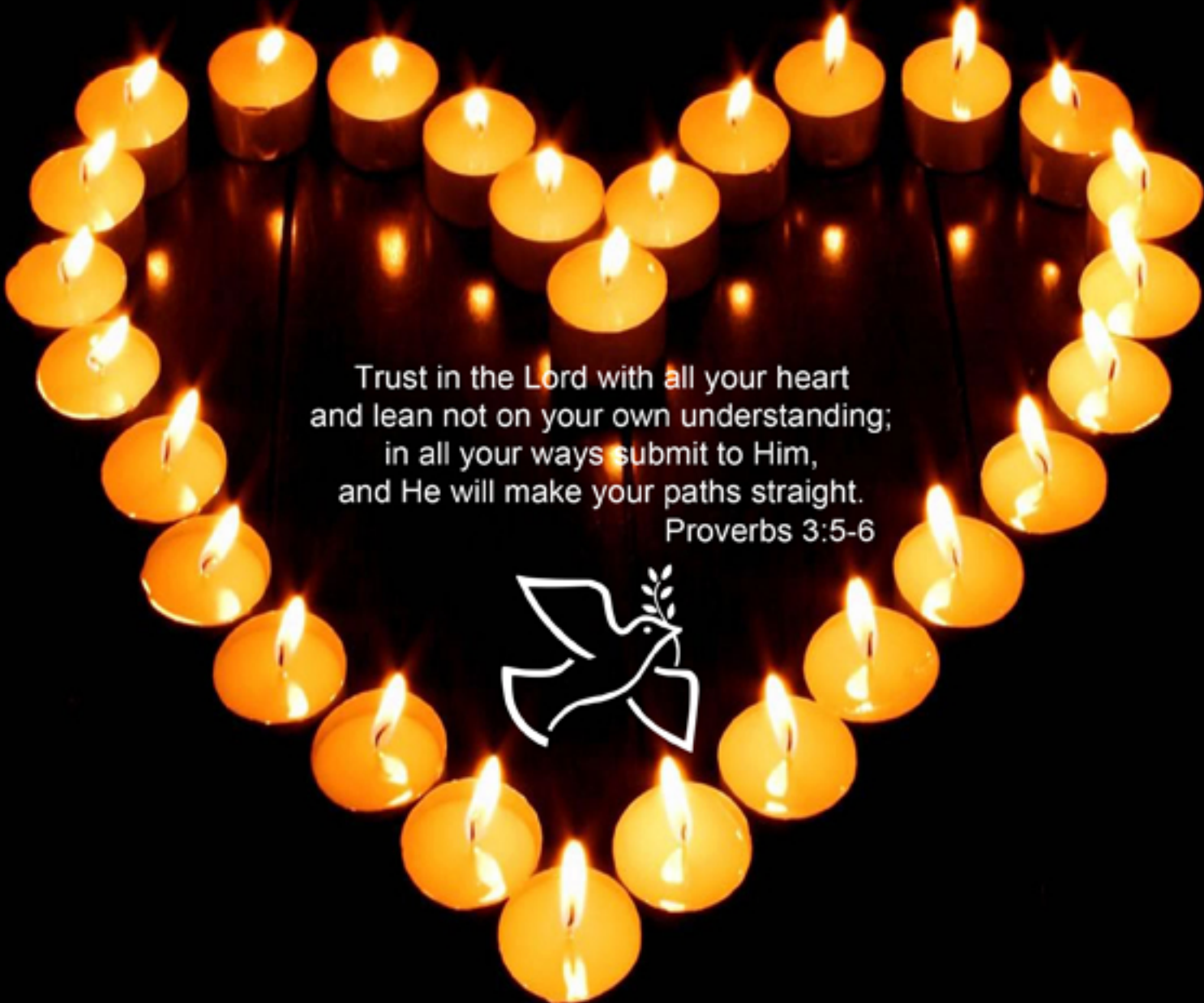


Overcomers for Christ

June 2014

In Loving Memory



Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to Him,
and He will make your paths straight.
Proverbs 3:5-6



Father, the events of this world unfold according to a plan that we cannot fully understand. But You understand. Help us to trust You, Lord, even when we are grieving. Help us to trust You even when we are confused. Today, in whatever circumstances we find ourselves, let us trust You and accept Your love ... completely ... Amen!!

Dolores Ann Mankin

May 18, 1946 - May 7, 2014

Glory Meeting of the Overcomers for Christ

January 2014



Grace, In Love - Part II

God has set people like Andrew Womack, Joseph Prince, Creflo Dollar, and Dr. Tom Anderson at Living Word Bible Church along with many, many more apart for this very season. The message, of grace, is trickling from them to the ears and hearts of those that are ready to stretch their faith and believe. Although, let me add right here, it is not only these more known leaders that are hearing and obeying the call to speak boldly about grace! It is though, because of their obedience to teach us, His sheep, that we are hearing the message in a whole new light! I can tell you that here at the **Overcomers for Christ**, as we read all of the mail; it's becoming easier for us to see that many of you are gaining an even deeper revelation and understanding of grace pouring into your lives every day as well. Praise God!!

I have been listening to these grace messages now for the past seven years. The longer and more intently I listen, the easier it has gotten to understand and believe. The *Holman Christian Standard Bible* reveals **Romans 10:17** to us like this, **"So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ."** So, I guess what I am saying here is this, "The more we listen to the message about Christ the more we hear. The more we hear the easier it becomes to believe. The longer that we believe the stronger our faith becomes. Then when our faith becomes fixed on the message of Christ, which is the Good News, we will then move from simply believing to knowing Him!"

Think about what it says here in **2 Chronicles 16:9a**, (ISV) **"The LORD's eyes keep on roaming throughout the earth, looking for those whose hearts completely belong to Him, so that He may strongly support them."** What I see here is that the LORD is continually looking for people that are willing to pour Him into others. As our heart shows it completely belongs to Him, He then will **"strongly support them (us)"!** **Hebrews 4:13** (NLT) tells us that, **"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before His eyes, and He is the One to Whom we are accountable."**

I am in agreement and believe that grace has been taught in many churches over the years, to a certain degree. But quite possibly it's only being taught to a "certain degree" due to the perception/understanding of the Word. And that is what religion is, man's perception instead of being led by the Holy Spirit. Then in some instances, it's quite possibly God's timing in that church. Either way I don't believe it's always intentional to hold the people under the Law, but instead that they have yet to be set free themselves.

In the **Book of Revelation, chapters 2 and 3**, Jesus begins by speaking to seven different churches concerning such issues. All of these Revelation references are being taken from the New Living Translation Bible. To the first church, Ephesus, the loveless church, He acknowledges, in **Revelation 2:2**, **"I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don't tolerate evil people."** Jesus continues on in **verse 4** to let them know, **"I have this complaint against you. You don't love Me or each other as you did at first."** Now to the second church, Smyrna, one of persecution, He says, **"I know about your suffering and your poverty - but you are rich! ... Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The devil will throw some of you into prison to test you. You will suffer for ten days. But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life."** (**Revelation 2:9a, 10**) To the third church, Pergamum, the compromising church, He says, **"I know that you live in a city where satan has his throne, yet you have remained faithful to Me. You refused to deny Me ... But I have a few complaints against you. You tolerate some among you whose teaching is like that of Balaam ..."** (**Revelation 2:13a, 14a**) to the fourth church, Thyatira, the corrupt church, He claims, **"I know all the things you do. I have seen your love, your faith, your service and your patient endurance. And I can see your constant improvement in all these things. But I have this complaint against you. You are permitting that woman - that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet - to lead My servant astray."** (**Revelation 2:19, 20a**) Here in the fifth church, Sardis, the dead church, Jesus says, **"I know all the things you do, and that you have reputation for being alive - but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of My God. Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly."** (**Revelation 3:1b - 3a**) And to the sixth church, Philadelphia, the faithful church, He affirms, **"What He opens, no one can close; and what He closes, no one can open. I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed My word and did not deny Me. Look, I will force those who belong to satan's synagogue ... to come and bow down at your feet. They will acknowledge that you are the ones I love. Because you have obeyed My command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing ..."** (**Revelation 3:7c -10**) And finally in **Revelation 3:15-16** Jesus is now speaking to the seventh church, a lukewarm church, Laodicea, when He said, **"I know all the things you do (works), that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth."** As we all read through **Revelation 2 and 3**, we may find that we are seated in the pews of more than one of these churches. Even if it's only one of them, Jesus clearly has a running theme for us all ... repentance and return to your First Love. It is through repentance that we will find His Grace available to help us accomplish all that He has set before us! So, let me ask you this, "Which one of these churches do you want to be found sitting in when Jesus returns?"

From my own personal standpoint; knowing the lifestyle that I've been rescued out of makes it is easy for me to see and receive the message of grace! Like so many of you sitting there behind those bars, walls and fences, I know I don't deserve the level of LOVE and forgiveness that I feel inside. It is not that we now love Him that has made the difference but that He first loved us! (**1 John 4:19**) That's what grace is! It is not something that any of us deserve or think we can earn, it is a GIFT from God through His Son Jesus' Life, Burial and Resurrection! (**1 John 4:9**) The only part that we have in any of it is to receive His grace and then freely GIVE IT TO ALL THOSE AROUND US!! Remember this, even though you may not feel or think that "this so in so or that so in so" doesn't deserve your grace, forgiveness or love let me remind you that neither do you nor did you as God gives/gave it to you!!

The message of grace brings a freedom to serve, the way you are. Grace shows us that we are freed from having to look like the cookie cutter perfect Christian to come serve and follow Jesus! We do have to give the Holy Spirit permission to prune us and groom us as He directs our way in the body. I'm telling you all that you ARE the ones that God is calling, just as you are, to come reach the people that only you can reach. Consider this; as you view your own body at different times you notice that there are days when your hands are much dirtier than your face, or maybe your feet stink more one day than another, does that mean that those dirty stinky parts cannot be used? NO! You ALL have a place in the body of Christ, and it is a place that many church people have no desire to go ... like the streets, the prisons, the gutters; the front lines of what they know as enemy territory. To us, the ones that once lived and operated there, it's not scary or intimidating to go into those areas. I say this with absolutely no judgment or prejudice to any of those people. NO! They are doing what they are called to do and now it's time for us to step up to the plate and fill in the slots that God has prepared for each one of us as well! You ask, "How is all of this going to happen Duck?" It all begins with LOVE! You may also ask, "If Love is the most important part in this entire message why are you putting it here at the end?" I've put it at the end so it's the freshest part on your minds. All of the things written above this point are to be filtered through Love, remember?

Jesus is teaching about loving our enemies in **Matthew 5:43-48** and **Luke 6:27-36**. I can almost bet there are many of you that when you get to these Scriptures you just kind of slide right on past them to something a little easier to read. If that is you let me reassure you; you will not only have to read them but you'll have to be a doer as well. Why put it off? Let's all look at it together, TODAY. We will refer to Matthew's account as Jesus begins in **Matthew 5:43** (KJV) with, *"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'"* Now in **Matthew 5:44** (KJV), watch as Jesus kicks it up a notch, *"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; ..."* Continuing on, in **Matthew 5:45** (AMP), *"To show that you are the children of your Father Who is in heaven."* We see that by being a doer and not just a reader, our new life will reveal to those around us that we now belong to a different family, the family of God. The Bible tells us the only way God accepts us to Himself is by believing in the One He sent, Jesus! (**2 Corinthians 5:18**) When we receive Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior, God then sees each one of us as His child. It's through the crimson Blood of Jesus that we are cleansed as white as snow in God's eyes. (**Psalms 51:7**) As we travel through the days, weeks and even years with Jesus we will be made more aware that His Blood has progressively broken the chains of lust, addictions, hatred and you can fill in the blanks for your own personal lives.

Jesus tells us in **Matthew 5:9** (NLT), *"God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God."* **1 John 4:7-8** (NLT) tells us, *"Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love."* Let's continue on down the page to **1 John 4:15-17** (NLT), *"All that confess that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in His love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect."* I am in no way saying that sharing God's love with some people is going to be easy. Not everyone will receive the love that you are trying to show them. **1 John 2:6** (NLT) reads that, *"Those that say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did."* Many people may look at you like you are up to something and they may even put up a shield or a hard heart against your actions. But when this happens I encourage you to remember Who you are trying to please. Is it them or God? (**Galatians 1:10**) **1 John 2:9-10** (NLT) tells us that, *"If anyone claims, 'I am living in the light,' but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is still living in the darkness. Anyone who loves another brother and sister is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble."* Then, there are many that consider these kinds of actions as weak, vulnerable or prey. There will be some that do not want the light/love you have to share and will look at you with hatred. Don't taunt them but share Him ANYWAYS! Jesus assures us that this will happen in **John 15:18-19** (NLT), *"If the world hates you, remember that it hated Me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you."* Spreading God's love is a difficult task in some areas of our lives but God blesses us when we DO IT ANYWAY! Remember this, when we refuse to spread God's love to others around us, out of fear, we have allowed the enemy to be the shut off valve to the flow of God's love. As we begin to value people the way Jesus values people, we will begin to speak with gentleness, act with more kindness and learn to forgive quicker and then our love towards others will grow tremendously!

Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done **Philippians 4:6 (NLT)**

Prayer Requests

Recently, my mom tells me that my grandmother has passed on and she was a great woman and lived a long life, but the kicker is that my uncle (her son) died right before her. My mom has taken it pretty good, but still, I know she's suffering. So, it's now only me and my mother whom I dearly love with all my heart. She just recently divorced and is now getting to know God for the first time. A lot has taken place in her life and I only worry about her. I want God to take a hold of her life and never let go. I don't want this to be in her life one moment, and then the next, just gone. With me being gone for a minute and her alone, I know the devil can be a charming, aggressive factor in anyone's life, when you don't have God next to you and in your heart. A lot of times this place I live in can beat you down and make you feel your all alone and ripe for the devil's picking. But, I'm good and I try and walk the straight and narrow, it gets to be a challenge at moments but being a Christian we all should expect daily trials, but always thank Jesus for His Blood, it's our victory that we already have. I would like to thank God for the truth delivered to my mother's heart, I know that everything is a work in progress, but I pray that God remains in her heart and that she finds peace and a good church to attend. I love her so much and only wish the best for her and knowing that God is for her only makes my heart smile. Thank You Lord for Your kind blessing. Please pray for me and my mother ... **B.A.**

Could you please pray for my mom and children that they stay good and healthy and be blessed ... **M.F.**

My mother, Mary, and her husband, Kenny, came down from MN to visit me and I got to share Jesus Christ with them. They both are not Christians ... yet!!! Please keep their salvation in your prayers ... thank you ... **J.W.**

I have a prayer request for myself and my family ... May God use me and continue to guide me with His Holy Spirit to do His will. May He take my sister Bre's drug additions from her; heal her for I know it's possible through His Blood. Protect, guide, and be with my nephews keeping them in safety, love and good health. Mother, Darlene, to give the strength, love, wisdom, health, and knowledge to open her heart and to trust the Lord that He can heal her and take her drinking away without her even wanting it, and peace of heart to handle her two daughters through their lives. My Father, Don, for healing in his back and neck, his health in general, and love and peace knowing he's never alone. For my fiancé and my step kids ... protect, guide, bless and to open their hearts to our Father ... **B.W.**

Praise Reports

To feel the love of God expressed through others makes the days so much more pleasant, even when those words come from a stranger. It's the familiar presence of our God that brings a smile to our hearts. To be honest I am not sure what my struggles are today. I have peace in my heart because I feel the presence of God in my life. I plan to use this year to become more disciplined ... **L.H.**

I will start this letter by telling you a little about myself and what I'm trying to become. I've been an atheist for most of my mature life not knowing God at all or caring about Him judging me at this point in my life. I'm doing 15 years, not the first time; I've got over 25 years locked up. I'm a 1 percenter for a M/C organization. Last month, I picked up the Bible for the first time. About five months ago, I found your newsletter in my dorm and I read it from cover to cover and enjoyed it very much. That's what started me reading the Bible. I would like to receive your newsletter. It's time for a change in my life ... **R.T.**

Now for a quick update from the concrete box. I'm still on the path moving forward. Baby Christians take baby steps. I'm reading and praying. It's a start in the right direction. I have a long way to go. But I find myself waking up with a smile in lockdown. That's something new and I thank the Lord for that and I do every day ... **R.F.**

We had a brother leave us and went back to CA, thank you Lord. It's so good to see people leave here. He wanted to go on the Soul Patrol one last time, and we had 22 brothers out there for the first time this year ... Awesome!! Looking forward to going out there and practicing boldness just representing God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit ... **J.W.**

I'm very blessed to be where I am. For three years, I have grown through Christ and I have five more to keep growing. Our Father is truly amazing and to trust and believe in Him fully is the best feeling ever. He gave me a wonderful man who sees the best in me, his family who accepts me, and my family who thinks of me ... Thank You, Jesus ... Amen ... **B.W.**

I am very blessed; Jesus has really been with me. I can't thank Him enough. I haven't gone hungry once this week. I've had something to eat at any part of the day. I've had a little store here and there. Praise Jesus! I got blessed with envelopes so I could write you guys. God is so good. I got blessed with a new Bible this week too. I still haven't heard from my family but all is well. God will take care of that part of my life when it's time. I live on His time and I am completely okay with that. I serve the Lord and it's not my will but His will be done. Praise Jesus! I want to thank you guys for staying by my side and helping me through difficult times ... **K.H.**

Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

Stripes and Lines

By K.R.

Thank you for the quick response to my letter. It would truly be a blessing to have any of my spirit filled words published in the D&C newsletter. Wow, just think of all the people who will read what is written in those pages. As I've read your personal letter to me, it's as if God's Spirit is talking to me about things that have happened in my life. Your words are "truly" God's words. They have a natural effect that opens the door of my heart so that the very necessary words appear in my mind so that I'm aware of what the word of God is requiring me to write, and, "Yes" my brother, you are very blessed to have been entrusted with the ministry of the D&C newsletter! Amen!

Approximately six years ago at the Maricopa County Jail there was a man who visited me from the Church on the Street Ministry. As I'm thinking about it (while reading your letter) it came to my remembrance that he said, he wishes that he wouldn't have waited so long to start serving Christ! Then my spirit prayed for him!

While I was in the county jail, there were a lot of things happening to me while there for fifteen months. God was pouring His Spirit into me from all situations and was allowed to know that only by God's Spirit can we know it's Him and His will for us through obedience to His Spirit. That is exactly what I was experiencing, however, I'm making it known that it is all to the glory of God.

A volunteer named Dave from Alongside Ministry was here and brought with him these verses:

Colossians 1:10 - *"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."*

1 Thessalonians 4:1 - *"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more."*

Philippians 1:27 - *"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."*

I am saying this because as I mentioned earlier, your words are like God's words as I read your letter. I'm wondering if it is a requirement for me to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit by the words in the letter to me from you.

What I'm certain of is that God wants me to fulfill an assignment, and as I read that part of your letter, the word doubt came to mind and I didn't know why. At first I wanted to put the doubt on you and say that you were doubting. Doubting what? I didn't know, possibly you or maybe me. Then I considered my past and how I've not really finished any assignment. There has been one! The Holy Spirit is always prompting us to do more. It's as if the testimony of your life is inviting me to do the very things that you have written and the fact that your testimony is a success, it included a promise of fulfillment as though I'm able to see the end result. **1 Thessalonians 4:2** - *"For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus."*

There was a time when at the county jail, there was a lady who did volunteer work and she said that there would be a special guest speaker the following week. Nobody else showed up except the DO's and the inmates. So, the people asked me to speak, so I did. There weren't quite fifty people but there was maybe thirty. They loved the message and I loved being there to speak. There are plenty of reasons to write about what's going on, but when I read the part about the men who never made it to prison it was as if God was saying that He used me to speak and that God's word didn't come back void.

Also, the day that the volunteer didn't show up the DO's still gathered the inmates and went to the Chapel. Usually, under any other circumstance the volunteer must be present before the Commander would give the okay to move inmates from the Pod to the Chapel. This all happened in 2006 ... all about the time that you mentioned in your testimony, and I'm certain that the men you ministered to are some of those who missed prison.

I am certain that God's word that He gave you to send me is just that, God's word. Plus I'm receiving confirmation that your word is letting me know that there are at least five who missed prison and the rest of them are being used mightily by

Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

our Savior Jesus Christ. I'm writing the number five because that's the number that came to my heart. I've got faith to believe that our Savior and His word don't come back void. Why five? I am being honest, I don't really know, I'm only speaking in faith.

My point is that this letter that you sent to me is a confirmation to me, that God is working in you and through you. The very words that you are penning are the Holy Spirit filled words that are setting people free. There are two words that you used in your letter ... *stripes and line*.

The word "line" appears 23 times in the Holy Scripture: **Joshua 2:18,21; 2 Samuel 8:2; 1 Kings 7:15,23; 2 Kings 21:13; 2 Chronicles 4:2; Job 38:5; Psalm 19:4, 78:55; Isaiah 28:10,13,17, 34:11,17; Isaiah 44:13; Jeremiah 31:39; Lamentations 2:8; Ezekiel 40:3, 47:3; Amos 7:17; Zechariah 1:16, 2:1; 2 Corinthians 10:16**

When we go fishing, we use "line" (tackle). My focus is on the line. I am not versed well enough to go deep into a study at this point of time. However, I'm going to share this with you.

I am currently incarcerated. Today as I was eating breakfast it came to mind that in detention units, the people used material to make lines long enough to go from cell to cell by using a weight of some sort and throw it, or push it under the door and out of the cell, to move things from one cell to another. Some inmates call this fishing from cell to cell.

As I am eating breakfast it occurred to me that these men are being prepared for a mission that is amazing. May we call it ... Search and Rescue? **Joshua 2:17-18 – "And the men said unto her, 'we will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and thy entire father's household.'"**

The word "line" here in **2 Corinthians 10:16**, "**To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand**", as I am allowed of my Creator to share with you, it was brought to me that here in **2 Corinthians 10** Paul was teaching the Corinthians about a line. Why? Was it necessary? You decide!

If you read **Psalm 19:4**, "**Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun**" and **verse 3**, "**There is no speech, there are no words, neither is their voice heard.**" The only difference in this verse and detention is that it is very loud in detention.

As I was reading, doing a word study on the "line", I am reminded of the word "stripes". This word is brought by revelation (**1 Peter 2:25**), "**For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.**" **1 Peter 2:24** is this, "**Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.**"

When I read this, it occurred to me that the stripes that heal us are, or were, and did need to come. However, I was told that we had **already** been healed and if we believe in Jesus or had faith to know we were healed, we would be healed. It didn't make any sense to me because if believers were getting sick, then why? So let's look at this prophecy by Samuel in **2 Samuel 7:13-17**, "**He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. I will be His father, and He shall be My son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.**"

Foot's Bible Study Notes

1 Samuel 20:1-21:15

God's laws should not be applied without compassion. To do good and to save life is God's greater law. (21:1)

The Bible makes it very clear that lying is wrong. (Leviticus 19:11) Lying, like every other sin, is serious in God's sight and may lead to all sorts of harmful consequences. Don't minimize or categorize sins. All sins must be avoided, whether or not we can foresee their potential consequences. (21:2)

John 9:1-41

We live in a fallen world where good behavior is not always rewarded and bad behavior is not always punished. Therefore, innocent people sometimes suffer. If God took suffering away whenever we asked, we would follow Him for comfort and convenience, not out of love and devotion. Regardless of the reasons for our suffering, Jesus has the power to help us deal with it. When you suffer from a disease, tragedy or disability, try not to ask, why did this happen to me? Or what did I do wrong? Instead, ask God to give you strength for the trial and a clearer perspective on what is happening. (9:2-3)

Psalms 113:1-114:8

In God's eyes, a person's value has no relationship to his or her wealth or position on the social ladder. Many people who have excelled in God's work began in poverty or humble beginnings. God supersedes the social order of this world, often choosing his future leaders and ambassadors from among social outcasts. Do you treat the unwanted in society as though they have value? Demonstrate by your actions that all people are valuable and useful in God's eyes. (113:5-9)

Proverbs 15:15-17

Our attitudes color our whole personality. We cannot always choose what happens to us, but we can choose our attitude toward each situation. The secret to a happy heart is filling our minds with thoughts that are true and pure, and lovely, with thoughts that dwell on the good things in life. (Philippians 4:5) This was Paul's secret as he faced imprisonment, and it can be ours as we face the struggles of daily living. Look at your attitudes and then examine what you allow to enter your mind and what you choose to dwell on. You may need to make some changes. (15:15)

“Foot” Notes

Que pasa Overcomers? By now you all know I do a lot of thinkin' about what I'm thinkin', my situation allows for lots of thinkin' time ... haha!! Then I finally unscramble all those thoughts and put them into words to share with all the Overcomers out there. So, here is my latest round of thoughts.

It's a big deal to us all when we take that leap of faith and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Ya' know, turn our hot mess of a life over to Him with the hope that everything will straighten out, que no?

So, we begin testing the waters so to speak by getting into the Word, learning about Jesus Christ, His ultimate sacrifice, and His promises to us all. Then before you know it, we start talking the talk, which is great. But a lot of us may not yet grasp the fact that when we begin talking the talk to others, those others then begin to observe us. You could go as far as to say we're now under the microscope and everything we do will be scrutinized to the nth degree to see that if what we're talking is matching up with how we're walking, que no?

If we're going to represent or present ourselves as Overcomers, we need to work on overcoming. We need to change our actions, cut loose those that got us in this mess, so to speak. Ya' know, start getting those ducks in a row, so that others will see that your behavior and actions coincide with your words. Because if we speak of Christianity and being a Christian, yet continue to act like a jackass, those who are observing will think that all Christians are a bunch of jackasses, que no?

We, as Overcomers, need to be the shining light in the darkness, an example of God's grace, an example of peace, humility, contentment, and love in a world that we know is full of angst and struggles. We need to overcome our trials, not just go through them.

Lord, I ask in your Precious Name that You give us the strength to actually walk what we're talking ... amen!!! Love to y'all – vaya con Dios – short and tall!!

I will close with these last few Scriptures from Jesus' lips. *"So now I am giving you a new commandment; Love each other just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples."* (John 13:34-35, NLT) And don't forget, *"You didn't choose Me. I choose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using My name. This is My command: LOVE EACH OTHER."* (John 15:16-17, NLT) Whether we are "locked up" behind bars or being bound by the Law, I'm sure you all would agree, both will put limits on our movement. But I'm here to tell you all today, "There is a way to live life in a cage and be as free as an eagle!" The answer lies in Christ, the Cross, His Blood and the Resurrection. That's where we receive the grace that frees us from the inside out. I propose that we all grow together in God's Word and grasp hold of the true freedom that IT pours out upon all those that have the faith and the courage to receive it! AMEN!?

BELIEVE – Part II

By Bob Small

John 6:29, "Jesus said to them, 'This is the only work God wants of you, to believe in the One He has sent.'"

Do you know that to believe in something takes action and work? There is a progression in truly believing something. It starts as a thought/idea in the mind. You have choice to accept it or reject it. If you reject it, it is thought of as being false or a lie and dies. This by no way means the thought or idea may not come back to go through the choice process again. If you accept it as reasonable and logical from your experiences in life, you then will begin thinking/meditating on it. This is conception. There are many conceived ideas and until investigation, action and work are applied, it remains a conceived idea and is questionable as being true. If the action and work is taken and it is successful, it is proven as truth and the belief turns into a knowing which then becomes something to be lived by. It becomes an accepted belief system. The science world is, for example, based on proven belief systems that shape our physical work as undeniable truths or commonly known as scientific laws. If I let go of a ball it will fall to the ground, the law of gravity, a simple example.

There are many different 'worlds' on earth with accepted belief systems or laws. The financial world, the business world, political world, the religious world, the spiritual world, the gang/criminal world and countless other worlds within the world we all live in. Sometimes these belief systems will change over time. Think back to the times when people's belief systems were that the world was flat. After research and action it was proven to be round. I could only imagine the controversy and resistance to the changing idea in the world at that time.

As you look into the world of personal lives each will have specific belief systems chosen to guide them through this world. Have you ever truly thought about the belief systems in your life and why you have them? Often they are protective, to help you survive in this world to gain and protect your worlds needs and desires. Usually they are about being part of something, gaining security, position, comfort and control in your life. As mentioned in the first part of this message, the very core of our belief systems are built around ones inner security or lack of it. What drives you and gives you that feeling of security and satisfaction inside? And if whatever it is was taken away what would you do?

In my early adult period I fancied myself as being independent and was quite proud that I had gained worldly success and achieved it on my own strength, or so I believed at that time. What I choose to ignore was that to deal with inner insecurities and feelings of unworthiness I was dependant on alcohol and drugs. There were periods I was away from the alcohol and drugs. At those times I poured myself into work and gained great success. I also got into physical exercise and became addicted to running, started schooling as well as teaching...on and on. As all of this took place on the outside I appeared to have things together. But on the inside I was a mess. My marriage and my family suffered because I was driven to be independent and successful. Today I see I was really seeking to gain inner security and peace. At times I would experience this but it would be soon replaced with worry, fear and a feeling I needed something more. Part of my belief system was built on a destination or lottery mindset. If I get a specific job, or certain status, or a relationship, or get in with an established gang/club, then I will have it made, I will be secure and have no worries. Well, it never seemed to work because as I gained some of these things it only brought more insecurity and fear. I would have to wear a mask to the world appearing I had everything together. I eventually ended up back into alcohol and drugs to try to deal with the inner emptiness and fear. Long story short, through them I gave up on life and lost everything that meant anything to me.

Earlier I shared about the deep despair on the inside of me because I no longer had anything to try and fill my inside pain. I now realize there was a spirit that was starving inside of me and from that came the cry for "HELP" from the depth of my soul. God soon started revealing Himself to me. This set me on a path of discovering a 'new belief system' that filled the inner part of me that was starving. Before, my inner being reflected anxiety, depression, emptiness, insecurity and fear. After being lead to a Spirit filled church I started having experiences in worship music where my inner spirit became filled with peace, warmth and truly alive. Over four services I was given a direction by this voice I now know as God. The first was "Release all fear". I had many fears but the main one at that time was what people would think of me being in such a church. The second was "Believe in Me". I was given a vision of a cross and I knew then it was the voice of Jesus. That

was eight and a half years ago and I am just starting to see the depth of what it means. It is the hinge to where we end up in this world and more importantly, after we leave this world. The third was "Have faith in Me" and the fourth was "Be obedient to Me".

I started seeing God was not some dictator God off in a distant land as my core belief system had come to live by. Rather I started realizing there is a life inside each of us that God wants access to and become part of. I started to see there is a world beyond this physical world that is within us and all around us. From that point the Bible became a Book I was drawn to as the words truly came to life. It was, and is, like there is a dimension, another world that comes alive. This happened not by force but by an inner change of desire that no human could force to happen. In **John 3:6-7** we read, *"Humans can reproduce only human life but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say you must be born again."*

As a child there was a family that lived near us that were referred to, then, as what is known as born again Christians. I had learned they were looked at as different and not necessarily in a good way. Today I have a whole different perspective on the term 'born again' for I have experienced it, and while not intentionally seeking it. I wanted a different experience from the torment I was experiencing inside. God knew what I needed and I opened the door to Him when I cried out from the depth of my soul.

Has life been perfect from that time forward? Not even close. But the times I have sought after God I have experienced peace, contentment, caring, compassion, security, love for others and so much more goodness. Initially I was hungry to experience more and there was a time of rapid and passionate seeking and growth in this new found life. But after a couple of years I experienced a geographical move that moved me back into an employment opportunity that only God could have provided. But, this move took me out of my community of support in my new found belief system. I let my guard down and started living on my own strength again. Old thought patterns started coming back and after a few years I fell back into taking action on some of these old thoughts. I found myself on the old path of using drugs at times. From this point, there has been a battle of the two worlds, at times believing the old system and following it and at times surrendering to God and having Him show me just how good He truly is with His mercy and grace.

Today, God has led me into a community that supports and truly believes in God. When I made the decision to live fully for Him again, it has been like the flood gates of His Holy Spirit have been opened into my life. It has taken work and sacrifice to get here.

I share this to come to this point. Through all of it I do not believe but rather I KNOW God is always there and loves us unconditionally. Whether you have never had the experience of His Holy Spirit or just don't believe in Him, whether you have a loose religious belief in Him, whether you have been with Him and fallen back and bound with shame and guilt or whether you have come to know Him and have been fully obedient in staying faithful to Him, He loves you unconditionally. Outside of all of the voices and belief systems in this world, GOD IS REAL and loves us all. No one is greater than or less than, in God's love.

Quote Worthy

"If you are going through hell, keep going."

- Winston Churchill (1874-1965) - A British politician who was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955. Widely regarded as one of the greatest wartime leaders of the 20th century, he was also an officer in the British Army, a historian, a writer, and an artist. He is the only British Prime Minister to have won the Nobel Prize in Literature, and was the first person to be made an honorary citizen of the United States.

Ministry Tithes & Offerings

It takes the body of Christ working together to create, print, assemble, and mail this newsletter every month. We thank each and every one of you who have sown a seed into this ministry. None of this would be possible without the generous financial support from people who believe in this ministry. By sowing your financial seed into this ministry, you are helping us reach out to those incarcerated by offering them hope, love, and encouragement. You are investing in reaching lost souls, encouraging new believers, and spreading the Word of God. **"A man's harvest in life will depend entirely on what he sows." – Galatians 6:7**

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In Honor of My Mom ... Dolores Mankin

May 18, 1946 – May 7, 2014

My mom taught me many things and I am the wife and mother that I am today because of things she taught me. She showed me what unconditional love looks like. She showed me how to be unoffendable ... to walk in understanding and forgiveness. My mom didn't have a mean bone in her body, she was kind to everyone. I remember times when we would talk and if she would be upset about something she would say, "I am so angry." And that would be the tone and extent of it. She showed love and grace to everyone.

Since I was 18 years old, people have been telling me how much I look like my mom. When I worked with her at Doctors' Hospital in California so many people told me that, so I told her, "Well does that mean I look like a 42 year old or do you look like an 18 year old?" She just giggled and said, "Oh, Michelle!" As I got older, I became more and more like her ... same mannerisms, such as "the Sigman hair pull" or "the Sigman head rub". My daughter, Courtney, and my niece, Sariah, frequently say to me, "Oh, that was just like Grandma D." Often times when I call Wade, he will answer and say, "Well, hello Dolores," because I sound just like her at that moment. These things are gifts from God, my family all possess a piece of her and that is how she will live on through us. All of her kids, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren have Dolores inside of them.

So many people have said she went to heaven too soon and I agree with that too. I wanted many, many more years with her. But the Saturday after she died, I had a God moment, He showed me some-thing ... 18 years ago my mom was on a ventilator and my stepdad called me to come over to California because things didn't look good. I got there and it didn't look good and the doctors thought she wouldn't make it, yet she did. And I remember on many occasions my mom telling me that God healed prayer because it had worked in her life. Saturday was that I was given 18 more had she not been healed then. Wow, it made time I had with her and not the time I will not

Will I miss my mom? Absolutely!!! Will I miss and the phone calls? Yes. But those are things that she brought to my life ... love and her. She is with me at all times. In **John 16:20**, Jesus is speaking, **"I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over her, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy."** This is how I feel about but I know that Jesus is my strength and because I know my mom is happy, healthy and she is still with me in my heart and mind, with this, on May 8th this was the daily always blesses me with words of encouragement

The Art of Acceptance by Steve Arterburn

"Come to terms with God and be at peace; in this way good will come to you." - Job 22:21

Sometimes, we must accept life on its terms, not our own. Life has a way of unfolding, not as we will, but as it will. And sometimes, there is precious little we can do to change things. When events transpire that are beyond our control, we have a choice: we can either learn the art of acceptance, or we can make ourselves miserable as we struggle to change the unchangeable. We must entrust the things we cannot change to God. Once we have done so, we can prayerfully and faithfully tackle the important work that He has placed before us: doing something about the things we can change . . . and doing it sooner rather than later. Can you summon the courage and the wisdom to accept life on its own terms? If so, you'll most certainly be rewarded for your good judgment.

Mom, I love you so much and I will miss you ... Michelle



soon and I agree with that too. I wanted many, many she died, I had a God moment, He showed me some-ventilator and my stepdad called me to come over good. I got there and it didn't look good and the yet she did. And I remember on many occa-her then and that she believed in the power of so many times. What God showed me on that years with my mom than I would ave had, me reflect and realize I need to look at the have.

the birthday cards, the Christmas cards, earthly things. The more important encouragement, I still can get from **16:20**, Jesus is speaking, **"I tell you what is going to happen to me, but your grief will suddenly turn my mom, today I am weeping and mourning comforter and my grief will turn to joy whole now. I have lost her physical presence and she is with me spiritually. I want to close devotional I received ... I love God because He and guidance.**

My Guardian Angel

By W.B.

Frail old Angel, if I had to do it over again,
I wouldn't change what I did.
I would change the way I felt about what I did
Last night I had a dream, it had a tale to tell.
I dreamed I saw an Angel; Poor thing He wasn't feeling
well!!

His body bruised and battered, His wings were ripped
and torn.

This Angel could hardly walk, He looked so tired and
worn.

I walked right up to him and asked, "Angel, how can this
be?"

He turned around and paused a bit, then He spoke these
words to me:

"I am your Guardian Angel, a great task as you can see,
you've ran amuck most of your life, look what it has done
to me.

These bruises are from shielding you in times both dire
and ill,
all the drugs and alcohol you've used, I've often paid the
bill.

You see my wings are ripped and torn,
how often they have flown you from evils unaware
each mark is its own story of deadly wounds destroyed.

You made me wish more than once that I was
unemployed.

If only you could make it standing on your own.

Oh, don't you fret or worry but please try to remember
I am getting old and frail!"

I could not believe all that I had heard, let alone how
much He cared.

I wept upon His shoulder, then left Him in despair
The next day I sat and wondered, should I really try?
and in the distance I thought I heard a frail old Angel cry.

Help us be better stewards by sending your change of address when you move to help reduce unnecessary waste and expense

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