

Choose a Life of Faith

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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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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 5

Chapter 1 7

CHRIST: THE END OF THE LAW

Chapter 2 13

THE PATH TO PEACE

Chapter 3 17

THE RIGHT KIND OF LIFE

CONCLUSION 21

INTRODUCTION

I heard a great story about a very old dog that was suffering from arthritis. A decision was made that this beloved family pet was to be put down, so the family allowed him one night to sleep in the parents' bedroom.

In the middle of the night this dog began to make much noise and was moving around as he hadn't for a long time. There was a fire in the home, right near one of the children's bedrooms. As a result of his commotion, the family made it out of the house safely. That dog responded instinctively to the danger it sensed.

God has given instinct to dogs to respond to abnormal situations. As human beings, made in God's image, we have even greater response patterns based on the life that is in us. Unlike animals, our responses are not dictated by instinct. We have to choose the life that we will live in. We can rest in God's eternal life—a life that eternally is; or, we can scramble through in temporal

life—a life affected by our feelings, failures, and frustrations in time.

This booklet shows that there really is only one way to live and experience peace, joy, and love. We can choose to live every moment in the provisions and power that are derived from eternal life—the life of God—reigning in us.

Chapter One

CHRIST: THE END OF THE LAW

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”(Romans 3:19-24).

“For when we were in the flesh, the motions

of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” (Romans 7:5-7).

The qualifications for being blessed are meekness and humility. As a result, when we listen carefully, without striving about what we hear, we have concentration and a spiritual capacity, which are God’s divine solution for understanding the truth.

There are people I know who live in habits of depression. This is not to scold anyone struggling with the problem of depression. There are many physical and chemical causes that when diagnosed properly are treatable. But there is a reason that it happens. It is contained in three words: *in the flesh*.

Being in the flesh sets forth the motions of sins, which operate by the law of sin and death. Given the right circumstances, these things work in our members and bring forth fruit unto death

(Romans 7:5). Every time someone begins to operate in the flesh, the law of sin and death is reigning, making him more depressed and discouraged or causing him to withdraw into emotionalism. It happens for this simple reason: There is no grace in the law, and there is no law in grace.

A grace person can respect the law and yet have absolutely nothing to do with the law. He lets the law do everything it was meant to do. It can shut his mouth or reveal his guilt, but that is where the law ends for him.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

“Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth

the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Romans 10:4-11).

Live in Liberty

I am going to make a statement that you possibly have never considered: A person who has liberty is exempt from mortal and moral mistakes. “That doesn’t sound right!” you say. But it is right, because liberty means that you are persuaded that all things are clean in themselves (see Romans 14:14).

Now, if I were a slave and someone came and paid a huge price to set me free, do you think that I would want to transgress against that person? Not at all. But liberty means being exempt from the law. Why? Because true liberty brings us to a Person, to the righteousness of God, and we then enter into a spiritual law that controls our morality.

So many people have problems with the law

because they have no idea how to live by faith. They do not know how to live in the righteousness of God, which is revealed from faith to faith. Therefore, they do not understand how to receive God's fullness, from grace to grace (John 1:16).

Paul said in Romans 7:21, "When I would do good, evil is present with me." It is not that the law was evil, but the law projected to Paul that *he* was evil, because he was living outside of grace, in human good and self-righteousness.

The moment we step outside of grace and the righteousness of faith, we come under the law and then slip into depression and withdrawal. Some people will choose to sublimate by going out into the world for fulfillment rather than giving in to depression. They may not do anything that is necessarily bad, but they do not experience the peace that passes understanding.

According to Philippians 4:7, God wants to give us peace that passes understanding and love that goes beyond knowledge. When we begin to experience grace and the faith-to-faith process, we enter into the pure righteousness of God, where the law is not manifested. There is no deed of the flesh. We are complete, and we are under the control of grace, love, and mercy.

Being filled with the Spirit means there is an overflow going forth from our lives. No one can keep being filled with the Spirit without the overflow and the spring of life that springs up from within. Every time we are filled, there is an overflow to bless others.

Chapter Two
THE PATH TO PEACE

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1-4).

At face value, this verse seems to indicate that walking in the flesh speaks of overt sins in the flesh. Yet, careful study reveals that it has nothing to with that. This verse refers back to Romans 7:5, where the motions of sin are stirred up by the law. If I walk in the flesh without

knowing, then I am back under the law, because I have come out from under the covering of grace.

As Christians, we cannot live ninety-eight percent by grace and two percent by law. Remember that whoever offends the law in one point offends it all. Those who walk in the flesh have experientially stepped away from God's pronouncement of "no condemnation." Their position in Christ is secure, but they are no longer covered by the operation of grace, and they are no longer growing in the Person of Jesus Christ.

For this reason, there is no peace for those who choose to walk after the flesh. We can only be peaceful when we are filled with the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), the love of God, and the grace of God. When we don't have peace, the tendency is to go find someone to talk to in the human realm. There is nothing wrong with getting counsel, but God's counsel goes far beyond human support.

Step into Grace

Whenever anyone steps out of the experience of Romans 8:1 ("no condemnation"), he steps back under the law, and things begin to

happen. He is apt to withdraw, thinking that the world is going to come to an end. According to Scripture, that is not a reality.

But what can he do? He can go to the Cross, die to himself, and wake up in the Spirit. It is a choice of receiving eternal life in a moment and seeing the promises of God fulfilled in a moment without having his circumstances change.

Jesus, when speaking to the scribes, addressed certain traditions that had worked their way into the law. They were living by the letter of the law, and that meant they were stepping out of the peace of God. "Acquaint yourself intimately with Me, and be at peace within yourself." That is what God tells us in the literal translation of Job 22:21. The Lord wants His peace to control our hearts, because His peace passes our understanding.

The grandson of General Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, once spoke of his grandmother and how the greatest revelation she received before she went home to heaven concerned justification by grace through faith. He told of how thousands attended her funeral in England. People lined up a great distance to get in and pay their respects. One man spoke of how he came off skid row and went on to be-

come a doctor because of Mrs. Booth's ministry to him when he was a homeless alcoholic. A woman talked of being a homeless teenager who became a beautiful wife and mother of four because Mrs. Booth had ministered the grace of God to her.

England had never seen anything like it. What a way to be remembered for serving God. She was a woman filled with such life and she was used by God to change many lives.

Chapter Three

THE RIGHT KIND OF LIFE

“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

“And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

“And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire” (Mark 9:43-47).

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting,

thou art God" (Psalm 90:2).

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

"I and my Father are one" (John 10:27-30).

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:25).

Two terms for the word "life" are used here. First, there is life that has a beginning and no ending (everlasting life of the soul, *psuche*), and life that has no beginning and no ending (eternal life, *zoe*). The latter is the life of Christ, the life that is in Himself and stretches from eternity to eternity.

Each Christian has two types of life within him—a temporal life, which had a beginning while it has no ending, and eternal life, which

has no beginning and no ending.

The Christian does not have a past because his new life has no past. Eternal life has no beginning, so how can it have a past? Furthermore, eternal life has no ending. That is the essence of eternal security. Jesus never would have said, "I will never, no never, leave you or forsake you" if our salvation could be lost. He never would have said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

The Provision of Eternal Life

As Christians, we have a choice to live in a temporal life with nervous tension and stress, or in eternal life with peace that passes understanding. When we choose eternal life, we don't want to do the things that offend that life.

When we are living in eternal life, we are living apart from the Law. Everything about our lives is grace and love. We have no obligation to morality. Instead, we possess a tremendous, powerful provision of spirituality. In this kind of life, everything is from God. Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it (1 Thessalonians 5:24). God does it all. He puts in us the will to do of His good pleasure. We are His sons, His saints, His kings, and His priests.

Why wouldn't we want to please Him, after all He has done for us?

God's eternal life—which has no beginning and no ending—always causes us to triumph. It is love that never fails, and not a single thing can stop it. It is a life that makes us steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:57-58).

CONCLUSION

Every Christian who has received God's life knows a life that has no beginning and no ending. He knows that he has been forgiven forever. He understands that his life is not based in the temporal, even though he must function in temporal affairs. This understanding brings him overwhelming, supernatural peace.

In your marriage, do not live in the temporal—always striving to figure who's right and who's wrong. "She did it!" "No, it's his fault." What kind of life is that? Make a decision to step right into the gift of eternal life, where the past is gone and all is forgiven because of the Blood of Christ.

Glory to God, we have eternal life that can abundantly bless our spirits, our souls, our bodies, our circumstances, our needs, our thoughts, and our words. We are covered with the protection and covering of God's grace and peace. The best part about it is this: We have the life that

will go on and on and on and on—real life, with no beginning and no ending.

Heavenly Father, we are so thankful for the provision and power of eternal life. We pray for the lost, who also have a life that has no ending. Their life has a beginning in time, based on a fallen sin nature, and they are facing a godless eternity. We want to be lights in a dark world, that men will be drawn to You and make a choice for eternal life. We ask this in Jesus' precious name, Amen.