



GLOBAL GRACE NETWORK

GGN is a fellowship of ministers and churches that advocate the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ – Jesus alone, grace alone, faith alone. Our purpose is twofold: to help the church rediscover Jesus and to take this message to the world.

NOVEMBER 2008

Living under Grace **VERSUS** Living under the Law

The old covenant was based on the law, and the new covenant is based on Jesus and grace. For us to understand the huge difference between the old and the new covenant it is essential that we understand the huge difference between living under law and living under grace. Under the law the focus was on us and our behavior and accomplishment, under grace the focus is entirely on Jesus and His behavior and accomplishment. We now live in the new covenant and everything is given to us by grace alone. Our works are never a requirement for God's blessings but rather a fruit of the new life.

In this month's newsletter we will look closer at the difference between living under law and living under grace. Grace is not just a topic amongst other topics; the very Gospel is called "The Gospel of the Grace of God" (Acts 20:24). The more we understand grace the more we understand the Gospel!

We encourage you to take time and meditate on what's written in this newsletter, you might even want to read it several times. It may radically change your life. The testimony of a minister is also included, telling how the revelation of God's grace and goodness turned his life around.



Send us an email; we would love to hear from you too.

Mary Felde
Editor

Considerations on Grace and Law

by Peter Youngren



Ten thoughts for your meditation on this very important subject

I believe in the Law for the purpose for which it was given: never to save, heal or make us holy, but to show us our need for a savior. The Law of Moses was a fourteen hundred year time period that showed all of us that no one can be righteous by works. That's what the Law is - human works to please a supposedly displeased God. All religions are based on human performance, and sadly many have reduced Christianity to a religion of works. Christianity without the Gospel of God's grace (Acts 20:24) is no more virtuous than any other religion.

The Law is what we can do, our performance and effort. It deals with the outside, putting our ability on display. The grace of God is unmerited, unearned, undeserved favor. The favor is based on Jesus' performance, His finished work on the cross and His ability to save, heal and sanctify those who "came to God through Him" (Hebrews 7:14).

I've included ten thoughts for your meditation on this important subject. Let the Holy Spirit illuminate what Jesus has done for you.

1. Reasons and motives

Legalistic religion based on our performance will make us do good things, but for the wrong reasons. Prayer, Bible study, giving and witnessing are all good things, but they only profit us when done in response to Jesus' finished work on the cross.

Paul tells us that if we gave all our money to the poor, but without love, it would profit us nothing (1 Corinthians 13:3). Obviously, our gifts would profit the poor equally, whether we give motivated by love or not. However, our heavenly Father loves us so much that He wants us to profit.

When we do good things to impress God or people, those good deeds profit us nothing. Alternately, when we respond to

God's love for us by loving others, those are the good works that will remain. Pharisees, both those 2000 years ago and modern day ones, are always concerned how they look to others. It's about keeping up appearances, especially to impress those who attend the same church, or who have the same list of rules of right and wrong that we do.

“When we do good things to impress God or people, those good deeds profit us nothing.”

Grace is about enjoying what Jesus has done for us, and responding to His love by walking in the foreordained “good works” He created us for (Ephesians 2:10).

2. Religious cosmetics or honesty

Sometimes when ladies put on their makeup they call it “putting on their face.” Legalism is religious cosmetics - putting on our good Christian face. Jesus told the Samaritan woman “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him” (John 4:23).

In “spirit” refers to the New Covenant, the covenant of the Spirit, which stands in contrast to the covenant of the letter (2 Corinthians 3). The former covenant gives life, while the latter kills. In “truth” means in reality. The Old Covenant was one of outward forms, God on the outside, while the New Covenant deals with true worship, God on the inside. Grace enables us to be real and honest. It is not our merits that are the determining factors, but Christ's flawless performance is what matters.

God loves you not because of what you have done for Him but because of what Jesus did for us at the cross. No need to be a pretender, to “put on our face.” If there is

a lack in us, let it surface to a place where we can allow God's love to help us.

3. The answer to our lack

Religious legalism in all its forms has some common denominators. There is always another rule to implement, another assignment for us to accomplish, more godly character to build, and always another personal problem we need to repent from - in essence we are never good enough.

While the above may be true, the Gospel is that Jesus has satisfied the just requirements of the Law for us. He accomplished all that was needed, and a genuine godly character is developed by Christ living in us. Good morals do not come by focusing on morality but on the indwelling Christ. “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). How big are you letting Jesus be in you?

4. What about good works?

At the core of legalistic religion is the conviction that if we try harder, pray more, and do more, we will obligate God into giving us more forgiveness, blessing, healing or prosperity. This is an elitist teaching that gives glory to us, not to Christ. This thinking stands in contrast to trusting in what Jesus has done, as stated in the song “On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.”

Legalism tells you to be more righteous, better, work harder, improve your life, give more, serve more, do more. The Gospel acknowledges that Christ has put His new creation life in us. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). Good works are not the result of our determination and good intentions, but result from a recognition of why we were born again: we were created for “good works” in Christ Jesus.

5. Hypocrisy or sincerity

In Matthew 15 we read the story of

the Pharisees feeling superior to Jesus' disciples because they involved themselves in the prescribed ritual cleansing and rinsing of their hands before they ate, while Jesus' disciples did not. The Pharisees used this argument to condemn Jesus and His disciples, but Jesus exposed them as spiritual imposters. While they “cherry-picked” one commandment and used it to accuse Jesus and the disciples, they themselves were guilty of breaking other more weighty commandments. You see, legalism will breed arrogance and condescension. Read the whole story in Matthew 15:1-10. It's an interesting sparring match between Jesus and some of the greatest spiritual hypocrites who ever lived.

Grace stands in contrast to legalism because it breeds sincerity. You live who you are. “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he* is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). When you are enjoying new creation life on the inside, you have no need to find fault with others, but instead your focus is on sharing the new life you have received.

“Whether our sins are big or small in the eyes of people, we are equally in need of Jesus.”

6. Do we see our need of Jesus?

In Luke 7 you have the story of a “sinful” woman worshipping Jesus in the house of a Pharisee by the name of Simon. Her sins were visible and well-known in the community; possibly she was a prostitute. Simon's sins were less noticeable: pride, self-righteousness, arrogance and hypocrisy. When we study Jesus' dealings with the two of them, we notice that Christ makes no distinction between one sin or another. In God's eyes sin is sin. If

anything, Simon was worse off because his self-righteousness clouded his spiritual perception. He did not see his real need for God. Instead he looked at others as needy, while he viewed himself as sufficient.

Once we embrace the Gospel of Grace, our sentiments will echo those of the Apostle Paul, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God” (2 Corinthians 3:5). Whether our sins are big or small in the eyes of people, we are equally in need of Jesus.

7. Spiritual elitism or equally needy

Spiritual elitism is a terrible trap that has snared many throughout history. One of those trapped in this deception is Simon, the Pharisee whose house Jesus visited. The story in Luke 7 shows us two people who are total opposites. She was a woman known for her immoral lifestyle; he had a public reputation of good morals. Simon seemed to have never asked himself the question, “How much sin do you have to commit to be considered a sinner?” Jesus drives home the point, later on echoed by the Apostle Paul, that if you are guilty in one you are guilty in all.

Imagine two people whom in order to save their lives have to jump the Grand Canyon. One is the Olympic gold medalist in long jump, the other one an elderly overweight businessman who never exercised a day in his life. Undoubtedly the Olympic gold medalist will do a lot better jump than the businessman, but in the end they will both face the same destiny – the bottom of the Grand Canyon. That’s the point of The Scripture, which tells us that all have

“When we accept that Jesus alone is sufficient we find ourselves repenting of our self-righteousness and self-reliance.”

sinned and come short of the glory of God but the gift of eternal life is by grace to anyone who will believe (Romans 6:23). No one has anything over the other; at the cross of Jesus we are all equally needy.

8. Is this a scandalous grace?

Grace doesn’t make sense. It’s actually scandalous in many people’s eyes. Why would God put His wrath for our sin on Jesus? Why would Jesus be willing to pay a debt He did not owe? Why would this debt load be taken care of before you and I were ever born? Then to top it off, why does God offer us this forgiveness as a free gift? After all, what if we were to take advantage of God’s unconditional love? The fact that he offers salvation, no strings attached, isn’t it scandalous? How can God suggest that forgiveness should be granted seventy times seven daily?

Yes, God’s love is a scandalous stumbling block to the pharisaical mind and foolishness to the theological philosopher, but to us who believe it, it is God’s power and God’s wisdom. It is His grace that causes us to rule in life and overcome life’s temptations and snares and to live dedicated and holy for Jesus (Romans 5:17, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, Titus 2:11, 12).

9. Who gets the glory?

Often people don’t want the good news of the grace of Jesus, at least not at first. Humans normally do not celebrate God’s grace. After all if we receive the unmerited, undeserved favor of God given through Jesus Christ, then we cannot take any credit for ourselves. It means that our salvation and all subsequent blessings are because of Christ’s finished work on the cross, not our own works; no glory to us, all to Jesus.

The Gospel of grace stands in stark contrast to all religion, which is about what we can do. Grace is about what Jesus has done. When we accept that Jesus alone is sufficient we find ourselves repenting of our self-righteousness and self-reliance. Then something marvelous happens - we begin to succeed and soar in life because of the indwelling energy of His grace. That is what compelled the Apostle Paul to greatness. He wrote, “But by the grace

of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Corinthians 15:10).

10. God’s love and grace never end!

Don’t give up on God – He hasn’t given up on you! To study Israel’s journeys through the wilderness is at times discouraging, and yet the story contains many encouraging elements. The discouraging part is that the Israelites could have made it into the promise land so much quicker, maybe in 3-4 weeks, but instead they wandered in the desert for forty years. All those years of discouraging results are countered by the fact that *God never gave up on them*. Do you ever feel tempted to give up? On God? On people? On yourself? Remember

“Don’t give up on God – He hasn’t given up on you!”

God’s love and commitment toward you is unchanging. Jeremiah wrote, “The LORD has appeared of old to me, [saying]: “Yes, I have loved you with an *everlasting love*; Therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you” (Jeremiah 31:3). That “*everlasting love*” and “*loving-kindness*” is fully revealed in Jesus Christ, and is available to you and me, not because of our merits, but because of Jesus’ qualifications. That’s a reason to never give up - Jesus’ merits have been credited to our account. Legalism always fails in the end; grace wins.



Peter Youngren
Senior Pastor of
Celebration Church, Canada
Founder of
Celebration Ministries
Member of
GGN Board of Directors
www.peteryoungren.org

The Best Is Here!

I still remember the moment when God revealed to me that “The Best” had already come – God’s amazing grace through Jesus Christ!

By Pastor Mike Walker



Some people say “The Best Is Yet To Come!” But I want you to know that you can have life at its “Best” now. The Law was good and holy, but God showed His grace in the form of His Son that we might have life and have it at its “Best” now. I still remember the moment when God revealed to me that “The Best” had already come - God’s amazing grace revealed through Jesus Christ!

“Religion” does not rest

It is in the hearts of men to please the god they believe in. But if we do not rest in God’s “best” and allow our actions to be in response to the understanding of the amazing love that Jesus demonstrated towards us, then that desire to please can soon become only actions that are driven by performance in order to get God’s attention turned towards us; that my friend is spelled “religion.” Pastor, what do you mean by this? Well, simply put, in the pursuit of doing our best to please God the creator, we soon discover our focus has shifted from God to focusing on our ability to become worthy and accepted. Then holiness, order, and discipline of religious duty will soon take the place of a personal relationship with Him.

Grace abounds much more

Look at the amazing truth that is revealed in the following scripture:

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 5:20-21)

Wow, it is here we see that through this divine intervention, sin in its fullness cannot outshine the richness of a life filled with grace. Through the cross, full payment was made, the check was signed in His blood, and the debt was paid for the penalty of sin: not only was this payment sufficient, but it was more than enough. This is such an incredible reality when we embrace the truth of God’s grace. Salvation is the overwhelming victory of the grace of God.

The Apostle Paul here declares that grace abounded much more:

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” (Romans 5:20)

This is the act of grace to the life of the sinner who is now made free! This brings us great encouragement and faith in our hearts! The Law made sin abound and reveals to us that we could never really meet the standard required to be righteous before God. But, oh, the wonder of amazing grace! In Him we see the unconditional love of God revealed, bringing us redemption from sin and its power over us.

The strength of sin is the law

Through Adam, sin made its entrance into humanity and the result is that all have sinned.

“The abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness is the power to reign in life!”

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Romans 5:12)

“Much more we reign in life by resting in God’s “Best” ...Jesus Christ!”

Thus came the Mosaic Law, the Law of God. We can see through history that once the door was opened and sin made its entrance, the Law could not stop its forward motion, but instead the results of the Law were only that sin abounded. The Law exposed sin for man and so we were left with a clear awareness of sin. It wasn’t that the Law was not effective in its purpose (it brought conviction to men of their sinfulness), but it provided no remedy; therefore leaving them helpless and hopeless. God’s Law would say to man, “don’t do that” and the sin in man would do it anyway because the strength of sin is the Law.

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. (1 Corinthians 15:56)

The power to reign in life

Because of the Law sin reigned over man like a king and had man under its dominion. Humans were living as slaves under the power of this cruel king. But then came THE KING OF KINGS, JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS, who revealed and demonstrated to man God’s amazing grace. The “Best” had now arrived!

When sin reigns it always brings death spiritually and physically - the demanding reigning power of sin taking but never giving, sucking the very life out of humanity. But grace has triumphed over sin and death, giving back the life that was once stolen by sin to all who will believe and receive this amazing wonder. The abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness is the power to reign in life! Grace-given ability will allow the new man in

Christ to emerge!

“For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:17)

Here we can see how the incredible grace of God completely overthrows the reigning power of sin. The grace of God is more than a conqueror over sin! Jesus is the King of Peace and the King of Righteousness. He triumphed over the powers of sin and gave us his victory so that we can be more than conquerors. Much more we reign in life by resting in God’s “Best”...Jesus Christ!

Grace abounded at the polls

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 5:20-21)

Grace much more abounds! Here in the United States we have just completed an election. As I watched the polls and the margins, the predictions and the debates, one thing was for sure: one candidate would emerge as the victor. The victory of the candidate called grace was not one of narrow margin but a landslide defeat. Grace “abounded” at the polls; it is the candidate that is surely in favor of the people. The scripture here stated that sin “abounded,” - it ran a good race, it went even beyond what was expected. But the statement that **“grace did much more abound”** not only means to go beyond what was expected...but even much more than that! The grace of God exceeds all expectations.

There is no need for a recount. The vote is cast, the champion is declared and grace now reigns through righteousness. All the campaign promises are yes and amen in Him.

Righteousness through grace

In Adam, man lost his innocence, but in Christ innocence is restored as we believe and receive the amazing gift of divine righteousness! In the garden of Eden Adam and Eve never had this righteousness. To be found innocent is to be declared not

guilty, but righteousness is given because everything has been done which is right according to God’s standard. The Law set the stage to keep us performing to meet righteousness. Jesus, as a man, met every requirement of the Law and at the cross took all of our sin and the punishment for that sin, and then He freely gives us His divine righteousness. Now through grace that curtain has closed, the performance has ended - just simply believe and receive what Jesus did!

In the garden we see man walking and talking with God; God coming and going from man’s presence. But in grace we see Christ ever present, never to leave us nor forsake us. He living in us is our hope of glory.

“...sin in its fullness cannot outshine the richness of a life filled with grace.”

Adam’s sin set up the need for the Law and that is to reveal sin. The strength of sin is the Law. Under the Law man had to do certain things in order to receive God’s favor. But under the abundance of grace we discover that Christ is truly our redeemer! Grace gave us a divine exchange. At the cross Jesus took the punishment for all the sins of man and in return gave us His divine righteousness. He redeemed us from sin and all the result of sin’s power; peace with God is now our truth. We have divine guidance that is ever with us. Healing, provision, and freedom from loneliness is now our reality. Jesus triumphed over all the powers of the devil so that we can live victorious lives by receiving what He has done...**my friend, the “Best” is already here!**



Mike Walker
Pastor of
Faith Ministries, Idaho, US
Member of
GGN Board of Directors

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The purpose of GGN is twofold: to help the church rediscover Jesus and to take this message to the world. For more information about GGN read the question and answer section of the Annual Newsletter 2008. www.GlobalGraceNetwork.org/network

When ministers and pastors register their membership, there is an annual fee of USD \$60.

Some of you might live in a nation facing financial or political disadvantages, thus making it hard to meet with a full annual

Welcome to each one of you that registered as members last month. We greatly rejoice at the opportunity to stay connected with you, and together we will take the Good News to the world!

fee. You may then choose a subsidized membership, equal in level, value and importance. The annual fee of a subsidized membership is USD \$10.

When Churches register their membership, there is a one time fee of USD \$150. The Church will receive a decorative plaque that identifies the Church and ministry as a part of GGN.



Related to Law & Grace

How can you say the Mosaic Law is over when Jesus said in Matthew 5:18 that "the law shall by no means pass till all is fulfilled?"

The answer to this question is found in the previous verse: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). Jesus Himself is the fulfillment of the Law. He raised the standard to an even higher standard (Matthew 5:20-22), and He was the only one able to go through that narrow "eye of the needle" (Matthew 19:24-26). The requirements were then taken out of the way and nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14) and Jesus became the end to the law for righteousness (Rom 10:4, Hebr 7:18-19). The

old covenant has now been replaced with a new covenant where everything is based on Jesus.

Even though the Mosaic Law was not able to save us, can it still help us to improve our lives after we are born-again?

If it was not able to save us it will neither be able to improve our lives. The Law is like a mirror condemning us and showing us where we are wrong, but the mirror doesn't stretch out its hand to help us change. We have to do it in our own power, but it only lasts for a moment. That's why Jesus came. Romans 8:3-4 says that what the law could not do, Jesus did! He gave us a new heart (Ezek. 36:26-27), and then He Himself moved inside of us and lives the righteous life in us. Our solution today is not to try to improve ourselves, but that Christ is formed in us (Gal 4:19). The Law was a shadow of the good things to come, but Christ is the substance (Col. 2:17, Heb. 10:1). Why hold on to the Law, the shadow, when we've got something BETTER - Christ in us!

Why all this focus on us being free from the Mosaic Law?

This question would take a long time to answer, but let's look at three of the reasons:

- 1) The law set conditions for the blessings of God. If we look at ourselves, everyone falls short. However, the Gospel is that everything has been given to us freely with Christ. When people see that there is no condition beside faith in Christ, it makes it easier for them to receive what already belongs to them!
- 2) The law caused people to sin more, not less (Rom 7:7-8, 7:13). In fact 1 Cor. 15:56 states that the strength of sin is the law. However, when people see they are under grace and not under the Law sin loses its dominion over their lives (Rom 6:14, Rom 5:17).
- 3) We want to present to people the pure Gospel of Christ, without any mix with legalism.

Author: Mary Felde

Legalism / Works

VERSUS

GRACE

Based on your own works	Based on God's works!
Based on your own obedience	Based on Jesus' obedience!
You get what you deserve (good or bad). You don't get what you don't deserve. If you do this, then God will do that. If you don't do this, then God will not do that.	You don't get the bad you do deserve (=Mercy). You get the good you don't deserve (=Grace).
If you do well, then God will bless you. If you do wrong, then God will judge you.	The blessing is given because of Jesus. The judgment has already come upon Jesus.
Law is you doing for God, to deserve something.	Grace is God doing for you, even though you don't deserve it.
The law is <u>you</u> doing... (You shall...)	Grace is <u>God</u> doing... (I will...)
The law is <u>conditional</u> .	Grace is <u>unconditional</u> . (Its impossible to mix law and grace!)



Produces self-righteousness!
(And thereby produces winners or losers)



GIVES God's righteousness.
(We are all winners for Jesus gave us HIS victory)

We NEVER come to God based on what WE have done, but based on what HE has done!

THE LAW OF MOSES

versus

GRACE

Unknown Author

Imposes divine standards based on God's holiness for the purpose of *revealing* to man his sinfulness and making him *aware* of his need for divine assistance.

Imparts divine life based on God's benevolence for the purpose of *making* man a partaker of the divine nature and *enabling* the plan of God to be fulfilled through him

Given by Moses (John 1:17)

Grace and truth came by Jesus (John 1:17)

Prohibits (keeps) us from coming to God (Ex. 19:10-25, Heb. 12:18-24)

Bids (invites) us to come as we are (John 6:37, Matt. 11:28-30)

Condemns the sinner (Rom. 7:9-11)

Redeems the sinner (1 Pet. 1:18-19, Eph. 1:7)

Shuts every mouth (Rom 3:19)

Opens every mouth in praise to Him

Says "Do this or die" (Rom. 10:5)

Says "It is done, now live" (Rom. 10:1-6)

Says "Try, do your best"

Says "Trust and rest"

Condemns the best man (Rom 3:20)

Justifies the worst man (Rom. 3:24)

Says "Pay up what you owe" (Rom. 4:4)

Says "It is paid in full" (Rom. 4:5, John 19:31)

Provides the basis for the imputation of sin (Rom 4:15, Rom 5:13)

Provides the basis for the impartation of righteousness

Says "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23)

Says "The gift of God is eternal life"

Says "The soul that sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:4)

Says "Believe only and live" (Rom 4:3)

Reveals man's sin (Rom 7:7)

Reveals God's love (Rom 5:6-8)

Grants us the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20)

Grants us the knowledge of redemption (Eph. 3:1-12)

Demands obedience (You shall not)

Gives us the power to obey (Ezek 36:27)

Was written on stones

Was written on the hearts

Brings us into bondage (Gal 4:9, 5:1, 4:3, Col 2:8, 20)

Brings us into liberty (Gal 5:1)

Produces fear (Rom 8:15)

Produces faith

Was done away with at Calvary

Remains forever

Ends with a curse

Ends with a blessing

Its Time to Reveal Him

To reveal Jesus to the people of the nations has become our heartbeat. My wife and I and our three boys have been missionaries in the Philippines for the past 9 years. We have had the privilege of helping pioneer a church, oversee an orphanage, teach in Bible schools and travel to several nations in South Asia.

God was not done with us yet

Three years ago we were contemplating packing our bags and moving back to the United States. But God was not done with us yet. A new ministry opportunity opened up and we moved to the big city of Manila. During this time of transition a missionary friend of mine started to give us CD's, books and teaching material on the subject of grace. I had no idea at first how my life and ministry would be radically changed.

The revelation of the grace and goodness of God transformed my walk with him into a life-giving relationship with a loving God. I have discovered that everything I do is a response to what He has already done for me. I love this quote by Watchman Nee: "Christianity begins not with a big do, but with a big done." It is only when I began to focus on what Christ had already done that I discovered that I had new energy and power to do the works of Christ.

The unforced rhythms of grace

Years of trying to make something happen in ministry had made me tired and frustrated. This passage from Matthew 11:28-30 in The Message Bible opened my eyes to a new and exciting way of living: "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Not only has the "unforced rhythms of grace" restored my joy, but it has also made me so much more productive in the ministry. Everywhere I go I find people who are in the same boat I was, working hard and accomplishing little, tired and burnt out by religion. But I have also discovered that when you keep the focus on the finished work of Christ, people will respond in mass. It is amazing what God will do through you when you reveal Jesus and what He has done.

Making it easy for people to receive

Focusing on Christ and what He has done stirs up a hunger in people and makes it so easy for them to receive anything they need from God. Faith for the supernatural comes alive when we get our eyes off of ourselves and focus them on Christ, the author and finisher of our faith.

I used to think that my main purpose in life was to imitate the works of Christ. Like many well-meaning Christians my battle cry was "what would Jesus do?" I have since discovered that I am not called to imitate Christ, but in fact to live in Christ. Because of God's grace we are not imitators or spectators - no, we are partakers (Col. 1:12). We can enter right into all that Christ has accomplished for us.

Another result of the message of grace is an increase in boldness. Heb 10:19 says "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus." I now see and understand like never before that because of the sacrifice of Jesus, nothing can keep me out of the presence of God. I refuse to let guilt and condemnation from past mistakes keep me from walking in God's plan. Now I know, Jesus was condemned so that I can live freely and lightly.

What religion does to people

I have seen firsthand how religion tries to keep you from the presence of God by focusing on what you need to do. I weep when people tell me that their whole lives they have felt unworthy or not good enough to have a relationship with God. What a joy it is to tell people that God accepts them not based on what they have done, but what Jesus has already accomplished for them.

"The revelation of the grace and goodness of God transformed my walk with him into a life-giving relationship with a loving God."

The Bible comes alive!

I have also discovered that the Bible comes alive like never before when you look for Jesus. He is the scarlet thread that runs from Genesis to Revelation. Grace has opened my eyes to see Him like never before, and not only see Him but enter into His life. This is my calling as a minister of the Gospel - to let people know that the barriers have been removed and it is time to enter in. What a joy to preach the good news!

The author is from U.S.A., but his name cannot be made known due to the situation in one of the nations he and his family are working in.

- Editor's note

