

Overcomers for Christ

January 2015

2015

Happy New Year!

Glory Meeting of the Overcomers for Christ

PETER REPLIED, "EACH OF YOU MUST REPENT OF YOUR SINS AND TURN TO GOD, AND BE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF YOUR SINS. THEN YOU WILL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT." ACTS 2:38

AUGUST 10, 2014



Grace Message - Part II

By C.L.

So what is Grace? How do we get it and why do we have it? Remember, it is not that complicated. Listen, in **John 3:16** (AMP), how much is our part, **"For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He (even) gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life."** It is real clear that the only thing God is asking us to do is **'to believe in Jesus'**. I told you it was simple, on our part. God was the One that gave the Sacrifice and it was Jesus' obedience to His Father's plan to go to the Cross that has made grace available! Every sin that every person has or ever will commit, past, present and future (remember that God is not subject to time and sees it all at once, **2 Peter 3:8**) was credited on Jesus at Calvary. All of God's wrath towards those sins were not only poured out but were satisfied on the Person of Jesus and God has declared justice served. We read in **1 Corinthians 15:16-17** (NLT) that, **"If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still under condemnation for your sins."** Why is this important? Because if even one sin remained unforgiven by God then Jesus would still be in hell. Jesus took everything we deserved and gave us everything He deserves!

If we think that God bases His relationship with us on our obedience then we place ourselves back under the law and not Grace! If we think that God is disappointed in us when we mess up then we place ourselves back under the law! This does not mean that God is okay with sin, it means that when we do sin He still loves us. Do we honestly believe that the God that knows the beginning from the end is shocked or caught off guard when we do sin? NO!! If we think that God is more pleased with us by our obedience we place ourselves back under the law! Sure, blessings do follow obedience but God is pleased with us not because of our obedience but because of Jesus' obedience. It's important that we don't place ourselves back under the law over and over again because God wants to, He can and He will bless us even when we mess up. This does not mean we intentionally mess up to see if His grace will still be there because His mercy is different than His grace! This walk with Jesus gets so much easier when we stop being so 'sin conscious' and trust the Holy Spirit to guide us. Again I say, Grace has nothing to do with our obedience but everything to do with Jesus' obedience being credited to us as if it were our obedience. The law states ... do good get good, do bad get bad. But Grace is getting good that we haven't earned and most certainly don't deserve, but Jesus did it for us! Teaching about what to do and what not to do is teaching about the knowledge of good and evil. When we read **Genesis chapter 3**, in a sense isn't that what caused our problem to begin with?

Look what is revealed to us here in **2 Corinthians 5:21** (NLT), **"For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."** That's what righteousness is, being made right with God through what Christ has already done. When you received Jesus as your Lord and Savior you were born again. (**Romans 10:9**) And since you were born again you **ARE, NOT SOMEDAY, BUT NOW 'The righteousness of God, through Christ Jesus and it's important that you believe AND receive what Christ has done for you, by faith!'** I wonder sometimes why some people have as many issues receiving the revelation of Grace but simply believed, by faith, that they were saved by grace and received their salvation??? This is not a different level of or kind of grace! Here's what the Holman Christian Standard Bible says about righteousness, in **1 Timothy 1:9**, **"We know that the law is not meant for the righteous person, but for the lawless and the rebellious, for the unholy and the irreverent, ..."** In fact **1 Corinthians 15:56**, we read that, **"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law."** When we read **1 Corinthians 15:57** a new reverence for God should bring about great praise, **"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"** In **Hebrews 10:1** (NLT), it's revealed, **"The old system in the law of Moses was only a shadow of the things to come, not the reality of the good things that Christ has done for us. The sacrifices under the old system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship."** Right here I want to ask you all, "Are you more aware/conscious of your sins (law) or are you truly aware of the righteousness made available, already in you, through Christ Jesus (Grace)?"

"With one sacrifice He made perfect forever those who are being made holy." (**Hebrews 10:14**) God made Jesus the perfect Sacrifice. You are not the sacrifice, you are the beneficiary of His Sacrifice. Why then do you suppose religion teaches us that this same God that cannot be divided against Himself (**Mark 3:24**) tells us one second that we are perfect in His sight and the next second He is convicting us of sin? We find in **Romans 8:33**, **"Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for His chosen? It is God who justifies."** **Revelation 12:10** tells us that satan is the accuser of the brethren NOT GOD! In **Genesis 3:1**, **Acts 13:10** and **2 Corinthians 11:3** we can read how crafty, subtle and sly satan is and his methods have not changed. The thief, satan, steals from God's children (**John 10:10**) by making us think that it is God withholding something from us and in the case of legalism he does it by getting our focus off of the Sacrifice, Jesus, and on to the sinner, us. Where there is sin consciousness there is no true confidence with God! It's crazy how subtle satan is as he brings these teachings to us through well meaning men and women of God (in the past myself included) under the guise of humility and a love for God.

We are taught to repent when we sin but what does that mean? The word repentance in most cases in the New Testament means to think differently or to think differently from guilt. Boy it would sure make things simpler if we could just think different thoughts by saying, "I'm going to think differently." As for the 'from guilt' part I think we've already established that Christ having known no sin was made sin (guilty) for us that we might be made the righteousness (not guilty) of God in Him. (**2 Corinthians 5:21**) The unsaved need to repent of their self-righteousness and this happens when the law reveals their unrighteousness to them. I am unable, however, to find a single verse in the New Testament where a believer is told to repent except when they have removed themselves from grace and put themselves back under the law. Popular religious doctrine teaches that falling from grace, backsliding, being in the flesh, counting the Blood by which you were sanctified an unholy thing and crucifying afresh the Son of God are all the result of sinning. Well, who is without sin?! If that were the truth then every Christian would then be fallen, backslid and in the flesh. These verses are talking about getting back under legalism!

There is a different kind of repentance for the believer. **Romans 12:2** (NLT) tells us, **"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is."** To be transformed means that we cannot do it! No! **Ephesians 5:26** is clear, **"So that He might sanctify her (us, believers, the church), having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word."** As we read the Word, Jesus is revealed to us. **"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."** (**2 Corinthians 3:18**) Now I don't know about you, but, in the natural, when I look in a mirror I see a very imperfect sinner. I believe this verse is saying we are to see ourselves looking like Jesus because that is the way God sees us and that when we see ourselves the way that God sees us and only then will we be changed. Brothers and sisters if your eyes are on yourself and your sins you are a slave to it! Trying to be holy will destroy a person because it cannot be done, on our own account. You will either, fail and feel guilty, or you will succeed by will power for a season and then become proud and judgmental of others, cancelling out the very holiness you were seeking. Is God holy? Yes! Beyond our comprehension. Does He want us to be holy? Of course! In **Romans 12:1** (NLT) we see, **"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice - the kind He will accept. When you think of what He has done for you, is this too much to ask?"** And in **1 Peter 1:14-16** (NLT) we see again, **"Obey God because you are His children. Don't slip back into your old ways of doing evil; you didn't know any better then. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God - who chose you to be His children - is holy. For He Himself has said, 'You must be holy, because I am holy.'" (See **Leviticus 11:44, 45**)**

Again we need to rightly divide the Word of God so satan cannot frustrate Grace and steal from us. Righteousness is not holiness and holiness is not righteousness. Let's look again at this beautiful scripture found in **Hebrews 10:14** (NIV) that reads, **"For by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."** This means that we are made righteous before God (in right standing with God, He is no longer angry at man). The New King James Bible has that same verse as, **"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."** Why does one translation use perfected (past tense) while being sanctified in the other one implies on going? Again let's rightly divide the Word. Looking now at **Hebrews 4:12** (NKJ) we see, **"For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."** We are a threefold being, after all, we are created in His image: Our spirit (God the Holy Spirit), our soul (God the Father) and our body (God in the Person of Jesus). Now let's go back to perfected and being sanctified. We know that no flesh will enter the kingdom of God, right? Let's look how **Romans 3:20** (NLT) breaks it down even more clear, **"For no one can ever be made right in God's sight by doing what His law commands. For the more we know God's law, the clearer it becomes that we aren't obeying it."** Here we see that no one is referring to flesh so according to **Hebrews 4:12** we have soul and spirit left. Since our souls are made of feelings, emotions and intellect we can gather that it has not been perfected or we would not have any more bad thoughts after we were saved. And according to **2 Corinthians 5:17**, **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."** It is our spirit man that has been perfected, meaning a new spirit not a rebuilt one, so we can conclude that it is our soul that is **being sanctified**. How? By our ways of thinking coming into alignment with His ways of thinking, as He is revealed to us. This is not something that we can do of ourselves. It is only achieved by the work of the Holy Spirit through continually renewing our minds with the Word of God. The truth is, as long as we are trying to be holy God is unable to make us holy because we are focused on self (flesh) instead of Christ. We must understand, **we will never be holy enough on our own to be righteous**. On the other hand, as we begin to understand that we are already perfectly righteous in Christ we will also begin to be made holy.

There is a common misconception in the church today that we have to be careful how we teach about grace or we will be giving people permission or a 'license to sin'. I am not promoting sin but I have committed enough sins for ten lifetimes and I never had permission or a license to do so! I know this sounds harsh but I believe that anyone that hears God's

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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

You all are a true blessing to me and my thoughts and prayers are focused on you, your families and all our brothers and sisters who are Overcomers for Christ. In the June issue of the Overcomers for Christ there was a wonderful tribute to Michelle's mom that was written by Michelle. I wish to express my heartfelt condolences to Michelle and her entire family. I've read page 11 of that June issue at least a dozen times now, especially the last paragraph, *The Art of Acceptance* by Steve Arterburn. You see, my mother Pauline also passed away in May, on the 23rd, at a Hospice in Scottsdale, AZ. My mother's passing has truly left my heart empty, and I will grieve her passing all the days of my life. I loved my mom very much and I will regret not being there to say "Good Bye" or to be by her side in her time of need. I have several months left on this sentence before I return home. There I will be taking care of my terminally ill dad who has COPD and my younger brother who is also terminally ill with full blown Aids. On top of all this, my 24 year old son, Francis committed suicide in a park last year in Utah on May 15th. To say that I have a lot on my plate is putting it mildly. I'm flat out overwhelmed most every day here. The reason I'm telling you all of this is to simply ask for prayer for my family and me. I am a strong believer in the power of prayer ... **B.C.**

I'm tired of giving up! For once in my life I'm ready to make a stand and give my life over to the Lord Jesus Christ. I have really been struggling with my relationship and fellowship with God. It is a lot harder to commune with God here as I can feel that satan has a good hold on this place and he doesn't want to let go. I am usually happy when I read my Bible, but it now feels like a chore. It hurts me to admit that but it's the truth. I have been putting more effort into it lately and the past two days it seems to be better by a small margin. I also have a lot of hate towards the other inmates here and that's something God had previously removed from my heart. I'm really not a violent person and I don't enjoy all this hate in me. I don't believe it is helping my relationship with Jesus either. Reading through the prayer requests in the newsletter I paused at the end of each one to say a little prayer. This was new to me because I really never prayed for people that I don't know. Then I realized that I too was able to write to you all and ask for prayer. I need prayer to have a better relationship with God, to remove the hate in my heart and to learn to quiet my mind to hear what the Lord wants to tell me. This is the first time I have ever written to anyone and asked for prayer but I felt I needed to do it NOW ... **P.T.**

I am 45 years old and my migraines are getting worse. I had to take a break because my head started ringing and hurting; sharp pain, all over in my head, for 2 1/2 years now and getting worse. I am supposed to see the doctor for a follow up. I've been reading my Bible, praying, listening to Christian music and I could use more prayers ... **D.G.**

Praise Reports

This should be home, until I parole next year. God is just so amazing and has blessed me so much in these last months! I'm now at fire camp and I'm a real fire fighter. I'm not sure if Arizona has anything like this for inmates or not but it's great! We help out with all the wildfires that happen in the state. We get trained and we go out there like the other crews. We do a lot of hiking and when we aren't on a fire we do different projects throughout the community. I'm living at a camp ground in the mountains and it's amazing how much freedom we have here! The best part is learning to depend on and be proud of yourself again. It doesn't hurt that the food is so great either! I'm really happy here and being able to hike through God's nature every morning is a plus. They also have church services every night so I have enjoyed all of the different teaching styles. There is this one group of people that come and I must say that I have never felt the Holy Spirit so strong before. It was like God's words were pouring out of their mouths, straight into my heart. It was exactly what I needed to hear and it was right on with some issues that I have struggled with for a long time. It was just so amazing! I have a lot of prayer warriors on my crew also and it can't get any better than that! Can you tell that I'm doing great and enjoying every little experience God places in my path? ... **S.P.**

Praise be to our Glorious God for I have finally been blessed with a move in!! It's someone that I can get along with AND relate to. My last 6 months have been a trial and a half, but today my prayers have been answered! I'm totally happy, relaxed and will finally get a good night's sleep. You just don't know ... I might be apt to paint a lot more now where I am. Sweet contentment and joy, no more stressing or being brought to the precipice of who I USED to be ... **S.C.**

I am incarcerated in Arizona and I ran across someone in my unit who gets your newsletters every month and allowed me to borrow one to read. While flipping through the newsletter, I came across an article titled God's Created Man - March 2014 - and saw a reference to a person I knew once as a counselor at a mental health drug and alcohol oriented program in Phoenix by the name of Debbie Tacker Kovach. She was an awesome example of Christ's compassion at work in the lives of others. She always had a kind word to say to me and always told me the pure and unadulterated truth about her faith, without being pushy. Coming across her name in your newsletter was not a coincidence and neither was having the opportunity of knowing her back in 2010. It was definitely a pure and simple act of God that put Debbie in my life when He did, which is partially the reason as to why I am writing to you at Overcomers for Christ, because of people like you and Debbie, I have come to know Christ as my personal Lord and Savior ... Thank you for planting the seed of God's Word and being one of the people who helped lead me to the Christ ... Praise God ... **J.P.**

Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

What I Know Is Right ... Love and Trust
By T.G.

The words of wisdom we all receive through the newsletters, I truly respect and appreciate for the mere fact that you all are the real deal, people that know what it's like to have pride rule your life, have fought the demons of the mind and flesh and have victoriously conquered the beast at his own work. It is easy for me to see that you all have traded in the prides of life you once carried for love and compassion. I want that too!

You know, I never could understand the meaning of "turn the other cheek" or "forgive those who seek to destroy you". It was just not in me, and still I fight the rage in my heart to keep the pride and fight. I'm searching so darn hard to find the courage to bow to what I know is right. That light of life that was given to us all at birth called love and trust. It is the blessing of life, given from God and instilled in every child! You know what I'm saying - you feel me? You wrote a great article in the newsletter awhile back that explained it so well.

As the hard times come, wrong choices made, habits picked up, the sinful flesh seems to gain control and war begins. I used to think that it was society that was to blame so to them I took the war. I began reaping havoc at the age of 21 all the way until I turned 50 years old, from Aberdeen, Washington to Arizona ... with an aftermath of 37 felonies, 14 prisons and 25 years of a wasted life. I thought I was clever, but really I was blind - selling my life out for a one night ride of happiness that tasted sweet but ALWAYS cost a high price.

Sometimes it's hard for me being 50 years old and looking back on all the lost and lonely years I have wasted. It really ticks me off looking around at these walls ... so I just want to love and be loved. Living in this environment of max security sometimes causes me to think that I am the only one here that truly believes that Jesus IS REAL!

For the life of me I really find it hard to truly give up control to anybody. But, I don't want to live without the peace and love that I know is out there for me. Love from the inside out that you speak of in your mail and newsletters, that's what I want. I am tired of being lonely, hurt, confused and feeling so darn helpless as I watch the days come and go. It's when I read your letters and what is written in the newsletters that I'm encouraged and inspired that it's really possible to give in and let love provide for my soul instead of pride.

Ask and Receive
By M.G.

We are always fighting the devil. I still think that way sometimes but when I do I rebuke it and have faith in God and then I believe that it has been justified. **Romans 5:6, 8** reads, "**For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly ... But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**" So can you see the justification, faith and the peace of God is all that He knows? When we start thinking wrong all we have to do is to start praying and rebuking! The way that I see it is; when we have the reverent fear of God in us we will stop doing what we were doing or getting ready to do. Let me say it like this. When I stopped smoking even the good taste of food came back. And then before too long I started hating the smell of cigarettes.

We tend to stroke prayer like a lucky rabbit's foot. We try to manipulate His will to ours and sometime call it faith. We push forward in the arrogance of our own determination, limited by our vision, rather than pull back in the simple trust of His infinite plan. It's like we expect Him to change the sovereignty of His omnipotent heart, instead of humbly asking Him to give us a heart willing to be changed. Instead, why don't we relax and let God be God? I thank God for the prayers that He has answered and how I knew that He would. I thank Him, somewhat shamefully, for the prayers I prayed and then forgot all about them, but He didn't. And in His loving kindness He answered them anyway. I also thank God for the prayers He didn't answer the way I prayed He would. I shudder to think of how some things in my life may have turned out if He had answered them my way!

In the mystery of His timing, in the confusion where I do not understand - God is God and I will not diagnose Him, I will not analyze Him. I will obey Him, I will adore Him and I will continue to lay my life before Him. We all can be this same way, as long as we have Him on our side we are in GOOD hands. Share with God's people who are in need. Let's all practice hospitality as in **Romans 12:13** (AMP), "**Contribute to the needs of God's people (sharing in the necessities of the saints); pursue the practice of hospitality.**" Paul tells us in **2 Corinthians 9:7** (KJV), "**Every man according as he**

Overcomers for Christ P.O. Box 42023 Phoenix, Arizona 85080
(602)472-8741 • OC4Cphx@gmail.com

Overcomers for Christ

From the Inside

purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." And now I'll close with Jesus speaking to us all in **Luke 15:10** (KJV), *"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."* If you believe, you will receive what you ask for in prayer ... Ask and Receive!

"Dear heavenly Father, thank You for prayer. Thank You for Your sovereignty and thank You for Your infinite love. AMEN!"

Malachi 4:5 Prison Ministries - Great Faith

By R.D.

Great faith, what is it? Some believe that it is to own several jet airplanes, live in a palace on a 20 plus acres of prime Texas ranch land and a mega T.V. ministry with millions of viewers. However, if great faith is seen in our possessions then why are Hollywood superstars, cartel drug bosses and greedy politicians mostly unbelievers? It does not take great faith to ask people for money, the homeless do this every day. Great faith is found in, *"Looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith; ..."* (**Hebrews 12:2**) **Revelation 1:8** tells us that faith begins and ends in Jesus, *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending."* Some of Jesus' followers were told, *"How is it that ye have no faith?"* (**Mark 5:40**)

There were two Gentiles who had great faith, it was a quality in their character and attitude that He recognized. In **Matthew 8:8-9**, the Roman centurion was very humble as he said, *"Lord, I am not worthy for You to come into my house; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it."* The centurion was submitted to those over him, and by this he understood authority. He knew that if Jesus just spoke the word his servant would be healed. How well do we submit to those around us? Are we humble while we serve? Do we need to have recognition? Is preaching a dynamic sermon more important to us than cleaning the church bathrooms? Our rewards are not based on what we do, but on how well we do them and the attitude we have while we are doing it.

Now, in **Matthew 15:21-28** Jesus finds a second Gentile with great faith. *"And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.'" (Matthew 15:22)* Here the woman is asking for help from Jesus and His response is, *"It is not right (proper, becoming, or fair) to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."* (**Matthew 15:26**) She responded in **Matthew 15:27** saying, *"Truth, Lord: but the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' tables."* If you went to your pastor or board of elders to ask for help and were called a dog or treated like this woman of Canaan, how would you respond? Can we serve and not take offence? Do we need to have the pre-eminence or can we serve in the shadows? By the way, Jesus' response to her is found in **Matthew 15:28**, *"Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment."*

There are great acts of kindness, great acts of service and the most humble act is prayer. No one sees us pray, it's something only God sees. **Revelation 8:3-4** reveals this truth, *"Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar, in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand."* We see here that prayer is the only thing offered in heaven on the golden altar with incense. This is great faith, Amen! No, I do not have that great faith, yet, but at least Jesus Christ has revealed to me what it is so I can repent and receive His grace. Do you have great faith?

Foot's Bible Study Notes

2 Samuel 15:1-16:23

Had David not escaped from Jerusalem, the ensuing fight might have killed him as well as many innocent inhabitants of the city. Some fights that we think necessary can be costly and destructive to those around us. In such cases, it may be wise to back down and save the fight for another day - even if doing so hurts our pride. It takes courage to stand and fight, but it also takes courage to back down for the sake of others. **(15:14)**

Maintaining your composure in the face of unjustified criticism can be a trying experience and an emotional drain, but if you can't stop criticism, it is best just to ignore it. Remember that God knows what you are enduring, and He will vindicate you, if you are in the right. **(16:5-14)**

John 18:25-19:22

Don't excuse yourself by pointing at others whose sins seem worse than yours. Instead, come to Jesus for forgiveness and healing. **(18:22-27)**

No sin is too great for Jesus to forgive if you are truly repentant. He will forgive even your worst sin, if you turn from it and ask His pardon. **(18:25-27)**

When you are questioned or ridiculed because of your faith, remember that while you may be on trial before your accusers, they are on trial before God. **(19:10)**

Psalms 119:113-128

Undecided people cannot make up their minds between good and evil. But when it comes to obeying God, there is no middle ground. You must take a stand, either you are obeying Him or you are not. Either you are doing what He wants or you are undecided. Choose to obey God, and say with the psalmist, "I love Your law." **(119:113)**

Proverbs 16:10-11

Whether we buy or sell, make a product or offer a service, we know what is fair and honest and what is unfair and dishonest. Sometimes we feel pressure to be dishonest in order to advance ourselves or gain more profit. But if we want to obey God, there is no middle ground. God demands honesty in every business transaction. No amount of rationalizing can justify a dishonest business practice. Honesty and fairness are not always easy, but they are what God demands. Ask Him for discernment and courage to be consistently honest and fair. **(16:11)**

"Foot" Notes

Hello everybody! May God's blessings be upon all of you. I've been thinking about how to apply my thoughts of late to paper in a way that makes sense to ya'll. I've been praying on this for a few weeks now and have come to the conclusion that I just need to start writing and trust that God will work out the rest so that ya'll can understand.

We all get saved for different reasons as to why our lives have reached bottom and all of us come from different backgrounds. Once we give our lives to Christ we want to 'cut loose' who and what we were, Que no? However, God enters our lives for a reason, healed us for a reason. And as we become stronger in our faith I believe it is up to us to return to where we were to be the light that can bring others of similar lives and backgrounds to the Salvation of God. I believe it takes addicts to reach addicts, criminals to reach criminals, bikers to reach bikers, jackasses to reach jackasses, etc., etc. I believe that once we've received Jesus it's our responsibility to help others do the same. As a culture we tend only to listen to those who have also "walked in our shoes", so to speak. Someone who is struggling with addiction isn't going to listen to someone who hasn't been there in the trenches. It's up to us who've made it out alive (whatever the affliction or circumstance) to reach back and try to show others that they too, can make it out alive. I pray that my words have made some sense, for the liar has been jumbling this around in my head like a basketful of Scrabble tiles for weeks.

Love to you all short and tall ... Vaya con Dios ... Don't ride faster than your guardian angel can fly!

grace being preached and gets excited that they can now go and sin all they want, without a definite consequence, more than likely was never truly born again in the first place. My belief? If you are saved and you are reading this you know this to be true because your heart has no peace with sin. It is satan who would have us focus on the sin we commit all of the time so as to keep us from beholding the spotless Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus. Why? Because He knows that when we look at our sin we sin more. And when we look more to Jesus we begin to have more Christ-like character thus, becoming more like Him.

I know what I am getting ready to say will absolutely ruffle some feathers, challenge the very core of some people's beliefs and even invite accusations against myself and even the *Overcomers for Christ* as blasphemers, but I believe that we stand with our brother Paul when he said, **"For I am not ashamed of the Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes - Jews first also Gentiles. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight."** (Romans 1:16-17a NLT) I will make no apologies for the Word of God. And here I go again (ruffle, ruffle). I can't remember when, where or by whom I was taught that when we sin we need to ask God to forgive us but somewhere along the line, this gross perversion of grace, established itself like a veil between us and God, again. I say again because the Crucifixion of Christ has already torn that veil once and forever. Now, I can already hear the shouts, **"Then what about 1 John 1:9, 'But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong?'"** So, let's start there.

Perhaps we have forgotten how subtle and crafty the enemy is? The Apostle Paul warns us of this, in **2 Corinthians 11:3** (NKJ), when he says, **"But I fear, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."** Listen folks, if satan tried to use God's own Word against Jesus, the very Son of God, in **Matthew 4:1-10**, by taking the text out of context who do we think we are that he would not still be constantly using those very same tactics against us, mere humans? And I'm sure you all have heard this many times but we all know how true of a statement this really is, "When the text is taken out of context all that remains is a 'con'." Let me encourage us all by saying, **We cannot allow ourselves to be subtly or craftily corrupted from 'the simplicity that is in Christ'.** Interestingly enough **2 Corinthians 11:3** is speaking of false witnesses boasting in the works of the flesh.

I encourage you all to not take my word for it but instead go and look for yourselves that every Epistle in the New Testament begins with a type of greeting or introduction that establishes who it is being written to. Every Epistle of Paul, Peter, John and Jude, with the exception of **1 John**, begins by greeting either Christ's church in a particular region or a specific individual who is a believer. However, when we look in **1 John 1** we don't find such reference. Instead we see in **1 John 1:3** (NLT), **"We are telling you about what we ourselves have actually seen and heard, so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ."** So who do you think John was addressing here in this Verse? Do we only declare (announce openly or formally, show or reveal) Jesus to the saved who already know Him? And shouldn't Christians already have fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ? So, who was John writing to? Read the chapter for yourselves and see! I ask you, "Does a believer or follower of Christ really need to be told he or she has sin in their lives?" NO! In **1 John 2:1** John begins by addressing believers as, **"My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if you do sin, there is Someone to plead for you before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the One Who pleases God completely."** Can we see how John's teaching about sin instantly changes? What John is showing us is that it's not us that plead with the Father it is the One that pleases God completely, Jesus Christ. **1 John 2:2** sums up why there is nothing we can do or would ever be able to do, **"He is the sacrifice for our sins. He takes away not only our sins but the sins of the all the world."** As we move down the page to **1 John 2:12** John states, again, **"I am writing to you, my dear children, because your sins have been forgiven (past tense) because of Jesus."** In the very next verse, **1 John 2:13** John's audience changes to, **"I am writing to you who are mature (fathers) because you know Christ, the One Who is from the beginning."** And in the remainder of that same verse John changes his teaching now to the young men. In less than two chapters John changes his focused audience four different times. Wouldn't you agree that in most church gatherings there are both saved and unsaved people in the audience? So this shouldn't seem that odd at all, right?

I'll bet that some of you may be thinking that I've lost my train of thought, huh? Well, I haven't so let's move on. Paul, in **2 Corinthians 13:1** reiterates, **"To the church of God in Corinth, together with all His holy people ..."** (**2 Corinthians 1:1**), what has already been written in **Deuteronomy 19:15** when he says, **"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established, ..."** And I believe that this implies to the Word of God. Let me explain. No doctrine should ever be formed based on one scripture especially when its context is questionable at best. That being said, I don't believe there is one single scripture in the Bible, outside of **1 John 1:9**, to support the doctrine that has been built around this one verse written to non-believers. And because there are not two or three, but just this one verse it would be, according to what Paul has quoted from **Deuteronomy**, not established as truth. Outside of all this, however, there remains perhaps the most obvious reason this verse is not for believers which is also the very reason it causes so many problems (fear, unrest, feeling distanced or dirty in God's presence) for the believer. Remember that **1 John 1:9** begins with the

word 'if' which means *on condition that*; then goes on to say, "... **we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us ...**" So wouldn't you, being a believer, agree then that 'if' you don't confess a sin it won't be forgiven? Sounds ridiculous huh? No one has ever confessed every sin! At the same time, anyone who is trying to confess every single thing they 'think' is sin has now become sin conscious and a slave to sin. Because of this he or she has put themselves under the law and its impossible demands. I'll conclude Part 2 right here with this statement. If, **1 John 1:9** is written to believers and we are to confess every single thing we 'think' is sin in order to be forgiven, **"WE ARE ALL DOOMED!"**

Overcomer's Testimonies

I'm becoming closer and closer to my heavenly Father and my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and I'm so in love with both of them. God is putting it on my heart to write my testimony to you guys. Be forewarned, I'm completely honest in this and some of it is a little gruesome, but I want it out there so people know that God even accepts the worst of sinners.

Well, I was born April 4, 1982 and was put up for adoption right after I was born. So, I do not know my biological parents. I am 29 years old now. My adopted mom and a guy by the name of Howard adopted me and life was good for a while until I was about 8 years old, and then the physical abuse started. I remember one time in particular I was 14 years old and I was tired of the physical abuse, so I tried to run away but Howard ran me down with his truck and got out and slammed me to the ground. I pulled out a small pocket knife and stabbed him in one of his hands. He called the police and I was arrested and put in juvenile hall for six months. My parents turned me over to the state and I went to a group home, I ended up running away from there and ended up in California where I got addicted to crystal meth. Then I went one day and called my parents and asked if I could come home and they bought me a Greyhound bus ticket. I ended up going back home, then about two weeks after I got home, the beatings started again. I got tired of it and ran away again.

I ended up in Provo, Utah and was living with a girl and her son. Things were going good for a while until we started doing meth and lost our place and ended up on the streets. Then I called home once again and went back home, the beatings started again but this time I stayed until I was 17 ½ years old. Then one day, I decided to go into my mom's purse and steal her checkbook and I forged two checks for \$500 each and cashed them to support my drug habit. I ended up getting thrown out of my parent's house, so I hitchhiked all the way to Wyoming. I met a girl by the name of Tiffany in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. She was an addict, also I ended up getting so paranoid that I thought that she was out to get me. So one night after being up for two weeks straight, I ended up putting a knife to her throat and told her I was going to kill her and throw her in the river. She ended up calling the police and I was arrested for felonious restraint and sentenced to 4 ½ years in the Wyoming Department of Corrections.

I got out and once again went back home until one day I was arrested for forgery and sent to prison in Arizona for 1 ½ years. While I was in prison, I started, as I like to call it "playing church", because my heart wasn't in it. I know that I was just using Christianity as a crutch. I got out and once again went back home. It lasted about two weeks until me and Howard had a falling out and he told me to get out. I packed my stuff and left and went and lived on the streets of Mill Avenue in Tempe, Arizona. Then I met this woman named Carrie and we ended up dating and she had her own place. I went to live with her and about six months into the relationship, I started doing all kinds of drugs and selling drugs and physically beating her. I was totally out of control. I even remember putting her in a choke hold and rupturing one of her eyes. It scared the living "hell" out of me. Then we had a friend and his wife living with us, and one night when I got home from work this guy started yelling at my girlfriend, so I told him to leave and he went and grabbed a 12" butcher knife. I ended up stabbing him and the police were called and I was arrested for aggravated assault and sentenced to 3 ½ years.

I lost my parent's trust and my girlfriend left me. I was so tired of life that I was ready to end my life when I just fell on my knees and asked God to take over because I couldn't do it any longer and I repented of all my sins and accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I stopped playing church and I haven't been the same since. I found life in my heavenly Father and my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I can tell you I'm so in love with them that I will never ever trade what I have with them for anything or anyone. I have more peace in my heart today than I have ever known and I have such a hunger for the Word of God that if I don't read it even for a single day, I feel physically ill.

I'm so in love with them and for a while now God has been putting it on my heart to become a youth pastor, so I am studying to become one, so I can help troubled youth. So they don't have to travel down the road that I travelled on. I can tell them that there is a better life out there and that life is in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who died for our sins and rose again on the third day, so He can give His life to us. Thank God for that. I've been where these youth have been and I want them to know that there are people out there in the world that loves them and cares about them, this is my heart's desire.

Cory's Corner

"Being Used" by God

By Cory Chilson

Today when I woke up I asked the Lord to use me somehow, someway to glorify Him. Not just knowing what to expect I headed off to work. Then it all began. During my usual routine we were told, "Instead of the usual seven chambers we would only be running five." So that meant we would be getting off work a little earlier. Then a co-worker and myself had a disagreement about some work that I had done to a tire and it all started there.

After our disagreement my co-worker decided to inspect each tire. Then he told me that if I missed one spot he was going to send it back to me to redo it all over again. He said, "That's how it's going to be!" This went on for about two hours and all the while the devil kept attacking me saying, "Where is your God now Cory? You suck at your job. See, God is not honoring your prayer that you prayed this morning. He don't want to use you for anything! You should stand up to this dude and fight him because he is just walking all over you. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

The entire time I continued to talk to God telling Him, "Lord, even though I don't understand what is going on here today or why this guy is so upset I still trust that You are involved in my day and I know somehow I'm being used by You. Thank You Jesus."

Then I thought the madness was finally about to end as my co-worker came up to me. Instead he said, "Look, I'm not going to stop harassing you until you either quit or we fight." I said, "Listen my brother this is really stupid. I never meant to hurt your feelings nor did I mean to make you have to do more work. So if I offended you I'm sorry. Look, I know you and I have had a rocky start but I've grown to like you. I consider you to be a friend of mine and no matter what; I don't want this job to come between our friendship."

That is when the Lord showed up and as always showed off! My co-worker said, "Brother, I'm sorry and now that I know how you feel I want to tell you I feel the same way." Just like that, God taught me how to remain humble and resist the devil, so that he would flee. He also allowed a person to open up and express what was on his heart to me, especially after I told him what I had prayed this morning. I won't say that my co-worker is a new believer but I will say he saw a light come on today that shown bright enough to allow him to admit that he was being a bit harsh with me.

Thank You God for using me today, even if it stung a bit it was well worth it! So, when you pray be careful, God does hear you and He will answer.

What Others Are Saying...

"My family in Christ, I would like to thank you all for the birthday card and helping me stay strong in the faith. I don't think you will ever know how much psychological support you give those of us who are in this situation. But you've helped me personally a lot. I've come to know that He's with us in every situation. It's up to us to recognize and acknowledge His power. I appreciate you all." - C.W.

"I wanted to take the time to thank you for helping me get to this point in my life. You set an example that people can change. I knew you and you have changed drastically, for the good. You saved my life years ago and I thank you." - L.C.

"First, I would like to thank you for your magazine. Also, thank you for the birthday card you sent. It means a lot that people that have never met me would care enough to take the time to show that there are people who still care in an otherwise fallen world." - T.A.

Quote Worthy

"Read the Bible as if you were seeking for something of great value. It is a good deal better to take a single chapter and spend a month on it than to read the Bible at random for a month."

- D.L. Moody (1837-1899) - An American evangelist and publisher, who founded the Moody Church, Northfield School and Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts (now Northfield Mount Hermon School), the Moody Bible Institute, and Moody Publishers.

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**

Any tithes or offerings that you would like to make to the *Overcomers for Christ* ministry, please make your checks or money orders payable to Living Word Bible Church, in the memo section put 'For Overcomers for Christ'. Mail them to Overcomers for Christ P.O. Box 42023, Phoenix, AZ 85080. Your donation does qualify as charitable contribution on your taxes. If you have any questions, please call or write Wade Anderson.

Overcomers for Christ P.O. Box 42023 Phoenix, Arizona 85080
(602)472-8741 • OC4Cphx@gmail.com

I Knew Not What I Did!
Contributed by J.M. - Author unknown

Alas! I knew not what I did!
But now my tears are vain:
Where shall my trembling soul be hid?
For I the Lord have slain!

A second look He gave, which said,
"I freely all forgive;
This blood is for the ransom paid;
I die that thou may'st live."

This, while His death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,
Such is the mystery of grace,
It seems my pardon too.

With pleasing grief, and mournful joy,
My spirit now is filled,
That I should such a life destroyed,
yet live by Him I killed!

A Letter
Contributed by J.R. - Author unknown

A letter is the warmest way,
To bid a friend the time of day.
A keep-in-touch that brings the smiles,
Across the very longest miles.
And what a wealth of strength and hope,
Is tucked inside an envelope.
Reminding loved one's that you are,
At least in heart, not very far.
In no country, state or camp,
The wealth beneath a postage stamp,
For memories that never age,
Are written down upon every page.
And though it's nice to telephone,
One of the sweetest pleasures unknown,
Are moments shared in thoughts we send,
That can be read and read again.

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

EDITORIAL Wade "Duck" Anderson, Michelle Anderson ART & DESIGN John Dobbins PRINTING Living Word Bible Church

Overcomers for Christ a Ministry of Living Word Bible Church

www.livingwordonline.org jasonlivingword@gmail.com

Overcomers for Christ P.O. Box 42023 Phoenix, Arizona 85080
(602)472-8741 • OC4Cphx@gmail.com