

Let God Clear the Way

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace World Outreach located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

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.

Copyright © 2004

Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 5

Chapter 1 7

GOD'S BULLDOZERS

Chapter 2 10

YIELD TO THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD

Chapter 3 15

REIGN IN LIFE BY ONE, JESUS CHRIST

CONCLUSION 20

INTRODUCTION

The heart is cluttered with evil thoughts, blasphemy, and foolishness, and the Word of God declares that these proceed into the discourses and experiences of our lives. When we realize our need for a remedy, we will spend so much time and energy trying to educate the natural man, grooming him to manage and maximize his potential. But the result of those efforts is religious striving, which is man's attempt to please God.

We try to do good in order to set right the negativity, but when all is said and done, there remains a terrible mess. Even in our best estate, God has declared that the heart (the center for all the communications that enter into and proceed out of the soul) is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9).

All that a man does in himself is vanity—empty of any eternal purpose. What we need is to come to Jesus Christ as a child and allow the

Holy Spirit to clear away the clutter in our hearts.

When we received Jesus Christ as our Savior, God gave us a new heart. Salvation is a finished work, sealed by the Holy Spirit because of the Blood that was shed for us. And, as this booklet shows, the new heart is kept new through the washing of the water of the Word of God. Though we walk through a world filled with evil, if we stay in the river of life we can have a new purpose and a renewed heart continually. God will break up the old structures that clutter the way and begin fashioning a strong structure stabilized by His objective Word.

Chapter One

GOD'S BULLDOZERS

Let us say that you realize that you were born with a sin nature. You understand that the wages of sin bring a separation from God, perverting your mind and sending your emotions vacillating. You see that you are carnal and soul-ish, having a will that does not know how to make right decisions in the eyes of God. Then, you come and accept Jesus Christ. You accept the cleansing of His shed Blood and receive the Holy Spirit. Regeneration comes from Him to your heart and you become a new creature in Christ. Anew attitude comes into your life and a new foundation is established.

We receive Christ by receiving the abundance of grace. We do not save ourselves by pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps or by joining some club. We simply received the abundance of grace and we were saved. Moreover, by this same abundance, we can reign in life by

One, Jesus Christ.

This is the promise God gives. His abundant grace wants to rule, regulate, and direct our lives. Every part of our being can be controlled by God's gift toward us—the gift of grace.

Plowing Away Wrong Patterns

For this reason, God allows circumstances into our lives in order to deal with wrong habits or patterns. This is what I call God's bulldozer. He wants to plow the wrong things out—the things that keep us from experiencing childlike faith—so He can reign freely. The Lord does this by allowing tests and trials. Sometimes through suffering, often through heartaches, God gets us to the place where we can only depend upon Him.

We cannot get to this place in our flesh. For example, someone with a bad temper can chant to himself, "I will not get mad. I will not get mad. I will not get mad...." Then, someone starts complaining or irritating him and he hollers, "I will not get mad!" He reached the end of his rope in trying to overcome his temper through the will of his flesh. This may work for some as a temporary and superficial remedy, but it will not change the heart.

Another one tries to convince himself by saying, “I will be happy” over and over again. In the midst of a difficulty, he may even break out into an unusual smile. Then the bulldozer comes in. Perhaps it is a letter from a creditor or a bank saying that he will lose his home or go to court if he doesn’t pay a bill, and all of that easy-going positive thinking fails at this point.

Responsible Hearts of Grace

This is where we must realize that living in the will of the flesh is simply human energy practicing religious doctrine fundamentally—a work of the flesh trying to do good. We need more than this. We need the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus Christ to us.

When we are allowing Jesus Christ to lead us, we can face our difficulties and say, “I will be happy.” We can look at that bill and respond in truth, saying to ourselves, “With everything God has appointed for me today, I will face this thing with a responsible heart and live in the abundance of grace.”

Let God clear the way.

Chapter Two

YIELD TO THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD

God really wants us to stop living in the realm of feelings and habits. Consider what He allowed Job to endure. Here was a man living before God, but then the Lord allowed Satan access inside the hedge He had placed around Job. The devil jumped right to the task and began attacking Job's family, his possessions, and his health—he didn't even realize what God was doing with it all.

"Okay, Satan, I will let you do this and this," God said. All the while, the Lord was simply letting the devil act as His bulldozer.

Job's wife started nagging him. His three friends refused to talk to him for seven days. Sure, Job started out strong, but then he became sensitive to his circumstances and began to complain to the Lord: "For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without

cause" (Job 9:17).

God let the bulldozer clear every possible thing out of Job's life so he would strictly trust and glorify Jesus Christ regardless of the silent friends, regardless of the nagging wife, regardless of the seven sons and three daughters who died, regardless of the embarrassment of financial ruin. The Lord was pushing out of the way the old foundation Job had laid down for himself.

This is not necessary if we will just learn of God through His Word. God only brings in the bulldozer when we refuse to allow Him to do what He must do by the Spirit through faith. We have to learn to accept the truth according to the Bible just as it is, by faith, and then yield ourselves to the Spirit.

Delivered from the Body of Death

"For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

"If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

"Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present

with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

“For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

“Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

“I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me” (Romans 7:15-21).

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 7:24-8:1).

The things I want to do, I really cannot do. The things I do not want to do, I do repeatedly. There is no power in my life. What I need is the filling of the Holy Spirit.

But what if I refuse to recognize this need? Then, in comes God’s bulldozer. A trial comes. Perhaps I find myself in an embarrassing situation. Someone hurts my feelings. Someone gossips about me. Another one lies. God is pushing out the old stones in the foundation of my life.

He is working to break up the patterns of habit that hinder my life.

God wants me to let Him establish a new foundation that is rooted in His life. Then, everything I do will be in His power, through His glory, and by His grace and peace and love. He clears the way so we can reign by Him in the midst of any trial.

Really, God would prefer not to use the bulldozer. He prefers not allowing us to go through the trials. The way He really wants us to take is in Romans 6:

“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart

that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:13-18).

First, we have a promise from God that the abundance of grace will make us reign in life. As the promise is recognized, it is experienced. I yield myself to God, point by point. If I do not yield myself to God, then the Holy Spirit’s power will not come in. This results in crises that come into my life later that make me troubled, burdened, and bothered. My heart becomes full of burdens.

It doesn’t have to be this way. I can let God clear my way by yielding to Him.

Chapter Three

REIGN IN LIFE BY ONE, JESUS CHRIST

What we yield to is what we serve. If we yield to fear, we live in fear and become servants of fear. If we yield to lust in a sexual sense, then we live in lust and serve it. This can damage the sacred sexual relationship God designed for us to enjoy in marriage.

We should not yield ourselves to bad tempers. We can enjoy godly balance in our mental and emotional development. If we let our temper get the best of us, then we are simply serving our emotions, letting them—and not God—be our master.

Yielding to the cravings of nicotine, narcotics, and liquor makes us servants of those things. Anyone who has suffered from an addiction knows just how powerfully it commands attention and satisfaction.

Whatever we yield to is what we must obey.

This includes defeat and fear. If we keep living in fear, then we become the servant of fear, and it just goes on and on, wasting hours, days, and years of our lives. A life of fear and defeat is useless and ineffective. There may be spurts of revival, but they amount to nothing, because fear is reigning in us.

Every newborn baby tries to pattern his parents' attention and responses. He will cry in the middle of the night. His diaper doesn't need to be changed. His belly is full and he is not ill. He just wants attention, so he cries. If a parent continues to yield to his cries for attention, then the child, not the parents, will rule the home.

Some people put their nationality and ethnicity ahead of the Lord. Americans do this as much as any one. We need to put God first and God will take care of America. When we put God first, we refuse to yield to appeasement and compromise. Be who God made you to be. Let Him be victorious and reign in your life.

Live in Victory

I thank God that, by His grace, I don't have to pick up a social drink to be happy. In me dwells no good thing; I am just rotten flesh. But by His Spirit and by His Word, I am a winner. I

do not need cigarettes to relax and enjoy life. I do not need to fill my mind with images and conversations in the media of TV, radio, and print that do not edify my soul.

We reign and rule and love as we are filled with God's peace and power and purpose through Jesus Christ. We are victorious through the Blood of the Lamb. We simply need to receive the abundance of grace and let Him clear the way for us.

The presence of God can overcome anything hindering our lives. Because of Calvary and because of the life of One, Jesus Christ, I can reign today. My language or just my countenance can express His glory and joy.

Some believers have not entered into the Lordship of Christ. They will not let the Holy Spirit reveal Jesus to them. Therefore, the things God gave them to reign over rule their lives instead.

It is high time for God's people to get smart and wise up. Some of us are going to face God's bulldozer. He will bring it in and break hearts in pieces. It is the only way He can get some of us to establish new foundations for our lives. Messages have been preached; statements have been made. Some people just go right on serving fear

and defeat and failure and habits. He will break those habit patterns. He would like to break them with love and joy. He wants to do it by expanding the coasts of our faith. But if He must, if there is no other way, He will use His bulldozer.

Perfect Peace with a Sound Mind

Thank God, we can reign in life—over sin, over habits, over Satan. We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us. He *always* causes us to triumph (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Thank the Lord we can live in perfect peace with a sound mind (Isaiah 26:3; 2 Timothy 1:7). The Spirit sheds His love abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5). We can have God's wisdom, God's redemption, and God's sanctification. He wants to be our very life (Colossians 3:4).

All the sins of our yesterdays have been buried forever in the deepest, deepest sea. We are free to live and experience the Person of the Holy Spirit as Jesus is revealed to us at every corner and in every moment.

We have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). We can yield everything to Jesus and enter into His presence. We can accept His truth and go on, living by faith. In any temptation and trial, we can be set free instantly because God

will clear the way.

CONCLUSION

The bulldozer is waiting for some people today. Some will not take the Word of God seriously, and they just go on, living as servants to fear, to unholy relationships, to ungodly habits. It doesn't have to be this way.

I intend to reign today. How about you? I do not intend to be a servant of fear. I plan to yield myself to the Holy Spirit and live as God's servant today.

Christ has made us free from sin. We can sing the songs of victory. Fear does not need to take us down the road to bondage. A wicked temper and lust patterns do not need to enslave us. By the grace of God, we yield ourselves to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Once we let Jesus Christ reign in us, then look out! We will let go of self-occupation and we will grow in grace and knowledge. We will yield to Christ at every point. When we fail, we will simply confess it and rebound by faith. We

can change our servanthood and let God clear the way as He changes us through the Holy Spirit.