



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 importance of Right Focus

The reactions of the leaders are still fresh in my mind. We took a closer look at some scriptures related to the fruits of teaching the Law of Moses, and the reactions came immediately. They saw it clearly.

Let's have a look at a few of the verses we discussed. *"Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound (Rom 5:20)."* *"I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. But apart from the law sin was dead (Rom 7:7-8)."* *"The strength of sin is the law (1 Cor 15:56)."*

If I ask you to close your eyes and NOT think about a barbeque chicken, rice and Fanta, what happens? You will probably think about it! Why? Because I put it in your thoughts. That became your focus, even if I said you should NOT do it. In the same way; if we teach a lot against different kind of sins, then those very things might probably come into people's minds. Let us therefore stop focusing on sins and start focusing on Jesus, His Finished work on the cross, who He is in us and who we are in Him. Then that will be in people's minds, and they will be released to live accordingly.

Enjoy the important teaching articles on Real Change presented in this GGN newsletter, and let

God reveal to you who you *really* are *because of Jesus!*

Merry Christmas!

Mary Felde
Editor



Real Change

The second part of a series on how to experience "Real Change."

CHANGE YOUR BELIEF SYSTEM

To initiate real, long-lasting change, first and foremost you must revolutionize your belief system. What this means is that you transform the way you believe, or have been taught, and start aligning your thoughts with God's Word. Before you start to think, "Oh, well that's easy," let me give you a dose of reality.

Changing your belief system takes work – and a lot of it! Depending on how much you have been incorrectly taught will determine how much readjusting will be required. The good news is it can be done, and when you begin to see how God really sees

you, it will release you to become the follower of Jesus He has made you to be!

One of the most important ways to have a shift in your belief system is by changing what you hear. The Bible clearly says that faith comes by hearing, and hearing, and hearing, and hearing. (Romans 10:17) Well, faith isn't the only thing that grows by hearing.

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Doubt, condemnation, unbelief and religious thinking all come the same way: by hearing! It's simple. If you are constantly surrounded by those who keep reminding you what a "bad person" you used to be (or maybe still are), then you need to change your surroundings. Get around people who will tell you what God really says you are: righteous, holy, and redeemed! It's the first step in changing the way you believe.

A few years ago, I started inserting a statement right in the middle of my messages that I knew would catch people's attention. I use it to prove a powerful point; but honestly, I think it's just as much fun to watch people's reaction! After giving a scripture reference to the audience, I say, "Now, I want everybody in this room who is holy to read this verse out loud with me." Then, I just stand there and watch! The different responses are priceless. They range from "What did he just say?" to "Holy? Well, he sure isn't talking about me!" (Sometimes I think I would get a better response if I cursed in the middle of my message!) Just when everyone has that cow-at-a-new gate look, I take it a bit further and say, "Hey, if you're a believer, *you're the one I'm talking to!*" Now, if I were to say, "I want every person who used to be an old sinner to open and read with me," practically everybody in the place would say, "Amen, brother. That's me!" Do you see where we've missed it? Why is it so easy to relate and connect to what we used to be, but so hard to identify what we now are by God's grace? The answer is simple: We need a

belief system makeover! We need to start believing what the Bible – not religious doctrine – says about us.

Remember, what you believe, you become. Thus, if you are going to live and experience real change, you must first change the way you believe to align your thoughts with what God says about you!

SEE HIM LIKE HE IS

Have you ever heard people say things like, "I can't wait to get to heaven because then I'm going to see Jesus for what He really is?" Even though there is some merit to this statement – one day we will see Jesus face to face - not examining what the Scripture says can cause you to miss something God really intended for you here, right now, on this earth.

Take a look at what the Bible says: *"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."*

- 1 John 3:2

It would be easy to see how you could read this verse and only relate it to God revealing Himself in heaven. But, that's not where the power of this scripture is found. You see, God's not waiting for you to get to heaven to disclose His power and nature to you. He wants to reveal Himself to you *right now*...through His Word! You don't have to wait until the Second Coming to have a revelation of Him; you can find Him, today, in the Scripture. This is so important to understand for this one, simple fact:

Whatever Him you see is the Him you'll be!

Go back and see how this verse starts out. It says, "Beloved, *now we are children of God*..." Most Christians completely skip over the most important word of this verse – "now". When? Now! Then the question is, "When is 'now'?" and the answer is, "Right now"! Not in the sweet by and by; not someday, sometime, in good things and deserved to be called a child of God. **NOW**. Look at what the Bible says, "Now, we are the children of God." That means

"...instead of learning the real nature and characteristics of their Heavenly Father, most Christians spend the majority of their time on another issue: battling their own weaknesses and failures."

the second you believed, right that instant, you qualified for this verse. There's no waiting period. **NOW** you are a child of God! And guess what children do? In most cases, they strive to mimic their parents! Why do you think little boys cover their soft, young faces with shaving cream and little girls prance around in high heels way too big for them and color their faces with make-up? It's because children's inherent nature is to be like their parents. And when they do the little things to become like mom and dad (even at a young age), it makes those parents blossom with pride!

It's the same way spiritually. The Bible says that we should be "imitators of God as dear children." (Ephesians 5:1) Every child of God should be imitating their Heavenly Father. But, instead of learning the real nature and characteristics of their Heavenly Father, most Christians spend the majority of their time on another issue: battling their own weaknesses and failures.

Everyone knows their own weaknesses and areas of struggle in the flesh; they greet you every morning as soon as you look into the mirror! But, have you ever stopped to think why these areas of weaknesses in your life are so prevalent and easy to see? It's simple. They have been revealed to you over and over again. As a matter of fact, some Christians are reminded about them every single Sunday – in Church nonetheless – from a preacher who wants to keep them more bound to their weakness than free in God's grace. And we wonder why so many believers stay in a spiritual rut! This is how real change happens.

YOU MUST SAY "YES!"

During the 1980's and early 1990's, a campaign was launched which was part of the United States' war on drugs. Millions of dollars were spent to make sure every child in America knew these three, famous words: Just Say No. Its original intent was to discourage children from engaging in recreational drug use, but after a few years, the scope broadened to include the realms of violence, premarital sex, and other issues in which young people were tempted to participate.

The "Just Say No" slogan was a good catch phrase and produced some positive, mostly short-term results; however, it was lacking one very important element which produces long-term change. You see, before you can just say, "No" to something, you must first say, "Yes" to something greater! Just saying, "No" to temptation and the weaknesses of your flesh is not enough. Many people say, "No" but turn right around and do the same thing over and over again. And what happens when this method doesn't work? It produces more frustration than victory – more condemnation than change.

As if the guilt of making the same mistakes over and over again isn't enough to carry, some Christians heap more blame on their heads by asking, "Why am I resisting the devil, just like the Bible says, but he's not going away?" They try and try to say, "No" to every attack of the enemy, yet with little results. Well, the answer to their frustration is found in the exact same verse they referred to. Take a look at this verse in its entirety:

"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."
- James 4:7

Here's the missing ingredient: resisting the devil (a.k.a just saying no) is only half of the equation. In order to live a life of constant victory over your flesh, something else has to happen first. You must submit to God. You cannot have the power to say, "No" to sin without first saying "Yes" to the only sustaining force that can keep you from sin. In other words, *without submission*

to righteousness, it is impossible to resist sin. Trying to fight the devil and conquer your flesh in your own strength will not only keep you in the vicious cycle of defeat, it will also drive you crazy! But, there is a way to stand against the devil and watch him run from you: by completely submitting your life to the powerful grace of God.

If submitting to God is the key to victory over the devil, then why do so many Christians still struggle with temptation and sin? Why don't they learn how to first say, "Yes" to God? One of the reasons is there's generally more pulpit time devoted to emphasize the weakness of the flesh than the power of righteousness and grace. They hear all the things they "can't do" but never have an understanding of what they "can do" through submission to God. So, let me be one to bring a bit of good news here: you can submit to God. You can resist the devil and live a life that conquers sin. The power to live a life of real change is rooted in your ability to completely surrender to His grace. When you do, here's something you will quickly notice: *When you surrender to God's grace, resistance to sin becomes less of an issue.*

Before you "just say no," start by saying, "yes" to the wonderful life of grace. When you do so, you are positioned to walk not according to your flesh, but according to this grace you have already surrendered to!

KEEP GROWING IN GRACE

Many times, you will see me reference this life of grace as a

journey. And that's exactly what it is! But it probably will not happen overnight. That's okay! Start where you are and take one step at a time. Begin to change your belief system. Start seeing God like He is right now! Submit your whole life to God and watch the devil flee! You've begun a process known as growing in the grace of God. Not that God's grace is changing – it's been the same since Jesus came and fulfilled all the Law – but your revelation and knowledge of how to live His grace will constantly be growing. Once you start walking in the truth of righteousness and grace, here's one thing you will immediately realize: the more you encounter God, the less you have to and the more you *want* to!

It's called the power of love, and love is the greatest change agent available to man.

Many people who have been believers for a long period of time have asked me, "David, why doesn't God give me a word like He used to when I was a baby Christian?" My answer surprises most of them. I say, "Well, I wouldn't be bothered about it because it's really a sign of maturity." See, when you are young in the Lord, you needed every bit of external confirmation and spiritual development you could find. But, as you grow in God, you will find that you no longer need a spiritual IV. Before long, you will be standing on your own two feet and walking by faith!

Does this mean you will never make

any more mistakes? Certainly not. Will you have any more temptations of your flesh? Most assuredly. But, here's the difference. The more you grow, understand, and walk in God's grace, the more you love Him, and the more you will want to unashamedly live your life to honor Him! Not because you have to.... but because you want to. It's called the power of love, and love is the greatest change agent available to man.

When my sons were in their pre-teen years, it seemed like I was constantly telling them to brush their teeth, put on deodorant, and comb their hair. Sometimes I would threaten them within an inch of their lives, but still there were less than favourable results... until! Until the day they actually became interested in some girl. All of a sudden, I didn't have to ask them to do anything. As a matter of fact, I would have to kick them out of the bathroom because they spent so much time primping. And as soon as they walked out, you could smell the cheap cologne two blocks away. What was the difference? When they had to, it was a task; but when they wanted to, they never had to be asked or threatened.

They did it out of love.

This is the exact same principle in your walk with God: the more you know Him, the more you love Him. The more you are formed into His image on the inside of you, the more you become like Him. During your walk of grace, people may not always see who you are on the outside, but that can never change who you are on the inside – *righteous, holy, and redeemed!*

Keep walking.

Keep growing in the grace God has so lavishly poured out on you. Live in His grace and don't be subject to the law. Stop beating yourself up every time you stumble, fall, or make a mistake. Let God's Word change your belief system, so you can see who and what you really are in Christ. Stop focusing on what it takes to "qualify" you for God's grace and get a revelation of what Jesus provided for you at the cross! Once you believe that, then start boldly declaring it, and then watch how this revelation builds in your heart. Then you better watch out...

....Real, lasting, life-long change is coming your way!

This article has been extracted from his new book "Grace Shift."



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Heart Burn

By Pastor Mike Walker

When Jesus met His closest followers after the resurrection, they didn't recognize Him. But when Jesus reveals Himself something happens.

Mark 16:9-14 Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

10 And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. (KJV)

THEY COULD NOT BELIEVE

Here unfolds an incredible account of Jesus AFTER the resurrection and the state or the condition of His closest followers. These were those who had followed Him day by day. They had seen the miracles, watched Him walk on the water and witnessed Him raising Lazarus from the dead. They were there when literally thousands of people were fed to the full with a little boy's lunch.

Oh, the things they had seen and heard! They had even been given power by Jesus over sickness, disease and torment and sent out on short-term mission trips. Jesus had told them that trouble was coming and He even told them where to meet Him.

32 **But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.**

(KJV) When the dust settles, meet me in Galilee.

Let's take a closer look at some of this, because we can discover a very important truth. Why is it they could not believe? Could it be that these people were so entrenched in religion even after being with Jesus for over three years? They were raised under the Law of Moses, but Jesus came with a new sound and the power of God flowed through Him.

Could it be that these people were so entrenched in religion even after being with Jesus for over three years?

They still did not know the amazing revelation of "Christ in you, the hope of glory!" They knew Jesus as God outside of themselves - we know Him as God who lives inside of us!

They saw him fulfill the Law to the letter. He had given them a glimpse of what was coming but they just

couldn't get a hold of it yet, because everything they saw was filtered through the eyes of the Law.

John 16:12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

After the resurrection Jesus began to reveal Himself to them and they began to see Jesus without the veil of the flesh, without the veil of the Law and all the reasoning of their minds. When we, too, meet Jesus, soon everything else begins to come into focus in our lives.

Let's look at the account of the two disciples who met Him while travelling into the country.

Luke 24:13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. **16** But their eyes were restrained that they should not know him. KJV

Faith should come by hearing, but sometimes it is clouded by circumstances and clouded by a religious mind that is trying to figure it all out.

These two had already heard that Jesus was alive by the report of

Mary and the other women, but they didn't believe. Faith should come by hearing, but sometimes it is clouded by circumstances and clouded by a religious mind that is trying to figure it all out. Remember, the disciples had been told by Jesus to go to Galilee and meet Him, but instead they were mourning and weeping when the women came.

As these men were headed on the seven and one-half mile journey home talking about the recent events, when they should have been headed for Galilee, Jesus joins them in the journey. But they don't even know who He is.

Many people in the world today don't recognize who Jesus really is. Christian churches are filled with people who know religion very well. But I wonder if Jesus were to join them in their journey, would they even know who He is?

SEEING THE RISEN CHRIST

These disciples were all concerned about the terrible things they had seen, and Jesus, who was the main person in the drama says, "What things?"

Luke 24:27-36 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther.

29 But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay

with them.

30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

When they sat down to eat, Jesus begins to break bread and pass it around the table. He must have begun to look familiar - His mannerisms and how He handled Himself. Then suddenly they knew - He is alive! He is risen! It is all true! The filter of the Law disappeared and the cloud of circumstance faded away!

We can never really understand the Old Covenant until we see the risen Christ!

32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

They felt so alive while He talked with them and for the first time the Old Covenant began to truly make sense in their hearts. We can never really understand the Old Covenant until we see the risen Christ! It was now dark, it was getting late, they had been through a very traumatic few days, and then travelled for seven and one-half miles to go home. But they didn't even finish their meal.

33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem,

and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,

34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

35 And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Hearts on fire! They couldn't hold it in any longer but carried that fire for a three-hour walk back to Jerusalem. They had to go to where the others were. I can almost feel the beat of their hearts as they got closer to Jerusalem. They probably started running and shouting before they ever got there!

In Mark's account of this, even when these two disciples came all the way back, filled with this revelation, they found the eleven and the others still gathered in sorrow, mourning, and unbelief. They did not believe. This was a tough group - a group bound in circumstances - seeing through the natural reality of the gentile mind.

36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." (NKJ) Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted! Peace be to you.

Luke 24:37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

They still did not believe! They didn't believe Mary and they didn't

believe these two disciples. Now Jesus was standing right in front of them and they still did not believe! They were blinded by the Law, blinded by fear, and blinded by the natural circumstances.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. **40** And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.

Jesus personally tells them "it is I Myself." Handle me. Then He showed them His hands and feet where the nails had gone through, and still...

41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? (KJV)

Luke 24:42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

43 And he took it, and did eat before them.

44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, KJV

It is time to meet the risen Savior, Jesus Christ! He paid the full price on the cross. He bore our sins, He bore our sickness; He became poor so that we can be blessed to be a blessing. He is our guide, and a friend who sticks closer than a brother. He has defeated all the powers of death and hell; He conquered so that we can become more than conquerors! We always triumph in Christ Jesus! Not only is He risen, He is ascended and seated - far above all principality, power, dominion and might, and has raised us up to be seated together with Him in glory!



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