



# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#158)

Obedience and righteousness – not a burden for those who are saved.

There are **SO-O-O many blessings** connected to justification and the forgiveness it brings!

- ✓ So many blessings that we experience.
- ✓ Two blessings that we do – because of the changes that justification and forgiveness cause in the lives of those who receive it.
  - ✦ God embeds his laws in our hearts – so that we want to do what is right.
  - ✦ We grow in our love for God – as we grow in our understanding of the sinfulness of our sin, which God has forgiven. (This also increases our love for people.)

**BOTH of these require the renewing of our minds.**  
(We cannot know God's laws or the sinfulness of our sin without it.)

... **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.  
Ro 12:2b (CSB)

✦ This doesn't happen by magic. It is something we do.  
✦ And it takes time and effort.

**Scripture describes this pursuit as a command and a fact.**

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
2 Peter 3:18a (CSB)

In both verses, the previous context describes the unsaved who don't do this.

... but his delight is in the law of the LORD, ...  
Ps 1:2a (ESV)



**The unsaved tend to view this as a "burden"!**

"It's a waste of my time!"  
"I don't think my views are wrong!"  
"! have more important things to do!"

Even if they do study the Bible...

- Their unrepentant hearts make it a fruitless endeavor.
- Without the love of God in their hearts, what they might learn has little influence on their values and conduct.
- Having not submitted to the God who gave them his Word, they lack the motivation that comes with salvation.

>> IF THEY REPENT AND ARE SAVED, THIS WILL CHANGE. <<

**IN CONTRAST...**

**God's people DON'T consider it to be burdensome.**

They have changed hearts (and forgiveness), which changes their attitude toward God's commands.

The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord.  
I will put **my laws in their hearts**, and I will write them **on their minds**."  
Then he adds:

"Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."  
And where these have been **forgiven**, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.  
Hebrews 10:15-18 (NIV)

Though originally written to Israel, this now applies to all of us, since we are now all under the New Covenant!

**"Heart change"**

**"Forgiveness"**

**In CHRIST, we see things differently!**

Though our old (sinful) selves fight against God's ways, **in Christ, we now see God's commands the way Jesus sees them!**

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.  
For **my yoke is easy** and **my burden is light**."  
Matthew 11:28-30 (CSB)

In Christ, **love and obedience come together** – and this influences our perspective!

We are empowered as we trust him for the power.

For this is what **love** for God is: to **keep [= obey]** his commands. And his commands are **not a burden**, because everyone who has been born of God conquers the world. This is the victory that has conquered the world: our faith.  
1 John 5:3-4 (CSB)

**THE TWO COVENANTS COMPARED:**

① The Old Covenant religious rituals *could* be a burden, BECAUSE:

- ✓ The rituals were a *temporary* covering for sin, restraining God's wrath until the *permanent* solution would be made available (through Jesus). And until that time, *they had to keep being done*.

... a **yoke** that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear ...

Acts 15:10b (NLT)

- ✓ Its commands were *external* – not embedded within the heart. For many, it became a meaningless ritual.

And you say, 'What a **burden!**' ...

Malachi 1:13a (NIV)

**This is why God promised to replace the Old Covenant.**

This [new] covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors ... They broke that covenant, ...

Jeremiah 31:32 (NLT)

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② The New Covenant *removes* the burden!

- ✓ Under the *New* Covenant, God embeds the moral law within us (= makes it *internal*) and he removes the need for the *temporary* "sin coverings" (*Old* Covenant rituals). We are **freed** from those burdens and should not go after them.

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be **burdened** again by a **yoke** of slavery.

Galatians 5:1 (NIV)

**Another Old Testament passage that describes this heart change.**

And I will give you a **new heart**, and I will put a **new spirit** in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a **tender, responsive heart**. And I will put my **Spirit in you** so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NLT)

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**For us, our burden is SIN, not OBEDIENCE!**

It's not God's *commands* that burden us (1 John 5:3-4); but it's *our old "self"* that we often have to struggle against.

This struggle is ongoing, **but it will not go on forever.**

**In Christ, we have the power to overcome.**

**THE NATURE OF OUR STRUGGLE** will tell us a lot about ourselves:

Are we **STRUGGLING** against **sin** (using Christ's power to overcome it); or are we **ENJOYING** the sin (and struggling with our condemning **conscience**)?

(Or has our conscience become so *seared*, that sin no longer bothers us... and there *isn't* any more struggle?)

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**ROMANS 7 DESCRIBES THIS STRUGGLE:**

- ① We **DIED\*** to our old "self" (Romans 7:4-6). Because of this, our heart's desires have changed.

For in my inner self I delight in God's law, ...

Romans 7:22 (CSB)

- ② We **STRUGGLE** with our old "self," because it refuses to admit defeat (Romans 7:7-23).
- ③ We have **VICTORY** over our old "self"; but it's not our abilities that do it (Romans 7:24-25).

This struggle exists because of the differences between:

- ① our **GOAL** (the *perfection* which we strive for), and
  - ② our **PRESENT CONDITION** (characterized by *imperfection*).
- The apostle Paul illustrates how to live with this difference.

\* (The Bible defines "death" as a "separation" of one thing from another.)

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**PAUL's example – GOAL vs. PRESENT CONDITION:**

⇒ **GOAL:** He **pursued** righteous perfection. It was his **lifelong goal**:

... that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the **righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith**.

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:8b-11 (NIV)

**"Somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead."**

Paul knew he was saved. The "somehow" pertains to the resurrection. We are to focus on our **present** pursuit of righteousness (trusting Christ for the power to do so), and let Christ deal with the **future** details regarding the resurrection. Our connection to Christ will "somehow" bring us to the resurrection from the dead.

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⇒ **PRESENT CONDITION:** He had not **attained** righteous perfection.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which **Christ Jesus took hold of me**.

Brothers and sisters, **I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it**.

But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **I press on toward the goal** to win the prize for which **God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus**.

Philippians 3:12-14 (NIV)

⇒ **WHAT THIS MEANS TO US:**

**IF:**

- ⇒ Christ Jesus has "taken hold" of you...
- ⇒ God has "called you heavenward"...

**THEN:**

- ⇒ "Press on" toward the goal that God has called you to!
- ⇒ Trust Jesus to take care of the rest!

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**God will get us to the goal!**

- Christ Jesus "taking hold" of us...
- God "calling us heavenward" ...
- Us "pressing on" ...

"Somehow," God is going to use all this to accomplish what he has promised to **those who love him!**

And we know that in all things God works for the good of **those who love him**, who have been called according to his purpose.  
... those he **called**, he also justified; those he **justified**, he also **glorified**.  
Romans 8:28, 30b (NIV)

☞ **HE has called and justified us.** ← God did in the PAST.  
☞ **WE want to follow Jesus.** ← **What's happening NOW.**  
☞ **HE will glorify us.** ← God will do in the FUTURE.

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☞ **HE has called and justified us.**

**☞ WE want to follow Jesus.**

☞ **HE will glorify us.**

**HERE IS WHERE WE "PRESS ON" – WHERE "SANCTIFICATION" TAKES PLACE.**

- Our desire and goal is perfection. It is glorification.
- We are not there yet... *but God is taking us there!*

... God, who **began** the good work within you, will **continue** his work until it is finally **finished** on the day when Christ Jesus returns.  
Philippians 1:6b (CSB)

- God makes it possible! He empowers us with the **same** type of power that was used to raise Christ from the dead!

...the incredible greatness of **God's power for us** who believe him. This is **the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead** and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.  
Eph 1:19b-20 (NLT)

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**It's no wonder that following Jesus is not a "burden" for those who love God!**

We don't know all the details, but: ① we do know what God has done so far... and ② we look forward to the rest! *This fact affects how we live!*

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known.  
But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.  
*All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.*  
1 John 3:2-3 (NIV)

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**OUR DESIRE TO DO GOD'S WILL:**

- It's NOT an attempt to earn God's favor.  
[God] has saved us and called us to a holy life—**not because of anything we have done** but because of his own purpose and grace.  
2 Timothy 1:9 (NIV)
- It's an expression of our love for God.  
Love means doing what God has commanded us ...  
2 John 1:6a (NLT)
- AND: It's a desire to be like our Father!  
Because you are God's children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into us to call out, "Abba! Father!"  
Galatians 4:6 (GW)

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**But can we ever get discouraged, or consider it a burden?**

Since our hearts have been changed, there is no reason that *doing what is right*, in itself, would become a burden.  
☞ **But other factors can influence this.**

**We may become discouraged or weary (and need encouraged)...**

☞ **When it seems that all our efforts are in vain.**

Let us not become **weary** in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we **do not give up**.  
Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.  
Galatians 6:9-10 (NIV)

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☞ **When we are struggling with the evil that continues to lurk in our hearts.**  
So I discover this law: When I want to do what is good, **evil is present** with me.  
Romans 7:21 (CSB)

☞ **When sin distracts us, so we have the wrong focus. (For a follower of Jesus, this can only be temporary.)**  
... the **worries** of life, the deceitful **pleasures** of riches, and the **desires** for other things take over...  
Mark 4:19b (GW)

☞ **When we are experiencing hardship and trials – especially when we don't understand why.**  
Dear friends, don't be surprised at the **fiery trials** you are going through ...  
1 Peter 4:12a (NLT)

Further explanation is given in the context; see also Hebrews 12.

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⇒ When we don't know what to do (though we want to know).

If anyone of you **needs to know what to do**, let him ask God, who gives generously and is not angry at anyone who asks. But when you ask God, trust him to answer you. Do not doubt ...  
James 1:5-6a (UDB)

This is one of the reasons we need to pursue a "renewed mind" (Romans 12:2), and to "grow in ... knowledge" (2 Peter 3:18).

⇒ When we are relying on our own power (instead of God's power) to do the good... and we fail.

For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is **no ability** to do it. For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do.  
Romans 7:18-19 (CSB)

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We find **many** verses that encourage us to do what is right...

Because of: ① The difficulties we've just considered, and  
② The fact that we **can't** do these **good** things in **our own** power (even though we **want** to do them).

✓ **May [God] give you the power** to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do.  
2 Thessalonians 1:11b (NLT)

✓ But **encourage each other** daily, while it is still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception.  
Hebrews 3:13 (CSB)

✓ But as for you, brothers and sisters, **do not grow weary** in doing good.  
2 Thessalonians 3:13 (CSB)

MORE →

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✓ Therefore, **strengthen** your feeble arms and weak knees.  
Hebrews 12:12 (NIV)

✓ ... **let us throw off everything that hinders** and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.  
Hebrews 12:1b-3 (NIV)

✓ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that **your labor in the Lord is not in vain**.  
1 Corinthians 15:58 (CSB)

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**YOUR MISSION:**

**IF** ⇒ You have a **changed heart...** → **THEN** ⇒ Follow the desires of your heart!

**With a changed heart, you will want to honor God!**  
(And will want to find out, in the Bible, how to do it!)

Such desires are not found in the unsaved person's heart.

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**Honor God / Pursue righteousness**

- The **flesh** (sinful nature) doesn't want you to.
- The **world** doesn't want you to.
- The **devil** doesn't want you to.

They want to **discourage** you, and keep you a **slave** to sin.

- Your **changed heart** wants you to.
- God's people** want you to.
- God** wants you to, and **has given you the power to do so**.

You can be **encouraged**, and remain **free** to do what is right!

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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