

E
7
m your life
life
r spirit man can
dy
ed in selfishness or

m your life.
at is
y pride
I Purify
I am

GRACE IS GIVEN TO THE HUMBLE

*Be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
—1 PETER 5:5*

[Read the remainder of chapter 8, beginning with the heading "Grace Is Given to the Humble."]

TRIALS IN THIS LIFE WILL EXPOSE WHAT IS IN YOUR HEART—whether the offense is toward God or others. Tests either make you bitter toward God and your peers, or they make you stronger. If you pass the test of humility, your roots will shoot down deeper, stabilizing you and your future. If you fail, you become offended, which can lead to defilement with bitterness.

Simon Peter was shaken to the point that he could no longer boast of being great. He had lost his natural confidence. He saw all too clearly the futility of his own strong will. He had been humbled. He was now a perfect candidate for the grace of God. God gives His grace to the humble. Humility is a prerequisite.

Have you ever said to Christ, "Lord, I've served You and laid many things down to follow You, so why is this difficult or terrible thing happening to me now?"

Tests either make you bitter toward God and your peers, or they make you stronger.

Christians who experience hurts and disappointments often become offended with the Lord because they believe He should give them special considerations for all that they have done for Him.

They are serving Him for the wrong reasons. We should not serve the Lord for *what He can do*, but rather for *who He is* and *what*

The Part of Jesus' Disciples' Great Faith

We are already done for as those who have been abandoned do not fall... we have forgotten from what manner of faith they were delivered. They are through our own eyes rather than through them.

Complete the following sentences:

My motivation for writing Christ is what he has done for me. He showed me unconditional love! I serve him because I love him!

My confidence rests in the Lord.

The reward I expect from Him is nothing! I just look forward to being with him one day!

We can do nothing of eternal value in our own ability.

WRITE A PRAYER...

Asking the Lord to purify your heart and to take away all confidence in your flesh.

Lord, thank you for Jesus' salvation! Purify my heart! Remove any confidence I have in myself! I can only rely on you!

DAY 12

THE ROCK OF OFFENSE

Paul says in 2Cor 13:10 a chief/conviction, often given to us who believe on whom will by no means be put to shame. Therefore, to you who believe, life is given, but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone, and is upon it building and a rock of offense." They smooth away objections to the word to which they also were appointed.

—1 Peter 2:6-8

Paul chapter 9!

TODAY THE MEANING OF THE WORD BELIEVE HAS BEEN WEARIED. In the eyes of most it has become a mere acknowledgment of a certain fact. To many it has nothing to do with obedience. But in the passage above, the words believe and disobedient are represented as opposites.

The Scriptures exhort "that whoever believes in Him [Jesus Christ] should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). As a result of the way we view the word believe, many think that all they are required to do is believe that Jesus existed and died on Calvary to be in good standing with God. If this were the only requirement, the demons would be in good standing with Him, for the Scriptures also say, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!" (James 2:19). Yes, there is no salvation for them.

Complete these sentences!

For me faith is in the Lord! It is the evidence of things not seen!

For me, obedience is Submitting, following, listening

If I say I believe and do not obey, then I am fooling myself. I am in disobedience.

The word *believe* has more meaning in the Scriptures than that of merely acknowledging the existence of or mentally assenting to a fact. Remaining true to the context of the verse above, we can say that the main element of believing is obedience. We could read it this way: Therefore, to you who obey, He is precious; but to those who are the obedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,' and 'a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.'

Love is the bottom line in our relationship with the Lord—not love of principles or teachings, but love for the Person of Jesus Christ.

It is not difficult to obey when you know the character and love of the one to whom you are submitting. Love is the bottom line in our relationship with the Lord—not love of principles or teachings, but we are susceptible to offense and to stumbling. When you live in obedience and to stumbling, fill the desires of men. As a result, you will suffer in the flesh. Jesus suffered His greatest opposition from the religious leaders. Jesus people believe God operates only within the confines of their parameters. If the Master offended religious people as He was led by the Spirit two thousand years ago, those who follow Him today will surely offend them also.

Remember, your response determines your future. Complete this sentence:

Others are offended with me living for Christ, I will pray for and bliss them.

The fact that the cross is the only way to salvation had written: "The fact that is the truth, and there's no way I'm going to lead people, but that is the truth, and there's no way I'm going to lead anything else." (See Galatians 5:11.) If anyone challenges the truth of the gospel, it is time to be offended without apology. We must determine in our hearts that we will for the Spirit of God no matter the cost.

WRITE A PRAYER...

Living Christ that you will trust, love, and obey Him.
and no matter what may come my way or who I may offend I will trust, love and obey you! you are my rock!

DAY 18

LEST WE OFFEND THEM

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.
—ROMANS 14:13

[Read chapter 10, stopping at the heading "Laying Down Our Rights"]

THOUGH MANY PEOPLE WERE OFFENDED AT JESUS, HE NEVER caused an offense by asserting His personal rights or benefits. Jesus urged, "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greater in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:4). The key phrase here is "whoever humbles himself." A little later Jesus amplified this:

Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

—MATTHEW 20:26-28

What a statement! Jesus did not come to be served but to serve. He was the Son of God. He was free. He owed no one anything. He was subject to no man. Yet He chose to use His liberty and freedom to serve.

Jesus chose to use His liberty and freedom to serve.

Read the following passages, and jot down what each Scripture teaches about serving and being a servant.

DAY 18

No one can save two masters. No one will love the one and love the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

But you are not to be like that. But you are not to be like the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.

Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

But now, by desiring to be released from the law so that we have been released from the law of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.

Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.

Philippians 2:5-11 The same mindset as Christ Jesus: who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth. And every tongue should acknowledge that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of the Father.

Notice that Paul emphasizes in Galatians 5:13 that we have not given the privilege or the opportunity to serve one another. We are not to use our liberty or privileges as children of the living God to serve ourselves. Liberty is to be used to serve others. There is freedom in serving but bondage in slavery. A slave is one who has to serve, while a servant is one who lives to serve. The name of Jesus is every tongue should acknowledge that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of the Father.

I have seen many Christians serve with a resentful attitude. They give grudgingly and complain as they pay their taxes. They still live as slaves to a law from which they have been set free. They remain slaves in their hearts.

WRITE A PRAYER...

Renouncing slavery to the world and surrendering yourself to be Christ's servant. Lord, I renounce all slavery to the world. I surrender myself to be a servant of the Lord! Not my will but your will be done!

LAYING DOWN OUR RIGHTS

But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.

-1 CORINTHIANS 8:9

Read the remainder of chapter 10, beginning with the heading "Laying Down Our Rights."

OUR LIBERTY HAS BEEN GIVEN TO US FOR SERVING AND LAYING DOWN OUR LIVES. We are to build and not destroy, to edify and not tear down. This liberty was not given to enable us to heap gain upon ourselves. Because we have used it in this manner, many today are offended by the lifestyles of Christians. We may have the freedom in Christ to do many things, but if something will offend another person, then we must carefully consider voluntarily limiting ourselves in order to witness to others.

Do the things I do seek the edification of another or myself?

Make a list of things that you have voluntarily stopped doing so that you will not offend or be a stumbling block to others.

I have given up the right to:
Always speak my mind with my mouth
Speak of others with my mouth
That others kindly with my behavior
Be right with my attitude

How do we know what freedoms and rights we need to set aside in order to win others to Christ? I suggest applying what I call the "edification test."

The apostle Paul, in writing to the Romans, summed up the heart of God in the matter: "Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19). What we do may even be permissible according to the Scriptures. But ask yourself: Does it seek the edification of another or myself?

Read the following passage slowly. Underline every part that is hard for you to do. Circle the part that you need to start doing immediately.

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but ~~each one~~ the other's well-being. . . . Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

—1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-24, 31-33

Allow the Holy Spirit to funnel every area of your life through this Scripture passage. Allow Him to show you any hidden motives or agendas that are for your profit and not for the profit of others. No matter what area of life you might embrace, accept His challenge to live as a servant of all.

WRITE A PRAYER . . .

Asking the Lord to show you anything in your life that may be a stumbling block to others, and then remove it.

Lord, please show me any area in my life that may be a stumbling block to others. Please show it to me and help me remove it immediately! In Jesus name Amen!

FORGIVENESS: YOU DON'T GIVE—YOU DON'T GET

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.

—MARK 11:24-26

[Read chapter 11, stopping at the heading "The Unforgiving Servant."]

LET'S TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF REFUSING to let go of offense and how to get free from offense. Jesus meant what He said: "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

We live in a culture where we don't always mean what we say. Consequently we do not believe others mean what they say to us. A person's word is not taken seriously.

It begins in childhood. A parent tells a child, "If you do that again, you'll get a spanking." The child not only does it again but several times more after that. Following each episode the child receives the same warning from his parent. Usually no corrective action is taken. If correction does take place, it is either lighter than what was promised or more severe because the parent is frustrated.

Are you forgiving others so that you might receive forgiveness?

But when Jesus speaks, He wants us to take Him seriously. We cannot view what He says the way we view the other authorities or relations in our lives. When He says something, He means it. He is

THE BAIT OF SATAN DEVOTIONAL STUDY GUIDE

faithful even when we are faithless. He walks at a level of truth and integrity that transcends our culture or society. So when Jesus said, "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses," He meant it.

Let down what Jesus had to say about forgiveness in the Gospels.

Matthew 6:14-15 For if you forgive other people when the sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Luke 6:37

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Matthew 6:12

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors,

Are you taking Jesus seriously? Are you forgiving others so that you might receive forgiveness? When your heart is filled with unforgiveness, then there is no room in it to receive God's forgiveness.

WRITE A PRAYER...

Let God to enable you to truly forgive the people who have offended you so that you will be able to receive God's forgiveness.

and help and enable me to truly forgive those who have offended me. Search my heart!
I want to be able to receive your forgiveness! In Jesus name! Amen.