

The Gift That Keeps Giving Joy Every Day of Your Life!

Of all the gifts we could ever receive, God's gift of salvation is by far the most amazing and important one. Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV) says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

We are saved by the grace of God through our faith in Him; our faith does not buy our salvation—it merely receives it. As Ephesians 2:8 says, salvation "is the gift of God." It is impossible to buy a free gift and this can be hard for us to understand. Human nature tends to be prideful, and we want to earn and deserve this free gift and take credit for being worthy of it.

But salvation is given to us freely by God's grace and the same way we receive Christ's salvation is the same way we have to live—by grace. God gives us His forgiveness and grace daily; we just have to believe and receive it.

See Yourself the Way God Sees You

When you are saved, it means God forgives your sins—all of them—and you have new life in Christ. All of your sins means everything in your past, present and future. You do not have to be afraid of sin because God has taken care of the problem. This is why the gospel is such good news!

Some believe that if we don't fear sin, we will keep sinning on purpose but that's not true. If you are truly born again and really have a relationship with God, there is a new nature inside of you.

Second Corinthians 5:17 (AMPC) says, "If any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a

new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come!”

Now no one is perfect and we all make mistakes sometimes. But if the Holy Spirit is living in your spirit through salvation, you won't be comfortable with those mistakes because God's nature is at work in you. God is not mad at us for our mistakes; He is love and we need to humbly accept His love and grace.

Changed by Grace

In John 15:5 (NIV), Jesus says, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” This Scripture reminds me that God doesn't expect me to change on my own. He is the power source and gives us the grace and strength we need to do what's right and make changes in our lives.

Here's our part in the process of changing to become more like Christ:

1. We hear the truth in God's Word and we're convicted by it. It's the Word that shows us who we are and reveals the sin in our lives. We have to realize what we're doing wrong before we can know what needs to change and how.
2. Then we repent of our sin. Being repentant means we're sincerely sorry and willing to turn away from it. (See 1 John 1:9.)
3. The next step is to study the Word in the area we need change. For example, if I have a problem with anger, I need to study scriptures about anger and forgiveness. Use the Word like medicine and take it into your heart and mind. James 1:21 (AMPC) says to “welcome the Word which implanted and rooted [in your hearts] contains the power to save your souls.” There is power in God's Word to bring change to our souls!

Believe, Receive and Enjoy Your Life

To receive God's blessings and enjoy everyday life, we simply need to make the decision to believe Him and His Word more than our thoughts and feelings. The Bible is our instruction manual on how to grow into the new nature He's given us and become who He wants us to be. So take some time each day to read and meditate on Scriptures that tell you about God's love for you, who you are and what you have in Christ.

A good verse to start with is Ephesians 3:17, which says, "May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love." This Scripture says that God loves you; His will is for you to be His child and receive every blessing He has for you—righteousness, peace, joy, provision of your needs, healing and restoration.

In Christ, you have a personal relationship with your Father God and you can hear from God and be led by the Holy Spirit, who lives in your spirit. In Christ, you have access to God's grace and strength to do whatever you need to do. Because of God's grace, you are blessed and you can enjoy your life!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's three-teaching CD series Joy and Enjoyment. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting .

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