

Dear Friend,

Did you know that living a holy lifestyle is not a matter of willpower? It is a matter of grace. What does that mean in a practical way? I used to read this verse and wonder what in the world it was talking about:

Rom 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

It was a long time before I understood Paul was describing the difference between a person who tries to live holy by the best efforts of man, and the man who has been born again by the grace of God and can now walk as a child of light ... because he is a child of light. The person in the book of Romans chapter seven loved God, believed that God's law was good, and with his mind he set himself to keep it (to live holy). But even though his mind agreed that God's law was holy and just and good ... he found that despite his best efforts to keep it ... he could not. He found there was another law, deeper than his mind, stronger than his will power, that kept forcing him back into sin.

This is the message God preached to the whole world by the Jewish nation. It is as if God selected the Jewish people, gave them the law of Moses, commanded them to keep it ... and by their failure God said to the whole world ... *"See world? They could not keep my law, and neither can you. Man is a sinner at his core. Setting the mind by the power of your will cannot set you free from sin. There is a law deeper than your mind, stronger than man's willpower, that will not allow you to be free from sin. You must be born again."*

The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only solution for mankind to ever become free from sin. First Jesus showed us by example that He could live free from sin. Our bible says He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. How did He do that? Most would answer, "Because Jesus is God." It is true that Jesus is God manifested in the flesh, but it is also true He laid down His divinity to become a man on earth. He was able to do it because He had a different light, a different life, on the inside of Him than anybody else on earth at the time. He was a man born of God, not of Adam. His life was from God, not from fallen man. He did not come just for us to see Him walk free from sin by the power of that life and only admire Him ... but never be like Him. He came so we could also have that same life in us. Said another way, He did not come as the only begotten Son of God just so we would admire Him from afar without the ability to ever become like Him. No, the bible says that for all who receive Him, He gives them the right to become sons of God themselves:

Joh 1:12-13 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Jesus prophesied again and again that those who follow Him and continue in His word would have the light of life within them, they would be His disciples, and that they would be made free from sin. Here are just a few examples:

Joh 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Joh 8:31-32 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;* (32) **And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**

Joh 8:36 **If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.**

When a person asks Jesus to forgive him and come into his heart, something supernatural happens. He is literally born the second time, born from above, born of the Spirit of God. He becomes a child of God, having the very nature of Christ within him. The bible says there is a new man created within him that is made after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.

Eph 4:24 **And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**

That new man has a voice, which we often call the conscience. It accuses or excuses every thought and it is a safe guide for us to walk in holiness. Following that inner voice is exactly how Jesus (as a man) walked sin free even though He was tempted in all points as we are. He constantly obeyed the voice of the righteous nature within Him. That is the first level of serving the Lord Jesus Christ for every believer: it is to bow the knee, to listen to and obey, that inner voice every time it speaks. Paul wrote:

Eph 5:8 **For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light.**

We are born of God. We are children of the light. We are no longer sinners who are slaves to sin. The Son has made us free by His grace, forgiving us our sins and placing His own nature within us so we can walk free from sin the same way He did ... in this world. We are to let the light of Christ shine forth from within us, like candles burning in the darkness, to draw others to the light of the gospel of Christ.

Your friend and co-laborer,

GARY