A matter of life and death.

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New Nature Publications

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Foreword by Rob Rufus - Pastor, author, multiple church planter in many continents, theologian, mentor and friend.

Jesus emphatically promised us in John 10:10 that the primary purpose of His coming was so that we could have life in manifest abundance! When you observe the pervasive condition of those who claim to have the Christ life are you profoundly persuaded of the power of abundance? In the same verse, Jesus precedes His promised purpose with the statement that the thief comes only to rob, kill and destroy.

How is it that precious people of God can catch a glimpse of the abundance of grace in the gospel and know the inebriating wonder that they are permanently co-equal heirs with Christ and for a brief breathless moment, where time seems to stand still, feel secure in the Father’s arms, only to be quickly deceived by debilitating doubt?

What seemed like supernatural, sublime substance, suddenly fades into a forgotten fantasy, forced from their experience by a mocking sceptical subconscious suspicion: 'I always thought it was all too good to be true.' The truth is the grace of God is so good because it is completely true! What happened? The thief robbed them! How?

By using scripture with an appearance of "legitimacy". Satan is shrewd in strategically using the scriptures to strip precious people of a secure, sustainable, increasing confidence in God's goodness. This is precisely the issue! Misusing scripture has inflicted much torment on multitudes.
What inspires and stirs such hope in me is that this current **grace revolution is being accompanied by the power of His Glory presence, as well as a theological advancement committed to rightly dividing the Word of God's truth**! My friend Wayne Duncan is an emerging champion in this. His book *A Matter of Life and Death* is an absolute anti-dote against the abortion of hope. The heresy against the gospel of grace is precisely because the right filters have not been applied. But things are changing in our day! Haggai and Ishmael are being cast out and Isaac is standing up in his grace inheritance!

Wayne powerfully and practically presents us with filters that will facilitate faith and equip us to successfully fight off demonic fear and doubts and will fully prevent the evil one from stealing our confidence again! This book is a must-read for every person who wants to marry liberated living with the joy of helping others stay free! The revolution is rapidly gaining momentum! Can you feel it?

**Steve Wheeler. Pastor, Pinetown. South Africa.**

In *A Matter of Life and Death*, Wayne Duncan does a superb job of unpacking the Bible as a 'dangerously' powerful book. In it he challenges us to anchor ourselves firmly in the Biblical revelation of righteousness by faith alone. I felt my confidence rise as I read his exposition in Colossians regarding the finished work of the Cross. Well done Wayno! You have written clearly and Biblically to refute any doubt that grace is indeed amazing.

**Ant Redman, Pastor of a number of communities.**

Wayne’s theology always makes me happy!

**Preface**
The Bible is a deadly dangerous book; this is my official conclusion. Within the Bible there are two distinct ministries. One ministry is a ministry of death, the other, a ministry of life. **Much harm is done by not “correctly dividing the Word of truth”**. When we consult the Bible or teach from the Word, it’s essential that we know whether we are releasing/drinking life or death. Incorrect understanding or teaching that leads to death is too common in the body today... It affects every area of our lives and ministry. It’s the “Leaven that works through the whole batch”.

One ministry is a fading glory, an obsolete covenant designed to crush you, break you down, discourage you and bring you to your very end. It’s a ministry of condemnation.

The other ministry is life, confidence, ever-increasing glory, liberty, intimacy, power and life for ourselves as well as those around us. The ministry of life qualifies you, by revealing how He has qualified you! He wants to do good to you, always! This is the New Covenant.

My hope is that this book, which is a collection of preaches and notes, will help you to separate these ministries as you read your Bible. May it lead you into a deeper understanding of who Jesus is, what He did and **who you are** as a result.

My aim is to point to how He deals with His children in the New Covenant, and the victory we have as revealed in the Bible’s ministry of life. It’s a matter of life and death...
Thank You

Father for your gift of love.
Jesus, well done you did it!
Spirit for your life.

Jennifer for all your love and support, you are the woman of my dreams.

Rob and Glenda for being bold grace champions, your courage, love, support and friendship have been a great source of courage and strength to me.

Gregg, thanks for the heads up on the grace message bro.

Ant and Les, George and Kath, Craig and Dawn, Richard and Sheila, Graeme and Kay, Ben and Steph and all the other Gospel addicts, thank you for keeping my head and heart in the intoxication of the Good News of the Good God.


Ryan, thanks for all the help and encouragement. Christendom is changing!

Leish, you got the ball rolling.

This book is dedicated to everyone who was ever bold enough to believe the Glorious Gospel of Grace.
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The Filter of Confidence
The New Covenant makes you Confident

Confidence through Christ

New Covenant Victory
The law has been cancelled
There is a regenerated new nature
The power of God flows in our veins
Freedom from Sin

Grace is dangerous!

New Covenant Culture

Practical Stuff

Appendix A:
Have you turned the Grace of God into a license to sin?

Colossians 1:6
All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.
Introduction

So why would a pastor who has many amazing, wonderful people in his church, many who have been serving Jesus for decades, see the need to do a series on “How to read the Bible”?

It’s amazing to me that in the last 20 years, I’ve seen the body of Christ literally polluted with bad teaching and poor theology. What’s even more amazing is that you don’t have to be a theologian to notice it!

Much of this error comes from a misunderstanding on how to approach the Bible and how it’s designed to work. Why would you need to read this? You may have been reading the Bible for years, you may even teach the Bible, or you may even lead a church. You may be a new Christian, and want to learn about all the glorious wonders, promises and ways of the living God.

My heart’s desire is that as you read this you would be inspired to re-evaluate your approach to the Bible. I believe this approach will help you see Jesus clearer than ever before.

Let the glorious truth of the Word wash over you and transform you. Let Him challenge your every belief. Let Him show you where the ministry of death is present in your life. Drink deeply from the ministry of life and you will fall more in love with the Author, but more importantly, you will feel more loved BY the Author.

The central theme of the Bible is Jesus, what He did for the Father, what we have, and who we are as a result.
Chapter 1
Is the Bible really so Dangerous?

Correctly applying the Word of God is liberating, freeing, power releasing and life changing. Incorrectly applying the Word, however, produces bondage, confusion and death. So how do we extract life from the Bible and not death? We must understand how to approach the glorious Word of God.

If a Boeing were merely 1 degree off of its course, it would not seem so dramatic, would it? One would barely notice the mistake after a kilometer. But after 10 000 kilometers, when it comes time to land, the pilot would realize how grave his miscalculation was and many would suffer from the “small” mistake!

“But Wayne, don’t you think you’re being a bit dramatic here, I mean death is a very strong word. Is the Bible really that dangerous?”

Absolutely! Let’s look at what the Bible itself says about this.

2 Corinthians 3 (ESV)
And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. 4Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. 5Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, 6who has
made us competent to be ministers of a New Covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. **For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.**

7Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, 8will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? 9For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.

10Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. 11For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory. 12Since we have such a hope, we are very bold …

What a stunning piece of scripture. Just take a moment to analyze this portion of scripture.

The two ministries are clearly defined:

- An old ministry (of Death),
- and a new ministry (of Life).

Let’s compare the characteristics of these ministries:
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<td>V3/7 carved in letters on stone</td>
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<td>V5 For the letter kills</td>
<td>V5 but the Spirit gives life</td>
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<td>V11 For if what was brought to an end</td>
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<td>V5 not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us</td>
<td>but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers</td>
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Based on a basic reading of this passage we see that there is a ministry of death that is carved in letters of stone. It kills you. Its glory is fading. It has ended.
It is a ministry of condemnation and it disqualifies you from being a competent minister.

Wow. Now come on friend, you never want to sit under that ministry! I refuse to receive anything from the ministry of death, and it is so devastatingly dangerous that I want to know exactly how to avoid the release of any of this ministry in my life.

Praise God that there is a better ministry. This ministry of life, which is written on my heart, is Spirit and life. It has a permanent, surpassing glory; it gives me righteousness, confidence and hope. This ministry creates boldness within us and makes us competent to be ministers.

OK, so here are some questions for you (no geniuses needed).

Which ministry do you want in your life?  
Which ministry is better?  
Which is better - life or death?

Say it with me friends: “Life…Good”, “Death…Bad”!

Imagine now that a troubled person approaches the Bible looking for help (which is the right thing to do), and drinks from the ministry of death. That person then applies that deathly solution (or theology) to his/her situation, much like applying vinegar to a wound. What do you think the probable outcome will be? There will be death, of course. Condemnation would abound to that poor soul. The person is then likely to become frustrated and disillusioned, finally proclaiming, ‘The Bible does not work!’
No, the Bible does work, but the wrong ministry was used!

Imagine the devastating consequences this ministry of death could have if it were released in churches or preached from the pulpit.

But what if that same troubled person had instead drunk from the ministry of life? He/she would have been liberated, made confident, assured of righteousness, tasted glory and ultimately extracted the abundant life that God wants to flow from His Word.

This book is a collection of preaches and notes that will position you to freely drink from the correct ministry, and in so doing, release life and not death into your spirit.

I hope this opens your heart to see that God is good.

Everything that he has done is to display His great glory through Jesus. And He has qualified you!
Chapter 2
The Bible is for you!

The first issue to be settled is that the Bible is meant for everyone to read and understand. God has given you the Bible to discover who He is, who you are and what you have because of Him. God gave you the Bible to assure your heart of the truth and to show off who He is. He then also provides a teacher to help us understand all the wonderful truths contained.

You don’t need a degree; you don’t need to be well learned for this. Every person, whether saved a minute or a millennium can receive truth from the Bible. We are never too new or too old to learn from Him every time we read the Bible. There is always more.

The second that we become born again, a veil is removed from our minds and we can understand the Bible. The Holy Spirit becomes our teacher and as we read the Bible, He brings truth and illumination.

1 Corinthians 2:12-13 (ESV)
Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13And we impart this in Words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.
God gave you the Bible so that you may comprehend all he has graciously given you. The Holy Spirit’s job is to teach you that truth. The Holy Spirit is our teacher and guide. All that is needed is the Holy Spirit, who comes to all who are truly born again. So it’s a promise - the Word will come alive to you as you read.

Now, I’m going to make a few points here that seem to detract from the importance of the Bible ... they do not. They simply highlight the effectiveness of the Spirit in teaching us truth.

Much of what we learn, we will not even need the Bible for. “What? That’s heresy!” some might argue.

...Is it?

**Hebrews 10** (ESV)

15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds

**And again in Hebrews 8** (ESV)

8 Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 9 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I
will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

Here we see something pivotally central to reading the Bible.

To put it in simple terms:
There was a Covenant.. God found fault with it, and made it obsolete. He then established a New Covenant. In this New Covenant, He writes His will and His ways on our hearts and minds (not on tablets of stone, but on flesh). He Himself teaches us right from wrong, leading and guiding us in everything. The Holy Spirit will lead you and guide you in all things, literally teaching you all you need to know.

(More about the Covenants later…)

We see that even if we did not possess a Bible, we would still have all that we would need to distinguish right from wrong, and all we would need in order to know God. Jesus bought us everything we need for life and godliness.

Did you know…?

The Bible as we know it has actually only been around for a few hundred years. The early church had no New Testament. About 50% of the world today is illiterate. Hundreds of people groups do not have the Bible in their own language.
The good news is that all these “disadvantaged” people can know God. They can still be perfectly righteous, live a victorious life and operate in signs and wonders with great power. They can still be mature Christians, because they can still have access to life in the Spirit.

For people who lack adequate education, it is great news that the gospel message is very simple.

Illiterate shepherds living in the hills of the Lesotho Mountains, who perhaps have never seen a city or a traffic light or a university, can know and fully understand the gospel.

When the gospel gets complicated or relies on much knowledge to work well, you know you’re moving away from the simplicity and truth of the good news.

I watched a man tell a story ...Jesus appeared to Him. Jesus told him the gospel and told him who He was, and what He did for him. The man got saved and baptized, spoke in tongues and began to witness on the streets. Until one day he discovered the Bible, and read about the Jesus who had appeared to Him ...wow.

-Faizal Malik

I have also had the pleasure of countless people sharing their dreams or visions with me about the Holy Spirit teaching people the theology of the Bible.

Everything from throne room encounters, spiritual
warfare and victory, to the love of God and other Biblical truth, can be taught to us by the Spirit of God through the various languages of the spirit.

For example, I know a wonderful young man who battled with demonic harassment for years. He would hear voices and struggled daily with fear until one day during worship he was powerfully affected by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He had to be carried out the church, as he could not walk. Hours later his father called me on the phone and said, “You need to come over right away; you’ve got to see this!”

The young man was having open visions of the throne room of God. He could describe the throne, the elders and their crowns. He described the living creatures around the throne in incredible detail, and heard them singing: “Holy, holy, holy”. Then Jesus showed the young man how “big and strong Jesus is”. It was a powerful encounter. Interestingly, this young man had never read the book of Revelations.

**God supernaturally revealed the theology of heaven to him.**

This awesome young man now is totally free from fear and operates powerfully in visions and prophecy and has regular open visions and second and third heaven encounters. What happened? God was faithful to His Covenant. He loved that boy and taught him that there is nothing to fear when a powerful God is on your side! I could tell you many such stories.

So now you may ponder, “Why then, do we need a Bible?”
The Bible is a wonderful safeguard and container of the heart of God towards man. The enemy, the deceiver, loves to lie, distort and steal. God, in His grace, gave us the Word to help keep us from deception. It’s a tool to believe ad to believe right.

My desire, and I believe it’s the desire of the Father, is that we all would love to read the Bible and that we would read it often.

We can measure our revelations through the Bible, and we can obtain truth from the Bible. Our visions and prophecies should be scrutinized against the integrity of the Word. If there is a discrepancy, we must make adjustments according to what the Bible says.

The Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God. It contains pure truth and life. If we believe anything that is contrary to what the Bible says, that belief is incorrect. I applaud people who spread Jesus over the world by giving Bibles away. I used to work for the Gideon’s, handing out Bibles in townships. We need efforts such as these. I hope that we are able to get a Bible to every believer everywhere in the world, because it is powerful and beneficial.

My point here is simply that for us who are literate and who have received the Holy Spirit, we can and should read and understand the Bible.

So simply say: “Lord here I am and here is my Bible; as I read, teach me. Thank you”.

And simply know: He will teach you.
How many times have you had friends bound up to you, eager to show you a scripture where they received ‘revelation’, but as you read the scripture and listen to their ‘revelation’, you can’t help feel, *I’m sure that’s not what it means?*

I’ve been that friend before!

How often have you read a scripture and thought, “But this contradicts another scripture!”

Much confusion and error has crept into our lives over the years by not correctly interpreting the scriptures.

So how should we approach the Bible? How do we construct Biblical truth?

An important key is for us to realize that everything in the Bible was written for us, but not every passage is written to you!

I’ve heard it said that a scripture with out a context, is just a con!

Here is a great way to avoid being conned!
How to read the Bible …3 questions.

If you ever battle with understanding certain portions of scripture, these three questions will prove to be useful tools when cracking open the Word:

Question 1. Who was it written to? (Context.)
Question 2. What does it say? (Content.)
Question 3. How does it apply to me
   -in the New Covenant?
   -through the finished work of the cross,
   through Jesus?

Applying this approach to tricky scriptures will eliminate 98% of all interpretation problems.

Here is an example for you:

In our little community we often witness and experience signs, wonders and healings. We see the power and presence of God touch people in their bodies, and there is sometimes radical falling, shaking and laughing. Certain signs and wonders that we have seen include people being covered in gold dust and a few even received solid gold teeth.

Some people experience oil on their hands, whilst others have caught single feathers that have descended from the roof. The diseases that many in our community have been miraculously healed and delivered from include cancers, addictions, and even broken bones.

In the early stages of these signs and wonders, one fellow in our community became very concerned that we were being deceived by the devil and brought this scrip-
ture to our attention, by phoning and sending text messages to a lady in our church:

2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 (ESV)

The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Ok, let’s test to see if this passage was correctly interpreted.

Does the passage speak about signs and wonders? Yes.
Does it talk about deception? Yes.
Does the passage say these people were under a delusion? Yes.

But does it mean that having signs and wonders indicates that we were deceived, and will be condemned?

NO!

Question 1: Who was it written to? What’s the context?

“Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians (1) to reassure those terrified by the thought that the day of the Lord had come.”

-ESV Study Bible.
You see, the context of 2 Thessalonians hinges on the fact that certain people in the church believed that the second coming of Jesus Christ had already taken place. There were even rumors circulating that Paul had written a letter to that effect. This is what is being addressed in the chapter.

Read the entire Chapter now, and then look at the following verses from that chapter.

Note verses 1-3:

1Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers 2not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3Let no one deceive you in any way.

So that’s who this scripture was written to - the Thessalonian Church who mistakenly thought that the second coming had already taken place.

With the context correctly established, we now consult the second question.

Question 2: What does it say? (Content.)

The deception that Paul fought to guard the Thessalonians from was not about signs and wonders essentially. Rather, it concerned the false doctrine of the second coming. Paul then goes on to list specific events that must occur before the second coming.

3Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first,
and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God

Paul clearly states that the false signs and wonders will be performed by the lawless one, the one who set himself up in the temple, claiming to be God. Then Paul notes that Jesus will kill this lawless one.

8And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. 9The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders.

And this is the double clincher...

10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ...

And...

12 that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The deception is for those who are perishing because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

All unsaved are condemned. Furthermore, these people delight in unrighteousness.

Does this sound like a spirit-filled, Christ-adoring, worshiping community to you? This excerpt of scripture does not describe our local church where we preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified, where people become born
again, perfected by the sacrifice of Jesus.

We are not perishing, we do not hate righteousness; we love righteousness and we are righteous in Him. We are not those “who refused to believe the truth and so be saved”.

We believe the truth; we believe in Jesus; we are saved. Verses 13-17 better describe a New Covenant church and our own little church:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{13} & \text{ But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.} \\
\text{14} & \text{To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.} \\
\text{15} & \text{So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.} \\
\text{16} & \text{Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace}
\end{align*}
\]

**Question 3: How does this apply to me?**

Well, theologically speaking, this scripture reassures me that the second coming of Christ has not yet happened. I am then encouraged to hold to the true teaching that Paul left with the church.

When I see “the lawless one” perform signs and wonders I must not be deceived.

We can clearly surmise, therefore, that the concerned fellow in our community had taken this scripture out of its context. It is not a warning to spirit-filled Christians that Godly activity among them might be false and
deceptive, and result in punishment. No, this is a misuse and abuse of scripture that could easily have been avoided had the man asked the three simple questions:

1. **Who was it written to, what was the context?**
2. **What does it say, what is the content?**
3. **How does it apply to me? (In the New Covenant, through Jesus and the cross)**

The previous example may seem trivial to some, so let me paint a brighter picture in order to highlight the incredible need for us to correctly understand and interpret scripture.

This next story illustrates how the same wrong interpretation teamed up with the ministry of death could wreak havoc and destruction.

A precious lady in our church had had a divine intervention in her life and the life of her family. Jesus began to meet with her in intensely powerful ways and with very real manifestations. The Holy Spirit would come with such power in her home that she would shake and spend hours crying and worshipping. The whole family was significantly affected. Gold dust, manifestations, angelic encounters and other supernatural activity also occurred frequently in their home. This was all quite new to her and to our community at the time. Enter the phone calls and SMS’s from our concerned fellow bringing a stern Biblical warning.

This well-meaning chap phones our lady and says: “I’m very concerned for you. I think you’re under a deception and that you are being led by false prophets. You are deceived - watch out! Look at this scripture (2 Thes. 2); the Bible warns about these things and you are about to
be condemned for your beliefs. If you don’t stop believing these things, you are in danger of being condemned.” He would also send long SMS’s bearing similar warnings.

Now this chap is a good person and there was nothing malicious about his actions. He genuinely felt that according to the scriptures he had a responsibility out of love to warn his friends.

That being said, can you imagine how this dear lady felt? Thoughts of *Is this real? Is this all evil?* and *What if he is right?* could very well overtake her. Fear of deception, condemnation and demonic influence could have wildly operated to break her beautiful spirit. Her faith for the supernatural might totally have been destroyed.

Fortunately, her experience with God was so real and powerful that nothing could persuade her otherwise. She had been loved deeply and experienced deep things in God over that time that could not be undermined or diminished. So I share this part of our journey with you for a few reasons, but the main one is this: If this lady had listened to the “scriptures” and advice, death would have been released into her life and home, and her spectacular discovery of the supernatural would have been severely disrupted.

Can you see the danger of incorrect application of scripture? There is quite a lot of that sort of thing going on.

Just as a sidebar – our concerned fellow who made the calls left the church a week or so later. He actually seldom attended before. Nevertheless, his child was miraculously healed of a heart problem; doctors verified the miracle. His wife was delivered powerfully one night by
the presence of God. Before, when she closed her eyes to sleep at night, she would see dismembered, cut up body parts. But one night she closed her eyes and instead saw falling leaves, and she has never been plagued by the unwanted images again. Unfortunately, neither of them attend a church now.

As for the lady in our church who had the wondrous encounters with God, she has become a powerful minister of the Holy Spirit. She carries a true anointing and is growing daily in many ways, often being used to bring about healings and other wonders. God has raised her up to help others encounter Him in greater ways, teaching and sharing on the prophetic and glory realm. I shudder at the thought of how incorrect interpretation of the Bible could potentially have affected (or should I say, infected?) her ministry.

We are beginning to understand the importance of correct application of scripture.

**Scriptures are not written in a void. They are placed within a paragraph, a chapter, a book, a testament and in a covenant.**

**Context error**

Another common context error comes from a misunderstanding about when the New Covenant actually started. The Bible clearly tells us that the law was from Moses until John (Matt 11:13). Then Jesus came full of grace and truth (John 1).

Surprisingly enough, the New Covenant did not start with the birth, or the baptism, or ministry of Jesus. These were all part of **establishing** the New Covenant.
Only once Jesus had been to the cross, had died, was resurrected and then seated beside the father to be the high priest forever, would the New Covenant be in place.

This allowed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. **Only then were all requirements met in order for the New Covenant to begin.**

This seems like semantics, but it affects how we see Jesus’ teachings.

A common mistake is to take one of the teachings of Jesus that was intended for the Pharisees and make it applicable to us today. Wisdom is needed here. Some of Jesus’ conversations with the self-righteous Pharisees were specifically designed to expose pride and hypocrisy! You can’t turn Jesus’ reasoning with a Pharisee into a command for believers.

It may surprise you to know that not everything Jesus said to people “to do”, is for **us** to do, some of His teaching were still under the Old Covenant, or at least before the new. It was an age of transition.

“So Wayne, what are you saying - that the teachings of Jesus are irrelevant for us today?”

No. I’m saying that we need to correctly divide the Word of truth.

Some of Jesus’ teachings are meant for us now; others however, were intentionally purposed to point out the hypocrisy of the legalistic, self-righteous Pharisees. Jesus was saying, “So you think your holiness is pleasing God, and earning you great favor with Him, hey? I’ll show you
that you’re not so holy on the inside!”. You need a savior, not the law.

Look at this scripture:

**Mark 10:17-22** (ESV)

17And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
18And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 19You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother."
20And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." 21And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." 22Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Some Christians read this scripture and conclude that “Jesus does not want you to be rich” and, “If you are rich you need to go sell everything and give it to the poor, because if you don’t you won’t inherit eternal life.” Others maintain: “Jesus said keep the law to inherit eternal life!”

But what’s really going on here? This man was self-righteous. He believed that he had kept all the laws, and was counting on Jesus applauding and saying that his obedience had earned him an eternal reward.

Now, friends, this is crazy; no one can keep all the laws. But this self-righteous man thought that he had! So Jesus lovingly said that he should sell all that he
owned, and the rich man soberly realized that he had indeed fallen short of God’s glory. You see, Jesus exposed that the rich man was breaking the very first commandment in his heart, “You shall have no other Gods before me.” This man’s god was money. Externally, one may appear to be keeping the law, but God sees our hearts and true motives.

So it would be a perversion of scripture to tell rich people that Jesus does not like it when we have money and that we must give it away in order to inherit eternal life. I have heard this preached from a pulpit before!

There is an interesting phrase in this extract that I wish to draw your attention to for a moment: “You lack one thing”. Let me tell you friends that under the law you will always hear the nagging demand of “You lack one thing”.

When you are finally able to adjust that one thing, however, …yup, you guessed it, you’ll again hear the demand: “You lack one thing.” No matter what you do, no matter how hard you try or how well you do, the law will always keep on demanding. This is what God designed it to do, so that we would run and cling to our Savior.

Praise God that Jesus lived a perfect life on our behalf, so that now we have His righteousness - a righteousness that surpasses that of the Pharisees.

Here is another example of how Jesus uses the law to bring the self-righteous to the end of themselves, and to the beginning of Him:

Matthew 5:27 (ESV)
27You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not
commit adultery.’ 28But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

Let me remind you that if you believe that all Jesus’ teachings are the literal will of God, you should be blind and maimed! If you believe Jesus was teaching the New Covenant as a higher, holier standard, you need to act on His commands and cut off your hand next time it causes you to sin, and take out your eye next time it causes you to stumble. If you look at a person with lust - cut out your eye. If you look at a house or vehicle and covet it - cut out your eye. If you watch or see pornography, cut it out! Yet I’ve never met anyone who has obeyed the teaching of Jesus here.

Was Jesus really saying we should cut out our eyes when they cause us to sin? Or cut off your hand when it causes you to sin? The logical answer is, “No, Wayne, don’t be silly.” Yet many people take other commands that Jesus gave to their literal extreme. The purpose of much of what Jesus taught was actually to expose unrighteousness to the self-righteous, highlight their guilt and their need for a savior. Jesus exposed the heart.

You don’t need a good heart or even faith to keep the law. Some argue that Jesus came and elevated the standard, and now even more is required of us than be-
fore. They love to quote this scripture:

27You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

No, friends, Jesus was not raising the standard for Christian behavior, he was arguing that a righteousness was required that went beyond the righteousness of the religious and arrogant Pharisees.

Praise God that this righteousness is available to every believer through faith in the gift of righteousness given to us by Jesus.

Let me quickly contradict myself… **Jesus did come to raise the standard.** Jesus demands a righteousness that is beyond that of the Pharisees. He demands perfection. Praise God that perfection and righteousness is imputed to me by faith in Jesus’ obedience on my behalf. (Ok, so it’s not really a contradiction!)

Elevating the law is a demoralizing belief, as no one could keep the law to begin with! The law was perfect, so how can one elevate perfection? The law was not given to be obeyed or to produce obedience. Rather, it was given so that all sinners would be exposed to their immense need for salvation outside of themselves, a salvation not based on human effort and achievement. ‘Elevating the standard’ will make people feel even more hopeless and condemned.

The Pharisees had memorized most of the Bible off by heart. They were schooled in religion from a young age. They studied for years. They performed ceremonies
and rituals and feasts and offerings. They were devout leaders and they attended meetings daily, debating in synagogues and fasting regularly. Do you think that Jesus is demanding a higher standard from believers today?

The Pharisees and most of the Jewish nation were trusting in their own performance and obedience in order to be accepted and declared righteous before God. Furthermore, some actually claimed that they were living perfectly. But Jesus exposed their self-righteousness and imperfection, highlighting their outstanding need for a savior.

Please remember, too, that Jesus was ministering in the Old Covenant to those who were under the law. The New Covenant of grace had not yet been fully established. The New Covenant was established when the work of the cross was complete and Holy Spirit was poured out. So even in Jesus’ responses you need to ask, “How does this relate to me now, in the New Covenant?”

When we read the commands of Jesus we need to evaluate the context and establish if that particular command is relevant for us now under the New Covenant, as ones who have been given the gift of righteousness and the abundance of Grace.

Filter the scripture through the finished work of the cross. The next chapter will give mind staggering perspective on how to filter the gospel through Jesus’ life and words.
Chapter 4
Scripture vs. Word
The Jesus Filter

The entire Bible is not written to you!

It is crucial to understand the difference between scriptures and the Word of God. We must see every scripture through Jesus, and all He accomplished for us. The scriptures are the entire collection of the writings of poetry, prophecy, songs and letters of God. The Bible.

The “Word” is the specific theme of the Bible. The theme of the Bible is - God loves you, He sent Jesus and now we are saved by grace - if we believe. The Word is God’s message to you now and must contain the ‘Jesus Factor’. It’s important that we understand the Word of God in the Bible. That primary Word is Jesus! *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God and was with God.* Jesus. If we don’t see this we’re in danger of incorrectly using or applying a scripture to develop a doctrine or theology.

If the entire Bible clearly shows you that God is green, yet one scripture seems to say that God is blue, then that scripture has most likely been incorrectly interpreted. This also includes the safeguard of using scripture to interpret scripture, i.e. what does the rest of the Bible say about this topic or Word? For example, the Word of God in the Bible is the Word of “No Condemnation”.

Romans 8:1 (ESV)
“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ”

Bear with me here:
We don’t come to a book; we come to a person.
Jesus is perfect theology.
Any belief I have that is outside of who
Jesus it must change.
Jesus is the exact representation of the Father.

There is a difference between the Word and the scriptures. Let’s see how Jesus was perfect theology to one particular lady in the Bible.

John Chapter 8:1-11 (ESV)
1 but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them.
3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst 4 they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. 5 Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" 6 This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him.
Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. 7 And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. 9 But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. 10 Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"
She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

The legalistic approach that the scribes and Pharisees took was not in accordance with who Jesus is. Remember His words in John 3?

John 3:16,17 (ESV)
For God so loved the world, (Or For this is how God loved the world) that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18Whoever believes in him is not condemned

What did the law say? It said she was condemned and must die. Is this legal demand consistent with what Jesus taught? It’s interesting to note that the law is very complicated, precise and exact.

Firstly, where was the man who had been involved in the adultery? The law demands that both should be brought before the judges to be on trial (Lev. 20:10).

One of the problems with the law is that the guilty are sometimes freed due to technicalities! The law can be manipulated to make you seem condemned when you are not, or righteous when you are not! The law can be used to manipulate and control people.

Secondly, the Pharisees misrepresented the law here; the law did not prescribe the actual method of death, which means that they could manipulate the law to their own advantage. If the woman was an engaged
This is the exact strategy of the enemy. He wants to apply the law to you, he wants to condemn you and he wants to release death into your life. He will happily misapply the law to you. But he is wrong! He lies!

But what did the Word, Jesus say? His actions modeled who God is. God is good. God is love. Jesus is God.

When you see the strategy of the enemy at work in your life, stop and say: “The Word of Jesus is the Word of no condemnation”. Remember too that Jesus is the exact representation of the Father, so if Father were before the woman, He would also have not condemned her… wow.

I John 3:21 (ESV)
*Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God …*

We have permanent confidence before God, because we are not condemned. Our heart condition before God is critical in our walk. If our hearts condemn us, we lose the reality of relationship with God. Ever tried to get along with someone constantly condemning you? It’s not easy or pleasant!

We have to strip back the layers on our hearts until we expose confidence. Then relationship flows effortlessly. This was Jesus’ desire and why He said: “For the Joy set before me I am going to the cross”.

The enemy wants your heart to condemn you, so that you will be stripped of confidence before God. How tragic when we do not or cannot approach God, when we
have no security or confidence.

This cannot be emphasized enough; the condition of our hearts is a matter of life and death. Life flows from the heart, and as a man thinks in his heart, so shall he be. This makes our heart condition of utmost importance. Where would we be with God if confidence were removed? Thank you Jesus for your drastic efforts and convincing assurance. By the removal of condemnation we now have confidence. Old Covenant confidence was by the law, and that’s why there was none.

God condemned sin in Jesus so we might become the righteousness of God. When God looks at you He sees you as perfect as Jesus, even when you have just sinned and even while you sin. Why? Because he sees you through the blood of Jesus, he sees you in Christ. Nothing can separate us from this love.

Surely the adulterous girl we just read about, burning with lust, betraying her husband, sneaking around and having sex during the day while others were gathered in religious meetings - surely she was guilty? She was guilty indeed. So where was her punishment, where was her judgment, where was the wrath of God? Jesus showed her the heart of the Father instead. Remember He said: “I do nothing without first hearing from my Father,” and, “I only do what the Father wills.” Remember also that Jesus is “the exact representation of the Father.” Jesus was perfectly obedient to the Father, which reveals to us that the Father’s heart is also one of mercy! If the Father were there, he would have made the same judgment that Jesus pronounced.

We must therefore interpret the scriptures through the heart warming word of “no condemnation.” If this is how Jesus interpreted the scripture to a
guilty person under the Old Covenant - how does He deal with us now under the New Covenant of grace and the blood of Jesus when we sin?

If you read a scripture and you feel condemned by it, you're applying the scripture incorrectly and not seeing the Word. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

Friends, there is either condemnation or there is not. The Bible clearly teaches that there is not, and Jesus has clearly showed us His heart and intention towards us. You cannot see the purpose of the Bible if you cannot see that “there is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.”

**“Jesus’ way is to love us to wholeness, not guilt us to rightness or holy living”**

How does this incredible story end? Well, Jesus reveals his love for her and her accusers leave one at a time. It is interesting that the older crowd depart first. Perhaps they were wiser. Perhaps as we age we begin to realize, through our many mistakes, that we all have fallen short and that we are completely unable to attain perfection by our own willpower, thereby realizing the need for grace. They were humble enough to realize that they could not throw the first stone.

**Jesus** turns away her accusers, which is exactly what He does for us. The enemy, the devil, is called the accuser of the brethren. He accuses us night and day, trying to guilt us into believing that God has turned from us. But **Jesus** turns away the enemy’s accusations. After He turns away her accusers, He says: “Go and sin no more”.

This is **Jesus’** model for life to us.
I love you, I don’t condemn you, I came to save you, now go sin no more.

This is the Father’s model for life to us, represented in Jesus. The Holy Spirit is there to help us to live the life God has given us. With the power of the trinity working inside of us, we are set up for victory!

Friends, when we approach the Bible we must understand the greater picture of God dealing with man. **You cannot simply take one scripture as the Pharisees did, and try applying this to your life.** In the scripture that we have just been exploring, we see a classic example of the ministry of death in operation, but Jesus ushers in the ministry of life.

If the Pharisees had had their way (according to the law), the adulteress would have been put to death, thanks to the ministry of condemnation and death. **Jesus’ ministry, however, released life, love, mercy and affirmation.**

In order to correctly divide the Word of truth and plainly see the Word of God through the scriptures it is essential to understand the ministry of Jesus, and the resulting reconciliation we now have inherited through faith in Him. Here we clearly see Jesus ushering the new dispensation.

*There is therefore now no condemnation in Christ!*

Tattoo it on your heart.
God has a gift for you that will keep you filled with peace and joy while maintaining fellowship with Him forever! Want it? What is this gift?

In the previous chapter we began to unlock this gift - the gift of righteousness. This is central to understanding the Bible.

Apart from understanding this fundamental Biblical truth, the Bible cannot be understood.

There is room for error when one does not fully understand this truth. Let’s begin by exploring some terms that will prove to be useful in this regard. This section is called “Filters”.

Filters are Biblical truths through which we must read the Bible. Correctly using filters ensures that the truth and purity of the Word is preserved.

The finished work of the cross accomplished and bought us keys that enable us to see the Word of God through the Bible. Not correctly understanding the depth of what Jesus achieved for us on the cross hinders us from entering into those promises. Without the cross we
have nothing. No life, no faith, no grace, no freedom, no joy. It is the centre of all that we believe.

You can imagine my great surprise that after 20 years of being a Christian, after many years full time and part time ministry, and while leading a church ...I discovered that I knew nothing about the Finished work of the cross.

Somehow amidst all the leadership training, marriage courses and discipleship classes, I had not been taught about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and what that means for every believer. As I have since learned, the church in general has not taught these wonderful Biblical truths, and most churches are mixing the covenants.

I must warn you, as we look at some of these solid Biblical foundations, that some of the beliefs that you may be holding on to will be challenged. I’m not asking you to agree with me; I’m equipping you to take the Bible and read it for yourself!

There are a few words in the Bible that we need to understand. If we don’t understand the definitions of **justification** and **righteousness**, we won’t be able to understand the Bible or why Father sent Jesus.

**Justification.**

The easy-to-remember definition of **justified** is:

“**just-as-if-I’d**” never sinned.

Justification is the forgiveness of all our sins, past present and future.
“Paul uses the Greek verb for Justified 27 times. It’s translated justify in all cases except two, where it is translated “declared righteous”. The term describes what happens to people when they believe in Christ as their savior. From the negative viewpoint God declares them not guilty; from the positive viewpoint, he declares them to be righteous. He cancels the guilt of their sins, and credits righteousness to them.”

(NIV Study Bible on Romans 3:24.)

Here is an excerpt from Tyndale’s Biblical Dictionary:

Justification in the New Testament

Almost all discussion of justification in the NT is found in the letters of Paul, primarily in those to the Romans and the Galatians. In these two letters is one of the fundamental terms by which Paul seeks to set forth the consequences of the work of Christ for sinful humanity. Justification by faith is set primarily against the background of Jewish legalism and it’s attempts to make the law the basis of salvation. Paul regards this as an alien message requiring the strongest condemnation (Gal1:6-9). The word and work of Christ, embedded in the message that Paul proclaimed, was a reminder that righteousness of justification is the gift of God through the blood (covenant blood Hebrews 13:20) of Jesus Christ. All this is entirely apart from the law( Rom 3:21). The law in fact, is not capable of leading one to righteousness, nor was it given to bring about righteousness.

“Righteousness” is therefore a relational term and is affirmed by one who by faith has been brought into right relationship with God. The law brings
judgment; it confronts one with his incapacity to cope with sin (Acts 13:39; Rom 8:3). Justification has then had its forensic (judicial) dimensions in that it copes with and represents salvation to, the problem of sin and guilt. The believer is set free from condemnation (Rom 8:1). Yet the fundamental understanding of justification is to be gained in moving away from the law and judgment to the covenant of grace. The appeal to Abraham in both Romans and Galatians is to show that the covenant has always been the only hope of humanity. 

**God keeps His covenant, even though His covenant people violate it daily.** (pp 765)

What stunning theology. Essentially, we see that righteousness is relational. We are in right relationship with God through Jesus and justification is our legal standing. We are declared not guilty as all judgment and punishment fell on Jesus. We go free.

Another way to see it is that justification is the removal of our sin, while righteousness is the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to us. **They always both happen at the same time.**

This is the heart of the entire Bible - salvation through faith in Jesus - declaring all believers righteous and justified by faith.

So “justified” is very simple - God sees you now and forever as though you have not sinned. He then gives you righteousness as a free gift.
Righteous

This means to be right with God or to be in right standing with God. The best way to explain it (we will delve into the theology of it later) is like this:

Imagine how Father God sees Jesus. Now that’s the same way that He looks at you... wow! How awesome is that?

The best part of righteousness is that it is a gift from God, which cannot be earned.

You know you’ve understood the gift of righteousness when you know that God will never hold your sins against you.

II Corinthians 5:19 (ESV)
that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation

Romans 4:7-9 (ESV)
Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; \(^8\)blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.

Hebrews 8:12 (ESV)
For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.

How radical these scriptures are that clearly state that once we’re declared righteous, God will never count our sins against us. Mercy means that we don’t get what we rightly deserve. We can never fall
out of right standing with God. Do you know a scripture that declares with certainty that you can lose your righteousness? It is reasonable to assume that if it were possible for one to lose one’s justification and righteousness it would be an essential topic to be in the Bible. But it is not in the Bible. I wonder why?

Unwrap and enjoy your free gift!
Chapter 6
Understanding the gift of Righteousness

How does God relate to me? What’s His way?

God’s plan was to redeem us and to bring us into right standing with Him. John Piper, a man widely acclaimed for his theological understanding, wrote the book “Counted Righteous in Christ - should we abandon the theology of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness?” Piper proves convincingly that without from understanding this central Biblical truth, you cannot understand the Bible:

I have found my mind and heart moving towards Luther’s estimation of the doctrine of justification, and particularly the **imputation of Christ’s righteousness** as the precious foundation of our full acceptance and everlasting inheritance of life and joy.


**Martin Luther**, the great father of the doctrine of the notion ‘Justification by Faith’, asserts:

[Justification] is the chief article of Christian doctrine. To him who understands how great its usefulness and majesty are, **everything else will seem slight and turn to nothing**. What is an an-
gel from heaven? What are all creatures in comparison with the article of Justification? **For if we know this article, we are in the clearest light; if we do not know it we dwell in the densest darkness.**

If we do not understand this truth we will dwell in the densest darkness, but if we do, we shall live in the clearest light.

I have heard some protest, “But you can’t just preach grace - you must present the whole council of God.”

I reply with John Piper’s quote:

Good counseling builds the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) into the head and heart of sinful wounded people. **At the centre of it (the “whole counsel of God”) is Christ our righteousness.**

Piper then goes on to say that “Understanding righteousness is so central to our precious faith that **without a true revelation of the gift of righteousness**, which Christ gives to us freely through faith, Christianity cannot be lived with everlasting inheritance of life and joy.”

If we do not understand our righteousness in Christ, we cannot understand our inheritance, or have everlasting joy.

**How to obtain righteousness?**

How do we enter this permanent state of being right with God, so that He can treat us as justified?

Firstly **- We cannot achieve righteousness.**
God’s standard for righteousness is perfect obedience. If we had to attain righteousness by our own effort, we would have to be completely righteous. We would have to perfectly obey every single law and command ever written. Unfortunately, none of us could ever do that. Fortunately, Jesus could.

Jesus now offers His earned Righteousness to us, to become righteousness credited to us.

Righteousness comes to us as a gift, without works, without the law, and through the life of Jesus.

Some incorrectly believe that the gift of righteousness is merely a starting point, and that we thereafter have to maintain it through works and obedience, lest you lose your righteousness again. This is a damaging theology to say the very least. If I am required to work for my righteousness, then it is no longer a free gift! Their philosophy boils down to salvation by works and a dependency on my own effort to keep my salvation. Oh what joy floods my soul to realize the truth of the Glorious New Covenant, and Jesus’ promise to present every child blameless before the Father!

The Free Gift of Righteousness

Romans 5:17 (ESV)
If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Here we see that righteousness is a free gift. This is a powerful life changing and liberating truth.
This is how the gift works:

Jesus came to the earth and He lived a perfect life in every way. He never sinned; He perfectly obeyed the Father every second of every day right up until, and even during, His death. **He was totally righteous and Holy in every way imaginable. Now when we become believers, He gives us that righteousness as a free gift. So the Father sees us as perfectly holy, righteous and obedient! How awesome is that?**

This single Biblical truth changed my life forever; when the light of this truth hit my heart, everything changed. Intimacy with God was instantly restored and new relationship was birthed. An increase in faith, hope, love and worship overflowed into my life at every level.

God made a radical way for me to be with Him, all the time, always, no matter what. What an amazing Savior. Thank you my Savior Jesus.

Not by works

**Romans 4** (ESV)

4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.

God cannot be manipulated into giving us righteousness, because we could never do enough to deserve righteousness. The standard to receive it is perfection (perfect obedience to the law and commands), and as far as we know, none of us are perfect.
We cannot work for righteousness, as if to earn it like a wage, or through works of the law.

**Ephesians 2** (ESV)

> 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
> 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

We cannot boast in our righteousness, because it comes to us through Jesus. It’s not our own works that produce righteousness. It’s the other way around - **righteousness will produce good fruit in us.** This is of God and to his glory so that that no one can boast. This boasting is the self-righteousness, that comes from works.

**The works of the Christian are to believe in Jesus.**

**John 6:28,29** (ESV)

> Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent…"

**This is the command of Jesus:**

**1 John 3** (ESV)

> 23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ.

So the works and commands of Jesus are simply to believe in Him.

**Righteousness apart from the law**
Romans 3:21 (ESV)
But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law.

Romans 3:28: (ESV)
For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

Galatians 2:21 (ESV)
I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification (Or righteousness) were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

It is very clear that righteousness comes apart from the law, as does justification. If it were possible for us to attain righteousness and justification through obedience to the law, then clearly, Christ died in vain.

Please friend, settle this matter in your heart. There is still plenty of ‘stinking thinking’ polluting Christian circles today. People are still trying to be righteous and holy by keeping the law, and grace is being mixed with the law.

We need to begin to read the Bible ‘Cross-eyed’, through the lens of accepting that the law has been fulfilled and we are no longer under law but under grace. If this matter is unsettled, you’ll quickly become confused, soon come under condemnation and the performance driven mentality and eventually become removed from Christ and cursed. Galatians warns that those who go back to the law are separating themselves from Christ and coming under a curse. If you battle with slipping back under the law, do a study of Galatians and let God set you forever free! Amen and amen!
From God, not of ourselves:

**Romans 10:3** (ESV)

*For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.*

Effective righteousness comes from God. We cannot produce it. It’s from God, and is actually the very righteousness of God. There is no way to make, give or maintain your righteousness for it is a gift from Him. You cannot establish your own righteousness; that’s called self-righteousness, and God hates self-righteousness (just ask the Pharisees – ‘the vipers’!).

**2 Corinthians 5:21** (ESV)

*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

This is a mind-staggering scripture. Jesus had no sin, but on the cross He literally became sin.

Did Jesus deserve to get and become sin on the cross? NO.
Did God give it to Him? YES.
Was that fair? NO.
Did Jesus work for that sin? NO. But he got sin nevertheless.
Can anything undo the effects of the cross? NO.

What about us?
Did we deserve to get righteousness through the cross? NO.
Did God give it to us? YES.
Was that fair? NO.
Did we work for the righteousness? NO. But we got it nevertheless.
Can anything undo the effects of the cross for those who believe? NO. (Check out Romans 5 for some crazy exchanges.)

It’s simple, friends. Jesus lived the perfect life; He was perfectly obedient. In the great exchange of the cross, he got what he did not deserve, and we got what we did not deserve.

**How do you get righteousness?**

Very simple: by faith in Jesus.

Simply believe that Jesus lived a perfect life on your behalf. Take His free gift of righteousness, and it is yours. We believe in Jesus’ perfect obedience, perfect sacrifice, and we receive the gift. It’s by faith and faith alone. And we can’t even boast in our faith for it’s the Holy Spirit who gives us our faith!

It’s not faith in our faith; it’s faith in Jesus that saves us.

**Philippians 3:9** (ESV)

…and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.
Romans 1:16 (ESV)
For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, (Or beginning and ending in faith) as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith.”

Jesus took the wrath, punishment, judgment and separation from God that he did not deserve, while we received the forgiveness of sins, wholeness and righteousness that we did not earn! When we believe in his perfect sacrifice by faith, we gratefully receive it all.

Much deception has crept into Christian theology, belief and tradition because of losing sight of “Christ our righteousness”.

If you read the Bible and think I have to do this, or do that in order to gain righteousness, or be right with God, then you’re incorrectly dividing the Word of truth. In the New Covenant, God no longer deals with us based on our obedience. Our righteousness is a free gift received only through faith.

So what about works, the law and the commandments? Indeed, they all have a purpose, but their purpose is not to produce righteousness. Those things happen as a result of our imputed righteousness!

The law is designed to crush you and bring you to your knees, to make you cry out for salvation. The law rightly points out that no one is righteous. It’s only by His obedience on our behalf - there is no other way to receive this life altering gift of righteousness.

Now that we are declared and made righteous, we
will naturally produce the fruit of the commandments and works. Righteousness is the root that produces fruit. No root - no fruit. We will produce fruit because of the righteousness in us. **We are radically changed into a new creation at salvation and its impossible for “good works” and “commandments” to not manifest in and through us.** We are filled with the Holy Spirit! It’s impossible to be filled with God, and not “do good works”. It’s right believing that produces right living!

John Piper again hits the nail on the head:

> It is by grace we are saved through faith; not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. But the heart that is full of faith will overflow in attitudes and actions very different from those which flow from unbelief. Therefore, our deeds will testify truly to the genuine or absence of faith, and it is not inconsistent for God to judge us according to our works. But we must understand that this judgment according to works, does not mean that we earn our salvation. **Our deeds are not the merit of our righteousness, they are the mark of our new life in Christ.** Our deeds do not earn, they exhibit out salvation. Our deeds are not sufficient to deserve God’s favor, but they demonstrate our faith. Please keep that distinction clear in your mind regarding our attitudes and actions: they do not earn, they exhibit; they do not merit, they mark; they do not deserve, they demonstrate. And therefore, “God will render to every man according to His deeds.”

We are changed, for we are new creatures, enabled supernaturally by the power of God to the glory of God.

Legalism will demand the proof of your inward
change by convincing you that the good works are now demanded, and it might even give you a timeline on which the change should happen. Legalism declares you guilty and unrighteous until you do meet the standard. The accuser of the brethren is the author of legalism. Satan!

The truth of the New Covenant is this: we are in right standing with God and all our sins forgiven forever, through Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf. This does not come by the law, works or obedience, but by Christ’s perfect performance on my behalf.

When God looks at you, he sees Jesus’ perfect obedience and performance. He sees you through Jesus blood as blameless, faultless and perfectly righteous. Since we have these great promises, let us approach God’s throne of grace with confidence.

You cannot become more righteous than you are right now, because you’ve been made perfectly righteous. We’ve received the righteousness of God. Jesus was perfect.

Simply believe and receive. Thank you, Jesus.

“Wow Wayne, you certainly went through a lot of effort to stress that we are not righteous by the law or works or obedience or anything else, but only by the gift. Why did you focus predominantly on that?”

What a wonderful question. Look at these scriptures again.
Grudem’s definition of propitiation is:

**A sacrifice that bears God’s wrath to the end and in so doing changes God’s wrath towards us into favour.**

That is deeply and intensely profound! Let’s breathe it in.

Let’s eat it!

A sacrifice...

Bearing God’s wrath...

**To “its end”...**

There is no more wrath left - God is satisfied!

The NIV study Bible puts it like this:

God’s holiness demands punishment for human sin. God therefore out of love sent his Son to make substitutionary atonement for the believer’s sin. **In this way the fathers wrath is satisfied; his wrath against the Christian sin has been turned away and directed towards Christ.**

(pp 1948)

God’s wrath towards you has been turned away, and it has turned into favour! Grudem says “This simply means that Jesus bore the wrath of God against sin,” and, “Apart from the central truth, the death of Christ cannot be adequately understood.”

Please understand this: God’s wrath for your sin - His anger, his disappointment and the punishment you should receive - fell on Jesus on the cross. If you were to come under His wrath, you would not be able to bear it. Bill Johnson often jokes: “How do we know we’re not under the wrath of God? We’re alive!”.
So how do I apply this to myself? Grudem has the answer:

The New testament emphasis on the completion and finality of Christ’s sacrifice of Himself for us has much practical application, because it reassures us that there is no more penalty of sin left for us to pay. The penalty has entirely been paid by Christ, and we should have no remaining fear of condemnation or punishment.

This application is profound...

How many times have we thought or been taught that ‘if you sin, you’ll incur Gods wrath and anger; God will punish your behaviour; you had better fear Him and live holy or you’ll reap the penalty from God!’

We need a mind shift. We cannot appease God’s anger to sin. This requires a sacrifice, which Jesus provided. Our good behaviour does not deter his Righteous anger, and we do not become righteous through being obedient. We’re righteous based on His obedience on our behalf. The only obedience that deters God’s wrath is the obedience of faith.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says:

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The cross does it. You must understand, without Jesus, the only way to satisfy or avoid God’s righteous anger would be to never sin or do anything wrong. Under God’s holy standard one mistake would incur his wrath...
II Corinthians 5:19 (ESV)

...That is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Romans 4:7-9

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; 8blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.

Hebrews 8:12

For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.

Do you believe these scriptures? Do you really believe that no matter what sin you commit, God will not count it against you.

“But surely if you sin a lot of times, God will punish?!”
“What about big sins, surely God will punish them?

Let’s meditate for a few seconds on this scripture:

Romans 8:1 (Memorize it!)
There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

No matter what you do, you cannot be condemned. I remember talking to Michael Eaton once and he was talking about writing a book entitled, “Not Guilty, even when You are Guilty”; it blew my mind.

We need the revelation that “all have sinned and fall
short of the glory of God”. We’re all guilty, all the time, for we are not at any time equal to the glory of God. No matter what we try, we fall short. Our very best efforts are like dirty rags. They are not what God requires from us. Add this scripture to the equation and our predicament becomes even clearer:

**James 2** (NIV)

10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

You see, the law is a composite whole, which means that if we fail at the tiniest bit, we have failed at all of it, and we are guilty. The bottom line is that we all need grace. Some just recognize their need for it more. Praise God, Romans 6 says: “where sin increases, grace increases all the more”. Now, if we think that it is impossible for us to sin, and that we don’t need God to keep us clean, we deceive ourselves, and fall into the same self-righteous trap of the Pharisees.

**Grace abused**

Can grace be abused? YES. If you see the glorious grace of God and the perfect gift of righteousness, understand that your sins are forgiven and that God is no longer counting your sin against you, but then use it as an excuse to blatantly sin and go on sinning, you are abusing the grace of God.

I’m not talking about the person who does not want to sin, and wishes he had not. I’m talking about the person who has no desire to stop harmful behavior, no hint of sensitivity to the right thing. And his reasoning? “The grace of God says I can sin, so I will”.

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If this person is in adultery, he argues: “God’s grace is there, so I’m going to get another mistress, for grace says that I can do what I want! I don’t care about my wife, I don’t care about my family or what the world thinks - grace is here for me.”

What an insult to our Savior! What an insult to the cross, and the beauty of the Gospel! I have to say, however, that I have never met such a person and if I do still encounter someone such as this, I would question if such a person had ever been saved!
Chapter 7
The Filter of the cross
Propitiation - The centrality of our peace.

The great exchange...

The central truth. The life changing realization. The demonstration of God’s love. The centrality of the gospel. The heart of grace.

“Apart from the central truth, the death of Christ cannot be adequately understood.”
- Wayne Grudem, author of Systematic Theology.

If we miss this, we miss the gospel! Sadly many have lost this wonderful truth of Propitiation.

You may say pro piiii tiii what? (Don’t worry, it took me 6 months to pronounce it correctly!)

We’re going to look at three aspects of propitiation:

- The scriptures.
- The definitions.
- The theology.

Then we will ask the all-important question:

So what does this mean for me?
The scriptures:

**John 2** (KJV)
Jo 2:1  My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

1Jo 2:2  And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

God does not want us to sin. When we do, Jesus is our defense. He comes to our defense. Even before we repent or confess, He defends. He (Jesus) deters God’s anger to the cross and His sacrifice.

All the worlds sins have been forgiven.

**1 John 4:9** (KJV)

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

I’ve used the KJV translation including the numbering so that later when we explore the Greek word definitions, the scripture will become clear.
Firstly, We must understand that we cannot pro-pitiate ourselves. Jesus is our propitiator.

There is only one way to receive propitiation. We cannot achieve it ourselves by work, or by obedience to the law. Only through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus, and by believing in the finished work of the cross can our propitiation be appropriated.

Romans 3 (KJV)
Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for the law is the knowledge of sin.

Rom 3:21 But now the righteousness of God is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; being witnessed by the law and the prophets; the law and the prophets; the law and the prophets; the law and the prophets;

Rom 3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ un-to all and upon all them that believe, there is no difference:

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Rom 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Rom 3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Rom 3:26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.
Rom 3:27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works?
Nay: but by the law of faith.

Rom 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Definitions

Did you see the number next to the word propitiation? Here is the Greek definition for the exact word used in those places.

**Strong’s Greek dictionary.**

G2434 ἱλασμός
Hilasmos *hil-*as-*mos’*
*atonement*, that is, (concretely) an *expiator*: - propitiation.

Some translations use the word atonement instead of propitiation. The words seem to be used interchangeably, but they have slightly different meanings in English.

**Propitiation** focuses on God’s *wrath being appeased* and *favour being released* in its place.

**Atonement** emphasises the resulting “one-ness” with God. The resulting reconciliation. Made at-one. Peace. It would be correct to use either word. Both together though, reflect the true meaning.

**The definitions:** Webster’s Dictionary

*Propitiation* /Pro-pi’ti-a’tion/ (?), n. [L. *propitiation*: cf. F. *propitiation*.]

1. The act of *appeasing the wrath* and conciliating the favor of an offended person; the act of making propitious.
That which propitiates; atonement or atoning sacrifice; specifically, the influence or effects of the death of Christ in appeasing the divine justice, and conciliating the divine favor.

He [Jesus Christ] is the *propitiation* for our sins. 
*1 John ii. 2.*

**Atonement** /A·tone´ment/ (?), *n.* **1.** (Literally, a setting *at one.*) Reconciliation; restoration of friendly relations; agreement; concord. By whom we have now received the *atonement.*

*Rom. v. 11.*

He desires to make *atonement.*

**2.** Satisfaction or reparation made by giving an equivalent for an injury, or by doing of suffering that which will be received in *satisfaction for an offense or injury:* expiation; amends; -- with *for.*

Specifically, in theology: The expiation of sin made by the obedience, personal suffering, and death of Christ.

**The theology:**

Wayne Grudem of Systematic Theology brings the following to our attention:

As Jesus bore the guilt of our sins alone, God the father, the mighty creator, the Lord of the universe, poured out on Jesus the fury of His wrath: Jesus became the object of intense hatred of sin and vengeance against sin. Which God had patiently stored up since the beginning of the world.

THE ATONEMENT, Chapter 27, pp 574-575.
Remember James 2:10 (NIV):

*For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it?*

Thank God for the cross. How many of us need a renewing of the mind in this regard. We still feel *if I just do this well, or that well... God will be happy with me*. But Friend, the truth is that He is already more than thrilled with you. Because when He looks at you, all He sees is Jesus.

Jesus bore God’s anger to its end. His anger is satisfied in Jesus’ sacrifice. Propitiation happened. A great exchange of anger and intense rage for radical favour and unconditional love happened.

God has done this for everyone in the world and when we believe it, we receive it.

The great exchange: God’s anger and punishment exchanged for His love and favour.

**Now we live free from condemnation... it fell on Jesus.**

**We live free from punishment... it fell on Jesus.**

**We live free of fear... perfect love casts out all fear.**

**Free from separation from God... Jesus was separated from Him for us.**

**What does this mean for me?**

You are atoned for. Made at-one with God. You can love and enjoy Him. He can love and enjoy you. All the walls of separation are torn down. Jesus paid the price, so we might go free. Now we live from here, from this
place of freedom. Living any other way will have no victory, no intimacy and no power. We drink from His love, peace, joy and righteousness. Through this great sacrifice, we access life, and life in abundance. From this place we live with confidence to approach the throne of His grace.

From this place we live by the Spirit, knowing our loving Father is guiding and leading us every moment of every day. From this place we love, worship and serve willingly. His great love and goodness has become our divine motivator. We know now that we can access His love and power and presence at any moment, because we have confidence before Him. Now we have peace; now we have boldness. Now we want to come to Him. Why? because we know we will find love. His anger is burnt out, and now his favour burns. Now we can live in faith; now we can believe God. What a great God and what a great saviour! Thank you Jesus! Let’s worship Him.

**Filter of the cross**

You died! That means your debts are cancelled! The legal demands are cancelled. Demonic powers are defeated!

**Colossians 2**(ESV)

11In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.
And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities (probably demonic rulers and authorities) and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. (Or in it (that is, the cross))

This is without a doubt one of the most profound scriptures.

We were dead in our sins. We had a sinful nature in the flesh. The sinful nature was crucified with Christ. And we were made alive.

**He forgave us all our sin.**

Note: **all!** Not some but all! How? By cancelling the record of debt that stood against us. All the legal demands that were against us were placed on the cross and died with Christ. This disarmed the rulers and authorities.

Just think this through for a moment - it’s deeply profound!

Any belief we have must be filtered through the cross. Beliefs such as:
- You still have the sinful nature.
- Your sin is not forgiven.
- You owe God.
- He is still not pleased.
- There are still legitimate legal demands.
- Demons can have authority over you.
These lies rob the believer of a residing victory in their lives. Let me ask you: Can these beliefs fit through the filter of the cross?

A classic example is that some teach (as did I) that when you sin you give the enemy a legal right to interfere in your life. By breaking God’s commands or law, you create an open door through which the demonic can legally create a stronghold. Breaking this stronghold can be very difficult and may even require a special ministry, or prayer and fasting.

Will this teaching make it through the filter of the cross?

Now it is never a good idea to do anything God does not want, but does this create legitimate opportunity for the demonic to come?

Well, if all our sins are forgiven, if our debt is forgiven, and the legal demands cancelled, and the demonic disarmed... how can there be a legitimate demonic influence?

That unsound belief is a demonic lie. This belief is a door for the demonic! The accuser is doing what he does best; he is condemning you and trying to convince you that you deserve harassment. **Falling out of faith or out of belief in the finished work of the cross** opens the door to the demonic. Stand strong and firm with the shield of faith that can extinguish all the fiery darts of the enemy!

Boldly declare: “My sins are forgiven, my debts cancelled, the legal demands removed, the demonic powers defeated and I am free!” No prayer, fasting or spiritual warfare needed, only faith in Jesus’ performance on your
behalf. Stand in faith, stand in victory, and refute every lying voice that would seek to bring you back under the yolk of the law. Take every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus – His obedience on the cross for you.

Curses

Can you be cursed? If you believe you can, then I suppose you can! If you believe you cannot, then you cannot!

A curse is an illegitimate authority influencing your life. A curse is the evidence of unbelief or ignorance. It has no legal right to be there.

Believing that it does have legitimate authority opens the door for curses to enter your life. Know this with certainty: illegitimate authorities will try to affect you. But if we know our position, if we know our legal rights through the finished work of the cross, we can stand our ground and refute every false accusation. What will you tolerate?

Satan uses the law to bring a curse. His strategy is to make people think that if they break the law, he can bring a legitimate attack or influence. That’s why Galatians 3:10 says:

*For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.”*
Trying to do everything the law demands will guarantee failure, for no one can keep the law, and if you fail at one part you fail at all of it (James 2:10). Relying on the law for right standing with God puts you under a curse of constant failure. The enemy will use that sense of failure to harass you. Satan will tell you that due to your guilt, you can be influenced by darkness. But praise God when we see that at the cross, the law with its legal demands and endless lists of requirements was cancelled and fulfilled in Jesus. When we see that we are imputed Christ’s obedience, we are delivered from the curse.

Satan wants you to come back under that curse! A curse needs handles. A curse requires unbelief or ignorance to operate. If a person does not know the authority God has given, or if they will not believe in the finished work of the cross, then a curse can come.

We can take authority over these things, through faith and through belief.

“Thank you Jesus that You were cursed in my place, and that every punishment I should have received, You received on my behalf. Every curse is gone, because they fell on You. Thank You that You triumphed over all the work of the enemy. Thank You that You have forgiven my sins, all of them. Thank You that You do not hold my failures against me and that You’ve cancelled my debt, and the written code that stood against me. Thank You that You pronounce me justified, righteous and innocent. Thank You that You destroyed condemnation. Thank You that You have blessed me with every spiritual blessing in Christ, thank You that I have all I need for life and godliness. Thank You for Your grace and mercy. Thank You that You have already defeated every power and principality! Thank You that the same power that raised Christ
from the dead is in me. I am free! No power of hell can touch me, because You’ve given me authority over every power and principality, and I am free!”

We no longer live in fear of being cursed. If there are negative things in your life, don’t accept them by believing it’s a legitimate oppression that you somehow deserve through your failings or through your earthly parents. Nothing your earthly parents did can release a curse legitimately on you. Your heavenly parent, God, has given you a new bloodline as a son. Take authority as a righteous and powerful son, and appropriate the cross; suck your reality out of heaven!

Don’t accept sickness, depression or recurring habits! Can you see how believing the lie makes you passive, through making you falsely believe that you somehow deserve what you have. But faith in Jesus’ performance on our behalf and the finished work of the cross causes faith to rise up, and we claim our victory with full assurance of faith.

Galatians 3:13
Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us - for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree" ...

1 John 5:15
but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.
We have studied the filter of the gift of righteousness, and the filter of the cross; now we’re going to concentrate on another filter, the filter of the Covenant.

**Without understanding the New Covenant, one cannot fully interpret the Bible.**

Below is a preach that I hope will help you to see how the Covenants are divided, and highlight the different ways that God deals with us within these Covenants. Enjoy…

We are doing a series on “How to read your Bible”. The reason we are approaching this topic is because the Bible is a dangerous book if incorrectly interpreted. The Bible can actually do harm rather than good if it is wrongly or partially understood. So it becomes very important to, as the Bible itself says, “correctly divide the Word of truth.”

Within the Bible, an Old Covenant and a New Covenant is contained. One Covenant releases death, and the other life. One brings you into freedom while the other puts you under bondage. It becomes of the highest priority, therefore, to live in the correct Covenant.

Much confusion, pain and legalism comes through
the terrible error of mixing the two Covenants. This mixing of Covenants has lead to a decrease in the glory of the church, a decrease in intimacy with Father, and a general drying up of the supernatural and the miraculous in the church today. But praise God for a Grace Revolution that is causing us to return to the centrality of the cross. Worldwide the church is being shaken and only what’s of Him will stand. So let’s make every effort to ensure that all we are about and all we hold to is Him. Let us see what Paul says about this:

2 Corinthians 3

5Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 6He has made us competent as ministers of a New Covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 7Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, 8will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? 9If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!

10For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. 11And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! 12Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 13We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. 14But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.

15Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16But whenever anyone turns to the
Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

This passage mentions many differences between the Old and New Covenant:

**Number 1**

The first difference is that one Covenant involves God writing laws on stone tablets, while in the other He writes on our hearts of flesh.

> 3b written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts

The Old Covenant was engraved on stone and the New Covenant is written on our hearts, on flesh.

Notice please, that the comparison is between life and death. Stone is inanimate, cold and lifeless, whereas Flesh is warm, sensitive to touch and very much alive!

**Number 2**

Under the law, when we think we are doing well, we want to claim competence for ourselves, and thereby stop relying on God.

> 4 Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. 5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.
The Old Covenant of law produces self-righteousness; the New Covenant of grace allows us to humbly and gratefully accept the gift of righteousness freely given to us through Christ’s perfect obedience on our behalf (Rom 5:17).

Under the New Covenant our competence comes from Him. It’s not about what we can do for Him, but it’s all about what He has done for us and in us, and what He will do through us, if we will allow Him.

*Number 3*

> He has made us competent as ministers of a New Covenant

Under the Old Covenant the only way to become competent was to fully obey the law. To become a priest, you had to qualify. You had to be born from the right tribe. You had to memorize the Bible. You had to be chosen as an apprentice if you wanted to advance. You had to be perfectly holy in order to be considered competent enough to minister.

Under the New Covenant He makes us all competent.

Under the Old Covenant priests ministered, but now in the New Covenant, we are all royal priests.

What do you have to do to be competent? Nothing. He has made you competent.
Now, reading your Bible and studying and prayer and living morally upright can help you be more effective in your ministry. But that is a lower level of competency. Many Christians read their Bibles, pray, and live externally holy lives, but seldom demonstrate the Kingdom of Heaven. Few experience the tangible presence of God. Few see signs, wonders, miracles and salvations. So good disciplines don’t essentially qualify you.

What qualifies you is the knowledge that Father loves you and accepts you. Jesus qualifies you through the washing of His blood. He then puts His spirit in every believer. Now in this new state ...anything can happen. You can heal the sick and experience His presence. You have intimacy with God, you can hear His voice and direction, and you can respond to His leading and guiding. He will give you the words for every situation and the Holy Spirit’s power to back it up.

The Old Covenant destroys faith for the supernatural, whereas the New Covenant promises power for the believer. Power to heal the sick, hear from God, to release the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and to be victorious in every area of life. You have full power and authority to deal with any situation you may encounter, because the power that raised Christ from the dead is living and active and working in you powerfully!

Now, the enemy does not want you to realize who you are, and what God has done to and for you. If you realize, fully realize, who you are as a new creation, as a born again spirit, if we realize the power within us... nothing will ever be the same. In this hour, Jesus is recovering the revelation of this truth to His church. This is the New Covenant, which is readily available for every believer.
Number 4

6He has made us competent as ministers of a New Covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

When the first (law) was released at Mount Sinai there was great fear and trembling, and 3000 people died.

In the book of Acts, however, when the New Testament was introduced in reality, there was peace and 3000 were saved! To reiterate, one Covenant is a Covenant of life and one was of death.

The Old Covenant letter kills, but the New Covenant spirit is life. If you want to die spiritually, simply become a legalist. It’s a ministry of death. One thing the Old Covenant will never say is “you’ve done enough”… you’re never truly good enough.

If you want to live, live by the Holy Spirit. This is life and freedom. One thing the New Covenant always promises is “Jesus has done enough”.

If you’re leading a church or ministry, and you want to see people slowly suffer and die, just preach the law, and watch all life drain out of the people you’re leading.

I can’t believe that the majority of people have a fear that when you remove the law, people will sin more. It’s not just the removal of the law, but the replacing of that with something infinitely more powerful and effective: The Spirit. How can the power-activating ministry of the Spirit within you cause you to sin more? It’s impossible!
The Old Covenant was a fading glory that brought death and condemnation.

The New Covenant revelation promises a never fading, ever increasing, incomparable and all surpassing glory. It offers righteousness for every believer.

The righteousness of the New Covenant was something the Old Covenant could never produce. No one besides Jesus ever achieved righteousness through the law. He was and is the only one. And He gave His righteousness to us as a gift.

If that first ‘useless’ Covenant, that God found fault with, had so much glory that people could not look into Moses’ face, how much greater will the glory of the New Covenant be! Jesus now lives in us and people see Him in our faces!

The Old Covenant’s glory has faded, and the New Covenant’s glory is ever increasing.
Number 6

12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

The Old Covenant never produced boldness, only a permanent feeling of failure and condemnation.

Since our confidence is not in ourselves, but in what Jesus has done, we are able to be very bold. We are bold before the Lord, living in His acceptance and intimacy. We are bold in the world, knowing that He is always with us. We are bold as ministers, knowing His power is in us and wanting to be released through us. We are bold to do anything, and go anywhere! We are bold, because he has done it. He is in us, so we are bold!

If we had to be bold based on our own merit, we would all find reason to lose confidence. If you do find boldness on your own merit, it’s religious self-righteousness.

Number 7

13 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. 14 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.

15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

The Old Covenant cloaked our minds in a veil.

The New Covenant removes the veil, like a husband would on his wedding day. This releases revelation, and frees the bride to enjoy intimate relationship with her beloved.
**Number 8**  
16But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom

The New Covenant is a covenant of Freedom.

**Galatians 3:23**  
Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.

To the degree that you are still under the Old Covenant deception, is the degree to which you are still in bondage.

The old was a shadow and the new the substance. Live free of the shadow.

**Number 9**  
18And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

We now reflect the Lord’s glory. Under the law we do not reflect glory!

**And Number 10**  
We’re being changed from glory to ever increasing glory. His Glory is that He is changing us. Under the old we strive to change ourselves while the law does not lift a
hand to help. Under the new, He changes us! When you are born again you become a new creature, powerfully changed!

**Number 11**

“All this is from the Lord.”

Let us abandon every hint of the Old Covenant. Let us run in the glory and freedom of the New Covenant. Let us live in intimacy with Father. Let us enjoy Him, and let’s allow Him to enjoy us.

Let the power of who you are and who He created you to be, flow out of you so that every environment you enter is changed.

Lead others into this glorious New Covenant. You can. Let’s worship and thank Him for this awesome freedom and intimacy of the New Covenant. Let’s be very bold, for He is in us and is working powerfully within us.
## Comparison of Old and New Covenants from 2 Corinthians 3

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Chapter 9
How does a covenant work?
You need faithfulness

It’s of utmost importance that we understand the need for faithfulness! Without faithfulness working in our lives we have no certainty of salvation! Without faithfulness, we are left vulnerable, and have no certainty of hope for the future! Without faithfulness we cannot grow in any way as Christians! Without faithfulness, we will not see revival, and signs and wonders and miracles. We simply must have faithfulness! We’re lost without it!

Here is the good news... JESUS IS FAITHFULL.

Our success as Christians is not dependent on our faithfulness to God, but it’s essentially Jesus’ faithfulness to the Father and to us that secures our future and gives us bold hope. Even our very right standing with God required and requires Jesus’ faithfulness.

Now faithfulness is important in every believer’s life, and faithfulness should flow out of Christians. BUT this faithfulness is an overflow, and a result of His faithfulness.

Let’s examine Jesus’ faithfulness for a moment!

Jesus is faithful to His Covenantal promises.
Now we’ve looked at Covenants before, but let’s run through it quickly just to bring it to remembrance.

A Covenant is a legal agreement, with obligations and requirements. For the New Covenant to be activated in our lives, we need to believe in Jesus. By faith in His sacrifice, we are made right with God. When we have done this, God is contractually obligated to faithfully perform His end of the deal.

Actually ‘Covenant’ is not the best word to be used here. Testament is a better one, or a will.

I say this because the New Covenant is an inheritance to those who believe. It’s not based on performance, but on faithfulness on the part of the one who issued the will.

There is a contractual agreement to deliver the contents of the will to the recipient. The rewards are received through belief in Jesus’ finished work on the cross.

Now please understand, God is not motivated by his legal obligations. He is motivated by His love. But to help us in our unbelief, He humbled himself to make a written declaration of His obligations and responsibilities to us... It’s crazy, but the tendency in man to underestimate the love of the Father is so evident, that God had to take radical steps to help us to literally see the love of God.

Now God is bound by His righteousness to fulfil the Covenant. God does not, and cannot, lie. God cannot be unfaithful; He would cease to be God if he was unfaithful. In perfect holiness and righteousness the God of all justice will be faithful to His promises. That’s who He is.
In Isaiah 54 we hear of the promise of the coming covenant of peace, called the “eternal covenant of peace” or the New Covenant, where God began to outline a new way he would relate to His beloved creation. Remember that God is bound by His righteousness to do these things. Read it! Isaiah 54.

Here are some of the promises of the New Covenant...

“... So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you.”

God has sworn to never again be angry with us.

“... And my covenant of peace shall not be removed.”

God promises that his state of peace will never be removed!

“In righteousness you shall be established.”

God promised to establish us in righteousness. This means that He establishes us in an eternal right standing with Him. Who establishes us? He does. Isaiah prophesied a future way in which God would deal with man. Under the Old Covenant, one had to establish one’s own righteousness through obedience. Under the New Covenant, we are established in righteousness through Jesus’ perfect obedience on our behalf.

Let’s take a closer look at more about the New Covenant:

**Hebrews 8** (ESV)

*Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 9 not like the cove-
nant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbour and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. **For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.** In speaking of a New Covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Let’s study some more promises. (There are many but I will focus on just a few. I encourage you to explore the scriptures yourself to discover all our amazing God promises us as an inheritance to those who believe in Jesus and step into the New Covenant.)

...“not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them,” declares the Lord.

In the Old Covenant, God showed no concern for those who did not walk in the Covenant and obey the obligations thereof. In the New Covenant, we enter in and He will always show concern for us by grace, regardless of the state of our lives. For He has promised to never leave us or forsake us, or take His presence from us.
The NIV puts it plainly:
12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

The NKJV translates:
12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more." 

This word iniquities or wickedness in NIV and unrighteousness in NKJV is translated from the Greek word:

G93 αδικία Adikia ad-ee-kee'-ah
From G94; (legal) injustice (properly the quality, by implication the act); moral wrongfulness (of character, life or act): - iniquity, unjust, unrighteousness, wrong.

“Sins” is translated from the Greek = offence. The Webster’s dictionary focuses on the element of inequality (Falling short of the glory of God).

Basically, this means that all our sins, wrong doings, offences, wickedness, moral failings and iniquities draw out mercy and forgiveness from God. He promises to not count these things against us. (And as sin abounds grace abounds all the more Rom 6.) According to this scripture, where sin is, God releases mercy.

Many people assume that there is an imaginary line and when you cross it, God’s grace runs out. We don’t know where this line is - after a few sins or many - but suddenly God’s grace ends and you fall back under judgment and condemnation if you dare cross it. This is not what the Bible teaches when it reassures us that “when sin increases, grace increases all the more.”
I remember once asking my pastor about grace. He told me that grace is there for a while, but then it ends. He said, “No-one knows where it ends, only God, but there is a point where grace runs out.” This is such a confusing philosophy.

When does grace end? What happens when it does? How do I know at any one time that I’ve gone too far?

Can you see how insecurity comes in here? My well-meaning pastor friend would also tell us that we could lose our salvation when we sinned too much. This made me constantly wonder if my failings would exhaust God’s grace, and I would think that I would lose my eternal life. This stole all my confidence and joy in the journey.

What joy exploded in my soul when I discovered that my sins are not counted against me, when I found mercy afresh, when my heart became established in grace. I did not go out and sin more. I became more in love than ever with my Saviour and Lord. Everything changed. No more relating to God in fear, but rather in love and faith and worship and intimacy. Light and life exploded in every area of my life and heart. My marriage accelerated in love. The church I was pastoring burst into healings, signs and wonders. It’s amazing what happens when the right gospel is released: The Ministry of Life.

Can it be true that God does not count my sin against me in the New Covenant?
YES. This is confirmed again in Romans 4: 7Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; 8blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.

Now with the problem of sin dealt with, we are now positioned to receive every blessing.

We see two components of this Covenantal promise. One is forgiveness, and the other is a component of favour.

John Piper talks about how “Jesus was not only for our pardon, but also for our perfection.”

Most of us do not battle with believing that our sins are forgiven, but we battle to accept that as a result of this that God sees us as perfectly obedient. This is what it means when God declares, “in righteousness you will be established” (Isaiah 54).

You see, we are not only declared innocent, but we are also declared worthy to receive all the blessings of heaven. That’s what Ephesians says. You’ve received every spiritual blessing, and He has given us everything for life and godliness.

John Piper speaks about the grounds for receiving future grace, that is, all the promises of God, in his book Battling Unbelief:

“Being satisfied with all that God promises to be for us in Jesus Christ is the essence of faith in future grace. Keep in mind that when I speak of faith in future grace or satisfaction in what God promised to be for us, I am assuming that an essential part of that satisfaction is an
embrace of Christ as our sin-bearing substitute whose perfect obedience to God is imputed to us through faith. In other words faith in future grace embraces the ground of all the promises, as well as the promises themselves.”

Can you see how no one in the New Covenant is disqualified from any of God’s blessings? There is nothing you can do to remove the blessing and favour of God from your life, because He is faithful to His covenant. Our qualification for blessing is the obedience of Jesus Christ. All we need to do is believe His promises.

Romans 8:32

31What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be (Or who is) against us? 32He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect?

God who did not spare giving us His own son will also give us every good thing, freely by grace. Why? Because you are His elect - you are a righteous son.

If God were to be angry with you, condemn you, or count your sins against you in any way, He would become unfaithful to His covenant, and cease to be a righteous God!

Here is a staggering scripture that demonstrates God’s permanent intent towards us in the New Covenant:

Jeremiah 32

40I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them.
And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. 41I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.

Eternal promises of blessing abound in the New Covenant. Father promises to never turn away from doing you good. Never! Does God lie? No. So it’s true that He will only do good to you. More-over, this promise reveals God’s goodness and character by stating that He will rejoice in doing us good. He loves to do good to us.

All we do is believe and receive. He will be faithful. He loves to be good to you with all His heart and soul. Doing you good is who He is. Glory!
Faithfulness to preserve
Can Jesus keep you saved?

Now, I want to point out another part of God’s faithfulness. (Please look for promises, statements and declarations that Jesus makes, and deals that the Father and the Son make, as this will give tremendous insight to the promise made between the Father and the Son regarding what Jesus was to accomplish by His life, death and resurrection - details in the Father-Son Covenant, of which we are beneficiaries.)

Just as a reminder, a contract is a legal agreement between two parties. It has legal requirements or demands, and rewards or penalties depending on how the contracted parties perform. A contract is only as strong as the accuracy of the contract and the strength of the legal parties.

Whereas the Old Covenant was between God and Israel, the New Covenant is between the Father and the Son.

These scriptures hold essential clues as to what Jesus’ part is in keeping His end of the contractual Covenant with the Father. Let’s look at the following scriptures:

John 6:38-40 (ESV)
For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent me. \(^{39}\)And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I should lose
nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise Him up on the last day.

Important question here: was Jesus, and is Jesus perfectly obedient to the father? Then Jesus won’t lose any of the precious ones that God has given Him and He will raise all who believe on the last day. This day is the Day of Judgment, where every believer will be raised to eternal life.

**John 10 (ESV)**

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, (Some manuscripts What my Father has given to me) is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one.

Here Jesus says that, He gives us eternal life, that we will never perish, and that no one will snatch us from His Father’s hand. Do you think Jesus is reliable in His claims?

**Philippians 1:6**

He who began a good work in you will carry it out to completion.

Ok so here it is: The Father gives people to Jesus (His sheep). Jesus must be, and is, faithful to the will of the Father, and He perfectly did, and is doing all that the Father desires.
And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

What was God’s will? That Jesus would not lose any of those that He was given. The Father asked Jesus to not to lose even one of all those He was given, but to raise them up on the last day.

The Father was asking Jesus to be a perfect saviour for man, to guard and protect the salvation of every true believer, and to keep them and to raise them up on the last day. This is a condition of the New Covenant. Did you notice that the New Covenant is between the Father and the Son …not between you and God? God did not say, “If they (sheep) don’t remain faithful, then lose them and don’t raise them up on the last day!” He did not say that if the sheep go astray, then it’s simply their own fault. No, the father asked Jesus to shepherd, and to rescue the wayward sheep. This is an essential part of the New Covenant, and an essential understanding to have when you read the Bible.

Friends, here Jesus made a promise to the Father to keep you and I saved forever! Jesus is now bound by His faithfulness to the Father to keep you saved.

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

We have eternal life. Saved forever! Is this true, can it be?

Let’s settle this matter further:

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish,
and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29**My Father, who has given them to me,** (Some manuscripts What *my Father has given to me*) is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.

We have been given eternal life - not ‘perhaps’, or ‘if’ or ‘maybe’ - it’s a done deal. We have been given eternal life.

No one can remove you from the Father’s hand of protection and love, and God is greater than all, so anyone who tries to take you from Him better watch out. You’ll never perish. The direct translation from Greek- is *certainly never perish forever*. Never means never and, eternal means eternal, and no-one is no-one.

You have to ask, this. What is God telling us through these scriptures? Father is trying very hard to communicate to us that He wants us to know that we are saved and that He will protect that salvation, that we have eternal life. This was in God’s heart when this scripture was created. Can you see that?

So now we have become aware that Jesus wants to keep you saved, that the Father wants Jesus to keep you saved... but **can** Jesus do that?

**Jude 24 and 25**

24**Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,** 25to the only God, our Savoir, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.
Here we clearly see that He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Father.

So He is able, and willing, for it’s His desire that none perish, and the Father told Jesus to keep you and save you, and Jesus had agreed, and He has faithfully completed all the Father gave Him. You are already saved forever. God has to be faithful to His promise to save you. Friends, God is faithful. His faithfulness never ends, never fades, never diminishes...

Look at this scandalous scripture:

**II Timothy 2:13**  
*If we are faithless, he remains faithful - for he can not deny himself.*

My personal belief is that the new creation spirit that has passed from death to life is a perfect spirit and could never lose faith in Jesus. My body is part of my flesh; they cannot be separated. Faith is part of my spirit and they too cannot be separated.

Even when we are faithless, He remains faithful. Wow, what an amazing God. God’s faithfulness sets us up for victory. His love never fades; He loves you perfectly all the time. He is always for you and never against you. He will uphold you by the power of His hand. Anyone who comes against you better watch out.

Thank you Jesus, thank you for being a righteous God faithful to your Word, promise and commitment to the Father. Thank you for the glorious New Covenant based on better promises! Thank you that you are always faithful. Praise you Jesus.
Who has been deceiving you? The New Covenant has an inheritance for every believer. Any claim that you are disqualified from your inheritance is a lie, do not believe it! Remember that we learned earlier that He has qualified us to be competent ministers of the New Covenant!

Colossians 1:12

...Giving thanks (Or patience, with joy giving thanks) - to the Father, who has qualified you (Some manuscripts us) to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Who has qualified you to share in the inheritance? Jesus has qualified you. You carry His endorsement. Who He has qualified, let nothing and no-one disqualify!

God’s truth over you:

“My son/daughter, I leave you power, authority, love, peace, eternal life, victory, salvation, health, prosperity, blessing, anointing, sound mind, joy, fellowship, reconciliation, endorsement and righteousness as your eternal inheritance. All I have is yours; every resource of heaven is at your disposal! Everything I did, you can do, and even more! This is yours by grace, for all who believe.” Wow, what an inheritance. Do you believe it? Receive it!
This is how an inheritance works...

A person lives and has or acquires something of value during their lifetime. When the person dies, that acquisition is then passed down to who ever that person selected as their beneficiary.

The person who now receives the inheritance (the beneficiary) receives the inheritance freely according to the conditions set down by the benefactor. The beneficiary is not involved in deciding what the inheritance is. The beneficiary is a receiver of the inheritance according to the contractual terms stipulated in the will.

Some characteristics of inheritance:

The inheritance comes available freely regardless of the condition of the beneficiary at the time.
No one can change the details and conditions of the will.
The benefactor can only give away what is his to give.
There must be death in order to pass on the inheritance.
The beneficiary must receive the inheritance in order to take possession of it.
The beneficiary now becomes the legal owner of the inheritance.
If another party were to try to attempt to steal the inheritance it would be considered illegal and illegitimate.
There is legal certainty and protection.

The awesome news is that for every believer in Jesus, there is an inheritance from the Father through the finished work and death of Jesus, which is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit’s presence, and work in us.

Firstly, did you notice that the inheritance comes as a promise? It is not dependent on our works or obedience
in order to earn the inheritance. The only way we could not enter our inheritance is if we reject it. God will not withhold it; in reality He has already given us all of it. He has qualified us and made us competent. We need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds to clearly see what has been freely given us.

**Galatians 3:18** (ESV)

*For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.*

Now, if we believe the lie that we have to earn the inheritance, then we can be easily intimidated and incapacitated. This is a powerful delusion that Jesus is undoing in our time, as He builds His church in the world today. Trying to earn your inheritance, when it is already yours actually, ensures that you never receive or release it with constant confidence and efficiency.

**Ephesians 1:11** (ESV)

*In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.*

“In Him” we’ve received the inheritance. Not maybe, but “In Him”, in accordance to the purpose of His will. Not “In Me”? How do we know we are “In Him”? This is important for there are many promises that are available for those who are “In Him”. So what does is mean to be “In Him”? How do we know whether we qualify for all the promises that are made to those who are “In Him”? Are you “In Him”? -If being “In Him” is the qualification for inheritance, I want to know what “In Him” is! Fortunately the Bible helps us here.
I John 4:13

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

This is how we know that we are “In Him” – we have His Spirit. There are those who are “In Him” and those who are not “In Him”. Those who have believed in Jesus sacrifice are “In Him”. When we believe in Jesus we are marked with a seal, the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1 so clearly reaffirms this wonderful truth:

Ephesians 1 (ESV)

13 In Him you also, when you heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

14 who is the guarantee (Or down payment) of our inheritance...

How can you be certain of your inheritance? Well, are you sealed? Do you have the Holy Spirit? If you are; your inheritance is guaranteed! He is the deposit guaranteeing the rest of the payment!

Dead or alive?

1 John 5:12 (ESV)

11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

What essentially happens is that we are born into a state of death. All of us were born into the first Adam and born in sin. Jesus then came and undid what Adam did
in the garden by becoming a sin sacrifice, a complete and perfect offering that turned away the wrath of God, completely forgiving the sins of the world. Now those who believe in Jesus will receive eternal life “to know God” and the complete inheritance. He has “blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing” (Ephesians 1).

Belief in Jesus’ sacrifice is the door to inheritance.

There is no inheritance outside of belief in Jesus. It’s available but can only be received upon belief.

Let me briefly speak about what happens to us when we are born again. What takes place in the moment of salvation? What happens to us?

Our spirits are made alive to God.

The Bible clearly states that we were dead in our sins. The Bible says we are raised to life when we believe in Jesus. This is called being born again. It happens by grace and through faith.

The process of our spirits coming alive is spoken about in many ways. John 3 speaks about being born again. I like this one...

1 Corinthians 5:17 says:

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. (Or creature) The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

The Condition - if we are “In Him”. The Promise - the old passes away and we become a new creation.
If we could clearly see that new creation clearly, nothing would ever be the same for us or those around us!

This new creation is so incredibly glorious. I believe **this new creation is the most underestimated event in all creation**. Bill Johnson says that “we radically underestimate what happened to us at the point of conversion.”

It is the most significant event that can ever take place in a believer’s life.

We are made new, we are made sons, we are made royal priests and we are made kings who were meant to reign. We are new creatures, something that has never existed on the planet before, born again, spirit-filled beings on sanctified steroids, supernaturally enabled with the power and righteousness of God running through our veins!

The power and glory that raised Christ from the dead filled our spirits and we were raised to life. Our old sinful nature died, and a new nature was placed in us, a nature sensitive to God, alive to God one with God. Within this new creation was placed our total and full inheritance as legitimate sons of God. This new life releases power and fruit. Ladies you’re also considered as sons, for sons receive the full inheritance!

Theologians label this as *regeneration*.

Wayne Grudem defines regeneration as follows: “regeneration is the secret act of God in which He imparts new spiritual life to us.”
Regeneration is the power of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit working together to literally produce a new creation. That same power and spirit that raised Christ from the dead is then living in you.

**Now it stands to reason that when a person is changed in such a dramatic way that there are resulting effects and changes.** Over time patterns of behaviour will change, some instantly! Depending how long it takes for you to see and believe who you are! Other desires are born too, fresh desires consistent with who we now are “In Him”.

The results usually include things like: A heartfelt trusting in Jesus for salvation, an assurance of sins forgiven, a healthy unforced desire to read the Bible and pray and a sense that these are meaningful activities, a delight in worship, a desire for Christian fellowship, a desire to be obedient to God and a desire to tell others about Christ. These feelings are birthed within the new creation and flow naturally from us, for this is who we are. Resisting these natural desires now feels strange because the essence of our inner being has been changed.

We’re raised to a new life, and this new life has natural expressions of life.

These desires within us are also proof that the Holy Spirit has indeed come to live inside of us. We don’t do these things to prove it, but He is in us, and that’s the proof.

Legalism focuses on the results of regeneration, without understanding the event. Life flows from understanding the event, seeing who we are, and understand-
Legalism in its extreme can be achieved without regeneration!

Without this event of regeneration, there is no altered spirit, and no life imparted. There is no new creation, and no being born again. With regeneration comes faith and belief and a resulting resurrection to a new life and a new creation.

This new creation is qualified for the inheritance of God. Every believer’s inheritance is, a promise from God.

Friends, if we could only see clearly who we are as a result of who he has changed us into!

If you believe in Jesus... You are powerful; you have glory in you; you have the fruit of righteousness in you. You have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control and goodness at the very core of your being; the new you is created in Christ Jesus to do good things!

You have been powerfully transformed. When we acknowledge this, we position ourselves to live true to who we are. Right believing always comes before right living. See who you are, and you’ll be who you are. You are raised to a new life, as a new creation, through believing the good news that Jesus died and that our former selves died with Him. When He was raised, we were raised with Him. The glorious fact that we are new creations is part of our inheritance.

Acts 20:32
And now I commend you to God and to the Word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.
Chapter 10
The filter of fellowship
Battling isolation and independence

Any theology or mentality that a person develops from reading the Bible, that leads to thinking that gathering as believers is unimportant, or unnecessary is deception.

Check out these passages:
Eph 4:1-25, 1 Corinthians 12, 1 Corinthians 13, Romans 12:1-18 and 2 Tim 1.
Don’t cheat… read them!

The simple truth is that Father has always purposed that love, growth and maturity are to be worked out in a loving, safe environment of a spirit-filled family.

The simple truth is that when you are you to me, I am better off. The simple truth is that when I am me to you, you are better off.

“The solution to abuse is not non use but correct use.” - Rob Rufus.

This remains unshakable:

All we will ever need is already inside of us. The fullness of Christ is already deposited in its full measure within each of us. We are already co-seated with Christ in heavenly places. God had given us everything we need for life
and for godliness. The same power that raised Christ from the dead is living and active and at work within each of us. When we became Christians God gave us a new nature, we became new creatures and the old died whilst the new became alive. This new ‘me’ is complete and powerful. I can access His glorious presence at any moment, instantly. His power and love are always available. This is certain and unchangeable. It is finished; there is nothing left for God to do.

So the question arises: Why do we need each other?

Why do we need to be part of a local church?

Well perhaps we can answer that question by asking a few more questions:

Do you see the fullness of who you are, and who God has changed you into, manifest in your everyday life? Do you see the dead raised to life on a regular basis? Do you experience signs, wonders, healings and miracles on a regular basis? Do you have a consistent joy? Do you live in perfect peace? Do salvations follow you? Are you the best dad you can be, are you the best mom you can be? Are you the best parent you can be? Do you get lonely? Do you ever need help or friendship? Is every person in your church or home group or ministry arena perfectly well in body, soul and mind? Do you long to see this gospel spread throughout the world?

So what’s up? We are discovering who we are, what he has done, and what he wants done and then spreading that to others.

The big question is: Can we achieve this in isolation?

Can a person reach total maturity in Christ apart from others?
The ministry of God in us will always release a compassion and desire to see others come into a greater degree of freedom and victory. It’s simply bizarre to become well in Christ and then retreat into isolation. It’s good to feel blessed; it’s weird when you feel that you never want to be with others who are well, or love others who are not well!

I believe we are on dangerous ground when we think that we’ve arrived. It’s terrible to not want to share the light of your wellness.

When churches say *We’re here; we’ve arrived!* trouble will follow. When individuals think *I don’t need anyone else*, they are in trouble! Pride comes before a fall, but God gives grace to the humble. So as we grow, and who we are develops (as the revelation of what it means to be sons of God develops in us). God will use people. To be honest I’ve found that most Christians who develop strange, ‘interesting’ theology have spent considerable time isolated and out of fellowship. Iron sharpens iron, and we help each other discover, define and grow in truth.

How does God use other people?

Well before we get overly ‘spiritual’ here, God places people in our lives simply to be friends! People who simply love us, care for us, and walk the road of life through thick and thin. Friends we can share our successes with, and laugh with about our failures. Friends who cheer us up when we are down, and unexpectedly bring light to this journey called Life.

When you break life down into its bare essentials, all that matters is where you were, and who was there! God uses people to grow us.
God has placed “uniqueness” within each of us. There is something that you do better than anyone else in this room. Within each of us is a God given gift that can help another person realize who they are in Christ. You have something that will help me in my journey and possibly accelerate my growth experience. As we offer up these gifts, we grow each other. As we surrender to each other’s God given gifts, we ourselves grow. If we deny ourselves this natural interchange of shared lives, we deny ourselves a great grace. God had graced each of us with wonderful abilities. As those gifts are let loose on each other we accelerate growth in each other. That’s why we have them.

Let me give you an example of this:

A year ago as a church we were plodding along, fairly contently. We responded to a call from Father to go to Hong Kong and learn how to transition a church into a higher degree of presence and anointing. We went and the result of being exposed to people with gifting was an instant and radical acceleration into the glory of God. Miracles increased, healings started, presence magnified and the church was changed forever.

In short, God used people with gifting to change this church. This is what He does. God uses people to effectively change the earth. He uses people to minister to each other, and he gifts people through grace to change churches, which are simply gatherings of other people. Now the truth of the matter is that all we have has always been available.

The message of grace. The anointing, the presence, the power, the glory, the signs and wonders, the prophetic, the open heavens...it was always there, it was always available.
But God used people, who:

1) Were prepared to share their lives and gifts with others.

2) Who had positioned themselves to grow in God and learn from others.

3) Were humble enough to recognise the need for change.

Friends, I have to clearly and simply state that I would not be where I am today without the glorious work of Jesus in me. And that work includes, in no small way, the Father using people!

I have friends who have stopped me from doing stupid things. I have friends and fathers who have encouraged and inspired me to go beyond myself. I have a wife who has caused me multiplied joy, and careful guidance.

Let me tell you how I came to believe in the theology of grace...

A friend of mine, Gregg Booyens, loved me enough to pursue me in argument and deliberation for 8 long months. He would challenge me with scripture after scripture. Eventually the lights began to come on. He gave me Rob Rufus’s teaching to listen to, and I consulted other teachers... the end result. Friends and a father changed me.

The love of a brother and friend, the gifting of a teacher, the anointing of the apostolic and a pliable life all came together in a glorious cocktail of change. The God of glory working His magic.
Positioning ourselves to receive from each other, to exchange the graces upon our lives, positions us for accelerated success.

I’m grateful for the people in my life who share this journey with me, walking and learning and growing.

I’m determined to have people in my life who contend with me and for me, people prepared to stand and support my inheritance, people who will add fire to the calling on my life. I’ve determined too, to live as one who will throw fire on the lives of others. I’ve determined to fan into flame the hope of those who position themselves for increase.

So I live with a hunger and a determination. I hunger for more of my reality to become real to me. And I’m determined to release the grace upon my life onto and into others.

As we read our Bibles, we read through the lens of God using people to help us know who we are, to release and grow revelation, to fan into flame what God has done to us and in us. Read through the lens that God wants who he has changed you into, to impact those around you, in the most meaningful way imaginable.

We were created to share our lives on this journey of Him loving us.
Chapter 11
The New Covenant makes you Confident

I would like to dedicate this chapter to Fini De Ger-signy, who taught and inspired me to know the confidence I have.

God designed the Bible to release confidence to you. Here are some areas in which God wants to minister confidence to us through His Word.

**Confidence**

The degree with which you lack confidence in any area of your Christian walk, is the degree to which you have not had a revelation of what Jesus has done for you in that area.

The degree with which you live with shame or guilt is the degree to which you have not understood the Bible.

Any reading of the Bible, or any teaching that removes your confidence in any area of your Christian walk, needs to be adjusted.

These are radical statements. But the wonderful truth is that Jesus did something radical for the Father in the power of the Spirit, which bought us this confidence in which we now stand. There was no easy way and no cheap price, but Jesus wanted this for us:
Restoration of what Adam walked in.

Now the enemy would love to convince you that this glorious freedom and power is not available to every believer. He defiantly attempts to convince you that you’re not worthy of confidence. He would love to convince you that you are not good enough, that you don’t do enough or have not performed well enough to have confidence in the various areas of your life. If he (who is the father of all lies) can succeed in this, he can succeed in incapacitating you. And if he can deceive enough Christians in this... the enemy can incapacitate the whole church.

The devil’s ministry is the ministry of death, condemnation and shame. He lies! His primary way is to use the law, accusations and condemnation against you. He wants you to feel unworthy, guilty and disqualified from all God has. He is relentless and determined to minister this to you.

What happened when Adam and Eve sinned? They became **ashamed** of their nakedness. Satan was delighted. For the first time there was separation from God. *Man* hid, not God. Why? Because of their shame! But God still sought them out. “Adam, Adam where are you?”...they were hiding. What did God do in response? He killed an animal and made them clothes to hide their shame. **God’s natural default setting is to pursue us in love, wanting to be near to us. He wants us to live without shame.**

Now, where we lose confidence, we lose faith. Faith is a big deal; it’s important to have and keep faith: **Faith in who God is, in His very nature. God is good.** Without faith, it is impossible to please God.
Where could we lose confidence?

1) We could lose confidence to approach God in intimacy.
2) We could lose confidence to pray.
3) We could lose confidence for ministry.
4) We could lose confidence in who we are.
5) We could lose confidence in our salvation.
6) We could lose confidence is God’s goodness.
7) We could lose confidence is God’s power.

Any reading of the Bible that undermines your confidence, must adjust to who God is, and who you are in Christ.

Let’s begin today with confidence before God.

Come into the Throne Room

Friends, if we lose confidence before Him we lose everything! If we let the revelation of open heavens diminish, we cut off our very life line. This is the source of sustained life, power, intimacy and sanity. It’s the only way to live! *Life without regular encounters with the living God is short of the Christian inheritance as sons and daughters.*

**Hebrews 10**(ESV)
1For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sin? 3But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin
every year.  

4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.  

5 Consequently, when Christ (Greek he) came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me;  

6 in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.  

7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'"  

8 When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law),  

9 then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second.  

10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.  

11 And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.  

12 But when Christ (Greek this one) had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,  

13 waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.  

14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.  

15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,  

16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,"  

17 then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."  

18 Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.  

19 Therefore, brothers, (Or brothers and sisters) since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,  

20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,  

21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,  

22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled
clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.  

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.  

24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,  

25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

I encourage you to go and meditate on this awesome chapter. It is rich with life and promise!

This passage tells us that we have been sanctified, made holy. We are made perfect in Christ and we need no further perfection. Now we need to accept this and settle it in our hearts. We have been made perfect in God’s eyes. He no longer holds our sins against us. He does not remember our sins.

Verse 14 says:  

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

This means that we are not complete in our growth and maturity; but in our spirits, and in Father’s eyes we are perfect forever! For all time we are made perfect. The reason is that when God looks at you, you are in Christ, so God sees Jesus, the perfect Jesus. We are in Him. God sees us through the blood of Jesus, perfect forever, for all time. So when you approach God, in worship or in prayer, you can be bold, at peace and confident. We don’t live under a God who is disappointed and mad at us all the time. Even when we fail, and fall he still sees us as “in Christ” and perfect.

While we are being sanctified, which is the process of maturing as a believer, He sets us in an environment
of love and acceptance, so we can approach the throne and find strength. Sanctification is the process of becoming aware of who we are, it’s apart from the law.

We then release who he has made us to be. He has powerfully positioned us for success. In fact we cannot grow as Christians, we cannot mature, and we cannot be continuously sanctified apart from God. He is the only avenue to maturity. This process of maturing will continue until we die. If we had to achieve sanctified purity before we qualified for confidence, we would never have this residing, abiding confidence before the throne. Through resting in the finished work of the cross we have permanent access to the Throne room of His presence.

This is grace, and it does not make us sin. This grace removes the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, and restores confidence before God. It restores love and intimacy and releases a spirit of worship through an attitude of wonder and awe at who God is and what he has done because of His great love for us.

What else does this chapter say?

18Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. 19Therefore, brothers,(Or brothers and sisters) since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful...
Listen to the type of language that these verses use...

There is forgiveness, **no consciousness of sins**; we have confidence to enter, by a new living way (Jesus). Let us draw near with full assurance of faith, with no conscience of evil, as those washed with pure water. We do not waver but trust that all this is so - not because of us, but because Jesus is faithful!

Our hearts seem to need constant strong assurance that we can come to the Father’s chambers, just as we are. This is why the author of Hebrews, under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, uses strong encouraging language to reassure us of this awesome truth. We can come and, draw near, with full assurance. (There is an even greater assurance; He Dwells in us! Think about that.)

God does not want us to approach Him with any consciousness of sin (which is actually unbelief in the finished work of Jesus!) He just wants us to come. Is it possible to have any real level of intimacy and confidence if we approach with a sin consciousness?

When we begin to live from this place of assurance, we begin to live as those who often, freely come before the Father of love and light. We receive so much in this place. In His presence is fullness of joy. And we begin to live in and from His presence. Which is our new reality. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit, so He actually lives in us, **so really we live in the inner chambers**. Here Hebrews invites us into the understanding of a permanently open throne room, through Jesus. Why ever leave?
When live from our position and with the presence, we have power and fulfil His purpose.

What will we find before His throne?

Hebrews 4:16 (ESV)

*Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

At His throne we will find mercy, grace and help for whatever we need.

*Mercy* is not getting the punishment and treatment that we deserve. Jesus got that in our place on the cross.

*Grace* is getting the blessing and favour we don’t deserve. The privilege is that through the opening of the New Covenant, we get treated way better than we deserve!

23*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful...*

This verse says that we should not waiver in our confidence. This promise has nothing to do with us, and everything to do with God. He is, and will be, faithful - faithfull to lovingly receive you every time you approach Him.

The fact of the matter is that when God is being faithful, His primary faithfulness is to Jesus. Within the sweet society of the Holy Spirit, there was a covenant made whereby Father set demands for Jesus.

If He perfectly filled these demands, it would create a way for man to be unconditionally accepted based on
Jesus’ fulfilment of the contractual conditions. Jesus was meticulous to the demands of the covenantal agreement. Finally in a breath, He cried out, “It is finished!”

Our confidence is outside ourselves. **The reason we can approach with such confidence is that our permission is granted from an outside source.** Our approval comes not from any man, nor from ourselves. We have been made perfect forever by another. And He now calls us in. He now draws us with the sweetness of who He is. He cannot reject us! To reject us, to deny access into the glorious richness of His presence would be to break the contract with the Son. God would have to become unfaithful and dishonest in order to do this. He cannot do this; He is God, perfectly holy and righteous. Just and true. Jesus kept His part - He was faithful and now the Father is bound by His oath not to reject us for all eternity. He cannot and will not turn away from us or deny us access into His glorious presence.

The awesome realization is that it was by His own great love that the Father wrote the rewards of the contract. From the foundations of the earth God wanted an unrestricted way to be able to relate to His creation.

By His great love he had predetermined this day. Jesus said that it was “for the joy set before me I go to the cross.” This is that Joy: that we can enjoy Him and He can enjoy us.

God is bound by His oath. But God did not bind Himself to the oath for His sake, but for ours, in order to assure our hearts of a great salvation, true and solid. To assure us of an access never denied.
Friends, since we have these promises, since we have a loving God that has cleared every obstacle to Him, let us draw near. That was the goal. Don’t wait until you get to heaven to enjoy eternity, start now, you’ve already started to live forever!

Come friends, let’s draw near!
The degree that we lack confidence to approach the throne, is the degree to which we have not had a revelation of Jesus.

The degree that shame, guilt or unworthiness hinders your approach to His embrace in intimate tenderness, is the degree to which you do not understand the love of the Father.

Think for a moment about the prodigal son parable, how the loving father embraces his son in love and tenderness as he returns home. This parable was told by Jesus to highlight to us how the Father embraces us, even after we’ve made the most horrendous mess.

Eph 3:11,12 (ESV)

11This was according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him.

The only qualification to boldly access with confidence is to have faith in Jesus. He alone qualifies us.
There is nothing we can do to conjure up this boldness; nothing else can qualify us, only the perfect sacrifice of Jesus and His blood shed on our behalf. It is “through our faith in Him”.

This was His eternal purpose, to relate to His people by grace. Behold the Lamb of God slain before the foundations of the earth.

2 Corinthians 3

4Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. 5Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, 6who has made us competent to be ministers of a New Covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 7Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses’ face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, 8will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? 9For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. 10Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. 11For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory. 12Since we have such a hope, we are very bold ...
ther as a sacrifice that would please Him enough so we could boldly enter His presence, continually, day after day, with a conscience cleared from the contamination of sin? What can be done to earn confidence?

The priests of old knew what it was like to try and enter the holy of holies, to enter presence of God on their own merit. They feared the very thought, because many of them that came into the presence were killed by the sheer holiness of God. Even if their sacrifice was accepted, it was only temporary. They never had sustained confidence, only an expectation of certain judgment. Jesus was offered up as the perfect sacrifice, and the curtain that guarded the holy of holies was torn in two, so that we can now go in freely, not based on our own sacrifice, or works of obedience, but based on faith in Jesus alone. Believing in Him gains us unlimited access into the very presence of God.

The reason for all this is because when we believe in Jesus, he gives us the gift of righteousness. When we are righteous, we can approach God without any fear. We don’t need to fear punishment, because He punished Jesus. We don’t need to fear rejection, because Jesus was rejected in our place on the cross. Jesus got what he did not deserve so that we could get what we don’t deserve. Part of that inheritance is a permanently open door to the Father.
Phil 3 (ESV)

1Finally, my brothers,(Or brothers and sisters; also verses 13, 17) rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. 2Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. 3For we are the real circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God (Some manuscripts God in spirit) and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh - though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law (Greek in the law) blameless. 7But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

Paul says to watch out for the legalists. Paul says neither confidence in the flesh, nor education, nor training, nor association to famous or prestigious people, nor what tribe you belong to, nor how well you know the law not even your zeal count for anything. It’s all considered poo! Trusting in any of these things for your ultimate confidence before God is a self-righteousness that stinks.

Paul says, “It’s no trouble for me to write these
things to you again...” We can therefore assume that what he is about to tell them is being repeated. He has most likely shared his testimony with them many times.

Paul goes on and says: “It is safe for you.” Paul teaches and reiterates righteousness in Christ alone. He emphasizes this over and over, calling it safety for them. Why? It stopped them from turning back to the law. Returning to the law was not a unique problem.

Galatians 3

3Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? 4Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? 5Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?

The Galatians started in the spirit by faith and grace, but Paul wrote to them because they were slipping back under the law. He could have phrased it similarly to what he wrote to the Philippians: “I’m writing to tell you again like I did before, don’t try be right with God through the law. It’s the wrong way; don’t be so daft and foolish. Those things are rubbish, dung, poo! Our reality is in Jesus, we’re made right through faith in Him. We have the spirit, and do miracles through faith in Him. It’s not about what we do, it’s what he has done...stick with the program, don’t fall for going back to those weak and miserable ways!” (Wayno’s version.)

Some argue that while it’s ok to preach grace, it’s just the ‘baby stuff’, where after one has to move on to the real meat.
What does Paul have to say about that?

**Hebrews 5:1**

> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, **for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness**, since he is a child. **But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.**

**Paul states that the meat is the teaching of righteousness.** If you don’t understand the teaching on righteousness, you are a child, still a baby, still on milk. The KJV says you’re still a babe - an infant.

Others say, “But you can’t preach grace all the time! You need to bring the whole council of God.”

I love what John Piper says about this in his book *Counted Righteous, should we abandon the doctrine of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness*:

“We should give people the whole council of God from the entire Word of God, and at the centre of it all is Christ our righteousness.”

**You can’t teach anything without coming from this place of perfect position.**

It’s not so much the *foundation* of our faith, but the *centre*. At the centre of all Christianity stands Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, accompanied by the pardon and perfection we receive as sons and daughters of God. Foundation implies: lay and leave. *Centre* insists that every truth pass through this great truth of “Christ our Righteousness”. You cannot give any council from the
Word of God without filtering that advice through Jesus. The council of the “entire Word of God” implies an understanding of the entire Word of God, which includes a fundamental distinguishing of the covenants. You cannot give council if you do not understand that the gospel is the point of the Bible.

Others say that we need to balance grace, to which I respond: What do you balance it with? With the law, with works? With self effort? With self-righteousness? If you don’t get grace right, nothing else will work.

Paul had plenty to boast about: he was born of a noble tribe, he had good social standing, he was well educated and taught by the best, he obeyed the law and had absolute passionate zeal. If you have reason to boast, Paul had more.

And yet he considered all of his achievements worthless compared to the only righteousness that exists - the one Christ freely gives us.

All we can boast in is what Jesus has done to us and through us. Paul boasted only in Christ, because He is the root of our confidence. The cross alone produces a permanent confidence called righteousness by faith.

Let’s abandon every self-righteous notion that our behaviour earns us the right to be confident before the Lord. Let us rest from our efforts to earn what is already freely ours. This is true confidence.
Chapter 13
New Covenant Victory
Why Grace Junkies sin less.

It’s not just the removal of one thing but the replacing with something infinitely more powerful and effective.

Romans 6

14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

There is an unbiblical concern that has been raised concerning the gospel of grace. **Some say that if you preach the gospel of grace, people will just run out and sin. I want to smash that accusation to pieces.** This concern is rooted in fear and ignorance, and is totally unbiblical. We are thus embarking on a three part series on why ‘grace junkies’ sin less:

The law has been cancelled.
There is a regenerated new nature.
The power of God flows in our veins through the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 10:4**

*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*
Galatians 2:19
For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ.

Colossians 3:13-14
And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, \(^{14}\) by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

This is how we relate to the law:

Christ is the end of the law to all who believe.
God cancelled the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

I am so happy that the apostles met together to debate and decide this matter, and we have their conclusion recorded in the Bible:

Acts 15
\(^{1}\) But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." \(^{2}\) And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question... \(^{5}\) But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses." \(^{6}\) The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. \(^{7}\) And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said
to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the Word of the gospel and believe. 8And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, 9and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. 10Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 11But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." 12And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. 13After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brothers, listen to me. 19Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God. 22Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. 27We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. 28For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: 29that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell." 30So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. 31And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.

It’s totally and unquestionably clear that the law
is no longer alive to us; it has ended and the demands are over. Even the apostles decided this issue, and circulated this teaching throughout the churches.

That’s great but why is that such good news? What’s the benefit to me? Simply put, trying to live under the law is a curse and more sin.

**Galatians 3:10:**

*For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."*

What is the curse of the law? The law was not designed to be obeyed. It was released in the earth to crush, to condemn, to create a consciousness of sin and highlight the need for a saviour.

Ok, before you shoot me, let’s substantiate this Biblically.

**Galatians 3 (ESV)**

23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

Law was replaced by faith. The law held us captive, imprisoned us until the coming faith could be revealed. It was our guardian until faith would be revealed through Christ. Christ came, faith was possible, and the result is
justification. Now that there is faith there is no longer need for a guardian. Now we are sons, by faith. This settles that the law was until Jesus.

Galatians 3:12 says that the **law is not of faith**, while Hebrews 11:9 states that **without faith it is impossible to please God**. Even more sobering is Romans 14:23: “For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.”

So preaching that people must obey the law in order to be right with God, is not of faith. The provision of right standing with God is by grace, through faith in Jesus. Preaching the law is not of faith, or even in the faith. **Therefore, preaching of the law is sin.**

The law was not meant for obedience, but for guidance to a greater reality. It was to highlight sin and to stir up sin; to create sin and define sin.

**Romans 7:5 “the sinful passions aroused by the law”.**

Sinful passions are aroused by the law. So preaching of the law arouses and stirs up sin. Therefore preaching of the law increases sin. Is it really possible that the law increases sin?

**Romans 5:20 “Now the law came in to increase the trespass.”**

What a sobering reality. Sinful passions are aroused and trespasses increase when we add law into the equation.

In contrast to law preaching look at what grace produces:
Titus 2

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

So preaching grace does not increase sin - it reduces it!

The law’s purpose was to show us that we are not okay. It was to bring us into the reality that we cannot keep the rules. It was specifically to reveal that we have no strength to obey all the rules, leaving us hopeless and dependant on a source of holiness and right standing with God that would be outside of our selves. The law paved the way for the good news. The good news would not be good news without the law highlighting our sin. Praise God that Jesus fulfilled the law for us and then nailed it to the cross.

Let’s study a few scriptures that demonstrate the purpose and nature of the law. Remember that trying to be right with God through the law is a curse.

The law does not give life but death.

2 Corinthians 3:6

He has made us competent as ministers of a New Covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

The law does not save us or produce righteousness, nor can it.

Romans 3:20

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law.
The law is a ministry of condemnation.

2 Corinthians 3:9

*For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.*

The law brings an awareness of the wrath of God.

Romans 4:15

“*because law brings wrath.*”

Through the law we become conscious of sin.

Romans 3:20

“*through the law we become conscious of sin.*”

The law's to stir up sin, to provoke sin and arouse sin in you.

Romans 7:5

“*the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.*”

The law’s fruit is death. We don't preach the law to get more fruit!

These scriptures highlight the ministry of the law and the purpose for which God released that ministry in the earth.

Now why does relying on that ministry to be right with God releases a curse?

The Old Testament document of the law is the most
used manuscript - its main user being the devil. Oh my goodness, how can I say that?? The devil is called the accuser of the brethren. What does he accuse us of? He attacks our failings. And what do you think he defines our failings with?

Let’s pool all these scriptures together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curse of the law</th>
<th>Galatians 3:20</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of death</td>
<td>2 Corinthians 3:6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unobtainable righteousness</td>
<td>Romans 3:20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guardian/schoolmaster</td>
<td>Galatians 3:25</td>
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<td>Consciousness of sin (self conscious)</td>
<td>Romans 3:20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness of wrath</td>
<td>Romans 4:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase trespass</td>
<td>Romans 5:20</td>
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<td>Condemnation</td>
<td>2 Corinthians 3:9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unbearable yolk</td>
<td>Acts 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sin dominate you</td>
<td>Romans 6:14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stir up sin</td>
<td>Romans 7:5</td>
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<td>Fruit of death</td>
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<tr>
<td>To trouble you</td>
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<td>Romans 7:5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is what makes the opening scriptures such good news for the believer:
Romans 10:4
For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Galatians 2:19
For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ.

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And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

When we come to Jesus, it means that the law has worked; the faithful guardian has done his job. We are broken, crushed and in realization that we are not okay. We cry out for forgiveness for our sins, and accept the only way to be right with God. We believe that Jesus is the Savior and the only way to get right standing with God. We believe and receive faith and righteousness as a gift.

Can you see the curse of the law? Trying to keep that relationship with God through the law always leads to condemnation and a feeling of being crushed. Unworthiness is the land of the law. Guilt is the economy of the law. Fear of judgment and a perception of an angry God is the climate of the law. And in this state...wait for it... you sin more!

I want you to know friends, I did not always believe in grace. I used to believe that my role as a leader was to preach the high standard of the law and the com-
mands of Jesus and of the New Testament. In the church we had a very high standard. We had very strong policies on all the issues regarding alcohol, smoking, teenage dating, premarital sex, pornography etc. Yet in the church those things were always there. We had leaders and people watching porn, we had teenagers sleeping together. We had people getting drunk and smoking, and we had some adulterous affairs. The preaching of the law did not stop those things. **Preaching the law does not give any strength to the believer to overcome destructive behaviour.** The law produces guilt, condemnation and a feeling of defeat.

Now you might find the same things going on in Grace churches, for wherever there are people, there are problems. But how do people become set free? How do they begin to reign and become victorious? When people begin to see who they are in Christ and that the power of God is feely available for them to conquer sin, they will begin to believe it and then become it. Right believing leads to right living.

Far reaching effects...

This has implications that go beyond sin. The law has been preached as a standard of qualification for the believer.

**Anointing** does not come by obedience to the law, and that is not taught anywhere in the New Covenant. Faith in who you are, and that the anointed ones resides in you, increases anointing, not obedience to the law. You are anointed; we don’t need more anointing. Now learn how to release it through faith.

**Power** does not come from obedience to the law. Power is the inheritance of every believer who has the
Holy Spirit. The New Covenant does not demand obedience to the law, in order for the believer to release power. Jesus said those who believe in Him will do what he did and greater, and all that is required is faith.

**Blessing** does not come from obedience to the law. We are already blessed with every blessing in Christ. Wholeness and prosperity are our inheritance as sons.

**Healing** does not come by obedience to the law. It comes through faith in the finished work of the cross.

_The law cannot sanctify you._ Obedience to the law does not produce sanctification. Holiness cannot come by the law. You are Holy; now live from your position - this requires faith.

The law cannot save you; salvation is by grace through faith.

The good news of the Glorious Gospel of Grace is that these things come to every believer freely through faith.

**Romans 8**

\[32\text{He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously (some translations say freely) give us all things?}\]

The church today has been crippled by the teaching that these things come through obedience, and reaching levels and standards of maturity. This terrible philosophy is responsible for many ineffective Christians in the world, who believe that the supernatural life of power and impact are for the select holy few. When Christians everywhere realize the power within, and the potential impact they can have around them, the world will once
again be turned upside down by the men and woman who are called followers of Christ.

**The truth of the matter is that belief in Jesus is all that is needed for the believer to operate with authority and power in this life.**

So the law of earning and obedience is a ministry of disqualification (death), and the ministry of the New Covenant is a ministry of qualification (life). This understanding is literally a matter of life and death.

It’s not just the removal of one thing but the replacing of an infinitely more powerful and effective way.

The **removal** of the law as the means of relating to God introduces the new way, the New Covenant.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The removal</th>
<th>The replacement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curse of the law</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Awareness of love and acceptance</td>
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<tr>
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<td>over you, since you are not under law</td>
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<td></td>
<td>but under grace.</td>
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<td>Leaves believer feeling they cannot</td>
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It’s not just the removal of one thing but the replacement of something infinitely more powerful and effective!

Being free from the law, according to (Rom 6:14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace) reassures us that sin will not dominate us. Being under law strengthens sin. Being under grace breaks the dominion of sin.
So more law = more sin.
More grace  = less sin.

So where there is a sin problem, the solution is more and more... grace.

We will see how important this becomes when we look at the next two reasons that grace junkies sin less.

Romans 7:6
But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

It’s not just the removal of one thing but the replacement of another way that is infinitely more powerful and effective.
I’m directly addressing the false unbiblical claim that preaching the gospel of grace will make people run out and sin. The second reason that this claim is untrue, is because **we don’t want to sin, for it’s not who we are.**

There is a regenerated new nature
The power of God flows in our veins through the Holy Spirit

In part one of New Covenant Victory we examined the fact that the law has been lifted off us, its legal demands cancelled at the cross in Christ, and that under grace, sin no longer has dominion over us.

**Colossians 2:13,14 (ESV)**

*...having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*

**Romans 6:14 (ESV)**

*For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*
Today we’re going to look at reason number 2:

**There is a regenerated new nature.**

“...The marvel of regeneration is the bringing of a soul out of spiritual death into spiritual life. It is a new creation, which is a bringing of something out of nothing. **Moreover the new creation is a far greater wonder than is the old.**”

-A.W. Pink (1886-1952)

“Regeneration consists in a new spiritual, supernatural, vital principle, or habit of grace infused into the soul, the mind, will and affections, by the power of the Holy Spirit, disposing and enabling them in whom it is, unto spiritual, supernatural, vital actings and spiritual obedience.”

-John Owen (1616-1683)

We are those who have passed from life to death. Before we were in Christ, we were dead.

**Colossians 2:13 (ESV)**

*And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him.*

**Romans 5 (ESV)**

12*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned –*  
15*But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. *  
16*And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For*
the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 17If, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. 18Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness (Or the act of righteousness of one) leads to justification and life for all men. 19For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. 20Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here we see that sin entered the world through the one man Adam, and as a result, all that followed entered into that sin. We are born into sin. The result of that sin was spiritual death, separation from God and broken relationship with Him.

BUT look at verses 17-18: If, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. 18Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

When we receive the gift of grace, we receive life. So we were dead and condemned, but now through receiving God’s grace, we receive the gift of righteousness and life.
This is also called being born again. Our spirits literally become alive. This is rebirth and renewal.

Look at what Titus 3 says (ESV):

3For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. 4But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, 5he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, 7so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus says that we were once foolish, disobedient and given to various forms of sin, but now that has changed. We have been washed clean; we are regenerated, and renewed, made new.

Last scripture:

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV):

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Ok, so here it is: If you believe in Jesus, you pass from life to death. This new creature, this new creation is regenerated and renewed. It is a new life. This new nature lives for God. Whereas the old nature was bent towards sin, the new nature made alive to God is bent towards life, light and goodness. The most underestimated aspect of the Christian experience has been the degree at which we are changed at the point of being born again.
We are literally a new breed on the planet, something that did not exist before the cross. We are filled with all the power of God. We are placed in Christ and co-seated with Him.

The effect of the new nature is that we live differently. We sin less because the core of who we are has changed. And the clearer we see who we have become, the more we will live as we truly are. The old has passed away.

It’s critical that we see ourselves as we truly are, for this is how God sees us. One of the most staggering scriptures in the Bible is in 1 John. It says: “as He is so are we in this world”.

I cannot emphasize enough to believe in who you are, for “as a man thinks in his heart, so is he”. What you think about yourself will be your reality. Even secular physiologists and motivational speakers agree with this notion. How you see yourself determines how you behave. I remember when I was in the business world, they told me to “dress like a professional, speak like a professional, believe you are one, and you will be one!” It is true.

See who you are. You are a new creature, a holy creature, a powerful creature. A creature dedicated to God at its very core, a creature madly in love with the giver of life. A creature of light, a creature of anointing. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. You can do anything you want! What do you want to do?

The New Creation, made and influenced by God, has desires, and expressions. The new you wants out. It
wants to live, it wants to express itself. Let it. The new you loves to love. The new you loves worship; the new you is addicted to the presence of God. The regenerated, renewed you lives for fresh revelation. The born again life filled you, wants others to taste this life too. Your new nature loves to be with God. You want to do these things. If you do not want these things, you are still dead!

**John Piper says:**
“The commands of Jesus are a description of the way new human beings behave, who have been born again, and enabled supernaturally, to the glory of God.”

Man, I love that we are new human beings.

**Titus 2**

14 *who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.*

He gave Himself for us, He has redeemed us from the grave, He has purified us, He has made us His very Own, He has made us eager to do good.

So He has done something to us that makes us live differently - He changed who we are. We’re now a New Regenerated Creature.

This new creature sins less than the old. Seeing who we are, seeing the work of grace in us, helps us sin less.

The more we see, the clearer we realize, and the more we know about who we are, the less we will sin.

Sin is not who we are - that person died.
So why do I still sin?
Although our new nature is not bent towards sin as it has been totally renewed, our minds have not been re-
newed to the same extent as our spirits. One day our bodies and minds will receive glorification, and then we will never sin again.

Our flesh has appetites; it hungers. It wants food, it wants water, it wants sex, and so on. When our flesh de-
mands something of us that is not consistent with who we are, we should resist the flesh. If I meet a beautiful lady and some feelings rise up in me, my flesh would like me to pursue an avenue that would be very satisfying. However in my spirit I resist this, it feels awkward and within me I know this is a dangerous situation. I then stay true to who I am, strengthened by the power of the spirit, consistent with my nature, taught by grace and I say NO.

But the more we see who we are, the better our deci-
sions will become. **If we believe we are evil at our core, where will we find strength and belief to resist a temptation?**

Another reason I sin is because my mind is still be-
ing renewed. My mind has not been changed to the same degree as my spirit. With the presence of God and by the washing of the Word, as He works in me, my mind is re-
newed and I am changed. That’s why it is essential to sit under the preaching of the Word. It brings powerful transformation to our minds.

Then there is another reason we sin. We are tempt-
ed by evil. The enemy will sometimes try to set us up and sabotage us with a temptation. **Praise God, we are free to say no.** Even the most mature Christian has areas that he/she can be tempted in. Temptation will continue
forever. Again, seeing who we are positions us to make the correct decision, based on the reality of who He has made us to be.

The mistake we make here is to apply the law to people who make bad decisions in their flesh, or from their un-renewed minds, or who fail when tempted. But as we saw earlier, all applying the law does is stir up sinful passions, strengthen the evil desire, and ultimately cause more sin.

**Right believing, however, leads to right living.**

We see who we are, and be who we are. In this place we sin less, and sin looks less and less attractive.

*When we live from our position, within His presence, we will receive power and fulfil His purpose.*
New Covenant Victory
Part 3
Why Grace Junkies Sin Less.
We have the power of the Holy Spirit running through out veins.

Ezekiel 36

26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

In the last chapter we saw how our hearts were changed from hearts of stone into hearts of flesh.

This is a powerful fact. It’s the supernatural sanctified steroids for the Christian - the power to be who we are.

Did you see that He will work obedience in us? He works in us and the natural overflow of being a spirit-filled Christian is obedience. It’s simply who we are.

This is consistent with Philippians 2:13: “for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”
He works in us to will and to work. He affects our will. He produces works in us. Our works flow out of His work in us. Thus they are good works, and of God so that no man can boast or rob God of His glory.

The message of grace has two components: the acceptance component and the empowering component. It’s insane to say that by preaching grace people will sin more, when at the heart of the grace message is “you are more powerful than you ever imagined. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you, and the same power that raised Christ from the dead is in you”.

How can this sort of preaching produce more sin?

How can the increasing awareness of the indwelling power of the Spirit produce more bad behaviour? Surely preaching and showing that His power is in every believer by simple faith, by simply being born again - surely preaching this produces better behaviour! As a man believes in his heart, so he is. If you believe that you have to earn the presence and power of God, it’s like saying “earn the power by right living, and then you’ll have the power to change”. This is faulty. No, we live from our position, we already have the presence, and now you can be freely empowered to be who you want - who you are.

As you can see, I’m taking time to clearly show that preaching grace decreases sin. The reason is that in my experience there has been so much resistance to the gospel of grace. One of the biggest accusation and concerns is that the preaching of grace produces an increase in sin. If you have not yet encountered this oppositional argument, I can guarantee that you will. So my aim is to
You must balance Grace

It’s essential that we balance grace.
So how do we balance grace?
The way to balance grace is to live from His presence.
We’ve moved away from living by principles, to living from the presence.

The preaching of grace is not just a philosophy. It’s not just an intellectual presentation of the good news of the Bible. No; there is power in the gospel. The gospel of the Bible is preached with signs following. Paul came not just with wise and persuasive words but also with a demonstration of power.

What grace says about the power of God is that you already have it inside of you. You don’t have to work for the power. You don’t have to perform for the power or fake the power! The power of the Holy Spirit is every believer’s inheritance as sons, through the finished work of the cross.

It’s not just the removal of one thing, but the replacing of something infinitely more powerful and effective: the power of the Spirit.

If we live from our position, within His presence, we will receive power and fulfil His purpose.

How do we receive the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the gift of the Father, promised to every believer. He is received in your spirit when you become born again. You literally become the temple of God.
1 Corinthians 3:16
Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?

How do we receive Him? Just ask, simply believe! Faith, like everything else! And know this, He lives in you. So it’s more about being aware of where He is, and less about getting Him to come. Ephesians 3 says: “He dwells in your heart through faith”. So look at your chest and say, “Hello Holy Spirit, please make me aware of where you are.”

He lives inside of you and never leaves. We have the promise that He will never leave nor forsake us. He does not leave you when you sin.

In fact, when you sin He works powerfully in you to convict you of your righteousness (right-standing with Him), to convince you, of who you are, and of the love of God. That the power of God is available for you to be victorious.

So, how much of the Holy Spirit is in us? Well, the Holy Spirit is a person - not a force that can be measured in degrees. You either have Him or you do not. If you’re born again you have Him.

All the fullness of God dwells in you!

What does this spirit do in me? Ephesians 3:20
Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.

Simply put he has, and is doing more than you can
ever imagine. His power is at work in you, all the time. He is constantly working in you. His work in you produces fruit:

**Galatians 5:22**
*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

This is the fruit of Him in you, this is what will flow out of every born again believer. This is who you are coming out of you.

How awesome are the promises in the next scripture?

**Romans 8:11**
*If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

His presence in us even affects our mortal bodies. His presence can heal us, strengthen us, and refresh us... in our bodies! He does not only affect our spirits.

Power comes on you when you receive the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 1:8**
*And you will receive power when my spirit comes on you.*

**Galatians 5:16**
*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

**Romans 7:6:**
*But now we are released from the law, having died to*
that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

We are released from the law, we died to our old nature, and we have the Holy Spirit in us, as the new way of life. This powerful cocktail produces a strength and ability in every believer that is effective beyond our wildest imagination.

This is why grace junkies sin less, we are radically changed human beings, born again, enabled supernaturally for the glory of God, by the power of God.

**Free from sin.**

In God’s great love for us He has set us free from the power of sin.

Sin is harmful to me, harmful to others and harmful to those around us!

Because He loves us so much he wants to spare us and others the pain associated with the devastation that follows sin.

This preach is not a call to a more righteous lifestyle, but rather, it focuses on the reason why we have the potential to live a sin-free reality.

Sin is not a transgression of the law – it’s a manifes-
I’m not calling for obedience to the law, but rather a greater belief in the finished work of the cross. Anything without faith in the finished work of the cross is sin.

**Romans 6**

> 18and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness...

Did you know that you have been set free from sin? I boldly declare the Word of God over you. You are free of the power of sin, set free through Jesus. You may find this hard to believe, so here is another scripture to support my case:

**Rev 1:5**

*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.*

We have been set free from sinning. God has delivered us from the bondage of sin. Now if you need to be freed from something then that thing is not good! So it’s good news to be free from something that is not good for you! The gospel is good news! He has destroyed the power of sin at its core.

How did God destroy sin?

**Romans 6:7**

*For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.*

We were set free from sin when we died with Christ. Wow, the driving force behind our motivation for sin, that
which drove us in slavery towards acts of sin, has died. We were enslaved in bondage to sin. It ruled over us so that we obeyed its passions and desires.

Say this with me: “I am free from the power of sin!”

**Romans 6:7** (Amplified)
*For when a man dies, he is freed (loosed, delivered) from [the power of] sin [among men].*

We’re loosed and delivered from the power of sin when we were crucified with Christ!

When we were without Christ we had a sinful nature, and it wreaked havoc in our lives we were not free from its influence! The law was given to make us aware of our sinful nature, our sinful state.

We had a sinful nature, but that sinful nature, that ruling controlling government over us was crucified on the cross, and a new government replaced it: the government of righteousness.

**Galatians 5:24** NIV:
*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*

**The KJV puts it as follows:**
*Gal 5:24  And they have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.*

**The NLT states:**
*24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there.*
God’s Word Translation offers this approach:
24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their corrupt nature along with its passions and desires.

Today’s English version says:
24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have put to death their human nature with all its passions and desires.

Clark’s commentary on this verse, notes:

Galatians 5
Verse 24. And they that are Christ’s; All genuine Christians have crucified the flesh—are so far from obeying its dictates and acting under its influence, that they have crucified their sensual appetites; they have nailed them to the cross of Christ, where they have expired with him; hence, says St. Paul, Ro 6:6, our old man—the flesh, with its affections and lusts, is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. By which we see that God has fully designed to save all who believe in Christ from all sin, whether outward or inward, with all the affections, παθημασι, irregular passions, and lusts, επιθυμιαις, disorderly wishes and desires.

So it’s clear that our sinful nature is gone. If you are still to be persuaded, read Romans 6.

What is our old sinful nature replaced with?

At salvation we are given a new nature.
In 1 Corinthians 5:17 the Good news Bible says:
“17 Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come.”

The ESV translates: “17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. (Or creature) The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

So we are new creations, new beings; the old has gone, and the new has come. Our new being is no longer a slave to sin! So what is it a slave to?

Romans 6

17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

We were controlled and enslaved to sin, our natural nature being and doing evil. In the new birth through the death of sin in the body of Jesus, we were made into new beings with new natures. A new creation nature that is good, holy and righteous, produces a love for all things good. Our own natural default setting now is to be good. It’s to love; it’s to worship!

Grudem asserts that: “Once we have been born again we cannot continue to sin as a habit or a pattern of life, because the power of the new spiritual life within keeps us from yielding to a life of sin.” (Grudem Systematic Theology, pp 747.)

*The power of the new spiritual life within..... wow. It’s this power within that we need to be so aware of as it has been tragically underestimated in the past.*
Grudem adds that “it involves a definite break from the ruling power of love, of sin so that it is no longer ruled or dominated by sin and no longer loves to sin.”

Paul says to consider yourselves “dead to sin.”

Grudem explains further that “the initial break with sin then involves a reorientation of our desires, so that we no longer have a dominant love for sin in our lives.”

The following is an excerpt from Ryan Rufus’ book Do Christians Still Have a Sinful Nature?

“... I want to give the Biblical reason why we don’t keep living in sin. We need to be grounded in the Biblical reason because Jesus said the truth will set you free. So if we want to be free we need to know the truth. ... Many [people’s] advice is [based on] personal opinions ... [or] experiences ... And if it’s not grounded on the Biblical reason then it can’t set people free. We have got to know the number one Bible foundation reason as to why Christians don’t [have to] keep living in sin. It’s simply this:
We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? That is the reason why born again Christians don’t have to keep on living in sin. We have died to sin and it no longer is our master.”

- Ryan Rufus. Do Christians Still Have a Sinful Nature? pp 66. (Brackets mine.)

Now, Rufus is not saying that it’s impossible to sin; he argues that we don’t have to sin because we have been freed from it. The potential for us to live free from sin is there. God has already provided every means for us to be free from it.
Our ‘old self’ could not lead us to righteousness because the sinful nature was ruling and controlling. But now something glorious has happened: the old nature has been crucified; the slave master known as the sinful nature has been totally done away with. It has been completely removed. Now we have risen up into a new life with a new nature that wants to live for God and is no longer controlled by the sinful nature. That’s the good news!

Grace does not make us sin; it gives us the power and opportunity to live free from sin.

BUT wait... that’s not all! Not only are we set free from the power of sin, but we are also filled with the power of God, and He is at work to aid us, that we might not fall:

**Jude 24**

*Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy...*

Wow, we have the potential to not fall! I’m just suggesting that it’s possible, Friend. He is able to stop us from falling!

He has positioned us to have complete victory over sin. He has removed the sinful nature, the very activity of God is helping us to not fall AND how about this one:

**Ephesians 1**

\[18\text{I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his people, 19and his incomparably great...}\]
power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that can be invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Power in us, power over sin, power over the enemy... resurrection power.

We were co-crucified and thus it’s no longer I who live but Christ. This new creation life is upheld by God and has the resurrection glory power inside it.

Our conclusion: You do not have to sin!

Nothing in the universe can make you sin!

Say: “Nothing can make me sin!”

Well then, Wayne, why am I tempted? We are tempted when we are ignorant and forget who we are. But **even if we are tempted, we do not have to say yes!**

We are free to say no, we are free from the power of sin. There need be no sin stronghold, no sin pattern; God has provided everything to set us free from the deathly grip of sin.

Be transformed by this powerful revelation that you have been made righteous by Jesus and righteousness is who you are. You are a saint, you are not a sinner! Be free! We get to live in the land of freedom from sin. Oh, what bliss of holiness!
There is a realm available of effortless purity through resting in who we are as a result of who he has made us. It’s all Him; He has done it to us.

Let’s pronounce this truth together: “I am holy, I am good, I love doing good things, my core is righteous, I am righteous and I believe it.”

Now be it! This is who you are; the old is dead, the new has come, and how sweet the new is. It is totally different.

New desires replace the old; new wants, new cravings and new longings are born out of your perfectly holy spirit and new nature.

But what if I do sin…? There is no condemnation; grace is there. But this preach is not about that, its about this:

Why choose to sin? You don’t have to!

Oh the glorious freedom of the inheritance in the saints.

Oh the bliss of salvation!

Imagine a life with no more sin…

With Christ the possibilities are endless!
Chapter 14
Warning!
Grace is Dangerous!!

Titus 2
11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,
13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ,
14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Friends, be careful of grace! Exposure to grace will radically change you and **will teach you** the following things:

- It teaches you to say no to ungodliness
- It teaches you to say no to worldly pleasures
- It teaches you to live self controlled
- It teaches you to live upright
- It teaches you to live godly lives in this present age
- It will give you hope
- It will make you grateful for redemption
- It will make you feel like His very own
- It will make us eager to do good.

Grace teaches us these things; continuous exposure to grace will produce these things in your life!
If you lack these things you need more grace exposed to you. For it is only grace that teaches us these things.

Paul calls grace the meat and the key to maturity. One of the reasons that it produces maturity is that the understanding that we are right with God and the confidence that this releases, draws us deeper and deeper into His presence. Here we find all we need. Here we find love. Here we find intimacy, here we receive power and it is here that we become bold and dangerous. A people like this will infect and affect every situation they come into... We are bold because we get to hang with the giver of all courage, the source of all life and the author of power - the source of light itself!

This confidence unblocks the wells that are clogged, it opens the wells that were covered and refills the empty ones. The New Covenant glory lifts the veils from our eyes and we see Jesus, as the loving God who draws us to Himself with the sweetness of who He is.

**Hebrews 10**

19Therefore, brothers, (Or brothers and sisters) since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

Now there would be no point in having this way
opened if we did not enter. Since we have this confidence, let us enter! This entire love story, this divine architectural masterpiece, was designed with this one thought from the master engineer...

“Oh, that they may come in and be with Me.”

Friends, His presence is a life giving well. Drink often of it, drink deep of it... What the hang - just jump right in and enjoy it! Father created Adam and how did He enjoy Adam? He walked and talked with him in the cool of the day. The same is still true today. He loves it when you’re together. He created you for it. Jesus restored what Adam lost. He loves you, longs for you, and has purchased the right to be with you, with the most expensive currency known to man, the currency of the blood of His child. The way is open; we can enter, confidently, boldly, and at any time... how about now?

Find time to be with Father... let Him love on you. Go confidently, boldly, for every restriction has been removed by the cross. Jesus took every hindrance away, now He eagerly waits for you to come!

Closing Thoughts:
My sincere hope is that this book will help you to strip back every layer that hinders any confidence to know God, love God, be used by God and understand His Word. I hope you will be able to easier distinguish between the ministry of life and death, and as a result reign in life through Jesus’ work on our behalf.

Romans 5:17 (ESV)
...much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.
Chapter 15
New Covenant Culture
Contending for and anchoring in the superior reality

We need to carry the sober awareness that we are constantly establishing a culture in everything we give ourselves to. We’re contending for a superior reality for the church. We’re contending for a church that will be more that what we are at present. We’re contending and partnering with Jesus to build a church that demonstrates who God is and who we are as a result of the finished work of the cross.

Every church has a culture...
Every church has a belief system...
Every church has a flavour...
Every church has a theology...

So how did the church get these things?

What we release into the church will bear fruit into the future. Now that includes good and bad seed. Day by day, week after week, month by month, there is a steering and a guiding of the church. Years later, there is a place, a result.

Much of what was pronounced over the church has lead to a decrease in power, and an incapacitation of the average believer. If you tell someone year in and year out that they have a sinful nature, they will believe it and be-
come it. If you tell people that they must work to be accepted by God, they will believe it and eventually become discouraged, never entering the rest. You tell people that they must qualify for the anointing and they will believe it and strive. Generations of faulty pronunciations has left the average believer disillusioned, weak, miserable, unconfident, striving, immature, disconnected and powerless. But praise God there is a Gospel Revolution, and Jesus is rescuing His glorious church by bringing us back to the Gospel and our inheritance through the finished work of the cross.

So we carry the soberness of this reality in order to ensure that what we sow into the life of the church results in a preferable culture. We cannot be dictated to by the current culture; we cannot accept the current culture as a place of satisfaction and arrival, and we cannot commit the same mistakes previous generations made. We must learn and see by revelation what Jesus is saying to the churches, and then make the relevant changes.

In this time, Jesus is strengthening His church in the world and raising Her up to be the most powerful force in the earth today. To the churches who hear His voice at this time, there will be a partnership that arises that will affect and infect every corner of the earth with the Gospel of freedom and power.

So what kind of culture do we want in the church? What are we contending for?

Here are a few things that our local church has identified as part of the preferable culture and the superior reality we feel Jesus is calling us to. These things explain much of what we do, and where we want to go in
God. We desire to grow in these areas, so that we will establish the superior reality of a ‘normal’ church for generations to come.

So here are a few aspects of our preferable culture in no order of priority (it is not an exclusive or exhaustive list; add your own ideas and vision for your local body):

We want the culture of the Gospel of truth, liberty and freedom preached with a demonstration of power.
We want a predominant culture of love, acceptance and forgiveness.
We’re wanting to see a culture of the Holy Spirit coming on people and changing lives.
We’re building a culture where God’s presence is honoured and desired above all.
We desire a culture full of life changing revelation that is released over one another.
A culture of signs wonders and miracles.
We’re contending for a culture of growth in people, growing into the fullness of Christ.
We’re contending for our church to be a place of safety.
We’re building a culture that transcends Sunday meetings and flows into our homes and everyday lives.
We’re looking for a culture of authenticity...
A culture of salvations;
A culture of maturity in the use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit by every believer;
A culture where every royal priest and king carries an anointing to minister and serve;
A culture where worship transcends words and music, but ushers in the Glory;
A culture of demonstration of the teaching;
A culture that encourages openness to hear, learn and to change;
A culture of “we are well”;

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We want the culture of the Gospel of truth, liberty and freedom preached, with a demonstration of power.

We want the truth that emulates from this place to be Christ centred, cross honouring gospel truth that has the power to change lives and bring freedom from every bondage there is. There are many false and fake Gospels out there. We want the real Gospel, and we want our church to be a place of truth.

We want that Gospel to have accompanying power. We refuse to go to the world with just a book and a message, but with power. Power ushers in and promotes the preferable future:

 Romans 1
16For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith.

Acts 1
8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

1 Corinthians
1And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2For I decided to know nothing
among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

John 14
The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. 12"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Jesus would say, “Believe my message, and if you can’t, then believe based on the miraculous works I do.”

Today the church says, “Just believe the message, and maybe one day there might be miracles.” We need to get back to normal supernatural Christianity that has the power of God flowing through the veins of every born again spirit-filled believer.

The good news is that that power is already there. Every believer has the power of God in them for miracles and healing and acts of power.

Jesus said:
"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do."
So we’re on this journey of discovering who we are. When we were born again, we were made new creatures, we were given a new nature, a nature that as Bill Johnson says, “has the very righteousness of God flowing through our veins”. As we’re transformed by the renewing of our minds, and begin to clearer see who we are as a result of what He has done to us, we begin to realize the power within us.

Our assignment becomes to destroy every argument and pretention that sets itself up against the knowledge of Christ. We demolish the demonic lies that disqualify us from seeing who we are.

That’s why the Gospel of grace is so essential. The Word clearly teaches us that God qualifies every one of us for ministry. God freely gives us everything we need for life and godliness. There are no levels; there are no favourites; there are no super heroes. We’re all qualified; we’re all heroes.

Religion longs to disqualify you, legalism wars to disqualify you and lying demons try to convince you that you are disqualified, but God has qualified you. Everyone who believes is qualified!

2 Corinthians 3

4 Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who has made us competent (or sufficient) to be ministers of a New Covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Who has qualified you? God.
And what God has qualified, let no man disqualify!

**You are qualified to minister life!** You are the life and light of Christ. Everywhere you go you carry the power and presence of God. Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Jesus has qualified you, your life is now hidden in Christ, and You are in Christ. You have become a son. You are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. There is no condemnation for you. Every hindrance is removed.

We used to believe that sin hindered the ability to minister. But believing that leaves every believer neutralized. For every believer has sinned. God uses imperfect people to minister to imperfect people, all the while growing us into His likeness.

We’re contending for a culture where people **be** who they are. **Be** who you are - a righteous spirit made perfect forever by Christ. Hebrews says that “You are the spirit of the righteous made perfect” and “by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever...”.

**We don’t look to the discouragement of our condition, but to the joy of our position in Him.**

Everything flows from faith. If we need perfection and performance to minister, we will loose faith every time we fail. But if our faith is in His performance on our behalf, we can have a permanent sustained faith that can produce superior results.

Imagine a Church that operates with this revelation. Imagine every believer having power flowing out of their every pronunciation of the Gospel. Whoever thought it would be so simple? All we need to do is preach the Gospel and then watch God back it up with signs wonders
and power. That’s real and sustainable revival.

**Mark 16:20:**

*And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.*

All we have to do is preach the Gospel. Signs will follow! I started by saying this:

**We want the culture of the Gospel of truth, liberty and freedom preached, with a demonstration of power.**

Preach the message, the Gospel of the glorious grace of God and signs will follow. I’m not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation. For in it a righteousness is revealed from God! Preach the Gospel of righteousness by faith. When you believe in Jesus you are made righteous. You are saved, and now made right with God forever!

The power of God is in this message of the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf! Now God is with you and in you. You can do anything; all things are possible with Christ. We’re positioned for victory, for when we preach the Gospel there is accompanying signs.

When we believe in Jesus there are miracles through who we are. We’re infused with supernatural sanctified steroids. Now through the preaching of the Gospel, and the revelation of who we are in Christ, we will never be the same, the church will never be the same and the world around us will be affected like never before!
Practical stuff

People often ask, “Where should I start reading the Bible?” A good place to start is with the following New Testament books: Acts, Galatians, John, Romans and Hebrews.

**What Bible should I use?** The best ones that are widely available and well used are the New International Version (NIV), King James Version and the English Standard Version. The NIV has some serious errors though, sometimes translating *flesh* (*sarx*) as *sinful nature*. This would mean in John 1 where Jesus came in the *flesh*, Jesus actually came in the *sinful nature*? The NIV also uses *punish* where other translations use *chastise*.

You can also download very helpful Bible software from www.e-sWord.net. You can download another helpful program from www.crosswire.org. These programs contain most Bible translations as well as concordances and dictionaries, including Greek and Hebrew dictionaries.

Further resources can be found at:

www.citychurchinternational.com
Rob Rufus’ church.

www.citychurchinternational.net/2009.html
Rob’s weekly preaches; conferences.

www.newnaturepublications.com
Rob and Ryan’s books, and worship CD.
http://www.josephprince.org
Joseph Prince, amazing!

http://www.desiringgod.org
John Piper, world famous theologian.

http://www.ibethel.org/
Bill Johnson, who empowers grace and revival.

http://graceinflood.blogspot.com/
Wayne and others’ weekly preaches.

http://www.awmi.net
Fantastic Grace teacher, Andrew Wommack.

http://www.dynamicministries.com/
Bertie, evangelist, teacher powerful healing.

http://www.thexpoint.com
Bradley Dearlove, grace preacher with power.

You can contact the author at
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Appendix A

Have you turned the Grace of God into a license to sin?

Jude carries a warning that some have turned the Grace of God into a license to sin. We should make sure, then, that we do not. How do you know if you have? What can you do to ensure that you do not “turn grace into a license?” Have your leaders done that to you?

It’s important to note that the people in the letter of Jude who were distorting the grace of God were not Christians. We know this from the following passages:

4For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

And also here:

8Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones…

And furthermore:

...looking after themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; 13wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

And finally:

19It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.
This phrase ‘devoid of spirit’, is put simply by the NIV, which says that they “do not have the spirit”.

These verses clearly show that this accusation that occurs only once in the Bible, was actually against non-believers and the debate should end there. Yet, some still use this scripture against those who preach the New Covenant and the glorious gospel of grace, as a warning that preaching grace will lead to evil behaviour.

We know, however, that this accusation is not true, because Romans 6:14 (ESV) states: “14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.”

The Bible consistently teaches that we do not sin, because we are under grace. Actually the Bible says that law stirs up sin and that the power of sin is the law. So then, preaching the law causes sin, while preaching grace reduces sin.

Despite this glorious truth, the grace message sometimes comes under fiery resistance by those who fear that people will just go out and sin.

**Firstly, we must note that it is agreed amongst theologians that if you present the gospel of grace correctly it will lead to the inevitable question “So I can just sin then?”**

Paul had to address this question 3 times, and Michael Eaton, John Piper, Martin Lloyd Joes, Rob Rufus, Terry Virgo, Joseph Prince and Charles Spurgeon all agree that this question will come up when grace is presented.

**According to RT Kendall and Dr Martin Lloyd Jones, if you’ve never faced this question, then**
you’ve probably never preached a grace message!

It is therefore important to be able to answer this question well. Paul gave it a lot of attention, and so should we.

How to avoid turning grace into a license to sin:

Be careful when you preach Grace to the unsaved

If you present grace to unsaved, or those who think they are saved, you may give them license to sin. This is cruelly keeping them in their life of sin, while they continue to think that they are ok. The fruit of salvation is that we want to do what is right. This is the proof of salvation, proof of a regenerated spirit, and proof that we’ve made the transition into the New Covenant, and into His kingdom.

A life of love to God is evident by a changed person in regards to his attitude to sin.

I John 3:9:
No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

I John 3:6:
No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

Of course we all still sin (thank God for His grace), but if we are truly born again we don’t want to, and don’t have to!
So if someone blatantly develops a ‘sin theology’, in order to justify sin and continue sinning, it would seem that he neither loves God nor is truly born again.

**Jesus makes his followers “eager to do what is good”:**

**Titus 2:14:**

...who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, **eager to do what is good**...

If this fruit does not exist, it is right to question the salvation experience.

(Wayne Grudum gives some helpful advice in this area of regeneration in his chapter on perseverance of the saints in his book *Systematic Theology*, chapter 40 and chapter 34.)

Ezekiel’s prophecy concerning the New Covenant promises:

26 *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.* 27 *And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

If a heart does not want to follow the way of the spirit it is still stone, it is not regenerated and is unsaved.

**We must preach the “By no means” of Romans 6:2.**

We must explain that this does not mean that we just go on sinning mindlessly. We must explain that in the New Covenant the Holy Spirit teaches us right from
wrong, and that it is good to choose the “right” in those teachings. We must make sure that we teach that the Holy Spirit, will give them the power to do the correct thing, and that sin no longer has power over us. We must co-operate with the Holy Spirit as he leads and guides us, in His work of sanctification in us. (showing us who we are, and empowering us to be it.)

We must teach Titus 2:

11For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age...

The fruits of grace include saying no to ungodliness and worldly passions. It produces self control, upright living and godly lives. If we understand grace right, and if it’s ‘working’, these positive fruits are the result.

We should see an outworking of faith in a body.

Friendship, fellowship, accountable loving relationships and fathering. This discipleship process enables “the truth to be spoken in love”. Grace and truth operate together, and this is the environment.

We must saturate people in the presence of God.

Grace is about good relationships. Good relationships with God and people. Is relationship with God being strongly emphasized? If we believe for people to live from a place of knowing and being with God, we need to ensure we are doing all we can to help each other to have and maintain that presence. I’m sure we all agree that it is very difficult to be continually intimate with Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit when we are in dreadful, sinful disobedience. We’re also trusting and be-
believing that His presence comes and sets us free from problems, helps us and strengthens us, leads us in all truth and empowers us to live godly lives. The presence of God also releases the “fruit of the spirit” in and through our lives.

If we don’t have a solid understanding of grace WE WILL NOT ACCESS THIS PRESENCE IN A CONTINUED, SUSTAINED AND MEANINGFUL WAY IN OUR LIVES.

An important role in leadership becomes helping/facilitating/ensuring that people are full of God. Rick Joyner says “the role of the church is to fill people with God”. Leadership wages war on anything that hinders that (God’s sustained manifest presence), and we teach people to do the same. Our focus is showing people that they are actually full of God already! So facilitating the move of the Holy Spirit, and allowing His work, helps avoid the “license to sin” issue.

**Study other credible grace teachers** to ensure that you’ve “got a good grip” on the correct theology.

If you’re leading a community or church, get **outside perspective** from other apostles, prophets, teachers, preachers and evangelists (and don’t just go to sources you know support your leanings). Be accountable in your theology, and invite correction. Personally, each week I send my preach to about 15 people, inviting correction/criticism/comments. I find it reassuring to know whether my theology and emphasis are in place. Make sure you get a broad spectrum here, **don’t only consult teachers**, who can have a tendency to follow the “letter” and often miss “the spirit”. I also send the preach to people I know don’t always agree with my theology. I, involve people who display all the gifts.
Don’t believe everything you hear about grace; test it for yourself. A lot of trouble comes when we simply believe what we hear, so process it, test it and digest it.

People will become who you are.

**Hebrews 13:7**

*Remember your leaders, who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.*

Consider the faith and life of those who lead you. Do you want to imitate their life and faith? Are they holy people? Do they love God? How are their families? Are their communities (churches) healthy? Do they operate in the gifts of the Spirit? Is there positive fruit such as healings, signs and wonders, salvations, personal growth and maturing?

Remember that people catch what you have and not what you say you have, much like Bob Mumford’s law of mumps and measles: “If you say you have mumps, but have measles, what do you think people will catch? They will catch what you got... measles!”

My point is: study the life and the fruit of those who lead you, it should be positive and desirable. This is a great safeguard for you.

If someone is preaching grace, and living an openly sinful lifestyle, with no desire for repentance, saying “Oh well I’m under grace”, they are abusing grace, and my firm suggestion is to not sit under their leadership.

**Resist the urge to preach the law.**
It may become easy to fear being ‘open to the charge’ of perverting the grace message. The natural response would be to start to lay down the law, to preach God’s wrath, punishment and fear, but in so doing one undoes the work of grace and releases condemnation. Watch out for the Leaven!

The body of Christ needs to mature into the place where we can learn to live in obedience to the King without manipulation, control or threat. Romans 8:1 clearly states that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Paul then encourages us to live as those who are lead by the Holy Spirit, as true sons of God. Keep people free; keep people in love with God. Preach Justification by faith alone and God’s gift of righteousness, otherwise people will fall back into performance and works. Intimacy will be lost and with it the power for life and godliness.

I hope these points will help you to evaluate if you are safely preaching the glorious gospel of Grace, without making it a license to sin. I hope this helps you to choose leaders who will preach a Biblical grace to you, and keep you in the type of freedom that Jesus wants for you. I hope this brings a correction if you are preaching grace as a license. I hope it helps you understand the ‘environment’ in which grace is preached.

Colossians 1:6:
All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.