

SO, NOW WHAT DO I DO? Lesson 1: Reorientation

Many believers are waking up to the fact that they took a wrong turn somewhere in their Christian walk. We all began well; fully aware that we did nothing to save ourselves and that our right-standing with God was based on faith in His grace. We believed that Christianity is not a religion but a relationship. The joy of knowing we were forgiven of our past and that God loved us permeated each moment of our existence. The awareness of God's presence was constant, and the desire to share this joy with others needed no prompting.

As the years went by, little by little, the love, peace, and joy we initially knew began to diminish to now and then glimpses. The desire to show our love *for* God gradually replaced the experience of being loved *by* God. The idea of closeness with God became a never-ending goal instead of an everlasting possession. Most of us just accepted this as a normal process of Christian maturity, determined to be faithful no matter what and to walk by faith not feelings. Unwilling to challenge the status quo, and not even knowing that we should or even could, we drifted into the most horrible of existences: remembering the joy and love and peace and closeness, but seldom experiencing it, even after many years of faithfully doing nearly everything we'd been told to do.

Many of us cried out to God asking Him why He seemed far and why it felt like He didn't love us. Was it something we did? Was there something else we needed to be doing?

Somehow, God answered that prayer. For us it was putting us in a situation where it was impossible to do those things which we had always seen as defining us as believers. For others it was coming to a place of giving up...not on Jesus, but on the whole Christian scene. For some, it was perfectly timed teachings that seemed to draw us back and then suddenly, we just woke up!

“Like waking up from the longest dream
How real it seemed, until Your love broke through.
I'd been lost in a fantasy that blinded me
Until Your love broke through.”¹

Many of us when we wake up to His grace sit stunned. What happened? Where did I go wrong? Wanting to remain in this rediscovered joy and love, and not wanting to go back to whatever it was that took us away from it, we feel unsure about our next steps and ask, “So, now what do I do?”

¹ These lyrics written by Steve Green described the born again experience. Many who have awakened to grace describe their experience as being born again, again.

When we came to this question in 1987-88, we thought we were the only ones who had taken a wrong turn. We were sure that we could find a church somewhere that was teaching the truth even though we really weren't sure what the truth was and were focused more on what the truth was not. So, as we visited each place and most of what we encountered was what we no longer believed, we began to understand that most of the church at that time was also asleep. We wondered if we would be forced to nail our beliefs on church doors. It was an odd feeling. We'd asked ourselves, "Who do we think we are? Martin Luther?"

At that time, there were almost no resources for believers waking up to God's grace. However, this is not the case for you. Now, there are multiple sources available from books, to multiple ministries, such as ours, created and dedicated to preaching the good news to God's people.

This series is designed for those who have traveled this path and now find themselves waking up to God's love and grace, perhaps a bit dazed and baffled by it all and wondering what to do next.

REORIENTATION

I. Believing vs. Doing

Being a Christian is NOT about what you are to do and not do². It is about a loving God who sent His willing Son to die for us and rise again so that we may be free and truly alive. You DID nothing but BELIEVE in Jesus in order to be born again, and there is nothing you can DO to remain in Him, except BELIEVE.³

A. The Old Covenant was about DOING. The New Covenant is about BELIEVING *Romans 10:5-6; 9-11*

*For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the **law**, "The man who does those things shall live by them." 6 **But** the righteousness of **faith** speaks in this way ... 9 that if you **confess** with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."*

B. We are made right with God (justified) by FAITH not the works of the law. *Galatians 2:16*

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ.

² An excellent book on the topic of believing vs. doing is Classic Christianity by Bob George.

³ In the Greek the word for faith and belief are the same. The word usually translated "believe" is the verb form of faith. The word usually translated "faith" is a noun. There is also a word usually translated "faithfulness" which is the adjective form of the word for "faith". When you see the word "faith" and "believe" remember they are from the same word. To believe in Jesus is to have faith in Jesus. We simply do not have the word "faithing" in English.

even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

C. We are born again by God's grace through faith in His Son.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

D. We are to live each day the same way

Colossians 2:6-7

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

II. What I Don't Believe anymore

It is very normal at first to have a difficult time articulating what is happening to you. You might find that it is more about what you don't believe now, and you aren't sure what you do believe anymore. For us, it was about "spiritual disciplines". We had practiced them very regularly for 14 years, but now we found ourselves no longer believing we were required to practice them to be right with or improve our relationship with God. We couldn't explain why. We just knew it.

- Don't be afraid to confront what you aren't sure you believe any more.
- Back up your beliefs with scripture.
- Realize that you might sound critical, rebellious, and negative to those to whom you try to explain what is happening with you.

III. The Chopping Block

It's very important to identify standard truths and stick to them, but also to be willing to place all other beliefs and practices on the chopping block. Don't be too proud to admit that you could be wrong about many things you used to think were absolutely true, even things you yourself once taught others.

If you held wrong beliefs in one area, it's likely that you hold them in others. Don't throw away things you know are true, such as the fact that Jesus is God, but be open to the Holy Spirit teaching you.

You may have also become involved in Christian mysticism or other non-biblical practices. Be willing for God to show you ANYTHING you may have believed or done that was inaccurate. Think of it as cleaning the garage or basement. What is the truth (what do you need), and what isn't (what needs to go in the garbage bin)?

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Test all things; hold fast what is good.

1 John 2:27

But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things.

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

IV. Touch not God's Anointed

Very often, those who wake up to grace have negative past church experiences. This is because religious institutions NOT based on God's grace tend to be abusive in order to sustain themselves. They will use teachings about "not touching God's anointed" to keep you from challenging what is taught. This scripture was about KILLING the king, not disagreeing with him. Sometimes, it takes several months for this awareness to surface. Others were aware of the abuse before awakening to grace, but didn't understand that it is a lack of grace which usually leads to the abuse. Don't be surprised if this happens, and don't shy away from taking a good look at your past. It is NOT wrong to disagree with leadership or to challenge what you were taught.⁴

A. Paul confronted Peter who was considered a principle apostle in the church. Paul was a relative new-comer.

Galatians 2:11-12

(Paul wrote), "Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; ¹² for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision."

B. The early church leaders felt free to disagree with each other about doctrine (Acts 15). Acts 15:1-2

And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." ² Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

V. Dealing with Anger

If you realize that you were taught things that were not only false, but things which pulled you away from the joy we could have known or even caused damage to those you love, it is perfectly normal to feel a good amount of anger toward those who taught you.

Usually, those who taught truly believed what they taught and probably did so with the best of intentions with your benefit in mind. However, poison is poison, whether it is given in love or deliberately. It has the same effect. It will make you sick.

Try to keep in mind that your well-intended teacher was likely also a victim. If you can, reach out to those who taught you and share with them what you are learning. If you can't (or you aren't sure you can right now), pray for them.

⁴ For a more detailed look at spiritual abuse, we recommend [The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse](#) by Jeff VanVonderen.

Above all, forgive them. You will probably have to forgive them multiple times...each time you realize another thing you were taught that bound you. Still, forgive. It will help you recover.

VI. Accepting Responsibility

One thing that will help you heal from spiritual abuse and forgive those who taught you inaccurately is to accept responsibility. You have a brain. You have a free will. You have a Bible. You were born again and perfectly capable of “proving all things and holding fast to that which is good”. However, for whatever reason, you chose to believe what you were taught (most people with never challenging it). No one forced you to adopt certain practices in your life. When you recognize this, it will take the blow out of the realization that you were ill-taught. Yes, you were taught things that are not true, but YOU chose to believe them, and in many cases teach them to others.

VII. Dealing with Regrets and Making Amends

If you are a pastor, teacher or parent, it is highly likely that you have taught or done things that are not in keeping with truth. There are many factors to consider, so we will discuss this topic in a separate lesson in this series. It is a difficult thing to deal with because it involves those you love, but for now, you will do well to let your children and/or church know about what you are learning the best way you can. If apologies are in order, don't hesitate to give them.

VIII. Sharing Your Joy

We were pretty sure that our friends from our former church would love to hear of what God was showing us, but it couldn't have been further from what happened. You might find that some want to share in and also know your joy. Others, however, might see you as compromising or going off the deep end.

Please don't be surprised if you are ill-treated due to your new discoveries. Some friends will want to meet with you to hear your story. Others will want to meet with you to warn you of the dangers of what you are believing. There will even be a few who no longer want to associate with you, seeing you as a threat to their own relationship with God. If you are attending a church, your own beloved pastor might ask you to find a place that is in more agreement with your new beliefs (also known as the “left foot of fellowship”), and sometimes, a process called “shunning” begins...which is a non-verbal form of rejection.

Just remember that this persecution is to be expected. Try not to be dismayed or discouraged. Those of us who have already gone through this are happy to report that many of those who initially rejected what we were sharing are now sharing it themselves. Have faith in the good news to penetrate the heart.

IX. Finding Fellowship

There are more churches teaching the gospel of grace now than when we first woke up, but overall, there are few, so finding a fellowship where the pure gospel of grace is taught can be a challenge.

*There is no one-size-fits-all for how to deal with this. Ask the Lord to show **you** what to do. He might ask you to stay in your current church and share the good news with your pastor and the people. If the pastor and the people receive what you are saying, there will be great rejoicing in that place. If not, the Lord will show you if/when to leave.*

God might also guide you to leave your church and seek out a place that is teaching the pure gospel of grace⁵. Consider all of this a time of transition as you re-learn the truths in the Bible.

X. Sorting through the Resources

There are now multiple ministries, teachers, book, tapes, etcetera which are teaching “grace”. Many really are. Some are just using the word “grace” in order to appear to be teaching it. Keep in mind that accepting everything you were taught is most likely how you went down the wrong road, and in order to keep from going down another wrong pathway, you need to learn to read and listen with discernment. Make a point of disagreeing with anything you read or hear that doesn’t sit right with you. Don’t ignore the Holy Spirit’s discernment. As you sort through the wide array of materials, feel free to not listen to anyone that makes you uncomfortable. If you have concerns, share them with others who have been awake to grace longer than you have. It isn’t a sin to challenge teachings. It’s a responsibility.

XI. Standing in Freedom

As you continue in this grace walk, you will start to see that the world’s system and most of the religious world’s system are based on justification (right standing) by works. This means there is the constant challenge to stay in this freedom.

Galatians 5:1, 4

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. . .⁴ You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Colossians 2:

***Beware** lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in **Him** dwells all the **fullness** of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰ and **you are complete in Him**, who is the head of all principality and power.*

⁵ Our website offers many video teachings which will help you grow in grace.

<http://www.graceandfaithministries.org>

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XII. Resting in Him

With so many resources available, it's easy to get stressed out about all of the changes instead of ENJOYING your rediscovered faith and joy. So, try to take a deep breath and take one day at a time. God isn't worried that you have much to learn, and you don't need to be either. He wants you to REST. Simply sit at His feet and listen.

Matthew 11:28-29

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Luke 10:38-42

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."