

Freedom From Struggle

I've been asked, "Joyce, how do you live the Christian life?" My answer surprises a lot of people. I tell them, "You can't live the Christian life." I then say, "Only God can live it through you!"

One of the greatest lessons I have ever learned is that we can't change ourselves—it is only by God's grace that we can overcome our weaknesses and become more like Him. We struggle and get frustrated when we try to do things apart from God's grace and strength. The most frequent prayer we should all pray is, "God, help me!"

Years ago, when I first started reading the Bible and getting serious about God, I began seeing all of the things I needed to change—there were so many! I needed to clean up my mind and my mouth; I had to overcome being so negative and judgmental, and my behavior toward my husband, Dave, also had to improve.

I immediately went to work trying to do it myself. However, I ended up very frustrated and made little progress. Why? Because I was spending all of my own energy trying to do something only God can do.

Maybe you're in the same place. You want to break a bad habit or change your behavior in some way, but you are frustrated and discouraged by a lack of progress. Here's the good news: God never intended for you to do it alone. In fact, there's nothing worse than trying to fix something only God can fix.

So, what is our part? Our part is to study God's Word, especially in the areas where we have a weakness, and spend as much time with the Lord as we can—whether it's talking to Him in prayer or even just sitting quietly in His presence.

Breaking news, Spirit-filled stories. Subscribe to Charisma on YouTube now!

As we do, the Bible says we will change into His image “from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18b, NKJV). Our part is to diligently and humbly seek the Lord and receive His grace, which is the power of the Holy Spirit to change us and meet our every need.

The apostle Paul discusses this very thing in Romans 7. Paul, who wrote a large part of the New Testament and is widely regarded as one of the great men of the early church, realized he could do nothing without God’s help.

He says, “I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very thing that I loathe [which my moral instinct condemns]. ... I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. [I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out]” (Rom. 7:15, 18b, AMPC).

Does this sound familiar? Have you ever intended to do the right thing but still struggled and couldn’t make it happen regardless of how hard you tried? Paul was going through the very same thing, and he provides us with the answer in verses 24b and 25:

“Who will release *and* deliver me from [the shackles of] this body of death? O thank God! [He will!]”

Paul is saying we can’t do it on our own. However, God will do it through us if we let Him.

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up to date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

This same principle applies to our relationships with other people—we can’t change greatest thing we can do is pray for others, love them and allow God to change them Himself.

When my children were young, I was certain a couple of them would never make it on their own. My daughter Laura was

extremely messy, unorganized, and couldn't keep track of anything. My youngest son, Daniel, struggled his way through school, and I was convinced I would be taking care of him the rest of my life.

I spent so much time worrying and pestering and trying to change them on my own. Most of the time my efforts only seemed to make things worse. Yes, I needed to be a good mother and help them in every way I could. However, instead of worrying, struggling and making us all miserable, I could have been praying, trusting God and choosing to believe everything would work out well in the end.

You see, whether it's ourselves or someone else, the Lord wants us to seek His help, then rest in the knowledge that He is on the case. God doesn't want us to struggle; He wants us to believe. He wants us to relax and enjoy our lives even while we're waiting to see things change.

Today, my daughter Laura is so organized that one of her jobs is to help keep my life organized! And Daniel? The boy who barely made it through school is now the CEO of U.S. Operations for Joyce Meyer Ministries, and he does a fantastic job! Now I look back and realize how much time and effort I wasted worrying and struggling when God had things under control all along!

So, what are you struggling with today? Your behavior, your finances, your kids or maybe other people? Here's the best advice I can give you: **You can't do it on your own.**

Run to God for help, receive His grace, then make a firm decision to relax and enjoy your life while you trust Him to change things. As you do, you will find freedom from struggling—and discover a new level of God's peace and joy in the process.

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-part teaching resource "Living a Life of Total Freedom." You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, "Enjoying Everyday Life," by calling 800-727-9673 or visiting .

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 140 books, including "Battlefield of the Mind" and "Overcoming Every Problem" (FaithWords). She hosts the "Enjoying Everyday Life" radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit .

Please note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or website are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Joyce Meyer Ministries