



GGN is a teaching resource for ministers and churches all over the world. We 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.

The secret of being a good RECEIVER

If we should make a list of what we need to *do* in order to reign in life, how long would that list be? How many points would we have to write down? It is very interesting to observe the Apostle Paul's words in Romans 5:17:

For if by the one man's offence death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

We reign in life through the ONE, not through the one hundred keys or formulas. And we can see that the focus is on *receiving*, not *doing*. We accept and receive the great gifts of grace and righteousness, and it will cause us to reign in life. Doing will be a fruit, but it starts with receiving. Let's accept what He has already given to us instead of trying to work for our self-righteousness and trying to earn favor with God.

Today we bring the third and last article on the series from Luke 15. Peter Youngren teaches on how we need to come to the place of "accepting our acceptance." This is a great revelation from the story of the prodigal son. We also start a new series by Archbishop David Huskins on Real Change. It is the first time we have had teaching articles from him in GGN, and we believe it will be

a great blessing. A testimony from him is also included.



Mary Felde
Editor



What Is It?

**Part 3 of a series from Luke 15.
What is repentance and how does true repentance come?**

A lifestyle or a Life

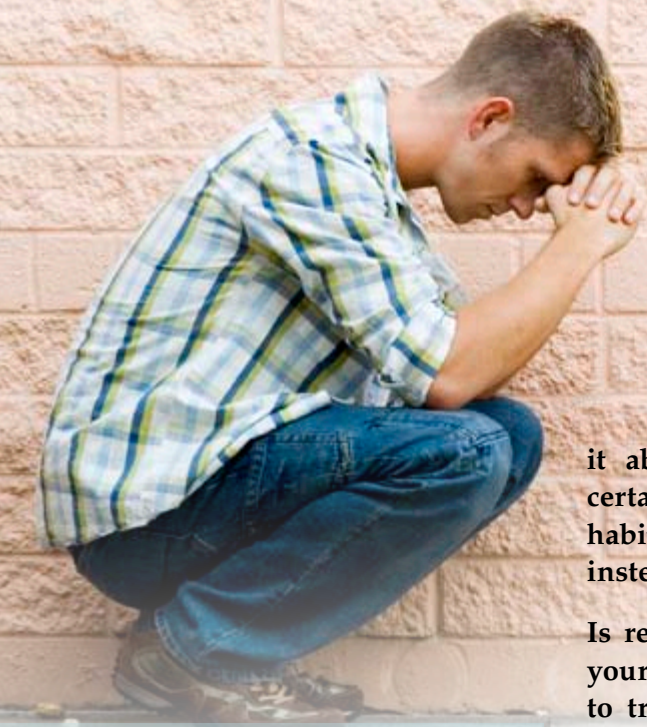
The Pharisees viewed repentance as changed behavior; to stop doing certain "sinful" things and begin doing other "holier" things. To stop breaking God's commandments and instead begin to follow them the best you can was the essence of their religion. Unfortunately the Pharisees definition of repentance is much the same held by many Christians today – stop drinking, smoking, cursing,

lying and instead begin to read your Bible, pray and begin to go to church. Repentance then becomes something that has to do with our exterior and with our works, instead of turning from our "dead works" [Hebrews 6:1] to Jesus. Christianity becomes a new lifestyle, instead of Him, who is life - Jesus Christ Himself.

Accept your acceptance

The moment of repentance for the prodigal son was not when he "came to himself" because when we come to ourselves we only find ourselves. Even when the father ran towards the son, he continued to repeat his own ideas - he was going to pay off his debt to

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Finally the prodigal son becomes silent – no more suggestion on what he himself is going to do but instead he accepts his acceptance from the father.

his father; he was going to correct the wrong and make everything right. The father never commanded his son to stop his rehearsed speech but instead he embraced him with continued kisses and hugs. Finally the prodigal son becomes silent – no more suggestion on what he himself is going to do but instead he accepts his acceptance from the father.

That's it: accept your acceptance.

The prodigal accepted the father's love and was restored, not because of anything he had done, but simply because he was a son and loved because of who he is. This is the real moment of repentance. The prodigal surrenders his own performance and accepts the love that has been relentlessly seeking for him.

True repentance

How do we view repentance? Is it about outward changes? Is

it about stopping and starting certain activities? Give up one habit and create a new one instead?

Is repentance about you pulling yourself up by your boot straps, to try harder to become a good Christian. No, true repentance happens when we allow God's love to embrace us, and we accept that we are accepted in Jesus Christ and loved by our creator.

Repentance has to do with a change of thinking. The Greek word is "metanoia" which means to "change your mind" or "change your thinking." We stop thinking that we ourselves must make everything right; that we are going to restore what we have damaged. Instead, we receive the free love and grace that is offered to us by our heavenly Father.

A changed lifestyle and good works, which are necessary because we are created for "good works" [Eph 2:10], come only as a result of accepting our acceptance in Jesus Christ.

How to preach repentance

How do you preach repentance? In Luke 15, Jesus uses the very word repentance more than any other place. He clearly says that the story of the good shepherd and the lost sheep is about repentance. In which way did the sheep repent? Was the sheep truly and seriously sorrowful that it had walked away? We are not even sure if the sheep knew that it

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was lost. The repentance of the sheep was simply that it accepted its position on the shoulders of the good shepherd. The sheep was now totally identified with its shepherd.

Jesus says that the story of the woman who lost her silver coin is a picture of repentance. In which way did the coin repent? Undoubtedly this was a coin common to the Middle Eastern woman who would carry a necklace with coins. In the case of the woman in Luke 15, she had 10 coins in her necklace and one was lost. The necklace was now incomplete; something was wrong, out of place. When she finally found the coin everything was restored as it was intended from the beginning. The coin simply accepted its place in the necklace. Repentance is accepting the love that God has shown us through Jesus Christ.

You may be questioning: What about living right, doing right and living holy? That all comes after our repentance from our dead efforts and dead works. Good works are the result of the new life we received in our restored position.



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Real Change

By David R. Huskins

Part 1 of a series on how to experience real change.

The day you believed and said ‘Yes’ to Jesus, something happened. You changed! Now you probably looked exactly the same on the outside, but something drastically changed in your inner-man. At that very moment, your spirit-man moved from death to life, from darkness to light, and you left a state of being lost to becoming a child of the living God! This transformation is so radical that Jesus termed it as being ‘born again.’ (John 3:3) Literally, in a split second, your old man died and the new you came alive in Christ Jesus.

The new birth transformation is something most every Christian, even the ultra religious crowd, can agree on. We all shout, “Hallelujah, another sinner was saved by grace,” but after their initial conversion, so many people are quick to abandon the grace which led them to salvation in the first place. Instead of walking in grace and growing in grace, they automatically go back to what they have always known - the works of the flesh. But, whose fault is it that these new Christians leave God’s grace? Can new babies in Christ really be held completely responsible to walk

this new experience by themselves? I don’t think the issue lies with the new Believer, but more with those who indoctrinate them with religious, Law-based, traditional thinking.

Think of a natural baby. What would happen if two weeks after he/she were born, their parents said, “Ok, you’re alive in this world now, our job is over. Learn the best way you can!”? I’ll tell you what would

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happen. Those parents would end up in jail with the key thrown far away! Yet, over and over again, spiritual babies are left to figure out how to walk with God all by themselves. Or, even worse, someone who is still entangled with the Law immediately begins to pollute their mind with what they think is the New Testament way to live. Soon, what started as “Oh, brother, just believe,” changes

to “Now, brother, this is what you have to do...”

But, *believing* and *doing* almost always contradict each other!

Is it any wonder why so many Christians – even those who have been saved for a number of years – are still spiritual babies? They still have to drink spiritually pre-digested, processed milk, still have to be spoon-fed every meal, and some can’t even walk on their own. Think about a natural child who is in the fifth grade, but still brings a bottle of baby formula to school everyday for lunch. You would probably say, “That child’s parents need to be whipped,” and rightfully so. But, in the Church, we just let people crawl around in spiritual diapers for years without holding their spiritual teachers accountable.

I believe it’s time to speak what the Bible says and break the chains of religion, so Christians can be set free. I can’t think of any place better to start than to look at how God’s Word says change – real, authentic, long lasting change – takes place in the life of a Believer.

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

Go back to the day you were born again. Did you have to work up anything? No. You came to Jesus a mess, and in one instant, you left changed. You were only required to do one thing: believe. Stone-cold drunks can come to Jesus so intoxicated that they can't even spell their name, and in one moment, be changed for eternity. Most of the time, they can't even tell you what happened, but one thing they do know: God, by His grace, reached down and transformed their entire life. Not just for the drunkards but for anyone who is a Believer, the salvation process was a breeze... but what follows the new birth experience is where people really struggle.

The reason they kept having the same battles (and losing the same battles!) was because they were working on it!

All of my life I have watched good-hearted, God-loving Christians battle with inner-personal issues until the day they went to heaven. They weren't bad people or backsliders, most of the time, just the opposite. They loved God and were committed to following Him all the days of their lives but they were constantly battling the same things over and over again. Honestly, I never could quite understand why such good people could always be tormented... and defeated... by the same one or two issues and never experience real, long-lasting change and victory. Then one day, while studying about God's grace, the answer hit me.

And, it wasn't even that hard to see!

If you were to ask these people about a certain area of temptation or weakness of their flesh, they normally would say, "Oh, keep praying for me brother. I'm working on overcoming it!" This might have been the "right" and religious thing to say, but in reality, it pinpointed the foundation of their problem. The reason they kept having the same battles (and losing the same battles!) was because they were working on it! It was all about them – what *they* were *doing* in their own power and strength to overcome the issues. It sounded good, but here is the fallacy of that mindset: The first day they didn't work at it, they were right back in it!

Maybe you have caught yourself saying this same thing or something similar. You might even be one of those "holy ones" who use the Scripture to back your self-waged war by saying, "I'm working out my salvation just like the Bible says to." Well, true, you might be working on something alright, but in reality, that weakness and temptation is probably *working on you* more than you *are working on it!* One day you have the victory, and the next day you're back doing what you promised God you would never do again. Let me assure you of one thing: This cycle of frustration will never go away until one thing happens....

...You experience real change!"

THE MIXED BAG

Practically every Christian I know has lived, at one time or another, what I call the "mixed bag" of Christianity. They seem to constantly vacillate between blessing and cursing. One

day they have a breakthrough, and the next day it's hell on earth! It's victory one week, and "pray for me, the devil's on my back" the next week. Now, don't get me wrong, as long as you and I breathe air there will always be temptations and battles. But when we understand and embrace God's grace, we start living – like the Bible says – from "faith to faith" and from grace to grace! (Romans 1:17)


So what brings the real change we all strive for in our lives? Well, let me start by giving you another mental shift. It is this:

Real change requires no effort!

I can already see you scratching your head and thinking, "What? I can really change without doing one thing?" The answer is "Yes, you can!" I know because for years I tried to do everything just right (remember, I thought God had his finger on the "zap all" button!), and all it produced was a life of frustration, condemnation, and broken promises to God. No matter how many times I said, "God, I will never do that again," I would still end up doing "that" again. Of course, I could always justify my weakness by quoting the words of Jesus: "The spirit is indeed willing but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:41) What I forgot to realize was what Jesus was addressing in that passage – the strength to pray, not the weakness of His flesh!

Real change requires no effort!

The will to pray wasn't my issue at all. I could pray all day, every day, but still lived the "mixed bag" Christian



life. As a matter of fact, I thought praying more would give me the strength to overcome my flesh. So, I ramped up my prayer time. Guess what? It didn't help me change one thing. Then I figured that if more prayer wasn't going to help me defeat these hounding issues, surely fasting would be the key. So, I fasted. And guess what happened? I lost weight (which wasn't a bad thing!), but was cranky to everyone around me, and I constantly griped about how hungry I was!

Still, no change.

I found more and more truth in the Bible about what causes life-long change: God's amazing grace!

After many years of frustration and self-condemnation, without much lasting results, I knew there had to be another way. I also knew countless other Christians who were being held under this same, demonic mindset. And they, just like me, yearned to be free. So, I began my quest to find real answers, real truth, and real change. This journey was actually twofold: to rid myself of wrong, religious indoctrination that had permeated my mind, and to find out exactly what God's Word had to say about real change.

What I discovered completely changed my life!

STEPS TO REAL CHANGE

Instead of finding a bunch of scriptures that dealt with "change," I found more and more truth in

the Bible about what causes life-long change: *God's amazing grace!* The more I studied, the clearer this incredible message of grace began to live inside my heart. And, today, it's still growing, developing, and becoming the message that is setting me and many other people free – free to actually be and live what God has called us all to be.

So, what about you? Are you ready to leave that old "mixed bag" Christian life of frustration and guilt? If so, here are some steps that I believe will help you leave the old way behind, experience real life change, and fall more in love with the grace of God. These are more than just good theories and concepts. I know they work! Open your heart and get ready...

...Ready to experience real change!

Part 2 of this article will follow in the next newsletter. The article is an extract from his new book "Grace Shift."



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CHANGED VIEW

One very important thing I have come to know over the years is this: truth is a progression. As you walk with the Lord, God will continue to change the way you see Him. This is so important for the simple reason that the image of God you *believe* is the image of God you *become*. It also determines the way you show God to other people. If you think God is mean and hateful, guess what? You're probably going to be mean and hateful. If you think God doesn't like you, more than likely you will deal with acceptance issues your entire life. However, the more you get to know the real character and personality of God, the more of the *real* Him you project to others around you.

When I was growing up as a child, my image of God was a bit distorted mainly because of how those around me saw Him. Many times, I would hear statements like, "David, you better watch out. God is going to get you!" or "I don't know how much more God is going to take!" Of course, the one that really grabbed my attention was, "I think God has just about had enough of that!" I remember thinking, "Man, what happens when God finally *does* get fed up?" The answers I came up with just filled my heart with fear.

I was forming an image based on what those around me believed.

Those images even carried into my teenage years and early adulthood. I just knew that God was some angry, old man out there about 700 miles from Mars with a huge stick in His hand and His index finger resting on the "kill all" button! In my mind, all God was waiting on was for me, or someone around me, to step over the line – cross the point of no return – and then "zap." It would all be over but the dying and the crying.

What was happening to me? I was forming an image based on what those around me believed. What complicated it even more was all of the sermons I heard about how we were supposed to "love our enemies." I remember scratching my head thinking, "Now, wait a minute. We serve a God who is ready to kill us, His children, but

we are supposed to love those who hate and spitefully use us? How can we do that?" To this day, this still makes no sense to me at all. But, thank God, I didn't stay in that state of mind.

A progression of truth started in my mind.

As I grew older and learned more about who God really is and not just what others said about Him, I began to see Him in a completely different light. The God I knew was a God of wrath, but the truth of His nature – His love and grace – was now being revealed in my heart. I began to see how the love of God drew people to Him and not the fear of going to hell or the dreaded "kill all" button. For the first time in my life, I was seeing God for who He really is.

While I loved this new perception *about* Him, I still lived far below my potential *in* Him. I was, once again, a product of what I heard. People were always quick to tell me how undeserving I was, how God required a holy life that I could never live, and no matter what I did, it would never be good enough to be considered "righteous." To make it even worse, they had Scripture to back up all of their theories and ideology. The only trouble was they were grossly misusing the Bible!

The truth is many Christians are still doing the same thing today.

DON'T STOP HALFWAY

Let's take for example one of the most misquoted verses in the New Testament. It's found in Romans chapter three. It's one of those scriptures many people learn in their Christian walk, and sadly, wear it boldly like some holy badge of honor. The scripture I'm talking about is this: "**As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one'**" (Roman 3:10)

It's very obvious that this verse says no one is righteous. The problem is, most people stop right there. Religious-minded Believers will say, "See! Right there, the Bible says that not one of us is righteous. We are all filthy rags and dogs in God's sight!" While this may sound good and "holy," the trouble is this passage doesn't stop there. It continues with an explanation of who this verse

applies to, and guess what? It's not for the New Covenant Believer. Take a look: "**Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law....**" (Romans 3:19)

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Seeing this verse in context, who does the Bible say is not righteous? It's easy to see: Those who are under the Law. This entire passage of Scripture – from verse 10 through verse 19 – is actually a quote from the Old Testament that Paul uses to later prove a point. So, yes, while it is true the Old Testament Law says no one can live righteous, there is better news: *We have been redeemed from the curse of the law!* (Galatians 3:13) You see, it's not about what God is *going* to do; it's about what He has *already done* over 2000 years ago! The church need not stop in any verse of the Bible which condemns us to unrighteousness, but move forward to understand that Jesus became our curse, took our unrighteousness, and paid the price for us to be and live in righteousness before God!

And the truth of that revelation is just beginning.



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