

How This Mental Shift Can Lead to Your Peace and Happiness

You *ought to* go to church. You *ought to* read your Bible, eat right, quit smoking, pay your tithes, and be a better mom ... dad ... husband ... wife... yodeler, underwater basket-weaver and more.

The weight of “ought to” living can be crushing. In fact, it’s really the essence of the law. Our sin nature traps us right in the line of fire of hundreds of “ought to” rules and rituals and no matter how hard we try, we can never quite fulfill our “ought to” quota.

Here’s the big problem with living under an “ought to” approach to life... We will never be able to change our hearts or please God merely by changing our outward behaviors. “Ought to” is a dead-end street.

Thankfully, the Holy Spirit has a different plan.

“For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor. 3:17, NLT).

When you begin a relationship with God by repenting of your sin and trusting in Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior, redeemer and Lord of your life, the Holy Spirit moves into the core of your being. And he gets to work. He uses the truth of God’s Word, the lessons of your circumstances and the wisdom and counsel of friends to shape you into the image of Christ.

And He grants us the one thing we need to thrive spiritually: freedom.

Now, I can do this! I could never do it before because I was too broken, too sinful, too oppressed and frankly, too

discouraged by my own failures. But now there is grace and forgiveness and freedom.

You've been living under "*you ought to pray more,*" but you may not have realized yet that you *can* pray big, bold, audacious, faith-filled prayers to a God who loves to hear, is powerful to answer and desires to listen.

You've been living under "*you ought to share your faith more,*" but you may not have realized that you *can* befriend lost people, show them love, speak well of Christ and draw others into your faith story because the God who wants to save everyone around you desires to speak through you.

You've been living under "*you ought to be a better husband/wife/mom/dad/leader,*" but you may not have realized that you *can* grow, a day at a time, into the person God intends you to be and into the likeness of his Son who went first, calls you to follow and walks with you all along the way.

Recommended Reading: *The Grace of God* by Andy Stanley

You're going to face days of seeming defeat and moments of failure. Welcome to earth. But you *can* get up and grow again, move forward and live life to the full.

I know you can do it because the author and finisher of our faith has done it for us and now waits at the finish line, cheering us on toward victory together with a great cloud of witnesses, all of whom testify to the power of big, biblical faith.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is—and if you're a believer, he is right in the middle of your life—there is freedom from *ought to*. There is the possibility of *can do*.

So, what's next for you? {eoa}

Brandon A. Cox *planted Grace Hills Church in Bentonville,*

Arkansas, in July 2011 and serves as the lead pastor. He previously served as a pastor under Rick Warren at Saddleback Church and developed the online global community of . He is also a coach to leaders, pastors and church planters.

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