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July 2012

## The Proof Of A Believer's Experience

Study 1: Galatians 3:1-5

—Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

<p><b>1. A believer corrects error</b></p> <p>a. Because ignoring the error makes him foolish &amp; deceives him</p> <p>b. Because he has seen Christ so clearly</p> <p><b>2. A believer receives the Spirit by faith, not by observing the law</b></p>	<p><b>CHAPTER 3</b></p> <p><b>III. THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE &amp; NOT BY WORKS, 3:1-4:7</b></p> <p><b>A. The Proof of a Believer's Experience, 3:1-5</b></p> <p>O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?</p> <p>2 This only would I learn of you, Re-</p>	<p>ceived ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?</p> <p>3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?</p> <p>4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.</p> <p>5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?</p>	<p><b>3. A believer grows by faith</b></p> <p><b>4. A believer suffers because of his faith</b></p> <p><b>5. A believer experiences God's miraculous work by faith, not by observing the law</b></p>
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### Section III

#### THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE AND NOT BY WORKS

Galatians 3:1-4:7

#### Study 1: THE PROOF OF A BELIEVER'S EXPERIENCE

**Text:** Galatians 3:1-5

**Aim:** To make absolutely sure that your spiritual experience is based on faith alone.

**Memory Verse:** "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Ga.3:3).

#### SECTION OVERVIEW:

This passage begins the major teaching of the book of *Galatians*, that a man is justified by faith alone and not by good works nor by law. Of

course, a man should be as good as he can be and do as much good as he can. A man should live a moral and just life like the law says. But this is not the point; this is not what Scripture is saying. Scripture is saying that a person is *not justified* before God by doing good and keeping the law. No man can do enough good nor keep enough laws to become perfect and acceptable before God. God is perfect, and no matter how much good we do and how much law we keep, we do not become perfect. We still fall short: we still fail, sin, age, and die. Good works and law do not perfect us; they do not make us acceptable to God nor impart to us eternal life. Only God Himself can perfect us, accept us, and give us eternal life. Any thinking and honest person knows that there is nothing on earth—absolutely nothing—that can keep us from coming short and dying. There is absolutely nothing on earth that can give us eternal life in a perfect world where there is nothing but love, joy, and peace. If we are ever to inherit eternal life, then God has to give it to us.

The point is this: How do we know that God will justify us? How do we know that God will accept us and give us life with Him forever? The answer to this question is the discussion of the present passage.

There are six proofs that God will justify us by faith alone, six proofs that God will not justify us by works and law.

**SECTION OUTLINE:**

1. The proof of a believer’s experience (3:1-5).
2. The proof of Scripture (3:6-14).
3. The proof of God’s Covenant or promise (3:15-18).
4. The proof of the law’s powerlessness (3:19-22).
5. The proof of what faith does for us (3:23-29).
6. The proof of Christ and the fullness of time (4:1-7).

**INTRODUCTION:**

Christian songwriter Andrae Crouch captured the essence of this session when he wrote, “I didn’t think it could be until it happened to me. And you’ll never know that it’s true until it happens to you.” (From *Andrae Crouch and the Disciples: Live at Carnegie Hall*. Light Records, a division of Word).

Until someone has had a spiritual experience with Jesus Christ, their concept of salvation will be built on a foundation of works. The natural mind has no concept of grace and faith. The Christian believer’s experience validates the truth of this line from a great hymn: “Just as I am without one plea.” You will note that the rendition does not say “Just as I *will be*,” but “just as I am.” Hallelujah! We can not add one thing to our salvation. Christ comes to each one of us...just as we are.

Some influential people had joined the churches of Galatia; and the churches took pride in their presence. The new members were so capable and the churches were so glad to have them that they were immediately placed in positions of leadership and teaching. However, these new members had not been truly converted by Christ or else their understanding of the gospel was all confused. They began to teach that faith alone was not enough to save a person, that a person had to undergo the basic ritual of religion (circumcision) and focus his life upon the law in order to become acceptable to God.

Paul’s answer is direct: the *experience* of the Galatian believers disproves that a person becomes acceptable to God by law. The *believer’s experience* proves that he is justified by faith alone, and all a believer has to do is to rethink his experience and he will see the truth.

**OUTLINE:**

1. A believer corrects errors (v.1).
2. A believer receives the Spirit by faith, not by observing the law (v.2).
3. A believer grows by faith (v.3).
4. A believer suffers because of his faith (v.4).
5. A believer experiences God’s miraculous work by faith, not by observing the law (v.5).

**1. A BELIEVER CORRECTS ERRORS (v.1).**

There are four reasons why a believer must correct the errors that he comes across.

1. Error makes a person *foolish*. Note that Paul calls the Galatian believers “foolish Galatians.” The word *foolish* means misunderstanding, thoughtless, and unthinking. The Galatians were listening to false teaching and passively drinking it in. They were not thinking through what was being taught. They were lazily sitting and soaking it up, not applying their minds to see if what was being taught was true or not. They were *foolish*, acting like senseless people who were incapable of thinking.
2. Error deceives a person. The word *bewitched* means to fascinate, cast a spell upon, mislead, deceive. The false teachers were, as so many are, very capable, fluent, and persuasive speakers with dynamic personalities and charisma. Their teaching sounded reasonable and logical.
  - ⇒ A man must keep the ritual of religion.
  - ⇒ A man must do good works to be good.
  - ⇒ A man must keep the law in order to be acceptable to God.

It all sounded reasonable and logical, especially to a person who was not thinking and comparing the teaching to the gospel of Christ. The error was *bewitching*, deceiving the believers.

3. Error shows disobedience. The Galatians simply were not obeying the truth. They were trying to become acceptable to God...
  - by undergoing the ritual of religion (circumcision, baptism, etc.) instead of trusting the death of Jesus Christ.
  - by subjecting themselves and focusing their lives upon the law instead of Christ.
4. Error leads a believer away from Christ. This is tragic, for the true believer is a person who has seen Christ crucified for him. The Galatians had clearly seen the death of Christ through the preaching of Paul. Paul’s preaching had plainly pointed out and explained the death of Christ. In fact, the Lord’s death had been so clearly explained that it was as though the Lord Jesus had been crucified in their presence, before their very eyes. There was, therefore, no excuse for their following false teachers. They knew what Christ had done for them, that Christ had died for them and had taken their sins upon Himself and borne their punishment for them. They knew that God loved them, that God so loved the world...
  - that He had sent His Son into the world to die *for them*.
  - that God expected all men to believe in the death of His Son, Jesus Christ.
  - that God took their faith and love in His dear Son and

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accepted them because they believed and loved His Son.

How then could they be so foolish and bewitched as not to obey the truth—especially when they had clearly seen and understood the death of Jesus Christ?

**ILLUSTRATION:**

When you were in school, how many papers did you begin to write only to ball them up and throw them into an already over-filled trash can? Did you ever give up and quit? Probably not, because you needed to turn in your assignment in order to pass the class.

If you were to spend some time in the shop of a potter, you would be fascinated to watch the potter at work. Working with a lump of unimpressive clay, the potter begins to form a civilized shape on his wheel. When it appears that he is almost finished, he suddenly smashes his work back into a lump of clay again. “What a waste of time,” you think to yourself. It looked pretty good from your perspective.

But, to the trained eye of the potter, an error was easily detected. Because he took pride in what he did, he was not willing to overlook the flaw. His product was going to be a cut above the rest—because of his commitment to quality.

In the same sense, the Christian believer must have the same commitment to correcting errors in the Church. Is it any wonder that a lot of non-Christians are searching for answers elsewhere because the “Christian Potters” are not committed to quality? We must be willing to look for and recognize false teachings and then to get rid of the erroneous teachings. Only then will our witness be pure and appealing to non-believers.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What distinguishes the truth from error? Why do some believers fall into error?
2. What can you do to protect yourself from being deceived?
3. What are some of the natural results of a believer who falls into error? What encouragement would you offer to someone who has fallen into the trap of some false teaching?

**2. A BELIEVER RECEIVES THE SPIRIT BY FAITH, NOT BY OBSERVING THE LAW (v.2).**

Note that this whole passage is a series of questions. Paul is stirring the Galatians to think. The present question strikes at the very heart of the gospel: How did you begin your Christian life? Did you receive the Holy Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

There is one thing genuine believers know, and the genuine believers in the Galatian churches knew it too: no person earns, wins, or merits the Spirit of God. Man is too polluted and too short of God’s glory to deserve the Spirit of God. His thoughts and behavior are too often..

- ugly
- selfish
- greedy
- unjust
- negative
- immoral
- lustful
- undisciplined
- impure
- unrighteous
- imperfect
- unholy

No matter how much good and how much of the law is kept, the be-

liever knows that he did not and cannot eliminate such thoughts and behavior—not fully, not perfectly. Therefore, he did not become a Christian—he did not receive the Holy Spirit—by good works nor by the keeping of laws. He became a Christian and received the Spirit of God by hearing about faith in Christ. He heard the glorious news that Christ had died for him and his sins, and he believed the news. Therefore, God took his faith and counted it for righteousness.

The believer knows that he is not righteous, but God *counts him righteous* because he *believes and loves* His Son. The believer knows that the Holy Spirit does not dwell in him because of any goodness or work of his own; he knows that he has the Holy Spirit because God counts his *faith in Christ* as reason enough to put His Spirit into his heart. That is how the believer receives the Spirit of God, and that is how the Galatians received the Spirit of God.

**APPLICATION 1:**

Every person must hear the glorious message of faith. The *message of faith* is the gospel of salvation—*faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His death for our sins*.

**“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Ro.10:14-17).**

**APPLICATION 2:**

The Holy Spirit is the gift of God. No man can earn, win, or merit the Spirit of God. God’s Holy Spirit is given by God and by God alone.

**“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn.14:16-17).**

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Why has God connected salvation with faith instead of works and the law?
2. How would you explain the concept of faith to a person who was seriously examining Christianity?
3. Why do some people think it takes more than faith in order to be saved?

**3. A BELIEVER GROWS BY FAITH (v. 3).**

Again, note the question: **“Having begun your Christian life in the Spirit, are you now maturing and being made perfect by the flesh?”**

A believer does not become spiritually mature by focusing upon his flesh, upon what he can do with...

- his efforts
- his works
- his goodness
- his discipline
- his morality
- his just behavior

No matter how strong and disciplined his flesh is—no matter how many good deeds and laws he is able to do in his own flesh—the believer’s flesh does not make him grow spiritually. Focusing upon his flesh and upon the strength and work of the flesh only causes the believer to concentrate upon himself. It emphasizes self, not the Spirit—the human and physical, not the spiritual and heavenly.

Note another fact: no matter how many good works are done and no matter how many laws are kept, they cannot make a man perfect; they cannot impart eternal life to a man. There is no man upon earth that is living eternally because of works. There is no law whatsoever that can keep a man alive forever and ever. No matter how many works of the law a man has done *in his flesh*, he has not achieved perfection—not the holy perfection that makes him acceptable to God. If he is ever to be perfect enough to be acceptable to a Holy God, it will be because God perfects him, not because he has worked and become perfect through his corruptible flesh and human efforts.

As Paul says, “Are you so foolish?” Is God so low that corruptible and dying man can achieve so much? Is man so exalted that he has so little to achieve in order to be perfected? Any thinking and honest heart knows not.

⇒ A man *begins* his journey to God when he truly believes in Jesus Christ and is “born again”—*a spiritual thing*.

⇒ A man *continues* his journey as he is daily renewed by the Holy Spirit—also *a spiritual thing*.

The only way a believer can spiritually grow and mature is to focus his life and mind upon Jesus Christ. The believer must focus his mind upon the things of Christ moment by moment, and as he does, the Spirit of God will draw his mind to spiritual things.

Remember: the Spirit of God lives *within* the believer. He is there to work within the believer and to help him grow and mature in Christ.

⇒ The believer keeps his mind and thoughts upon Christ, casting down imaginations and making every thought obedient to Christ.

**“Casting down imagination, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Co.10:5).**

⇒ The believer focuses and keeps his mind and thoughts upon being conformed more and more to the image of Christ. He keeps his mind and thoughts upon Christ all day long—praising, honoring, worshipping, and asking for His help and guidance. He learns to live and move and have his being in Christ.

**“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Ro.8:29).**

⇒ The believer who focuses his love, attention, and life upon the Lord Jesus Christ is accepted by God. God loves His Son so

much that He accepts any person who truly loves and focuses his life upon His Son. And someday—in the glorious day of redemption—God will perfect the believer and conform him perfectly to the image of Christ.

**“For our conversation [citizenship, behavior] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Ph.3:20-21).**

#### QUESTIONS:

1. It is very fashionable in our culture to be a “self-made” person. In what ways do people try to increase their faith?
2. What is the only way that you can grow in Christ? What are some distractions or barriers to growth that you need to overcome?
3. How does this verse help you to refocus upon the Lord?

#### 4. A BELIEVER SUFFERS BECAUSE OF HIS FAITH (v.4).

When the Galatians accepted Christ, they had suffered ridicule, abuse, isolation and persecution from their neighbors; and apparently the persecution had continued for some time (Ac.14:1-7, 19, 22). The point is this: if the Galatians now turned away from Christ to some false teaching, then the suffering they had borne for Christ would be in vain. They would have suffered for nothing. In fact, they would now appear foolish if they turned away from Christ when they had suffered so much in order to embrace Him.

#### APPLICATION:

Every believer who truly turns to Christ has some suffering to bear. It may be mild, but some suffering is borne. There is the suffering of...

- separating from the world
- denying self
- taking up the cross—dying to one’s own will and way every day
- giving everything that one has to Christ and His cause (money, time, energy, effort)

The list could go on and on, but the point is clearly seen. If Christ is worth suffering for, why then forsake Him and turn to some false teaching?

**“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mt.5:11).**

#### ILLUSTRATION:

Where is it written in the Bible that a Christian believer is exempt from suffering? Unfortunately, many have bought into a false doctrine that says “bad things don’t happen to good people.” We need to rest in God’s ability to provide everything that we need in order to become more like Jesus.

*A man found a cocoon of the emperor moth and took it home to watch it emerge. One day a small opening appeared, and for sev-*

eral hours the moth struggled but couldn't seem to force its body past a certain point.

Deciding something was wrong, the man took scissors and snipped the remaining bit of cocoon. The moth emerged easily, its body large and swollen, the wings small and shriveled.

He expected that in a few hours the wings would spread out in their natural beauty, but they did not. Instead of developing into a creature free to fly, the moth spent its life dragging around a swollen body and shriveled wings.

The constricting cocoon and the struggle necessary to pass through the tiny opening are God's way of forcing fluid from the body into the wings. The 'merciful' snip was, in reality, cruel. Sometimes the struggle is exactly what we need. (Craig B. Larson, Editor. *Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching*, p.266.)

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Can you recall an experience when you had to suffer because of your faith? What lessons did you learn from this experience?
2. How can God help you grow through suffering?
3. On a scale of 1 (any time) to 5 (never in my wildest dreams), rate yourself on the following statements. Call this your "suffering index." Would you...  
\_\_\_\_\_ Risk embarrassment by sharing Christ?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Take a short-term mission trip to a third-world country?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Skip a meal once a week and use those funds to feed the hungry of the world?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Get up thirty minutes earlier each day in order to have a quiet-time with God?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Stand up for the rights of the abused and oppressed?
4. Have you become satisfied with your faith, doing only what is easy and comfortable?
5. Does God expect you to suffer sometimes? Why?

#### 5. A BELIEVER EXPERIENCES GOD'S MIRACULOUS WORK BY FAITH, NOT BY OBSERVING THE LAW (v.5).

What were the miracles experienced by the Galatians? They were miraculous works of healing (see Ac.14:8-15). But note: the miracles were not due to the Galatians; they were due to God. The Galatians did not earn, win, or merit the miracles. They simply *heard about* the power of faith, and they believed God, that God would meet their needs. And God did—God worked miracles among them because of the "hearing of faith." They heard the glorious message of faith in Christ, and they believed in the power of faith in Christ; therefore, God honored their faith and met their needs.

#### APPLICATION:

What a lesson for us! To believe "the hearing of faith"—the glorious message of *faith in Christ and its power—and then to experience that power!*

**"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Mt.21:22). "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Lu.11:9).**

#### ILLUSTRATION:

In the U.S. Navy, the Seabees have a saying: "The difficult, we do immediately. The impossible takes a little time."

Author Jamie Buckingham shares this story from the missionary adventures of JAARS (Jungle Aviation and Radio Service—the flying arm for Wycliffe Bible Translators). We pick up his story about a pilot who was fighting to keep his plane from a fatal crash:

*Never for an instant did Ralph believe they could live through the pending crash...He could feel his wife's warm hand on the back of his clammy knuckles where he gripped the stick. "We do our best, God does the rest." It was the motto of JAARS. During all the time of the emergency, he had not called upon God. Why had he waited? Why had he not cried out at ten thousand feet? Now, with death only seconds away, he gulped the words.*

*"Father, if You still have work for me and for my passengers, please bring on the engine..."*

*It was a sensible prayer. He could have prayed for a giant hand to rise up out of the jungle and cushion his fall. He could have asked for ten thousand angels to bear him up on wings of down. But like Moses at the Red Sea, he was content for God to work in natural ways—not by sending a strong east wind to blow back the sea—but by bringing the engine back to life...The carburetor heat!...[It] was used primarily to prevent ice from forming in the carburetor ...But there were no known instances of icing at this altitude.*

*The carburetor heat! Again he tried to dismiss the thought, to spit it out of his mind. But it pounded against the inside of his temples. It rang in his head. And his hand was obedient. He reached down and jerked the carburetor heat handle and at the same time pulled back on the stick. The jungle had arrived. The only thing to do was flatten his glide just at the treetops, lose as much speed as possible, and settle into the foliage. Certainly forever.*

*Suddenly there was a mighty roar up front. The big prop, which had been slowly windmilling in the streaming air, roared to life. As if they had never quit, the thousand horses were up and running again, straining at the traces, trying with all of their might to pull the sinking old Duck out of the jaws of death.*

*Ralph's Canadian dignity, shaken all the way to the soles of his soggy socks, finally broke. It came forth like the sound of a shipwrecked sailor thrown at last upon a sandy beach. From the very inner part of his soul, there came forth an utterance of thanksgiving.*

*"Praise the Lord!" he said with deep reverence. And then repeated it. 'Praise the Lord!' (Jamie Buckingham. *Into the Glory*. (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1974), pp.13-14.*

## QUESTIONS:

1. Have you experienced any miracles in your life? Do you know anyone else who has?
2. Have you reached a point in your Christian journey where you do not expect miracles?
3. Do you feel you can take good care of yourself without any help from God?
4. Do you think God always has to provide a miracle? Does the miracle always have to be big? Why or why not?

## SUMMARY:

Your journey with Christ is meant to be a growing one, full of faith and sometimes full of suffering. Your experience is to be a testimony that has been built on Christ's handiwork, not your own efforts. Remember the challenges from this session:

1. A believer corrects error.
2. A believer receives the Spirit by faith, not by observing the law.
3. A believer grows by faith.
4. A believer suffers because of his faith.
5. A believer experiences God's miraculous work by faith and not by observing the law.

## PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES (Reflection & Response)

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4. Closing Statement of Commitment:

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## Pennsylvania Deitsh Testament



If you would like to obtain a New Testament with Psalms and Proverbs in Pennsylvania Deitsh, they are available for \$13.95 postpaid from the **Committee for Translation, 3864 Township Road 162, Sugarcreek, OH 44681. Phone 330-852-4663.**

You do not need to send money ahead of time; they will bill you with your order. Your local Christian bookstore may also have them available.

## What Is Justification?

**BIBLE MEDITATION:** "...and whom He justified, them He also glorified." Romans 8:30

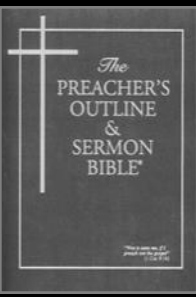
**QUESTION:** What does it mean to be justified? It means to be declared righteous.

Justification is not being good, though being good gives God glory. When you, by FAITH ALONE, put your FULL TRUST in the fact that God placed your sins on the Lord Jesus Christ then God stamps "righteous" over your name in His "Book of Life." (Romans 3:28, 5:1; Galatians 2:16, 3:11 & 24.

It's not because of what you have done or ever can do, but because of His justification. (Eph 2:8-9)

No court on earth can justify anybody. But what God does is take a guilty person and not only give that guilty person a pardon, but He makes that guilty person just as if he had never sinned. That's justification.

**ACTION POINT:** If you lived every moment believing in the justification that God has given you, how would your faith be strengthened? Would you be more vocal about the gift of God's love?



# Preachers Outline & Sermon Bible in King James Version

If you are one of those people who is serious about studying and understanding God's Word, but sometimes need just a little bit of help understanding what you read, then I would like to recommend to you one of the Christian's greatest and most trusted tools available in our generation. From the very first time I was introduced to the POSB commentary set, I fell in love with them. What drew me the most is the simple layout, explanations and illustrations (see sample of John 3:16-17 below). I also like the way this commentary brings in other scriptures to go along with what you are studying.

What I would like for you to prayerfully consider is; buy one book and see for yourself how great they are. I promise, you'll have a hard time laying it down. You will learn so much!

## Sample Page

<p>1. The fact: God so loved (v.16). 2. The evidence: God gave (v.16). 3. The purpose: to save (v.16).     a. From perishing</p>	<p><b>Love: 3:16-17</b> <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> For God sent not his Son into</p>	<p>the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.  b. To eternal life c. By believing</p>	<p>(the Incarnation) a. Not to condemn b. But to save <b>5. The means: Thru Him</b></p>
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**E. Revelation 5: God's Great**

**DIVISION II**  
**THE REVELATION OF JESUS, THE SON OF GOD, 2:1-3:21**  
**E. Revelation 5: God's Great Love, 3:16-17**

(3:16-17) **Introduction:** this is the world's most well known Scripture. Brief and to the point, Jesus revealed God's great love.

- The fact: God so loved (v.16).
- The evidence: God gave (v.16).
- The purpose: to save (v.16).
- The proof: God sent His Son (the Incarnation) (v.17).
- The means: through Him (v.17).

**1.** (3:16) God, Love of: God so loved the world. He loved the whole world. Note several facts.

1. The idea that God loves the whole world is a new idea. The Jews believed God loved the religious (the true Jew) and hated the non-religious (the Gentiles). The same thoughts are held by many in every generation, especially by religionists. The fact that God truly loves is shocking to many. Some wonder and others question how God could possibly love the...

- vile person
- immoral person
- child abuser
- thief
- street person
- enslaver
- murderer
- wife beater
- prostitute
- alcoholic
- oppressor
- bitter, vengeful

**Thought 1.** God loves every man, not just the religious and the good. He does not love only the people who love Him. He loves everyone, even the unlovely and the unloving, the unbelieving and the obstinate, the selfish and the greedy, the spiteful and the vengeful.

**And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16).**

**For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:12-13).**

**"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).**

**The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).**

2. The basis of God's love is His nature. God is love (1 John 4:8, 16); therefore, He loves. He acts, demonstrates, and shows His love.

**But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).**

**He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love...And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:8, 16).**

3. Love acts; it expresses itself. Love does not sit still, doing nothing. It is not dormant, complacent, inactive. If love actually exists, it has to act and express itself; it has to do something good. Love is loving; that is, love is always demonstrating love to others. Therefore, God's love acts and reveals Him to be love.

**Thought 1.** God wants man to know His love. He wants to reach everyone in the world with His love.

**Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us" (1 John 3:16).**

**In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9).**

**DEEPER STUDY #1**  
**(3:16) God Loved:** past tense. A past, proven fact. An outline of the greatness of God's love is seen in this verse. (1) Height: God loved. (2) Depth: so loved (3) Length: God gave (4) Breadth: Whoever. (See note—Jn 21:15-17)

**2.** (3:16) God, Love, of: there is the evidence of God's love—God gave His only begotten Son. Note several points.

- God demonstrated His love in the most perfect way possible: He gave His only begotten Son to the world. As God, He is perfect, which means His love is perfect. Therefore, God not only loves, but He so loves. He loves in perfection, loves to the ultimate degree. Whatever the ultimate degree and the perfect act and expression of love is, God shows it. Without question, the greatest act of love is the sacrifice of a man's own life; therefore, God sacrificed the life of His own Son to save man.

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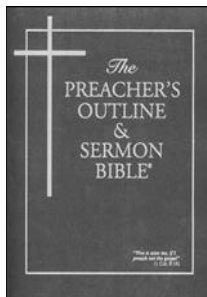
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I went to visit an Amish friend in the hospital. While waiting to go into her room, I had an opportunity to talk with her husband and relatives, ultimately leading to a discussion about heaven. I shared with them how I was born again and how it freed me when Jesus came into my heart. As they listened, I could tell some disagreed. After a while, those who disagreed, shared their be...

how a person gets more at born again over time, and death they have hopes of getting to heaven. They based their belief on how well they lived their life—trusting in their rules, not making too many mistakes, and not forsaking that which is good. They strive to live a good life, which is honorable in it's right place.

(Do we do good works as evidence of our faith or do we do good works to gain favor and salvation with God).

One even said, "We believe that the old Amish way is The Way." On my way home, and throughout the next couple of weeks, his sentence haunted me. I wish I would've replied: Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6)



To me it's simple – Jesus is the only way; not the Amish way, the Methodist way, the Baptist way, the Catholic way, the Mennonite way. Those are different theologies and standards of living; a box with a label. Some boxes are bigger and some smaller.

It's not wrong to be in a church box, but you must have Jesus as the core of your Him, your box is emp-Him—not our box.

put an interesting in my mind; the difference between a saved person who is working for the Lord, and an unsaved person who is working for the Lord. (Read Matthew 20:1-14.) In this story, you see that Jesus used a workday

as an example of life on earth. The people who were hired the third hour did not clock in; they went from their home to the fields. What do you think their wages would be after work?—the master had no knowledge of their work hours. He might've said, "How do I know you're not some stranger off the street wanting payment?"

Many of us know the value of clocking in if we want our wages. It's similar in spiritual labor; you come to Jesus and give our life up

to Him, saying, "I'm your servant, Lord. Use me anywhere you need me."

In that parable, it didn't matter what time they were hired (or clocked in); their wages were the same. In the same way, it doesn't matter the time (phase of life) you clock in (become a born again believer) but that you do clock in. Some might argue, "I'll wait till the eleventh hour." How much work would get done if all of us waited until the eleventh hour to clock in? Remember, we're not promised tomorrow.

Matthew 7:21-23 warns of people who work for the Lord all their life, but never give their heart to Him. It doesn't matter what box (church name) you live in; make Him the core by giving your heart and mind to Him.

Don't be one who says, God looks at the good things I've done, as a way to earn your salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9).

My mess is turned to beauty!

—by Cindy Miller

I'm in bigger trouble than I have ever thought possible, as I look over my life, my marriage. I see broken pieces of glass all shapes and sizes. They overwhelm my soul and mind as I stand here looking so helpless into this tin can, digging through it getting cut and bruised. In desperation I cry—hot tears streaming down my face. What am I to do "Lord", I silently scream. I can't fix this. It's to broken. My strength is not enough!!

I feel a gentle hand tipping up my chin, brushing my tears aside. Look! Remember what I did for you, dear child. As I look, I see a cross standing there. I draw in a sharp breath, as I glance from my tin can and broken glass to his finished work on the cross, I finally understand that He can do all things, if I just give it to Him!! As I slowly reach out my hand and pour out the tin can—the pieces hitting the ground clattering—

scattering into the dust, I feel a lightness come upon my spirit knowing that in my dear Savior's hand my marriage is secure. I can rest assured, He cares so much more than even I can. As I look toward the future, I see He will turn our mess into beauty. It will glisten for all eternity.

So dear friend, if you have a mess, a tin can full of broken glass, come to the cross, reach out your shaking hand and pour it out. Let the peace of God come upon your soul. Know that the One who cares so deeply for you, will take the brokenness of your life and fashion it into something unimaginable greatness and beauty. For He walks through the fire with us and sees all of our hurt and pain. Friend, He knows you; he wants you to know Him too. So give your life to The Lord. He wants a relationship with you!!!

Isaiah 43:1-3

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee...and he that formed thee...Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour...





Responses from previous articles that appeared in the Amish Voice

In response to Levi Schwartz's question in the March issue of the Amish Voice, on pride (hoffart) and humbleness (demut.)

The simplest concept of what humility is, can be gained by having small thoughts about oneself. Humility is the fundamental law for all salvation. In James 4:6 and in I Peter 5:5 is written the same thing, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." It is noteworthy that it is first written, God resisteth the proud.

Both James and Peter go on to tell us to resist the devil. And why should we resist the devil? Because he is the one who whispers to us in order to get us to have high thoughts about ourselves. When some things go well for a person, the devil comes and tells them, "You are really quite something, there really is something special about you," and tries to puff them up. His chief weapon is to puff people up, in whatever vocation it may be. But God opposes the proud.

When we are proud, God is our opponent. He gives grace to the humble. To receive grace means to receive help that I need. We receive only as much grace as the humility we possess.

When it can't be noticed that there is any progress in your life, it is because you are not receiving grace. You can accomplish a lot in your own human strength and attempt to compensate for a lack of grace by being zealous in different things. You can be capable and good, as a human being, but all that human goodness and ability doesn't help if God opposes you. You aren't acknowledging and you aren't judging yourself, but defending yourself instead.

He who humbles himself voluntarily abases himself -will be exalted. If you are a little bit humble, it will succeed a little bit, and if you are especially humble, it will succeed especially well.

The law regarding humility is like the laws of nature. The whole creation would perish if everything didn't go exactly according to laws. When God gives grace, then one receives very precisely that degree of grace-that means help, new light, salvation, transformation.

A given amount of humility yields exactly-by weight and measure-the same amount of help and salvation. There are no exceptions. It is a universal law. This also applies to unconverted people. It is by His grace that it succeeds, and grace means help.



There are two aspects to the word grace. One is the atonement and the forgiveness of sins. But grace also means help. To experience grace is to receive true light, life victory and glory, all in accordance with the laws of humility.

God is interested in thoroughly saving us. It all depends on how we take things. Each one must understand this as well as he can. If you don't understand it, then hide it in your heart so you can receive light later. Better late than never. Now then: It's written about love that he who doesn't have love is nothing. This would appear to be a different, very central issue. But it really isn't. We cannot get love if God doesn't give it to us, and He gives it to the humble.

We have heard and read a lot of wonderful things about love and the spirit of faith, etc. And it is very important. But if we're not humble, we won't receive anything. In accordance with this, the wisest thing to do is getting smaller thoughts about ourselves, and to use every opportunity to humble ourselves.

To humble oneself of your own volition, represents the highest degree of humility. This is not the same as being humbled. God is the one who does that, to the proud and high-minded, that they might not be condemned with the world. I Cor. 11:32

Felty Yoder, Salem, KY  
(270) 988-4145

**In the Jan. issue, in Eli Stutzman's article on, "How Shall We Ever Please God," He states that the first husband is the Law of Moses. Now, I know that Watchman Nee explains it that way, but it's not the way we see it. We understand the first husband to be the flesh (the old man that needs to be crucified and die on the cross). The law is quite simply what binds the woman to the husband. Romans 7:2. When the first husband is out of the way, the law becomes superfluous. —Felty Yoder, Salem KY**

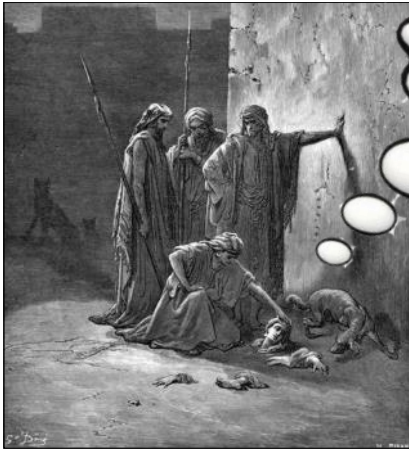
**Eli Stutzman Replies:** Thank you for your response. The verse in question is from Romans 7:2 *For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.*

The passage is intended as an allegory (parable) showing the Hebrews (see verse 1) how the old law of Moses can no longer be in force for a believer. As an allegory (using a parallel story to illustrate a point) it can only be used to demonstrate that particular point. The death is past tense.

Matthew Henry commentary says: [2. We are married to Christ. The day of our believing is the day of our espousals to the Lord Jesus. We enter upon a life of dependence on him and duty to him: Married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, a periphrasis of Christ and very pertinent here; for as our dying to sin and the law is in conformity to the death of Christ, and the crucifying of his body, so our devotedness to Christ in newness of life is in conformity to the resurrection of Christ. We are married to the raised exalted Jesus, a very honourable marriage. Compare 2 Co. 11:2; Eph. 5:29.]

As to the flesh, it does not die instantly, it has to be dealt with throughout our lifetime. The law is out of the way, so now we either serve in the spirit or in the flesh. *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* (Romans 8: 4)

Dealing with the flesh is an ongoing process, so the admonition is always in the present tense. There is far more in various commentaries than I could possibly post here, but I hope this will suffice.



## FOR YOU

ed. Her name is mentioned 22 times in the Old and New Testament.

Recently, a friend of mine said: “the reason she was eaten of dogs is because she wore stylish clothes and painted her face.”

In the Old Testament we read about a woman named Jezebel who was killed and eaten by dogs. Truly, she was one of the most wicked and ungodly of all women the Bible ever recorded.

After reading about her in 1st and 2nd Kings, I was not able to come up with the same conclusion my friend came up with. For that reason, I would like to ask our readers what their thoughts are.

Secondly, I would like to encourage you to read the account of Jezebel and share your thoughts via letter. If you allow me, I would gladly publish your article in the next issue.

You can read about her in the following places: See 1st Kings 16:31 through 21:25. Her account concludes in 2nd Kings chapter 9.

I look forward to hearing from you. —Joe Keim

*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

—Matthew 11:28-30

1. When you are feeling sad and blue, and your troubles seem so big you just can't see your way through...Come to Me and rest.
2. When you've messed up, yet another time, and you feel like you're reaching the end of your line...Come to Me and rest.
3. When it seems no one understands, and you've tried to explain so often you feel like burying your head in the sand...Come to Me and Rest.
4. When things keep coming one after the other, and you're beginning to feel like a failure of a mother...Come to me and rest.
5. When you need wisdom to deal with relationship issues, and you try and you try, but all you seem to do is use all your tissues...Come to Me and rest!
6. When your husband is stubborn and insensitive, instead of giving up and getting ready to leave...Come to Me and rest!
7. No problem is to big, no sorrow to great, no mountain unmovable, nothing can cause me to break...Come to Me and rest!

Written by Lyn Miller

## In Response to “Youth Leaving the Amish Culture”

—March Issue, Joe Keim



Dear Joe, before I was even finished reading your article about *Youth Leaving the Amish Culture*, I thought of writing about my youth. Then in the end you actually asked to hear from others concerning this topic. That motivated me even more!

I grew up in an Amish home and I don't remember my parents ever telling me that they loved me. And I never got a hug or any praises that I recall. I guess there may have been times though, that they expressed appreciation for something my brothers, sisters or I had did. But for the most part it seemed we were always being pushed and yelled at.

Sometimes it seemed my dad would “test” us to see if he could catch us at lying. He would watch us so closely or dig so deep, if we lied we had to be good liars! Believe me, we teamed up and tried to cover up for each other. It seemed to me sometimes that he drove us to lie. We did not want to get caught at something that would upset him.

One day my sister dropped a jelly dish in the kitchen when dad was in the basement. Of course it broke and was a sticky mess. We were just horrified that dad would come upstairs and see it! So my sisters and I helped each other and cleaned it up the quickest way possible. Dad had been telling us that the one who made this mess is not normal and even mentioned it in her presence. We did not want him to fly off the handle and give her a hard time.

We were often told how stupid and worthless we were. And my young mind truly believed it. My mom was more like the peace maker of the family.

My late teen years were full of fear and confusion. So many of the church rules didn't make sense to me. I couldn't get any decent answers. Sometimes I had the nerve to question my mom about certain things. Why we had to do some things this way or that way. She would say it has always been that way. Or she thought we shouldn't question it. Another answer would be that it is better for us to suffer than us making others suffer.

My dad and brothers fought a lot. Five brothers left the

Amish, but the one who is schizophrenic is back with my dad again and trying to live the Amish life. He has a sad life (up and down like a roller coaster).

When I was younger I was very run down and often sick. Things changed after I started dating a very special young man. My dad talked about it that I'm looking healthier. He made the comment that it must be because of that boy! Which is probably true, because of all of a sudden I had something to look forward to. The future looked promising to me. Getting married would mean getting away from home!

By the time we wanted to get married my two oldest brothers had already left the Amish. They both got married in the Amish community and left that life afterwards.

Well my parents were so worried that we won't follow the Amish rules once we're married and maybe leave too.

—Continued on page 11—  
They were hesitant in letting us get married. It got to the point that I thought why not leave the Amish and then get married, if they don't trust us enough to have a wedding for us.

All I wanted was to be with



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**Continued from back page**

*without knowledge, therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

I wish there were more space, as we only have room for a few verses. However, my friends, it is very clear that God is looking for more than our best. Remember that Job was called perfect, and by God himself! If any man ever had reason to think his righteousness counted for something, Job had that reason.

Now, let's look at Romans:

*Romans 3:23-24—For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

*Romans 3:27-28—Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that **a man is justified by faith** without the deeds of the law.*

*Romans 4:5—But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, **his faith is counted for righteousness.***

Friends, we are clearly saved by grace,

through faith in our Savior Jesus Christ alone. We must be followers of our Savior; not for the sake of righteousness, but because we are fully committed to him! There is so much trouble because people do not rightly divide the Word of God!



*2 Timothy 2:15—Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.*** (Our works are no longer filthy, because we have Christ. Christ finished work cleanses us, and makes us and our works clean; therefore we no longer need to be ashamed.)

We must recognize that the Bible speaks of different topics, and that indeed we must

work for the Lord. Indeed, our reward is based on our works, but not our salvation (another column could be written about the difference between 'reward' and 'salvation', and even 'saved' versus 'salvation'). We must read the entire Bible; not only the verses that allow us to find our own way into heaven. Jesus Christ alone is the door, our robe of righteousness. Our righteousness is as filthy rags to God. In spite of that, we tend to be so proud that we ask God to accept our filthy works, pleading that He'll like what we do! This is a shame, a terrible shame, and it's time we accept Christ as our righteousness and fully consecrate our entire lives, spouses, families, occupations, goods, and yes, even our own righteousness. Only then can we come into His Glory. J. Martin

**—Continued from page 10—**

this young man and away from that rigid life. We finally got married, but first, I was forced to say that my brothers who left the Amish are wrong for having left. In my mind I was planning to get into the Bible and find some answers after I'm married.

I am happy to tell you that my husband and I are both born again Christians now! And my

husband is proof to me that not all men are as I feared they are. He is a great man. I thank the Lord many, many times over for having brought that special man into my life.

We have a precious little boy about 2 years old and I often worry that we will mess up in child training. I just try to give it to Jesus and ask for guidance. He is our little jewel and a blessing to our life.

I think a huge missing part in my young life was trust. I had no confidence in myself. There was so much tension in the home where I grew up.

—Name withheld

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## Current Resident

### Is Your Best Good Enough for God?

— by J. Martin

When I was a child, I thought of God as a vague (unclear), faraway being who wanted something from me. To be honest, I was a bit confused. I knew there was a problem with sin, but that didn't stop me and I really didn't know how to stop doing the wrong that I did. So, I kept asking God to forgive me for my sins, hoping and praying that at Judgment He would remember that I asked for forgiveness, thinking that asking for forgiveness was the solution.

This type of thinking is no different than the world's concept of right and wrong. It's commonly thought that we should do good things, and that as a just God, He will reward us with heaven because we tried. It's been said that we must do the best we know, and that is what we'll be held accountable too. Many preachers falsely teach this incredible lie.

My friends, the Bible teaches us another way. In this column we're going to look at some key verses which point to a wonderful Savior, who indeed has ransomed (delivered) us from our debt. The man Job also thought doing good things was the requirement and

that he should be rewarded for his works. Let's take a closer look at some verses from the book of Job.

*Job 1:1—There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and **that man was perfect and upright**, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

Notice that the verse says he was perfect. Then, with the permission of God (Job 1:12), Satan wreaks havoc on Job's life, taking away all he had. Job starts to complain:

*Job 3:3—Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. (The child he is referring to is himself)*

Job's friends came to comfort him, but spoke critical words that God himself condemned them for (Job 42:7). After much back and forth between Job's three older friends and himself, the younger Elihu speaks up:

*Job 32:2—Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.*

*Job 35:4-8—...Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what doest thou against Him? or if thy transgressions [wrong doings] be multiplied, what doest thou unto Him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou Him? or what receiveth He of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.*

After much painful truth, Elihu finishes his message. The Lord confirms Elihu's speaking by asking many questions; asking Job to justify his bold proclamation that his good works should count for something:

*Job 38:3-4 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding...* —continued on page 11—

Fortunately, Job understood:

*Job 42:1-3—Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that thou canst do every-thing, and that no thought can be withholden*