. But instead of struggling with the flesh, we can just respond to the Lord and say, "Here am I. I am here to be changed. I am available to be changed. I am available to pray. I am available for a new word from heaven. I am available to be corrected. I am available to be edified. I am available to the corporate Body. And though we are many, we are one."

### *Available to Glorify God*

I am available, and I want to drink into the same Spirit that glorified Christ (John 16:13-14). When I do, the Holy Spirit will glorify Christ in me.

Jesus Christ prayed in John 17:21-22, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." In other words, the glory that the Father gave to His Son, Jesus has given to us.

We started out with the glory of God. That glory was from the very beginning of the first moment you were saved. And with the glory of God, a place was set apart in God's sanctuary,

which is your body, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

### *Chapter Three*

## THE MAN THAT I LOVE AND THE MAN THAT I HATE

There is a man that I love, and it is me—that is, when I am rightly related to God and to others. Together, we are as one new man. There is, however, a man that I hate. I despise him. And thank God, he is not around any more. This man that I hate is the man that I was in my old sin nature.

But the man that I love is also me. I have been quickened, saved, raised up, seated, and hid with Christ in God. Sixty-eight things happened to me the moment I was saved. We who are saved have indeed died, and indeed we have been buried. Thank God for that. We can remember who we were if we want to, but we can choose not to know ourselves after the flesh.

Love who you are in Christ. You don't have any sin record. You may remember some of your sins, but because of grace and mercy, you have

no sin record whatsoever. Every one of us who is born again is seated on a throne in heaven, and in our bodies is the glory of God. The precious glory of the Holy Spirit indwells us. We have a capacity of availability which results in dependability, which enters into acceptability and all the possibilities of probabilities in Jesus Christ.

### *We Are Commanded to Love Ourselves*

In Matthew 22:37-39, a lawyer among the Pharisees tempted Jesus by asking Him, "What is the greatest of all the laws?" Jesus said, "It is that you shall love the Lord thy God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. That is first. But the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." He said, "Those two laws cover all of the words you talk about endlessly but never truly understand."

You have every right to love yourself. In fact, the Word of God commands it. There is no need to get up and always confess how terrible you are. That is buried. Yes, it is true that we have an old sin nature, but it is crucified and buried in God's eyes. You are now a *new* creation.

In Romans 6:4 you have a brand-new life. In 2 Corinthians 3:6, you are under a brand-new

agreement between the Father and the Son, and they can never reject you (Hebrews 6:18). According to Isaiah 62:2, even before you get to heaven (Revelation 2:17), you have a brand-new name.

The flow of God comes to us from His throne in heaven. It was given to us from the very beginning, and how glorious it is. We can fellowship with our crucifixion. We fellowship with our burial. And oh, most important, we fellowship with our resurrection and ascension in Christ.

A very beautiful verse is Psalm 45:2*b*, and it says, "Grace is poured into thy lips: therefore, God hath blessed thee for ever."

Thank You, Jesus! Grace is poured into my lips, that I might be blessed. That is the man I love: The new man who has his only identity with Christ. The man who, when he suffers, reveals Christ. The man who is seated with Christ. The man who is a member of the Body of Christ, knit with every member in the body. This man is one with those who are members of Christ's body, flesh, and bones (Ephesians 5:30), joined to Him as one spirit. That is the man I love. He is hid, and he is called in the oneness of the entire corporate Body.

## *The Gospel Comes with a Call*

Every Christian is called, but not every Christian hears from God. They don't know what He has done in them. They go to a church that preaches the Gospel, but they do not experience an abundant life. They do not understand that we are called into a Person—the one new man of Ephesians 2:15. Yes, they hear the Gospel. But with the Gospel comes a call to serve (Luke 1:74-77), a call to grow, a call for discipleship, a call to prayer, a call to repent, a call to be one, a call for the flow of heaven.

When the flow of the Word of God comes down in the pulpit, it flows out—not because of the person behind the pulpit but in spite of him. It comes down from heaven and flows through the speaker into all the people that are one with him. And as an assembly, they receive the tremendous revelation of the living waters. And they receive it through the Holy Spirit of the living God, and God is the Giver.

So as the local church responds to the “go” of the Gospel, they begin to minister to their Jerusalem and their Judea. They receive a vision for their Samaria as well as for the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). They respond to the

call of God. And when a Christian changes location because of the call of God, that new place becomes his Jerusalem.

If he is called to China, what was once the uttermost parts of the earth now is his Jerusalem. It is a beautiful exchange from God, giving us the freshness of the invigorating vision for the entire world, leaving nobody out. Our vision is still for all of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world. This is falling in love with God for the world.

### *Becoming All That You Can Be*

The availability of God, your acceptability by God, the dependability of God's faithfulness, and the realization of all the possibilities of God in you—that takes you into everything you could be and makes you become what God has already made you to be. As you begin to realize this, by the grace of God, you discover that you are God's woman, you are God's man. *You are!*

And as you go through life, you will begin to discover that it isn't what you go through that makes a difference—it is what goes through you. It isn't how much you suffer but how much you suffer with Christ that brings glory to God.

In the simplicity of God's communication, in

the explanation of God's desire, please remember this. This man that I love, I love him because he is a member in particular in the body of Christ, a lively stone fitly framed in the place where God Almighty dwells.

People ought to love themselves. God gives messages like this one because a lot of people who should love themselves don't. Please understand this: You are not your own. And if you are not your own, and if you acknowledge that you belong to God, then God controls your tongue, your lips, your ears, your mouth, your feet, your hands, your mind, your emotions, your conscience, your self-consciousness—and you will love yourself.

## CONCLUSION

I am not my own. Many years ago, I heard a call from heaven to preach. God said, "I am available." He said He would bless our ministry with television and radio broadcasts, missions, and schools. And He has.

But the truth is this: All of my availability to the One who is available to me produces all the possibility of His power. As a result, I live in my acceptability in Christ because of the holiness of God's throne, which is glorious.

I am changed from glory to glory as I love myself—that is, Christ in me. I love the Christ in you, so I don't know you after the flesh, and I don't know myself after the flesh. God doesn't know us after the flesh.

Furthermore, we love one another through the power of God's provision, His Person, and the truth of God's will. There is not a reason in the world why we should not love our new creation. And I happen to be in it, so if I love my

new creation, I love myself!