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The Proof That A Man Is Justified By Faith Alone And Not By Works

Study 4: Galatians 3:19-22

—Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

1. The law was given to reveal sin—to make men more aware of their sins
2. The law was temporary
3. The law was not given by God, but through a mediator; therefore, it is inferior

D. The Proof of the Law's Powerlessness, 3:19-22

19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

4. The law has no power to give life

5. The law declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin

Section III

THE PROOF THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE AND NOT BY WORKS (Galatians 3:1-4:7)

Study 4: THE PROOF OF THE LAW'S POWERLESSNESS

Text: Galatians 3:19-22

Aim: To expose the law's powerlessness to justify us.

Memory Verse:

“But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Ga.3:22).

INTRODUCTION:

One of the corny gags from the days of Vaudeville theater was someone pointing a gun at someone else, pulling the trigger and...BANG! said the flag as it hung from the barrel. The gun looked real and sounded real, but it proved to be harmless.

The law has the same effect on the Christian believer. It looks intimidating and it sounds intimidating, but it is powerless. The law cannot justify us. Those who claim that the law does justify are just shouting BANG!

There were some teachers in the Galatian churches who were teaching a false doctrine: that a person is justified (acceptable to God) because...

- he does the very best he can: he honestly tries to obey the law of God and to do as much good as he can.
- he practices religion: he keeps the rituals, ceremonies, and rules of the church.
- he has submitted to the basic ritual of the church (circumcision, church membership, baptism, or whatever).

All of these are important: everyone should be faithful in obeying the law and in practicing religion and in being baptized. However, Scripture is abundantly clear: these are not the things that actually justify a person. Jesus Christ alone justifies a person. Man can do nothing whatsoever—exert no energy, no effort, no work—to make himself acceptable to God. A person is acceptable and justified before God only when he truly believes in God's Son, Jesus Christ. There are many people who...

- exert all kinds of energy and effort in keeping the law and doing the best they can, but they do not believe in Jesus Christ.
- practice religion, but they do not believe in Jesus Christ.
- have been circumcised and baptized, but they do not believe in Jesus Christ.

The raw energy—the fundamental act—that saves a person is faith in Jesus Christ, true faith in God's very own Son. When a person truly believes in God's Son, God takes that person's belief and counts his belief as righteousness. God accepts that person because he honors God's Son—honors Jesus Christ by entrusting and giving all he is and has into His keeping.

Since this is so, why then did God give the law to man? If we are not saved and justified by obeying the law of God and doing the best we can, what is the purpose of the law? This is the discussion of this passage: to show that the law is powerless in saving a man. And the powerlessness of the law actually proves that a person is justified or made acceptable to God by faith.

OUTLINE:

1. The law was given to reveal sin—to make men more aware of their sins (v.19).
2. The law was temporary (v.19).
3. The law was not given by God, but through a mediator; therefore, it is inferior (v.19-20).
4. The law has no power to give life (v.21).
5. The law declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin (v.22).

6. THE LAW WAS GIVEN TO REVEAL SIN—TO MAKE MEN MORE AWARE OF THEIR SINS (v.19).

How do we know that the law does not justify or make a person acceptable to God? Because the law was given to reveal sin—to make people more aware of their sins. Note the crucial fact: the law was not given to make men righteous, but...

- to make men aware of their sin and condemnation.
- to show men that they are short of God's glory.
- to stir men to pay attention to the fact that they are sinners.
- to stop every mouth from boasting and claiming self-righteousness.
- to awaken men to their crying need for God's help.
- to plant in man's mind that he desperately needs God to save him from sin and death.
- to arouse every mouth to confess its need for a Savior from sin and its punishment (death).

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro. 3:20).

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Ga. 3:24).

ILLUSTRATION:

What does God use to get your attention, to show that you are a long way from perfection? Does He use other people or circumstances?

Long ago a story was told about a proud fishing pond and a fish. Across the land, fishermen would come and exclaim how clear the water was in this pond. Upon hearing yet another positive accolade, the pond's level of pride began to reach flood stage. "I must be the best and clearest pond in the world!" It didn't take long for the old fish at the bottom to grow weary of this overdone pride. He had heard it for years. And he, better than anyone, knew what was really in this pond.

Resting on the bottom of the pond, the old fish began to rapidly flutter his fins. As he did the motion of the water began to stir up the silt on the bottom. It did not take long for the pond to fill up with a murky cloud.

"Stop! What are you doing to me? What have you done? How dare you dirty me up?!" screamed the offended pond. The fish responded in measured and striking words: "I haven't done a thing to you except to show what has been in you all the time.

And that is what the law does to us. It simply shows us the sin that has settled in the bottom of our hearts. Just in case we forget who we really are, the law reminds us how desperately we need the cleansing power of our precious Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS:

1. How can you know that the law is powerless to save you?
2. Since the law is powerless to justify you, why did God give the law?
3. When the "old fish" swims at the bottom of your heart, what kinds of things is he likely to stir up? Which one of these things need your immediate attention?

2. THE LAW WAS TEMPORARY (v.19).

How do we know that the law does not justify or make a person acceptable to God? Because the law was temporary. It had a certain course to run and when it was run, it was to be set aside. To say that the law was temporary frightens some believers, for they fear that such a teaching makes way for loose living. Nothing could be further from the truth. Note what Scripture says:

"[The law] was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come" (Ga. 3:19).

When Jesus Christ came, the law was to be set aside. The law was meant to have only a temporary purpose and life span. It was to extend only from Moses to Jesus Christ, for Jesus Christ is "the seed" to whom the promise of righteousness was given. God *never intended the law to be the way of salvation*. It was only for the

temporary purpose of showing men their sin and its awfulness.

⇒ *However, note:* since Jesus Christ has come, He (His perfect life and righteousness) is to be the standard for men. Jesus Christ fulfilled the law; that is, in Jesus Christ, God gave man more than just mere words to describe how He wants man to live. He gave man the Life, the Person who perfectly pictures and demonstrates the law before the world's very eyes. Jesus Christ is the Picture, the Living Example, the Pattern, the Demonstration of life as it is to be lived. He is the Perfect Picture of God's will, the Ideal Man, the Representative Man, the Pattern for all men.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14).

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15).

Now note: since the law was meant to be temporary until Christ came, does that mean that the law has no value for men today? Could we just cut the law out of our Bibles and be just as well off? No, a thousand times no! Jesus Christ *fulfilled the law*; therefore, the law and its righteousness is part of His nature. Therefore, when a man looks at Jesus Christ, he sees the perfection of His nature, and that perfection includes the righteousness of the law. To cut the law out of our Bibles would be to erase part of our understanding of Jesus Christ and part of His very nature.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Mt. 5:17).

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Ro. 8:3).

Note another point as well: the law is still in force for the unbelieving world. Why? Because all unbelievers who have not trusted Jesus Christ are trusting their own righteousness to make them acceptable to God. They are still trying to become righteous by the law. Therefore, God shall judge them by the law.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Ro. 10:3-4).

Matthew Henry points out another fact that should be noted:

the law can still be used to convince men of sin and to restrain them from living loose and evil lives.¹

¹Matthew Henry. *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Vol.5 (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co.), p.661.

QUESTIONS:

1. Even though the law was only temporary, it still serves a useful purpose today. What does it do in your life?
2. What does the Bible mean when it says that Christ came to fulfill the law?
3. What kind of harm do you create if you separate Christ from the law?
4. Can an unbeliever achieve perfection through the law? Why or why not?

3. THE LAW WAS NOT BY GOD, BUT THROUGH A MEDIATOR; THEREFORE, IT IS INFERIOR (v.19-20).

How do we know that the law does not justify or make a person acceptable to God? Because the law was not given directly by God, but through a mediator; therefore, it is inferior. Two arguments show this.

1. The law was not given directly by God. The law came from God, but it was given by angels to Moses and then to man (Ga. 3:19; Ac. 7:53; He. 2:2). Moses stood as a mediator between God and man in the giving of the law; therefore, the law came to man as a second-hand thing. But not the promise of God. God Himself gave the promise of grace and righteousness (that is, of His acceptance and eternal life). Abraham received the promise of God directly from God. Therefore, the promise of God is bound to be superior to the law, for it involves a more personal contact (relationship) with God.

2. The law was between two parties—man and God. In the covenant of law, man and God both had responsibilities or work to do. Man had to keep the law, and if he did, God would act and reward him with the gift of righteousness. The gift of righteousness was conditional under the law.

However, the promise of righteousness or grace was given by God alone. No one could break that promise. If man (Abraham) simply believed God's promise, he received the promise of righteousness and grace.

QUESTIONS:

1. To whom was the law first given? Why does this make the law inferior?
2. What was man's responsibility to the law?
3. Exactly what has qualified you to receive God's promise of righteousness and grace?

4. THE LAW HAS NO POWER TO GIVE LIFE (v.21).

How do we know that the law does not justify or make a person acceptable to God? Because the law has no power to give life.

1. The law is only words and rules. It can only inject the idea of behavior into the mind of a person. It can only demand—demand that each precept be kept and obeyed. The law is mere words, cold and lifeless. It is entirely external to man, outside the body of man. It has no spirit, no life, no power to enable a person to do the law. It cannot help man to any degree whatsoever as he tries to keep the law. The law demands obedience, but it leaves man entirely on his own as he struggles to obey.

2. The law cannot give life to man. It is not a living being with the power to give life. If it were, then righteousness would have come by law. But, as stated, the law has no life and it has no power. It is mere writing, mere words and rules. However, this is not true of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is both a Person and a life. Therefore, He is able to put spirit and life to the words and rules of the law. He is able to live the life described by the words and rules. As such, He is able to inject both the idea and the power to behave into a person's mind and life. It is now His life that sets the standard and the rule for the believer; it is His spirit and life that give the believer power to obey.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro. 8:3).

ILLUSTRATION:

Doing all the right things and having all the right titles are of no benefit to the Christian believer. There is only one thing that will grant us justification. David Seamands ends his book *Healing Grace* with this story:

For more than six hundred years the Hapsburgs exercised political power in Europe. When Emperor Franz-Joseph I of Austria died in 1916, his was the last of extravagant imperial funerals.

A procession of dignitaries and elegantly dressed court personages escorted the coffin, draped in the black and gold imperial colors. To the accompaniment of a military band's somber dirges and by the light of torches, the cortege descended the stairs of the Capuchin Monastery in Vienna. At the bottom was a great iron door leading to the Hapsburg family crypt. Behind the door was the Cardinal-Archbishop of Vienna.

The officer in charge followed the prescribed ceremony, established centuries before. “Open!” he cried.

“Who goes there?” responded the Cardinal.

“We bear the remains of his Imperial and Apostolic

Majesty, Franz-Joseph I, by the grace of God Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, Defender of the Faith, Prince of Bohemia-Moravia, Grand Duke of Lombardy, Venezia, Styrgia... The officer continued to list the Emperor's thirty-seven titles.

"We know him not," replied the Cardinal. "Who goes there?"

"The officer spoke again, this time using a much abbreviated and less ostentatious title reserved for times of expediency.

"We know him not," the Cardinal said again. "Who goes there?"

"The officer tried a third time, stripping the emperor of all but the humblest of titles: 'We bear the body of Franz-Joseph, our brother, a sinner like us all!'

"At that, the doors swung open, and Franz-Joseph was admitted.

"In death all are reduced to the same level. Neither wealth nor fame can open the way of salvation, but only God's grace, given to those who will humbly acknowledge their need."²

² Alan J. White (Selected from Leadership, Fall, 1994), p.42.

The law is powerless. It cannot open heaven's door for you. It cannot give you life. Where have you placed your trust? In the law or in Christ?

QUESTIONS:

1. What can you count on the law to do for you?
2. Why would someone think that the law gives life to men?
3. Why is Jesus Christ superior to the law?
4. In what ways are you tempted to look to the law for direction? What can you do in order to redirect your focus upon the Lord?

5. THE LAW DECLARES THAT THE WHOLE WORLD IS A PRISONER OF SIN (v.22).

How do we know that the law does not justify or make a person acceptable to God? Because the law imprisons all men under sin. Note several significant facts.

1. "The Scripture" refers to the law. The law of God, or the Scripture, is conclusive: all men are lawbreakers—all men are under sin.
2. "Under sin" means to be shut up as a prisoner in the solitary hopeless depths or solitary confinement of a dungeon.

"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one....Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Ro. 3:9-10, 20).

3. The great purpose of the law is stated again: to drive men to seek the promise of Jesus Christ, that is, righteousness by faith. When men look at the law and see that they are sinners, they are driven to seek a Savior. Man can seek and trust the righteousness which Jesus Christ has secured. When a man believes in Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ judges that man righteous, and that man becomes a "partaker of the divine nature of God" (2 Pe. 1:4).

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ro. 5:1).

ILLUSTRATION:

No matter who we are, the law pulls us down. No one can defy the law's lethal gravitational pull. J. Vernon McGee illustrates this point for us:

Picture a building about twenty-four stories high. There are three men on top of the building, and the superintendent goes up to see them and warns, "Now be very careful, don't step off of this building or you will be killed. It will mean death for you." One of the fellows says, "This crazy superintendent is always trying to frighten people. I don't believe that if I step off this building I will die." So he deliberately steps off into the air. Suppose that when he passes the tenth floor, somebody looks out the window and asked him, "Well how's it going?" and he says, "So far, so good." But, my friend, he hasn't a rived yet. There is death at the bottom...

Now suppose another fellow becomes frightened at what the superintendent said. He runs for the elevator, or the steps, and accidentally slips. He skids right off the edge of the building and falls to the street below....The third fellow...is thrown off the building by some gangsters...Now the man who was thrown off the building is just as dead as the man who deliberately stepped off and the man who accidentally slipped off the building. All of these men broke the law of gravitation, and death was inevitable for all of them. It is in the fact, you see, and not the degree. It is the fact that they went over the edge— they all broke the law of gravitation.³

³ J. Vernon McGee. Thru The Bible, Vol.5 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), p.171.

The Proof That A Man Is Justified By Faith Along And Not By Works – (Continued from previous page)

If you are going to take a leap, leap into the waiting arms of the Lord Jesus Christ. Allow Him to pull you close to His side.

QUESTIONS:

1. The law continually convicts man of sin. What solution has God provided?
2. What feelings would a prisoner experience if he were trapped in a dungeon? Have you ever experienced some of the same feelings? What one thing freed you from a prison of sin, a “life without parole”?
3. What does this verse teach you about the nature of man? Why do some people tend to think that man is basically good? How does Scripture address this misconception?

SUMMARY:

Is the law pointing a gun at you? Are you afraid of what will happen when the trigger is pulled? BANG! It’s only a cruel gag. Remember, the law has no power over you because...

1. The law was given to reveal sin—to make men more aware of their sins.
2. The law was temporary.
3. The law was not given by God, but through a mediator; therefore, it is inferior.
4. The law has no power to give life.
5. The law declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin.

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:

This article was taken from the Teacher’s Outline and Study Bible (TOSB) Commentary, Galatians? Did you know—you can buy the whole New Testament commentary set? To order, please go to the back cover (page 11) and use the ordering form.

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My Song

—Cora Byler

The story behind my poem is very special to me because the Lord asked me to write it. I’m from the Amish culture, and as the Lord opened my eyes to receive Him as my Savior, I now want to share my testimony with others. He has changed my perspective and made a new piece of pottery out of me. Though I was broken, now Jesus can shine through my being, and I can tell the world of His love and what He has done for me.

*You first spoke to me, Jesus,
A little girl, bonnet and shawl.
Though you showed me your love,
With veil before my eyes, I couldn’t see*

*Through the storms of life
The broken pieces burned to ashes.
The tears from my heart
Put them together again, Lord.*

*You are the potter, Lord.
Mold me again.
Make something beautiful, Lord,
A new creation in you.*

*Tear down the strong holds;
Set the captives free;
Make me a shining light
For the blind to see.*

*Fill me with your Holy Spirit;
Light the candle within me;
Shine through me, Jesus,
For you have called me.*

*Make me your tabernacle;
Light the candle within me
To be used for your glory, Lord,
For all the world to see.*

*May you be exalted, Lord,
Through this vessel you have freed;
Through your precious blood
We will celebrate your victory.*

—Cora Byler

This week I conversed with a minister who was simply overwhelmed. My trying to help him proved futile because he would not allow himself to see beyond his assumed responsibilities and financial woes. Sadly, this man is metaphoric of the many leaders who assume many responsibilities they should not assume. Many potential problems arise whenever someone reaches a saturation point, but refuses assistance and is unwilling to change habits.

I want to highlight five of the potential problems and emphasize a few solutions for each.

The first potential problem is the addiction to adrenaline. Workaholics get used to the adrenaline they feel when meeting certain goals or deadlines. Sadly, many leaders develop a sense of pride at being busy, often boasting whenever their schedule hits overload because it feeds their false ego of self-importance, and for this reason, they have a hard time saying no to new responsibilities.

The intensity one feels when overwhelmed develops stress. This affects the quality of their relationships. They can become very controlling, territorial, and sharp with their reactions to others. Stress also affects their health in the long term.

Time with God, loved ones, and for personal development tends to be neglected or placed on the back burner. Depression often sets in when someone who is addicted to adrenaline attempts to slow down or relax.

Suggested solutions include:

- Establish a maximum number of hours to focus on work each day.
- Refuse to take work home with you.
- Say no to an extra request to do something if it means you cannot accomplish it without adding to your maximum allotted work day hours.
- Schedule time off on a regular basis.

The second potential problem is burnout. The body, mind and emotions are de-

signed for a balance of work and rest. Time must be made for both. Burnout sneaks up on you, and when it comes, it can be very difficult to recover.

Burnout produces a cacophony of emotions. One might develop a sense of guilt, anger or regret. These are hard to overcome when one is in a state of burnout.

Suggested solutions include:

- Recognize and admit that burnout is real, and it needs to be eliminated.
- Develop an exercise plan in combination with proper diet and rest.
- Plan occasional getaways with those you love. These do not have to be expensive but they should be meaningful.
- Learn to back away from the workload. It will be there when you return.

The third potential problem is the damage you do to yourself and those who love you. It has been said that when people approach the end of their lives, they never say, "I wish I had spent more time at work." Unfortunately, when you refuse to be sensible and balanced about work, the collateral damage to your family and close relations can be devastating.

Spouses and children are often hurt and damaged because they believe you love your work or your church family more than you love them. Many of the dysfunctions in a leader's home arise because the leader has neglected those at home. All too often a leader's spouse or children develop resentment or bitterness brought forth by a sense of abandonment.

Suggested solutions include:

- Make time for meaningful conversations on a frequent and regular basis.
- Be involved in the outside activities of those you love.
- Learn to say yes to your family and no to others.
- Do not cancel promised plans with

your family when others call and ask for your time.

- Celebrate accomplishments with those you love.
- Help each other establish goals and encourage each to attain them.
- Hold regular and consistent family devotions.

The fourth potential problem is that by doing everything yourself, you prevent God from manifesting His capability to provide. Who needs God when you can do everything for yourself? Why would God have to provide assistance when you won't let Him? When God sends others to help you, why do you continue to insist on doing everything yourself?

- Learn the arts of delegation and facilitation.
- Study teamwork and become a team builder.
- Progress in leadership styles as God adds people around you.
- Learn to wait on God's timing and provision.
- Quit trying to play God and spend more time seeking after God.

The fifth potential problem is the neglect of personal care and leadership development. Many of the problems a leader faces today cannot be overcome unless new skills are acquired. Leaders who are too busy to take time for professional development should not remain in a leadership position.

- Always be involved in some form of focused study and development.
- Connect to a mentor with the experience and skill sets to help steer you in the right directions.
- Schedule a portion of your workweek for professional development and stick to it religiously.
- Commit time and resources to personal and professional advancement.

— Dr. Fred Childs
Childs Ministry Group
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I grew up in an Old Order Amish setting where I still live, and I thought I had a fairly normal life. I am the oldest of eleven children, and I probably got more privileges because of that. Our family got along reasonably well, except for the fact that Dad struggled with controlling his temper. This resulted in much tension in the home. In spite of this, I took pride in the fact that I was able to handle it well. I was seldom irked or upset by anything, but I was never happy either even though it might have appeared like it to people around me because I did a lot of whistling.

I went through a rebellious stage where I didn't really care what I got into, yet deep down I wanted to do what was right. I joined the church when I was sixteen because I felt an emptiness in my heart and thought this would help fill it. Between the ages of seventeen and nineteen my life went downhill. I didn't want it to, but I didn't know what to do about it.

In the meantime, my next younger brother was struggling, but he got connected to a home for spiritually troubled men and boys. He was there for five or six months, and then he came back home. I noticed that he seemed to have something that I didn't have, and yet, it all seemed odd to me.

During this time, my life was far enough downhill that I decided to forget Christianity and go live a life of sin. (Even though this is what I decided to do, I never actually did it.) My brother and I seldom talked about the spiritual side of life. He approached me about the need for God in my life at about the time I decided to leave, without knowing what I had decided. In spite of everything, I prayed daily even though I thought my prayers were not heard. I prayed because it soothed my troubled conscience a little. I knew God wasn't in my life, but deep down I had a desire for Him. Yet, it seemed Satan had a tighter grip on my life.

My brother encouraged me to go to the home where he had been. I reluctantly

agreed for him to call and see when the next opening would be, but he found out the next opening would not be for about five months. I was almost despondent as I knew in my heart that I would never hold out that long.

In my heart, I was crying out for help, so I found a secluded spot, and I prayed earnestly to God for the first time in a long time. I prayed, "God, you know I will never hold out another five months. If you want me to take this step in my life, then let something work out sooner than five months." I felt a sense of peace after committing this to God, and somehow I knew he had heard my prayer.

*"Marvel not that I
said unto thee, Ye
must be born again."*

— John 3:7

The next day my brother talked to the Administrator at the home, and when he got back, he said that there would be an opening for me the next week. I was amazed, to state it mildly. I knew God was speaking to me. I felt that God had a deep love and concern for me.

I later asked the Administrator at the home how it worked out that they had an opening all at once in spite of a long waiting list. His answer was, "I really don't know." Amazing! God almighty has a plan for every soul on this earth, and yet, that plan will never be fulfilled unless we seek for it.

There is a promise in the Bible that was brought to my attention about this time, and it gave me tremendous courage. *Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you* (Matthew 7:7).

I knew my life was still a mess, but I had a peace like I never had before, just knowing I was on the right track. I looked forward to the daily sessions with my counselor. One day he asked me if I had ever been born again. I said I really don't know, but I suppose so. I knew I tried real hard to do what was right, and I was baptized, yet in looking back, I had never been born again.

At this point in my life, I knew trying to be a good person on my own strength was a lost cause. My counselor encouraged me to pray to God, admit my helplessness, and welcome Him into my heart to change me completely and give me a new heart filled with His divine love. This was a new thought to me; nevertheless, this is what I did. Something happened in my life that had never happened before. It was not a huge change, but it was a very, very real change. A change that only God could make. Once I felt my need for change, I was willing. In looking back five years later, my life has never been the same since.

I would like to note a few things that changed after my conversion. One of the first things I noticed was in my feelings and emotions. As noted earlier, I was seldom irked by any situation, but on the other hand, I was seldom happy either. What happened was that in my younger years I had blocked out the pain that I felt rather than accepting it as my pain and dealing with it between God and me. By blocking this pain, I unknowingly blocked my emotions too. And now things were different. All of a sudden, I could be irritated over the oddest things that would have never irritated me before. But on the other hand, I could now also feel joy like I had never experienced before.

Because I let God change me, He could restore my emotions to the way they should be. Has life been rosy ever since? Certainly not! Don't take me wrong, I have been blessed more than I ever imagined, but God's children are not promised an easy

—continued on next page—

Amish Population by State

State/Province	# of Settlements	# of Church Districts	Est. Population
Ohio	54	474	63,990
Pennsylvania	55	431	63,785
Indiana	22	335	47,235
Wisconsin	48	127	16,255
New York	46	109	14,715
Michigan	38	98	12,935
Missouri	41	91	10,645
Kentucky	35	72	9,000
Iowa	22	58	8,175
Illinois	18	50	7,000
Ontario	15	38	5,130
Minnesota	15	28	3,520
Tennessee	6	17	2,120
Kansas	7	12	1,620
Maryland	3	12	1,620
Delaware	1	10	1,500

(Continued on next column)

State/Province	# of Settlements	# of Church Districts	Est. Population
Oklahoma	4	7	945
Colorado	4	6	810
Montana	4	5	675
Virginia	4	6	450
Maine	5	5	375
Nebraska	4	4	300
West Virginia	3	3	225
Arkansas	2	2	150
Florida	1	1	75
Idaho	1	1	75
Mississippi	1	1	75
North Carolina	1	1	75
South Dakota	1	1	75
Texas	1	1	75
Wyoming	1	1	75
Total	463	2,007	273,700

—continued from previous page—

road through this life. The big difference now is that in spite of struggles, there is a foundation to work from, whereas before, there was absolutely nothing to stand on.

The tremendous ability of God to restore a bad situation to the most beautiful reality is nothing short of amazing. God is still working in my situation, and I trust He will be as long as I live here on earth.

God is very interested in the lives of His children and potential children. Only as we yield our lives to Him can He work on the details of the beautiful plan he has for every one of us. We cannot yield to God without dying to our own selfish, carnal nature. Only as we die to our own selves can we rise to new and fulfilling lives in Christ.

Life, then, is not about us. Probably one of my biggest struggles has been to trust in the blood of Jesus for my salvation and realize that good works will not save me. It is faith alone in the grace of God that will save. Ephesians 2:8-10 makes it clear what faith does, and where works fit in. *For by Grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works less any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which*

God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. These verses have helped me to understand that we are saved by faith.

By faith God gives us a new heart with new desires and a totally new way of thinking. Because of this heart change, we begin to reflect the image of Christ. This new person that God has created out of us is uniquely created to have good works come forth. These works are very pleasing to God because He creates them in us. Can we then just stand back and not even try to do anything? *For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure* (Philippians 2:13).



As God works in us, He gives us a desire to do what He wants us to do, and He also gives us the strength to do it. Because of this, we do good works, not to be accepted as the children of God, but because we are accepted as His children. According to Romans 8:7-9, it is impossible to please God if we have not accepted Him as our

Lord and Savior by faith.

John 15 talks about fruit coming forth out of a believer's life, which might actually be the more accurate term. According to James 2:17, if there is no fruit coming from a person's life, that person's faith is dead.

So dear reader, have you found a relationship with God that completely satisfies your soul? If you have not, where will you find this satisfying relationship? In the Amish church? In some Mennonite church or some other denomination? What does Jesus say in the matter? *I am the way, the truth and the life* (John 14:6).

Peace with God will never be found in any certain denomination, but in God Himself. So whatever denomination we are in, God must be the Head of our church. Only by following the way and the truth will we find true and everlasting life. If we cannot find true peace where we are right now, we probably won't find it elsewhere either.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).

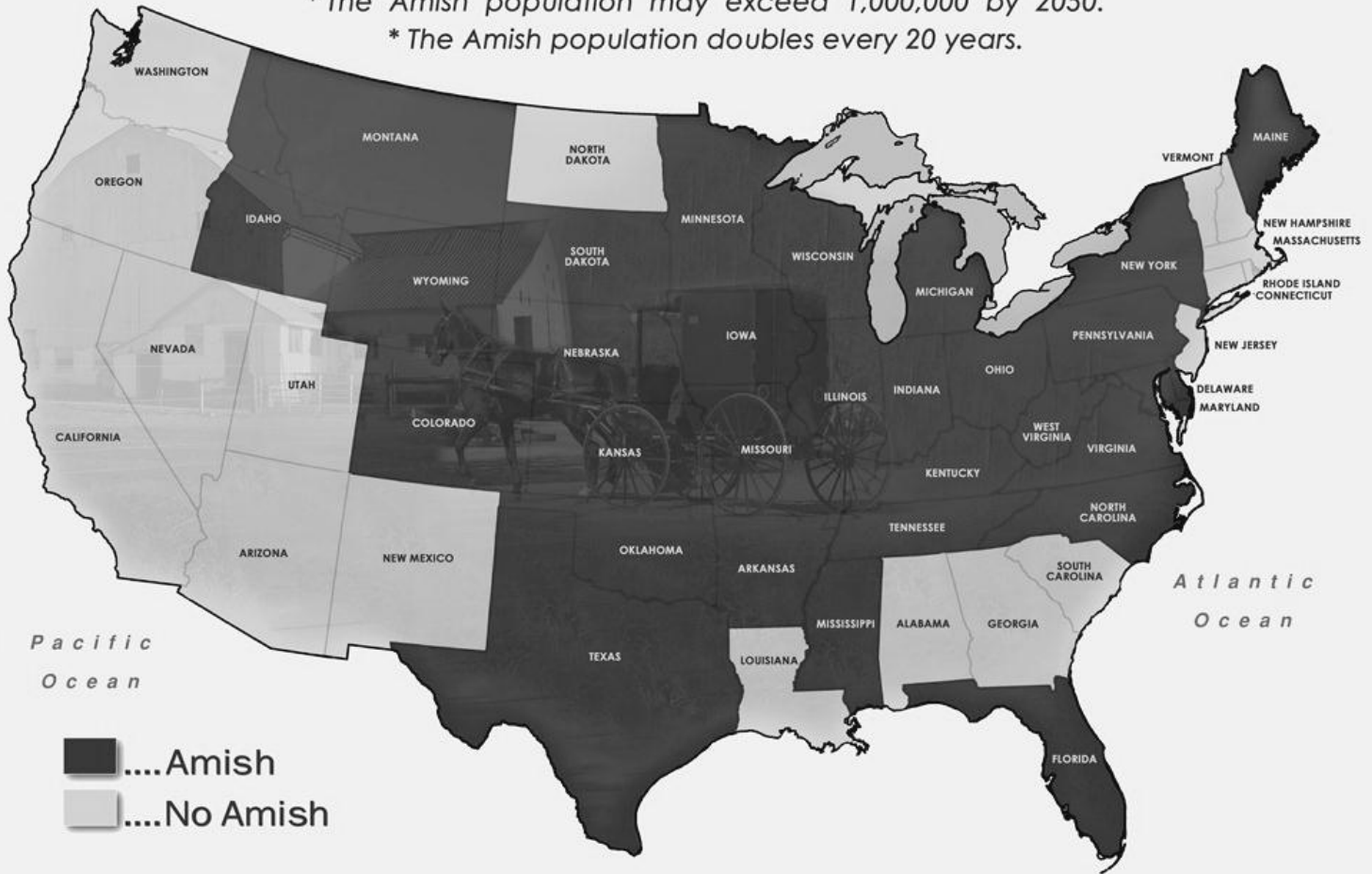
Jonas and Keturah Yoder
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There are 273,000 Amish Living in the U.S.

* A New Amish Community is formed, on average, every 3-1/2 weeks.

* The Amish population may exceed 1,000,000 by 2050.

* The Amish population doubles every 20 years.



—continued from back page—

“I just read something about if we are in Christ Jesus, old things are passed away, and everything else is made new,” Katie explained. “What is the old that is passed away and what becomes new?”

Mattie had no answer for Katie as she paid for the few dish towels she’d picked up for her hope chest (or was it a hopeless chest?). Her inward conflict over what worldliness was just added to her desperation of not having a steady boyfriend.

Katie was working for Enos W Mary and was driving their rig to run the few errands for the family. As she headed back to the house, she had some thinking time. Pat, the faithful horse, plodded along in the cooling, autumn sunlight of the country gravel road.

He set his pace and headed homeward.

“I believe the old things that are passed away are issues of the heart. Didn’t I confess at my baptism that I believed that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God and that He died so the world could be saved?”

Suddenly her mind was illuminated as if the Lord had shown her two completely different pictures. The difference was as clear as black from white. Jesus did die to cleanse her from her sins! The clothes she wore could never do that. With that revelation, the realization came that she must first love God and then her fellowmen.

“How can I love God when I can’t freely read His Word and find Him in it?” Katie wondered out loud to Pat.

“Okay, Pat, we’re almost home...just

around the bend, past my friend Mary Beachy’s place and over the hill.”

The two young ladies had become good friends by attending the Sunday night singings, and Katie waved joyfully as she saw Mary harvesting vegetables from the garden.

Katie’s prayerful questions led her to a resolve – not to rebellion, but one that would direct her in her quest for truth. She resolved to read her Bible until she found the answers to all of the questions that had plagued her. Peace settled over her as she realized she needed the truth more than that deep lavender material or even a black material.

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Winter Seeds & Summer Roses

—Lynn Miller

The last few months have been wild with the challenges, stresses, and hurdles that come with being a family of seven who are learning to grow and surrender to God's plan. Things can seem downright overwhelming as we all know very well, and it takes a lot of focus and determination at times to keep our spirits and courage up so we can keep going.

It has been a season of my life when I feel that I am swallowing way more than my share of responsibility, and there have been times I have been downright resentful about it. (They say confession is good for the soul, so there you have it!) Many times I cry out to God and ask Him, "Why? Why?" It seems so unfair, especially when those who should be shouldering the responsibility are right there and refuse to shoulder their part. (My opinion, but it is very accurate, I am sure!)

It has also been a time when I feel utterly helpless in my circumstances. It is impossible for me, yet I can't seem to get help from anyone either.

Often I find myself in fight or flight mode...you know, when you feel you can't handle another minute, and you want to run away until some people get a clue and straighten up? I'm sure no one else has ever felt that way! ;) I have begged and pleaded with God to please heal my baby, please heal my husband, please remove some stress, please help the baby to sleep when I need rest, etc....You know all those feelings, I am

sure.

I don't know. Maybe you never feel like this, but my hunch tells me that most of us know this feeling well or have experienced it at one time or another in our lives. No matter how hard we try to change our circumstances or try to get out of a situation, we find ourselves cornered. We begin to wonder, WHAT IS God trying to DO?! We begin to desperately plead with Him to show us whatever it is He wants us to see. ANYTHING to be out of the current situation!

While I have often been in situations like this, my current one takes the cake. There are so many different things going on all at once, almost all of which I have little control over, and, for some reason, all of them are adding stress or work for me, taking me to a place where I feel like something has to change or I might just pop with the pressure!

Have you ever noticed how during these times it also seems no one else can see the amount of pressure you are under, and they just keep saying, "You need to give this to God"?! If we are honest with ourselves, we often feel like telling them to be quiet. It can be an extremely lonely time.

Ok, so what am I getting at? What is really going on? Are you going to give us some relief? Well, no, I'm not, but Someone is; that is, after we allow ourselves to die to the process.

What?! Die?! Yes. Consider how a seed

has to die in order for a new plant or flower to spring to life. These situations are just like that. The pressure and heat is allowed to cause old, obsolete, or ugly things to die off, so a new person can emerge.

Did you ever ask yourself, "Why does this keep happening to me?" Does it seem like the same type of scenario keeps repeating itself, or the same type of irritating people keep appearing in your life, seemingly to torment you? And often the situation becomes more intense the more often it returns? This is because if we fail the test, we just get to repeat it over and over until we finally figure it out. This may feel cruel, but it is actually God giving us chance after chance to allow Him to work in our lives and make us better people. He is actually coaxing us, "Please let me do my work in you. Please let me make you into the person I need to use in my Kingdom."

There is a song that says, "The soul afraid of dying never learns to live." We need to learn to surrender to the process. It does not mean we just give up, but we say, "Ok, Father. I surrender to Your work in me. I allow my flesh to die so You can make me what You want me to be."

And remember, winter's dying seed becomes summer's rose. In dying we live, and letting the ugly die, the beautiful can emerge! Be encouraged, and surrender to God's process in you! He has beautiful plans for your life!

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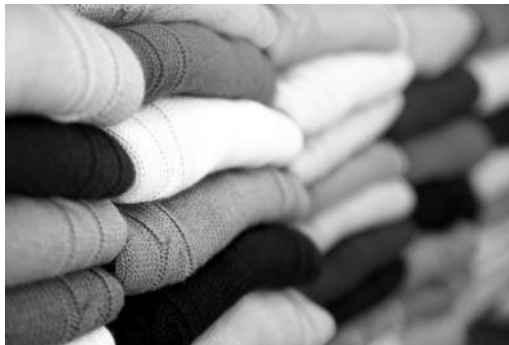
— Lydia Chorpeneing

Katie lingered longer than she planned to in the Cedar Lake Country Store. Many attractions lined the shelves from dishes to quilts, but the dry goods really grabbed her attention. She longingly looked at some of the lighter and brighter colors and couldn't resist stroking her fingers across a deep lavender one.

"It's been a long time since I've had a good Sunday dress," Katie whispered to herself more than to Mattie Yoder who was tending the store. She brushed her work-worn hand over her faded brown apron.

Katie Burkholder was the oldest of eight children. She came of age a year earlier when she turned twenty-one. Since then, the pint-sized brunette worked as a maud (maid) for various families in her Amish church district. Though she only stood five feet tall, her dedication to complete a task and devotion to the woman she worked for more than made up for her small frame.

Katie's lingering minutes triggered the question as to what made a color worldly, or what was a truly humble color. "Is worldliness the color of a piece of material, or is it a heart condition?" Katie wondered.



"Who defines worldliness? Who can tell if this deep lavender is worldlier than Emma Troyer's black that she always wears?" Katie's puzzling questions finally spilled out of her mouth, "Why would someone think that I am being worldly if I were to buy this lavender material? It would wash well with little ironing. What

makes it worldly?"

Mattie moved closer and replied quietly, "I think it's just about our church rules; you know the ordinances we've always had. Bishop Bieler may think that you are proud; you know we have to be dahmutic (humble).

"But how can Bishop Bieler know what's in my heart?"

"You know you'd be safe if you chose this dark blue or this deep pine green, and the church leaders wouldn't consider you to be rebellious."

"Ach! I wish I knew if the church elders are always right. I know we're not encouraged to study the Bible on our own because we may be deceived, but I do read my New Testament sometimes. When I do, something inside of me feels more satisfied, but another part of me is disturbed.

—continued on page 10—