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Glorious Gospel

**Our desire is to
dwell in the house
of the Lord!**

Psalms 27:4



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Change Not Performance

Gordon Crook, Pastor
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**“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”
Matthew 6:1-4**

It is our normal human nature to want to be accepted by others, and many times we are willing to put on a mask that is not our normal self. We can act in ways that make people think we are something that we are not. The old nature, that we all have, likes to act religious because it means that we do not have to recognize our failure before God. It is certainly possible to look like we are “spiritual,” when our heart is not right.

God is always dealing with our attitudes. He is not fooled by our outward actions even if they appear to be good. God is not in the business of making people that can put on a front and do things to be seen of others. He is in the business of changing our hearts to be like Him. The Christian life has never been about performance, but about change.

God has always looked at man's heart and sees what others do not. **"I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."** Jeremiah 17:10. **"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."** Hebrews 4:12

Everything we do is known by God, and He is the one that will reward accordingly. We are not talking about our salvation when we talk about rewards. We will receive a reward according to our deeds. However, those deeds should be done as unto the Lord and not to impress people. **"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."** Colossians 3:23-24

When we are doing something for the Lord, it should be done as unto the Lord without considering whether

others see us and recognize our efforts. While it is generally true that our actions are the effect of what is in our heart, we are certainly capable of doing things with the sole purpose of making others think something about us that is not really true. The real question is whether we really want to please God or man.

This is what Paul says about his intentions. **“For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a of Christ.” Galatians 1:10 (ESV)** Every action should be in the attitude of pleasing God. This does not mean that we will act perfectly all the time. It is, however an attitude of heart that needs to pervade our life.

Many understand and agree that our salvation is by grace alone, but then they want to turn to performance for the rest of their spiritual growth. God has never desired “performance” from us. He desires only surrender. It is far harder to surrender all of our life to Jesus than to try to do something on our own.

Jesus makes it very clear in John 15 that we can do nothing apart from Him. He is speaking there about bearing fruit. Performance is not fruit, it is self effort. What Jesus does in us when we are truly abiding in Him, is a real change in our hear attitude. He is making us more and more like Him. This is what Paul means when he says we are being changed from glory to glory.

God's people will find so much rest and spiritual growth when they begin to realize that Jesus wants to complete their sanctification if they will let Him. **"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" Philippians 1:6. "The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me:" Psalm 138:8a. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thessalonians 5:24. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2. "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." Hebrews 4:10**

Please consider that you are not expected to perform something that is defined by someone else in order to be spiritual. If you will yield your heart and life to Jesus, He will work a change in your life that you cannot on your own. I am so amazed at what He has changed in my life. I can really see many changes in my attitudes in my heart.

I saw this quote somewhere, and I think it is correct. **"Nobody wakes up one day and decides to lock Jesus out. They just build something that works without Him."**



Spiritual Leprosy

Pastor Vicky Moots
Kingman, Kansas

Leprosy, in the Bible, is a spiritual picture, or type, of sin. At that time, it was considered incurable, but now it is treatable. I would like to discuss the physical disease of leprosy and then give the spiritual comparison and meaning of it.

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's Disease, is a slow growing bacterial infection affecting the skin, the mucous membranes of the nose and throat, testicles and peripheral nerves. It is caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*, a bacteria that is similar to the one that causes tuberculosis.

The first symptom that appears is patches of skin on the body that look like a rash, but there is no itching. One of the most marked manifestations of the disease is the loss of the ability to feel temperature or pain in the affected areas. This is due to the destruction of the nerves, which can lead to atrophy and bone damage and autoamputation of the fingers and toes. Leprosy is very disfiguring and can lead to paralysis of the hands and feet. The patients unknowingly burn or injure themselves, and then the wound becomes infected. Death was usually due to infected sores.

So, how is leprosy like sin? Sin, like leprosy, destroys a person a little at a time, and they do not feel it or realize it. As leprosy progresses, it affects the appearance, the speech, the ability to walk, and the ability to bear fruit. Untreated, it leads to death. Likewise spiritually, when we

yield to the sinful old creation it affects our talk, our walk, and our outward appearance and causes us to become unfruitful.

The leper was considered "unclean" according to the Old Testament Law and had to be separated from the other people in a place outside the city. Sin, likewise, separates us from fellowship with God. Leviticus, chapters 13 and 14, give the regulations regarding the plague of leprosy and even how it was diagnosed.

In Lev. 13:45 the leper was commanded that he was to "...put a covering upon his upper lip and shall cry, unclean, unclean." In other words, he was to put a covering over his mouth. This law was to prevent the spread of the disease to other people. It is interesting to me that no one at that time knew how leprosy was transmitted. We now know that it is spread through droplets from coughing and sneezing.

In the spiritual sense, just like the leper, the Christian who is yielding to the flesh instead of walking in the spirit, is unclean. But according to I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is the only cure for spiritual leprosy.

Leprosy is spread by prolonged close contact with someone who is infected, not by casual contact with them. And so it is with sin. The more time that we spend in an unwholesome environment, or the more time that we spend with unbelievers, the more likely that it will begin to affect us. Jesus occasionally ate with sinners and ministered to them, but He did not associate with any of their activities. We are commanded in II Cor. 6:17 to come out from among them and be separate.

In II Kings 5 we read the story of Naaman who was captain of the host of the king of Syria. Verse one describes him as "a great man ... and honorable ... he was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper." Naaman was a great man, but he was unclean, just like all of us who have sinned. He sought the prophet Elisha for healing. Elisha sent a messenger to him to tell him to go and wash in the river Jordan seven times, and he would be clean.

Naaman was angry and refused to obey at first because Jordan was a dirty river. He finally swallowed his pride, and v. 14 tells us that "... he went down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

The river Jordan is a spiritual picture of our death and resurrection with Christ, and the number seven is God's number of completeness (on the seventh day, creation was complete). The dirty river water of Jordan had no healing power, and it was not what cleansed Naaman. It took faith and complete obedience to the command to "wash and be clean." He had to dip in the water seven times, not just two or three.

To have victory over sin, we must submerge our souls completely in the murky waters of the death of Christ and be raised up with Him as a new creation, as Paul testifies in Gal. 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."



Sharing Testimonies

June Arst

I want to start by saying how thankful I was to grow up in the family I did. I'm thankful that I've was raised by a wonderful mom and dad who taught me so much in life and about the Lord and about the Grace of God. Also, I had a wonderful and ornery brother I enjoyed growing up with. I really enjoyed going to church and going to fellowship meetings and also to camp. It was fun for me.

I really can't complain about my life. I love people that I have gotten to know over my life time. I was a single person for a long time and then, the Lord brought me a wonderful man to whom I have really enjoyed being married. I am so happy that my Dad got to perform our wedding. We went back to our honeymoon spot in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, and when we stepped back into Thorn Crown Chapel, I broke down in tears as it brought the memory of our wedding back to surface.

In 1997 my husband David was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. Then, several years later I was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes. It seems like most of my life was medicine free and hospital free and I had pretty good health.

Last year David had to have half of his thyroid removed. That wasn't easy and his recovery was rough. Two years ago I had to go to the emergency room and found out that I had blockage in my kidneys. Two years later, on

the 9th through the 13th of March of this year, I was in the hospital. Before that, I had gone to my doctor's and ended up having a lot of shortness of breath. That Monday they hooked me up to an E.K.G. and said I was in A-Fib .and told me I was going to have to go to the Hospital. I chose St. Theresa because the heart doctor that was there was from my doctor's office.

When I was done with the E.K.G., David said he was feeling funny. He thought his blood sugars were dropping they checked his blood sugar and got him something to eat his blood sugar was doing fairly good. When I came back to the room, after I went to the bathroom David was talking but I didn't understand what he said and then his hands started shaking and his body started convulsing and he started to fall forward I grabbed his body and held him back and yelled for help. When they came in the nurse tried to do what she could and David blacked out again.

When he came to they started to check his blood pressure, and blood sugar again and pulse, and oxygen. More than half the staff was in the room taking care of David. I moved to the hallway to give them room to work on David. We ended up at the same Hospital Emergency room.

I got out of the hospital on the 13th and have been at home recovering with watching my sodium closely and taking blood pressure and checking pulse taking lots of medications. I Thank the Lord for His love and care over me. My prognosis sounds positive if I make big changes for my health. I thank the LORD JESUS FOR HIS LOVE.

They also had to reset my heart beat on April 22, which was David's and my anniversary. I stayed at St. Francis overnight. Since then it has taken me a while to recover. I had a life vest that I have worn since the 13th of March, that monitored my heart and could act as a defibrillator if necessary.

We had made some serious changes since I was released from the hospital with our sodium intake and making big changes but just took a step further. I do believe that God put that in my head to do that and watching our food closer has also paid off because when I went to the doctor last Monday I had an echocardiogram and this last Friday, 26th of June was my followup with my Heart doctor. He pointed at the battery pack that was part of the life vest and said you can get rid of that thing. He also lowered my medications. and said my heart was almost back to normal.

I love our gracious Lord how wonderful and faithful he is to take care of his children. God blessed us with all of you and your prayers. Thank you Lord for our spiritual family that has been praying for us all the way through this journey, and for God's wonderful healing. Please continue to keep us in your prayers.

(Bless the Lord oh my soul and all that is within me bless his holy name he has done great things Bless his holy Name bless the Lord oh my soul and all that is with in me bless his Holy name!)

— 0 —

Paul Chastain

My Prayer

I Come Broken, Lord, with no place left to go.
I come broken, Lord, with nothing left to show
For a wasted life of sin and shame. I come broken Lord,
For You are my only hope. Yes, I've wasted my life on sin and
frivolity; for a sinful life was the only life for me.
Now I know the folly of the sinful life I've lived,
so, I come broken, Lord, full of sin and sickness please
please won't You take me in?
I've had no friends nor family to walk my road with me;
So, now I walk this lonely road with one last chance for me.
As I walk the lonely road, torn, tattered and filthy,
so full of sin and shame, I have come almost to roads end;
hoping that you will accept me and take me in.
For there is no place left to go, so I come to You, Lord, please
won't You take me in?
As I near the end of the road I have walked, so full of sin and
shame, I look ahead and see a solitary figure, standing, looking
back at me.
It is You, O Lord, I see, looking back at me;
It is You I see, with arms held open wide, and the love I see
shining from Your eyes, I know is meant for only me.
You call my name and say, "I love you, Paul, please come and
live with Me? That you have wasted your life is plain for all to
see; Yet only I alone can redeem you, if you will come and live
for Me. A life poured out in service, leading others unto Me,
a life redeemed, and lived in liberty."
I am not perfect, it is plain for all to see, yet Jesus loved me,
saved me, that I might live my life for Him, in perfect liberty.

A Soul

**A soul in distress,
cries out with grief.
Seeking an answer,
desiring relieve.**

**The Word goes forth,
Touching that soul.
Pointing to Jesus,
making it whole.**

**A healing takes place,
For all to see.
For a soul once bound,
Is now set free!**

**The name of Jesus!
His cross! His grave!
His resurrection!
A soul is saved!**

**Debra Isenbletter
Springfield, Missouri**

Ephesians

Pastor Gordon Crook

Chapter 3

"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Ephesians 3:12-19

Last month we ended considering God's purpose and work to put on display, through the church, His great wisdom for all to see. Verse 11 ends with **"eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."** This leads to our start here; **"In whom."** We now know that Paul is here referring to Jesus.

We are being reminded that our access to the Father is through Jesus. **"Having therefore, brethren,**

boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;" Hebrews 10:19-20 Also read **Ephesians 2:18, John 14:6** and **Romans 5:2**. There is no other access, and this access made available to us is a precious privilege.

Coming into God's presence with confidence is never about being rude or demanding as some want to do. The confidence is about understanding that on our own merits, we could not survive in God's presence. You can read in **Leviticus 16** how specific it was for Aaron to enter into the Holiest which is where God's presence dwelt among Israel. God was teaching about the Holiness of His presence. This is why **Hebrews 10:22** encourages us to "**draw near**" in "**full assurance of faith.**" Fully assured that we are accepted in His presence. **Ephesians 1:6**.

God has always intended that humans would be in fellowship with Him. This is exactly why He made a way for us. He is not just "**tolerating**" us in His presence, we are eagerly invited to have fellowship with Him.

Paul is not preaching the gospel out of some expectation of applause or acceptance by people, but because he knows the importance and truly wants us to know what God has revealed to him. This is why he tells the saints to not be discouraged by his tribulations. He is not discouraged.

Even in his tribulations, he is able to pray for the saints that will listen to him. This is his second prayer in this letter. I have always been impressed with Paul's prayers

as I think they clearly show us how we ought to pray for each other. When we read these prayers, we should take away some understanding as to what God wants for us.

Consider what Paul prays for here. It is not their health. It is not their wealth. It is not even for their safety in light of persecution. It is for strength in the inner man. It is for them to be rooted and grounded in love. He prays for spiritual things because they are more important. What is the value of worldly things if the spiritual is neglected.

“Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” This is not our own strength. Paul is not trying to be a motivational speaker. He wants us to realize that we need the strength from the Holy Spirit for our spiritual life. If we just try to “muscle” through on our own, we will fail.

“That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” The most important thing we need to understand is the love of Christ. **“Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”** Matthew 22:36-40

Jesus ties all of the law to love. Paul tells us that it is briefly comprehended in this; **"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."** John tells us that; **"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."** And also; **"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" 1 John 4:20**

All of our understanding of God needs to be in relation to His great love. Jesus first loved us and gave Himself for us. For God so loved the world that He gave His beloved Son. Paul prays for these saints (and us) that we might comprehend; not just the basic love, but the breadth and length and depth and height. There is much more to the love of Christ than just knowing that He died for us.

Those that go on in the race for the prize of the high calling in Christ are going to realize there is much more to learn about Jesus every day. They will experience a deeper companionship with Jesus and His love will change them from the inside.

"That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." I wrote a complete article on this in the May 2026 Glorious Gospel. You can read that if you have a copy, or online at www.gloriousgospel.org.

I feel certain that these prayers of Paul should give us a great example of what we should pray for, both for ourselves and for others. I do not want to discourage in any way saints praying for their health and finances and wisdom and all of those things, but Paul helps us understand the more important things.

MEMORIALS

Jack Davis

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body."

Mt. 26:26. It is interesting to notice what Jesus did with the bread, which represented His body, as they were sharing this meal. What a fellowship! This memorial is **to keep us aware**, of what he bare, that we might enjoy our blood-bought share. I Pet. 2:24; I Cor. 10:16.

"HE TOOK BREAD"

He took that body from his Father's hand, in perfect submission. God had provided that He dwell or live therein for a while. Heb. 10:5-10,14. A body prepared for Him especially as a vehicle in which to do all the Father's will. I am persuaded that Jesus took it willingly. He accepted the physical being without quibbling, why hast thou made me thus? This human form was a necessity for his entrance into the world to be the redeemer of humanity. We also think of this event as "the word made flesh." This body in which He lived was completely dependant upon His Father for his care.

We think of Mary who gave birth to and nourished Jesus, looking at Him as a mother would. We don't know how much she understood of the prophecies concerning Him, but it must have been a great trial of her faith to see Him suffering there on the cross. We think of another Mary anointing His body for His burial. The care given by Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus preparing His body for burial. I believe God saw to it.

"HE BLESSED IT"

Oh, would not a body be blessed wherein Jesus lived for about thirty-three years? Wherein Jesus did nor knew no sin. He did far more than "take it" or accept it. We get a sense from synonyms given from the Greek..." to speak well of in praise and thanksgiving to attribute as belonging to God, to consecrate for use unto God's glory.

Many put too much importance on our physical well-being. Some even equate such with spirituality. WRONG! Some of the most spiritual saints I have known suffered severely in body. Others fail to realize the proper importance God gives to the care of these bodies. There are those who abuse, misuse, neglect, and even reject them. Let us remember that by faith we are temples of the living God. We well appreciate the fact that they are a needed "house" to live in for a while, while we prepare for eternity. God cares about these earthen vessels enough to place the Christ life treasure within. He commanded the light of the glorious gospel to shine therein.

When we yield to Him He makes us vessels unto honor, meet for the Master's use. These vessels in which there is to be manifested the life of Christ, and even to magnify Him. II Cor. 4:10; Phil. 1:20. I Cor. 6:15 says that our bodies are members of Christ. Don't we glorify God in these physical bodies? II Cor. 6:18-20. Paul said "I keep under my body," It is so needful to submit ourselves unto the control of the new life, and the Holy Spirit.

To me it is so sad and dangerous that so many saints allow their bodies to be boss in their life. Daily choices, and even spiritual decisions are being determined by physical conditions. Lord help us

overcome wherever we are, content in whatever state we are in. Rom. 12:1-3. It is our privilege to present ourselves a living sacrifice. Has He promised that the Spirit shall quicken these bodies? Are we earnestly awaiting the Redemption of our bodies? OH GLORY, THESE WILL BE CHANGED IN A TWINKLING OF AN EYE. I Cor. 15:51-52. We shall soon be fashioned like unto His glorious body when He comes. Phil. 3:20-21. Who can estimate how blessed these bodies have been to have the life of the Son of God move in.

"HE BRAKE IT"

Or presented it for the breaking

The Greek synonym has the thought... "to break off, bust asunder, crack apart." We read that not a bone of Him was broken. It is indicated by Scripture that His heart burst, water and blood flowed together out of His pierced side. His bones were out of joint.

We think of His marvelous walk, His wonderful words, His amazing works. As He talked and walked He taught, even illustrated His messages, with miraculous examples concerning the truth of His ultimate purpose for being here. He healed those oppressed of the devil, He made the lame to walk, the dumb to talk, deaf to hear, He fed the multitude, He stilled the storms. But He had a definite path, a sure destiny. The things mentioned before was not His whole mission for being here, not the total purpose. He was here for the breaking, and giving. Had He returned to heaven right after His transfiguration on the mount, where would we be?

The Scripture gives us memorials of several things broken, and teaches us of how God can use the broken things. We think of the alabaster box broken, in order that the fragrance could flow out and fill the house.

Gideon's men with their pitchers, which had to be broken to allow the lamps within to shine out for victory.

"HE GAVE IT"

Isa. 50:4-7, Fortells the giving of His body. Read Eph. 5:1-2; Gal. 2:20. But let us consider John 6:47-58. In verse 51, He speaks of Himself as the living bread come down from heaven, and refers to it as His flesh which He will give for the life of the world. Thank God! The bread of life can be also our daily bread. He is our sacrifice but also our satisfying portion. We will one day wear what we have been eating today.

"TAKE EAT"

He so graciously says "take eat. What shall we eat? What shall we wear? Physically it seems that some of us think that we wear much more than we eat. How do we eat or take in the bread of life? Are we not privileged to be partakers of His life? What type of life do we have by faith? He is HOLY, PURE, UNDEFILED, AND ALIVE FOR EVERMORE. We may enjoy from Him all the nourishment and satisfaction we need. V. 55. He seems to express here how we "eat" or take into our life the word of life. Verse 47: **"He that believeth,"** as we believe we are taking Him into our lives. Verse 56: tells us to "dwell in Him." Speaking of our "living by Him." Col. 3:4 speaks of Christ who is our life, Gal. 2:20 we live by His faith.

Consider what He has done to present us gloriously complete. Col. 1:21-23, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith..."

His part, "I give," He asks of us, "take, eat."

"TRUE FREEDOM"

Gary Giddings - Broken Arrow, OK

Psalm 119:45 "And I will walk at **liberty**: for I seek thy **precepts**." There is a connection between **liberty** and God's **precepts**. The Hebrew word **liberty** means "wide, roomy, space." This freedom to live as God meant us to live comes only from seeking His **precepts**. **Precepts** means "command" and it signifies THE WORD OF GOD. He gives us His commands for us to follow. Instead of being in a tight, restricted area with no room to breathe, we learn to follow God's **precepts**. Then we can enjoy the "wide, spacious room" God gives us.

Our most important relationship is with God, more than political relationships we have with local, state and national government. This is not more important than our relationship with God. John Adams, one of our founding fathers and the 2nd President of our country wrote: "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. He firmly believed that a free, constitutional republic would only work if its citizens retained high moral standards. When John Adams said "religious" he meant the Christian religion, not just any religion. Our founding fathers came from a Christian culture.

Even with the best idea of government, if people aren't able to control themselves, that form of government can't last. Politicians may "pledge" to support the constitution and even mouth the words, "so help me, God," but it means nothing if the heart is wicked and deceitful. I would rather preach the Gospel than to try to teach the philosophy and ideals of any political party. Only the

Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ can change our hearts and minds for a better life now and for eternity. The biggest problem we have is not political but spiritual. Who do we serve and worship? Only Jesus can change our hearts from DIRTY to CLEAN, from WICKED TO HOLY, and from DEATH to LIFE. Only Jesus! The Old Testament was God's instructions to His people, Israel. They didn't have to wonder what God wanted because He spelled out for them. But the only way this benefited them was by humbly receiving and obeying.

Psalm 119:133 "Order my steps in thy **word**: and let not any **iniquity** have **dominion** over me." The writer asked the Lord to order his life with the **Word**. This is the only way to escape from the **domination** of **iniquity**. If we don't make God our priority, then someone else or something else will fill that void in our heart. That may seem to be alright for a while, but no one can ultimately give us the love, peace, and joy that God gives in relationship with Him. Many people think that civil or political freedom is the ultimate, being able to "say what you want." But just because we have the right to express our opinion doesn't mean our opinion is right! We can be enslaved in our own wrong thinking, not knowing how bound up we are. But Jesus tells us the way to be FREE, and to know TRUE FREEDOM. John 8:31-32, Jesus said to those Jews which **believed** on Him, If ye **continue** in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you **free**.

We must first **believe** in Jesus and then **continue** to know Him on a personal level. What about those who quote His Word but don't have a personal relationship with Jesus? They may know some things ABOUT God,

but they don't really KNOW God. We must open our heart to God's way of salvation, which is Jesus Himself. The New Testament is so much more glorious than the Old Testament because Jesus took on a body of flesh and blood, and He fulfilled the requirements of the Law as a man. Jesus did what we could not do. "For the law was given by Moses, but **grace and truth came by Jesus Christ**" (John 1:17). Jesus is our connection between **knowing the truth** and **being free**. Jesus paid the price for our Salvation and the price was His blood. He died in our place so that we don't have to die. Not only that, He has given to us His RIGHTEOUSNESS. In Christ we are a New Creation and we are ACCEPTED in the Beloved (we are always welcome at God's throne).

God meant for us to **continue** in Jesus, the Word of God, and to be His DISCIPLES (learners). CONTINUE, according to Strong's Concordance, is to stay, abide, dwell, remain, or to stand. To be MADE FREE means to be liberated. From what do we need to be made FREE? from the sin that hinders our relationship with God. Salvation is a gift, but to FOLLOW Jesus will cost us something. Our desire to follow Jesus will be tested, but thank God we are learning we have the most FREEDOM when we look to Jesus and DEPEND upon Him!

A longer title of this article could be, "True Freedom Comes from Declaring Our Dependence upon God." Think of what the Thirteen American Colonies did when they declared their INDEPENDENCE. How dare they separate themselves from and enter into certain war with one of the greatest empires in the world? We know what our founding fathers were thinking because it is written in The Declaration of Independence. They weren't being "rebellious children" of their parent country but **they**

declared their dependence upon God! They put themselves in the hands of the God who rules over the affairs of all people and nations. Right from the first paragraph of The Declaration of Independence, the colonists plead their right “to dissolve the political bands” which connected them with Great Britain and that they have the right “to assume the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of **Nature’s God** entitle them ...”

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their **Creator** with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness ...” It is important to realize that our rights come from God, not from any earthly government; government was meant to protect those rights, not to arbitrarily decide who has rights or who has “more rights” than others. Most of The Declaration of Independence is a record of the abuses that King George III inflicted upon these colonists. the relationship between them and their “mother country” was so impossible, they appealed to Heaven.

The last paragraph mentions God two different times: “We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, **appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world** for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States ... **with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence**, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.” Our founding Fathers called God, “**the Supreme Judge** of the world” because the Court of Heaven is higher than

any court in the whole world. In other words, they declared their DEPENDENCE on God while declaring their independence from Great Britain.

I wouldn't say that every American colonist was a Christian, but most of them were and they lived and breathed a CHRISTIAN CULTURE. They prayed and read His Word. How do we know that the American Colonists put their trust in God? When they were in a terrible pinch, They asked God for help PUBLICLY, and they also thanked God PUBLICLY when their prayers were answered.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loved me, and gave himself for me." When we don't have the faith or when we feel shaky in our faith, LOOK TO JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Jesus learned obedience by the things that He suffered. He trusted the Father and did everything according to the Father's will. Jesus gave up His rights of being God and put His trust in the Father. After His death, Jesus was glorified and given "a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9). We are learning to DEPEND upon God through Jesus our Savior, more than we did yesterday. May we allow ourselves to be "fully persuaded" as Abraham was with God (Rom. 4:21) and may we know and experience the full, victorious life that comes from being DEPENDANT upon Jesus our Savior!

I'm happy with Jesus alone,
I'm happy with Jesus alone;
I'm rich in my Savior, as rich as can be;
And happy with Jesus alone.

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