

Battling Unbelief – Fighting for Joy with faith in Future Grace

1. Why Does It Matter? The Passions Behind Faith in Future Grace

Passion #1: A Passion for the Supremacy of God

John Piper's Mission Statement: "I exist to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples."

Why? God's Zeal for the Supremacy of God

God is infinitely committed to preserving and displaying his glory in all that he does from creation to redemption. And in this commitment we see his zeal and love and satisfaction in his glory. The person that opened my eyes to this Biblical truth was Jonathan Edwards in his amazing book, *Dissertation Concerning the End for which God Created the World*. There he piles text on text — hundreds of them — to show that God exults in the display of his glory in all that he does from beginning to end.

Jonathan Edwards' Conclusion

*For it appears, that all that is ever spoken of in the Scripture as an ultimate end of God's works, is included in that one phrase, the glory of God; which is the name by which the ultimate end of God's works is most commonly called in Scripture; and seems most aptly to signify the thing (Paragraph 264 in *The End for Which God Created the World*).*

Three Key Biblical Texts to Show God's Passion for His Glory

Isaiah 48:9-11 9 *For my name's sake* I defer my anger, *for the sake of my praise* I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. 10 Behold, I have refined you, but not like silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. 11 *For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.*

Romans 1:18-23 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

21 For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Romans 11:33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became his counselor? 35 Or who has first given to him that it might be paid back to him again? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen

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Preliminary Texts to Show that Living By Faith in Future Grace Highlights and Magnifies the Glorious All-Sufficiency of God and so Expresses Our Passion for the Supremacy of God in All Things. (By Faith in His Grace, We Get the Help, He Gets the Glory)

Act 17:25 God is not served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

1 Peter 4:11 Whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified

through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Romans 4:20 With respect to the promise of God, [Abraham] did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Psalms 50:15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will glorify Me.

Passion # 2 : A Passion for Joy

Is this a Biblical Passion?

Psalms 100:1-2 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. 2 Serve the LORD with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing.

Psalms 32:11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones, and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.

Matthew 5:12 Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Philippians 3:1; 4:4 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

1 Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice always.

1 Peter 4:13 But to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

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Is Passion #1 at Odds with Passion #2?

Jonathan Edwards' answer:

God in seeking his glory seeks the good of his creatures, because the emanation of his glory implies the happiness of his creatures. And in communicating his fullness for them, he does it for himself, because their good, which he seeks, is so much in union and communion with himself. God is their good. Their excellency and happiness is nothing but the emanation and expression of God's glory. God, in seeking their glory and happiness, seeks himself, and in seeking himself, i.e. himself diffused...he seeks their glory and happiness (The End for Which God Created the World, paragraph 114)

Thus it is easy to conceive how God should seek the good of the creature even his happiness, from a supreme regard to himself; as his happiness arises from the creature's exercising a supreme regard to God in beholding God's glory, in esteeming and loving it, and rejoicing in it (The End for Which God Created the World, paragraph 277).

God's respect to the creature's good, and his respect to himself, is not a divided respect; but both are united in one, as the happiness of the creature aimed at is happiness in union with himself (The End for Which God Created the World, paragraph 278).

The Bible's Answer:

Philippians 1:20-23 “it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. (21) For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

(22) If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. (23) I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

My answer:

God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.

The chief end of man is to glorify God BY enjoying him forever.

One aim of this course is to show that living by faith in future grace is the way of life that unites passions #1 and #2.

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Passion #3: A Passion for Practical Holiness

Why Do We Have a Passion for Holiness?

It is the only pathway to eternal pleasure in God. No holiness, no heaven.

What do I Mean by Practical Holiness?

- Obedience to God's Word in the everyday life.
- The fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- Genuine love for other people.

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 May the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; 13 so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

Key Texts to Show that Practical Holiness is Necessary for Final Salvation

Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification (holiness) without which no one will see the Lord.

John 5:28-29 Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, 29 and shall come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.

Galatians 6:8-9 For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary.

James 2:17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself.

1 John 2:4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

Matthew 6:15 But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Romans 8:13 If you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

1 John 1:7 If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

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The Problem Raised by the Necessity of Holiness

If we are justified once for all by grace through faith apart from works at the point of true conversion, then how can our final salvation be conditional upon a transformed life of holiness?

Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

The Solution Given by the Westminster Confession, Chapter XI

(1) Those whom God effectually calleth he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous: not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone . . . (2) Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is not dead faith, but worketh by love.

In other words, we are justified by faith alone, but that faith never remains alone. Therefore, justifying faith is always and inevitably accompanied by good works.

So the crucial question now is: Why does practical holiness (i.e. love) inevitably accompany justifying faith?

Preliminary answer: faith itself is the agent of the works. They do not merely accompany faith. They come through or by faith. Faith is the agent that produces the works. And it does so necessarily. Thus the works are evidence of true faith, and are not the means of our salvation the way faith is. They are the evidence that faith is real and thus are necessary for final salvation, though not the ground of it, as the death and righteousness of Christ are, or the means of it, as faith is.

Thomas Watson's way of putting it: using the word "repentance" for the practical change in life that has to happen for forgiveness of sin to be given, Watson says, "Not that repentance merits the forgiveness of sin. By repentance we please God, but we do not satisfy him. Repentance is a condition, not a cause. God will not pardon for repentance, nor yet without it" (*Body of Divinity*, p. 557).

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Analogy of How God will Assess Works at the Judgment (1 Kings 3:16-27)

Recall the story of how two harlots brought a baby to king Solomon, each claiming that the baby was hers. They asked king Solomon to act as judge between them. In his extraordinary wisdom, he said that a sword should be brought, and that the baby should be divided, with half given to the one woman and half to the other. The true mother cried out, "O, my lord, give her the child, and by no means kill it" (v. 26). Solomon said, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him. She is his mother" (v. 26).

What was Solomon looking for? He was *not* looking for a deed that would earn the child, or would *create* a relationship that did not already exist. He was looking for a deed that would *demonstrate* what was already true, namely, that the child was truly this woman's child by birth. That is the way God looks at our deeds on the judgment day. He is not looking for deeds that purchase our pardon in his judgment hall. He is looking for deeds that prove we are already enjoying the fruits of our pardon. He is looking for the practical evidences of our living by faith in future grace. The purchase of our salvation was the blood of Jesus, sufficient once for all to cover all our sins. We do not add to the worth of his atoning death or of his righteousness imputed to us by God (which we call justification). But the means by which we receive this gift is faith (= being satisfied with all that God is for us in Jesus). That kind of faith frees us from lifelong slavery to the fear of death and works through love.

Therefore, faith is not only the means of *justification*, it is also the agent of *sanctification*.

How, Then, does Faith Do this Great Work of Sanctification?

Preliminary Answer: faith severs the root of sin. Sin has power by promising a better tomorrow (or at least a better this evening) and by promising superior satisfactions. But true faith is of such a nature that it severs the root of sin by embracing a better future and providing a deeper satisfaction. The future grace of God is the deeper satisfaction and the better future. When you live by faith in future grace, the power of sin is broken by the power of a superior satisfaction and a better future.

Our Three Passions Raise Three Questions

1. What kind of life will magnify the supremacy of God most?
2. What kind of life will forever satisfy the deep longings of our soul?
3. What kind of life will produce a practical holiness that is necessary for final salvation, but do it in such a way that our justification is still by grace alone, through faith alone, based on Christ's death and imputed righteousness alone?

Our answer to all three questions is: living by faith in future grace.

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2. Is It Biblical? The Foundations of Sanctifying Power

Faith is the Great Worker

1 Thessalonians 1:3 [I] Constantly bear in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.

2 Thessalonians 1:11 To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth

Acts 26:18 [I send you] to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of

sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

1 Timothy 1:5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Romans 9:31-32 Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone.

The Grace We Have Faith in is Not Only God's Disposition to Save the Unworthy, But the Power of God Exerted to bless Us in the Future with All that We Need

1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 16:23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

2 Corinthians 8:1-3 Now, brethren, we *wish* to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. 3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability *they gave* of their own accord.

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.

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2 Corinthians 12:9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Acts 4:33 And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.

Acts 6:8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

Therefore, though grace was given to us in eternity past (2 Timothy 1:9) and was the disposition of God that moved him to send his son to die for us (Romans 3:24), it is also a power exerted by God in the future to meet all our needs. On this we rely. On this we depend and trust. Faith is not just faith in the past events but the future grace of God.

Faith Is Future-Oriented, It Trusts in Future Grace

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Romans 4:16-24 For this reason *it is* by faith, that *it might be* in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 17 (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the sight of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. 18 In hope against hope he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." 19 And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; 20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. 22 Therefore also IT

WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 23 Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reckoned to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Colossians 1:22-23 He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach — 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; 9 indeed, we had the sentence of death within

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ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.

Therefore, faith is future-oriented and embraces a future governed by God's grace and is therefore superior to the future promised by sin.

The Function of Bygone Grace: Solid Ground Under Faith in Future Grace

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Romans 5:9-10 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath *of God* through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Hebrews 4:14-16 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

Faith Is a Being Satisfied With Heartfelt Valuing and Treasuring All that God Promises to be for Us in Jesus, Not Just an Assent to Truths (Past or Future)

Philippians 3:8-9 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the Law*, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith.

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

John 7:37-38 Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me,

as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'"

John 3:19-20 And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.

John 5:40 You are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life.

John 6:37 All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

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1 John 5:3-4 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. 4 For

whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.

Therefore faith includes love for God in the sense of delight in him and valuing him and treasuring him above all else. And so faith is a being satisfied in all that God is for us—and promises to be for us in Jesus. Therefore faith severs the root of sin which is the promise sin makes for a better future and a better satisfaction.

What Is the Role of the Holy Spirit in Enabling Obedience?

Galatians 5:22-23a But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Galatians 3:5 Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

Why Does the Spirit Unite Himself to Faith as a Way of Bringing about the Works of Love?

The answer seems to be that the Holy Spirit loves to glorify the all-satisfying dependability of Christ and his Word (John 16:14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you"). If the Holy Spirit simply caused acts of love in the human heart without any clear, ongoing causal connection between love, on the one hand, and faith in Christ's promises, on the other hand, then it would not be plain that Christ's all-satisfying dependability is honored through love. But the Spirit is utterly committed to getting glory for Jesus. Therefore, he keeps himself quietly beneath the surface, as it were, and puts forward "hearing with faith" as the conscious cause of love.

1 Peter 1:3-6a Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice,

John 7:37-39 Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

What Is the Role of Gratitude in the Motivation of Obedience?

Nowhere in the Bible is gratitude connected explicitly with obedience as a motivation. We do not find the phrase "out of gratitude" or "in gratitude" for acts toward God.

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Christian obedience is called the "work of faith," never of the "work of gratitude" (1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11).

We find expressions like "live by faith" (Galatians 2:20) and "walk by faith" (2 Corinthians 5:7), but never any expression like "live by gratitude" or "walk by gratitude."

We find the expression "faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6), but not "gratitude working through love."

We read that "the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Timothy 1:5), but not "from sincere gratitude."

We read that sanctification is by "faith in the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13), not that it is "by gratitude for the truth."

We read that "faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2:26), but not that "gratitude without works is dead."

And when Jesus deals with the disciples' hesitancy to seek the kingdom first because they were worried about food and clothing, he did not say, "O men of little gratitude," he said, "O men of little faith" (Matthew 6:30).

Faith in future grace, not gratitude, is the source of radical, risk-taking, kingdom-seeking obedience.

The temptation to say: "God has done so much for me, what can I do for him?" is very great. But it is very dangerous for three reasons:

1. We can never pay God back — not one penny's worth — because every move we make in love and holiness is a move that God himself supplies (1 Corinthians 15:10), and so we are simply going deeper in debt to grace by our obedience, not paying any of the debt off. A better way to think is to say grace pays our debts to God which sin creates.
2. If we could succeed in paying God back for all he does for us, or for any of it, to that degree we would nullify grace and turn it into a business transaction. Grace is free or it is not grace. Grace does not establish an amortization schedule of obedience payments.
3. Thinking of obedience as empowered by gratitude directs our attention backward to bygone grace rather than forward to future grace. In this way the debtor's ethic tends to divert us from the wealth of grace yet to be known and distracts us from the very power of obedience we need — future grace. You can't run your car on gratitude for yesterday's gas.

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Therefore, Our Passion for Holiness Involves a Fight for Faith in Future Grace. We Battle Against Sin by Battling against Unbelief.

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me

on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

2 Corinthians 1:24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm.

Philippians 1:25 And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith.

3. How Does It Work for Holiness?

The Origins of Radical Love

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

1 Timothy 1:5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Matthew 5:43-44 You have heard that it was said, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy." 44 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Matthew 5:10-12 Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 7:7-12 Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! 12 In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Luke 14:12-14 And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and *that* will be your repayment. 13 But when you give a reception, invite *the* poor, *the* crippled, *the*

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lame, *the* blind, 14 and you will be blessed, since they do not have *the means* to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

Luke 12:32-33 Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 10:32-34 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

Hebrews 11:24-26 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 13:12-14 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. 13 So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking *the city* which is to come.

4. How Does It Work Against Sin?

Battling the Forms of Unbelief

Battling the Unbelief of Anxiety

Definition: The loss of confident security in God owing to feelings of uneasiness or foreboding that something harmful is going to happen.

Battling Anxiety in General

Matthew 6:25-34 For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on. Is

not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and *yet* your heavenly Father

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feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27 And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life? 28 And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, 29 yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith! 31 Do not worry then, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear for clothing?" 32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Lamentations 3:22-23 The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 *They* are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

Battling Anxiety About Being Useless

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.

Isaiah 55:9-11 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. 10 "For as the rain and the snow

Battling Anxiety about Feeling Weak

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Deuteronomy 33:25 As thy days, *so shall* thy strength *be* (KJV).

Psalms 56:3 When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You.

1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; 11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it.

may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

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Battling Anxiety about Difficult Decisions

Psalm 32:8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.

Psalm 25:8-9 Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. 9 He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way.

Battling Anxiety about Opponents

Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?

Battling Anxiety about Afflictions

Psalm 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

Romans 5:3-5 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven

character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Battling Anxiety about Aging

Isaiah 46:3-4 Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, you who have been borne by Me from birth and have been carried from the womb; 4 even to *your* old age I will be the

same, and even to *your* graying years I will bear *you!* I have done *it*, and I will carry *you*; and I will bear *you* and I will deliver *you*.

Battling Anxiety about Not Persevering to the End in Faith

Philippians 1:6 *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Jeremiah 32:40 I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.

Hebrews 7:25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Battling Anxiety about Death

Romans 14:7-9 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; 8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we

live or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

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Battling the Unbelief of Covetousness

Definition: Desiring something not for God's glory or in such a way that we lose our contentment in God.

Is Covetousness Idolatry?

Colossians 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

FORSAKE YOU," 6 so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

Exodus 20:3 (First of Ten Commandments) You shall have no other gods before Me.

Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Exodus 20:17 (Last of Ten Commandments) You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Philippians 4:11-13 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Hebrews 13:5 -6 *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER*

Gracious Warnings about the Dangers of Desiring Money and Things

Abundance of Possessions is Not Life

Luke 12:15 Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not *even* when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

Desire for Riches Chokes the Word

Mark 4:19 The worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Loving Money Spans All Kinds of Sins

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

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Desiring to be Rich Destroys the Soul

1 Timothy 6:9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

Money Is No Final Help in Death

1 Timothy 6:7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

Pray for a Heart for the Truth and Not for Money

Psalms 119:36 Incline my heart to Your testimonies and not to gain.

Battling the Unbelief of Lust

Definition: Pursuing illicit thoughts or images in the mind with a view to stimulating sexual pleasures - with or without external stimuli.

Lust Grows out of Suppressing the Knowledge of God and His Promises

Ephesians 4:22 Lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit.

1 Peter 1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance.

1 Thessalonians 4:4-5 Each of you [should] know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful

passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.

2 Peter 1:3-4 His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

It Is a Lie that Losing Sex Is Losing Something Essential

Psalms 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD gives grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

The Gain through Purity is Unspeakable

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

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Unfought Lust Will Destroy the Soul

Matthew 5:28-29 (See *Future Grace*, p. 329)
I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

Luke 8:14 The *seed* which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

Be Killing Sin Or It Will Be Killing You (John Owen)

Romans 8:12-13 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Battling the Unbelief of Bitterness and an Unforgiving Spirit

Definition: Holding a grudge or savoring the thought of getting even with no true desire for the salvation and reconciliation of the offending person.

A Crucial Consideration of Bygone Grace

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

The Blessing You Will Receive Cuts the Need for Vengeance

Matthew 5:11-12 Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

1 Peter 3:9 (compare 2:21) Do not return evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

The Promise of God's Vengeance Releases You from that Role

1 Peter 2:21-23 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT

FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting to Him who judges righteously.

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Romans 12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written,

"VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

In the End There Will Be No Unrecompensed Sins

They will all be duly punished, either in the cross (Isaiah 53:6) or in hell (2 Thessalonians 7-10). We may leave that finally to God.

Battling the Unbelief of Impatience

Definition: Murmuring against Providence when we are forced to walk the path of obedience in an unplanned place or an unplanned pace. ("Do all things without grumbling or disputing" Philippians 2:14.)

Examples of Extraordinary Patience and Perseverance (Future Grace, p. 171)

1. The story of Joseph

Genesis 45:7 God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.

Genesis 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

2. Benjamin and Annie Kinkead Warfield

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

B. B. Warfield: "He will so govern all things that we shall reap only good from what befalls us." (*Faith and Life*, p. 204)

God Works While We Patiently Wait

Isaiah 64:4 For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, nor has the eye seen a God besides You, who works for the one who waits for Him.

I will rejoice over them to do them good . . . with all My heart and with all My soul.

Jeremiah 32:40-41 I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. 41

Isaiah 30:18 Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; how blessed are all those who wait for Him.

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Psalm 40:1-3 I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me and heard my cry. 2 He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. 3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; many will see and fear and will trust in the LORD.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being

renewed day by day. 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Colossians 1:11 [May you be] strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

William Cowper's Hymn, "God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

God moves in a mysterious way
his wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
and rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
of never failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs
and works his sovereign will.

You fearful saints, fresh courage take;
the clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
in blessings on your head.

His purposes will ripen fast,
unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
but sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
and scan his work in vain:
God is his own interpreter,
and he will make it plain.

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