

A Living Faith

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

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From a message preached on June 27, 1987

Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

The thing that many of God's people lack periodically and frequently is understanding. I can have all the knowledge in the world and a great grasp of memorizing Scripture. I can be able to say the right thing in the right place to the right crowd but lack understanding. I can give you rhetoric that will explain a chapter and a verse and have it make a tremendous impression upon you when it's said but lack understanding. I can live a pious Christian life that is free from overt sinning, a life where I'm not noticeably negative in any way, and still lack understanding.

Do you understand that these are the last hours? Do you understand it's the latest time in human history? Do you understand that only spiritual people make an impact upon a nation? Do you understand that we are to redeem the time because the days are evil? Buy up every moment. Do we understand that our days are

numbered on earth? Do we understand that wasted time and wasted hours means a waste and loss for eternity? Do we understand that God gives mandates for our spirituality through His grace and love twenty-four hours a day?

We have to ask ourselves, what's my capacity? Is it to react? To get nervous? To be insecure? To be fearful? To walk by sight? To hold back on God? To keep back what's God's anyway? Is that our capacity?

As you will see in these pages, we may very well have an orthodox faith but not a correct faith. We may have the words of faith but a faith without the tune of grace. We may have statues without salt. It does not glow and it does not burn. We may have intentions but no experience. We may have confession but no communion. We may speak the words of faith and not live in faith with our words. We may make promises and conviction is found wanting.

Chapter One

THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING

The Bible says, "Be careful how you hear." Be careful how you listen. In other words, to those who really listen, God will give a greater capacity. To those who do not listen properly, God will take away the capacity that they already have. Remember this, every word of God is pure.

Every time I see someone who has been away from his local assembly for two weeks or someone who only goes to church occasionally, my spirit always picks up that he is not as spiritual as he was three weeks ago. Why is that? Because every word of God is pure, and the Word of God is God's only standard for quickening the soul of man into a spiritual capacity to hear and participate in a fellowship with Jesus Christ so He can express and reveal Himself in a life.

I want you to see something that is lacking sadly in the lives of multitudes of Christians and

any one of us are in danger of it. "To know wisdom and instruction and to perceive the words of understanding."

There are things that we do not understand. There are things that we have never really learned.

Real Fellowship

In some of our relationships, we are not really fellowshiping in Christ. These are just wasted relationships based upon material things — clothing and things of that nature. And when you relate with any person in that way for any period of time, I'll guarantee you, you'll become dull spiritually. Husbands should notice it, and people should pick up on it and understand something about any relationship that isn't a pure and honest fellowship around the Word of God.

"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels" (Proverbs 1:5).

"So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart understanding.

"Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding." There it is again.

“Then shalt thou understand (to trust in) the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

“The LORD giveth wisdom: and out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”

“Then shalt thou understand righteousness” (Proverbs 2:2-6, 9).

“So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Proverbs 3:4-5).

This word, “understanding,” is the key over and over again in Proverbs. In chapter 1, verse 22, “How long, you simple ones,” and the words “simple ones” means people that have knowledge here in this particular verse but no understanding. “How long will you love simplicity?” Love knowledge without application, love illumination without appropriation. “And the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate the (application of knowing the reality of God in a personal experience)?”

A believer can have everything going in the world but not have understanding. It doesn't mean you do not grasp the message. Knowledge will do that. It doesn't mean that you don't know the doctrine. Classes will perform that

function.

Understanding means you take the Word, you receive the message, and you use it in the test, and it leaves you with understanding how the Word of God is pure when it's tried in the furnace of your life. So when it says, "Trust in the Lord and lean not on thine own understanding," in Proverbs 3, it means never trust in your own experience through personal application without the power of God. Trust in the Lord with all thy frame of reference, and lean not unto thine own understanding. Acknowledge God in all thy ways, and he shall direct your paths.

Look at some of the other verses in Proverbs
"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding" (Proverbs 3:13).

"The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth by understanding." Then it says, "Hath he established the heavens" (Proverbs 3:19).

"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding" (Proverbs 4:1).

"Get wisdom, get understanding" (Proverbs 4:5).

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get

wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7).

Do you see it? What is he talking about? Understanding.

There are many areas where people do not understand a living faith in a living God but substitute for it a natural faith in natural circumstances by sight and how the substitution isn't even realized if the heart is sincere in a moral frame of reference. The contrast is the eternal purpose versus the temporal purpose.

Righteousness Revealed from Faith to Faith

“For the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

“For as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

“Wherein is the wrath of God revealed from heaven unto all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:17-18).

What is the righteousness of God? Perfect integrity, perfect justice, perfect kindness, perfect patience. Jesus Christ in His state of being perfect in His essence. For the characteristics and nature and essence of God with His attributes—love, grace, mercy, integrity, immutability, ve-

racity—these things are revealed from heaven from faith to faith. If we stop expressing a living faith in the promises and categories of God, we do not reveal God’s characteristics.

What does that mean? It means that we receive doctrine and don’t have understanding and don’t reveal it. The momentum test comes and we don’t reveal it in the only opportunities that we have. We hold the truth about unconditional love in our unrighteousness and do not express it, do not give it. It means that I have doctrine but it doesn’t become living faith. I may hear categories, but I don’t implement them. I want to show you why they’re not implemented.

Identification in Love

A woman may have an identification with another woman that’s out of line with God and not have an identification with the living Word to supercede it. Her life does not reveal the character of God; the essence of compassion, kindness, humility, brokenness is not in evidence. That woman gets involved with the cares of this world—material things, clothes, having good things excessively—and her identification in that relationship becomes so important to her that

it's needed to make her spiritual life happy.

Thank God for the unity of a marriage. And God established the home in its sacred order, and it's divine institution No. 2, and the family is No. 3. Free volition is divine institution No. 1. Families should pray together, love each other, stay together, hold up each other, share God together, and grow together to be conformed to Christ's image. And it's one of the greatest, most sacred institutions when it's spiritual. But if a wife is attached to her husband without being identified to the Cross, to doctrine, to the Holy Spirit, I'll guarantee you, her days are numbered before she sells out to lukewarmness.

One woman held out for three years after her husband sold himself out for the world. And finally she said, "I'm giving up." She had an identification with the institution of marriage instead of the God who created it. The institution is beautiful but it must never be elevated above the living God who initiated it and instituted it.

Consequently, she sold out, and today, as far as we can tell, she is in no church anywhere. She started out going down to once a week, then once in two weeks, then once a month, then not at all. Most people who start down that road end up out of fellowship. An identification with

each other in the marriage but no identification with the Cross.

I must sacrifice my temporal happiness to bring in divine principles of truth. If need be, I must sacrifice my temporal happiness to bring in divine principles of truth and appropriate them in understanding. A godly husband will tell his wife if he ever deviates from doctrine, don't agree with him.

I've said that myself more than once. When I get off from categories, never agree with me. Stand up to me. Get in my face privately and disagree with me head-on and never give in. Why? Because it's the most subtle trap in the world.

A man has dominion over the woman in equal circumstances from Genesis on. That's why when a man initiates lust and indiscretion and becomes suggestive with a woman who likes him. That man is heavily responsible before God, because if the woman isn't on guard, the male has dominion over the female. She gets emotionally seduced, then physically she surrenders.

Therefore, the husband has one of the most sacred responsibilities. If he is the reason that his wife doesn't grow in grace, if he stops her ca-

capacity from growing with God, if he prohibits her understanding, he will pay for it at the Bema Seat, and he'll be responsible for the loss all eternity.

"Prove it to me," you say?

OK, when Eve sinned, God addressed Adam. When Eve sinned, God blamed Adam. I think there was a reason why Eve sinned first, and she's guilty, and women have somewhat paid for it ever since, but I think there's a reason why God addressed Adam.

Now if you're identified with your marriage but not Calvary, then you'll never have a stabilized mind, a mature heart, and a living faith.

What's wrong with Sarah saying to Abraham, "Get Hagar out of the house" if that's God's mind? Sarah didn't waver one inch. Abraham started to pull this headship trip but it didn't last too long because God intervened and said, "Get rid of the woman like your wife says." That time God didn't allow Abraham to pull the headship trip, did He, because Sarah had connections with the Head that he didn't have.

Chapter Two

THE NEED FOR PRECISENESS

Some women sell out to materialism, to the cares of this life, to pleasure, and lose their spirituality in the test of time by drifting and wandering into the land without promises, the land without life. Their identification progressively is sealed by something outside of a precise, pure Calvary.

The messages I am receiving are for the entire Body, and I'm getting them I know in prayer and through your prayers. I'm not talking about rebellion. I'm not talking about negative reaction. I'm not talking about listening to God as to when to be quiet. I'm talking about walking with God in precise light.

When the Bible says, "The entrance of God's Word gives light," in the original Hebrew it says, "The entering of categories give accurate precision for appropriation."

When the Bible says, "The Word of God is a

lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my pathway," one translation puts it this way. "There's preciseness of God's Word always gives accurate light and precise understanding available to experience the light of the one that releases the Word."

When it says, "Let the word of God dwell richly in us" (Colossians 3:16), it says this. "Let the accuracy and preciseness of exactness become that that has dominion over your mind." Precise, accurate information that is precise.

I'm shocked that some older Christians don't have preciseness. They lack accuracy.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world, and they that followeth me shall not walk in any thing that is dark, but shall abide in precise, accurate definition through divine information available for the powerful understanding of the individual's response."

Do you know why we can go through international persecution and lies and assassination and still go forward? Because by the mercy and grace of God we have preciseness in our teaching. Accurate information is available through the power of the Holy Spirit. It can be not a single word less than precise. It must be accurate so there will not be human deviations from divine

inspiration.

You would be shocked at the things that Satan uses in relationships and in good businesses to hinder the man and woman and family of God for training in order to reign with Christ forever in heaven. I'm going to train, and win the lost, and go in the world, and go into the third world, and love the Body, and lay down my life, and be motivated by love and evangelism to build up the Body a million times over than to make it down here and lose it all up there!

Many people who do that get a little colder, a little lukewarm, just a little. They don't go way off, they get a little off. A little more off. A little more off. Ten years later they're gone. They didn't realize the leaven of material things. They didn't realize their indifference to relationships. They had too many relationships where the fellowship of Calvary, the burden of prayer, and the love of God was missing. They weren't bad people. They just weren't spiritual people.

Mark this down: if I am one quarter of one percent off, I am carnal. The spiritual way is to be confessed up-to-date, relaxing in faith, growing in grace, living precisely by the Word accurately by faith.

Let the Word have Dominion

Some people have said to me, “God is telling me to go here.” That calling sometimes stops suddenly when a challenge comes up. Now God doesn’t change His mind. The flesh changed its mind because it walked by sight, it looked at circumstances, and it decided what was better for the old man.

See, the attitude is this: be challenged and tested, and if your faith can live through it in faith-rest, you’re all right. If you get convicted and not condemned, you’d better get converted.

If there’s one tremendous need for every one of us, it’s to understand what are we identified with the most. Are you identified with the personality of a influential leader who doesn’t communicate Christ? If you are identified with that, we’ll be swallowed up by personality ego. I don’t care who it is.

Don’t identify with a personality ego.

Live by every Word of God.

Live by every Word of God.

Live by every Word of God.

Live by every Word of God.

Live by every Word of God.

Live by every Word of God.

I am repeating myself on purpose because it is so important to live by every word of God.

Walk in the Spirit so that you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

The thing you don't want to do is probably exactly what God would have you to do if you'd open your eyes to heaven. The thing that's inconvenient to do is just exactly what the Cross wants you to do. We sang this little song the other night. In fact, we made it up. It goes like this:

Order my steps in thy Word, dear Lord,
Thy Word, dear Lord, thy Word, dear Lord.

Order my steps in thy Word, dear Lord.

Let iniquity not have dominion over me.

Millions and millions are going to hell. Where can I best win them? That's the question I must ask myself. Is Jesus Christ establishing your steps precisely, accurately, and absolutely through the Word so that mental attitude presumption does not have dominion over your volition? That's the principle when we are identified with the Cross.

Do you know why we have so many teams go out into all the world? Do you know why that is? Let me tell you—because people have the right identification.

“Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12).

Jesus said He loved the Word more than His name (Psalm 138:2).

When people love the Word of God more than what it is seemingly necessary, then naturally they’d rather listen to it than watch TV, or play sports. They’d rather listen to it than go swimming. They’d rather listen to it than wandering around in their homes. If they love the Word of God more than their necessary food, naturally they’re going to go to where the Word of God is taught providing they can do it.

These believers follow the Word of God, no matter who preaches it, if he’s precise and accurate. So shame on you double-crossing, double-minded backsliders who live in loyalty to the flesh, loyalty to the personality, loyalty to a denomination, loyalty to an organization, loyalty to ties that aren’t spiritual, loyalty to relationships that have no fellowship.

Where Do Your Loyalties Lie?

Some people have loyalty to clothes without the clothes of righteousness; loyalty to money

without the riches of heaven; loyalty to the old nature without the refinement of the Cross; loyalty to things, and people, and situations in order to be accepted, in order to have a rapport, in order to be elevated in personality and ego.

It is so much better to be crucified with Christ and live a life that is unattached to all things, going forward in Satan's world as a stranger, as a pilgrim sojourning and going forward with a living faith in a living God, motivated by love, with fire in your bones, character in your soul, guts in your mind.

I am going forward in Jesus? I am not backing up and cooling off because of an attachment to something else which is temporal and going to die! You know that's true, and you're going to hear it precisely, boldly, without anybody being ashamed to preach it right.

I am not going to worry about the few details of a transition and act like they are overburdening my carnal soul. I don't need a vacation, either. I'm not burned out. I'm not worried about details. Why? There's a resurrection power of God that's in my soul—quickenning my body, quickenning my tongue, quickenning my soul, quickenning my heart, quickenning my emotions, quickenning my consciousness and my self-

consciousness and making my volition ready to go—frustrating the old nature with the power of the Living Word in preciseness, in light, and in accuracy!

Chapter Three

LET GOD GIVE YOU THE BEST

Abraham said to Lot though he deserves to choose first, "Lot, you choose." Lot lifted up his eyes toward the watered plains of the Jordan and Sodom and Gomorrah. He walked by natural sight in natural circumstances because of natural needs for his herds and flock. He chose southward. Abraham lifted up his eyes to heaven. He had faith in the living God, and he said to Lot, "If you take the left, I'll take the right. If you take the right, I'll take the left."

Now, what was Abraham's attitude? Unconditional love derived from a living faith in God. Abraham didn't care what he got, because he was identified with Jesus Christ and his divine call and not temporal things in time.

Abraham lets Lot choose first, and he takes the leftovers. We've got so many godly men here that would do that for each other. That's what they do. We're thankful for them, women as

well.

It is so great to minister to people with capacity. Boy, it's good to have people with capacity, who know categories, who know preciseness, who don't get occupied with the cares of this world; who don't occupied with the deceitfulness of riches; who do not become occupied with pleasures and other things (Mark 4:19). The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and pleasures choke the Word and a person becomes unfruitful.

What do these things do? Choke the Word.

Now, if you should put your hand to your throat tonight and start choking yourself, you wouldn't have air. It's called self-destruction. That is ridiculous. But imagine choking off the Word of God that is pure, the Word that lasts forever, the Word that's going to judge us at the Bema Seat. When we choke off the Word, we cut off heavenly light, heavenly knowledge, heavenly wisdom, and we go on without experiencing heavenly understanding.

Do you know what Lot could have done? He could have let Abraham choose. No sir. He didn't pray. He didn't do anything. He just said, "I'll choose. Right down there, that's what we want, isn't it, honey?"

A Living Confidence

Abraham had self-sacrificing love, confidence in God, a living faith. He lost all things on the earth and counted them but dung. Abraham did not compare himself with Lot. Abraham did not measure himself with somebody else and make a human comparison. Abraham had a capacity for God, and Lot only had a capacity for the seeming pleasures of Sodom. Abraham could have spoken evil against Lot, but he was too busy revealing the righteousness of God. Abraham could have criticized. He could have gossiped.

Every day of my life I hear amazing stories and I try to turn away and not listen to what people say about people. Sometimes they are about well-known people. Sometimes respectable Christians let words slip out and reveal that their hearts are in wrong relationships with people who profess to be Christians, but are not deeply committed to the Cross. Instead of that Christian lifting the weaker one up, the weaker person drags him down to a level of acceptance in the relationship.

Abraham lived in self-sacrificing love. The words that he spoke were words of edification.

Follow it with me. He didn't criticize Lot. He didn't gossip, and he didn't listen to negativity.

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give a place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

"Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, given him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head" (Romans 12:19).

Now what does that say? Don't take vengeance. Always give God a place to do it justly because you wouldn't do it justly.

"Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful.

"Judge not, and you shall not be judged: condemn not, and you shall not be condemned: forgive, and you shall be forgiven.

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down: shall the Father have people give it unto your bosom" (Luke 6:36).

That is precise doctrine. But many Christians do not seal their tongues when they have wrong relationships with worldly Christians, backslidden Christians, hypocritical Christians, self-righteous Christians.

James 4:11 says, "Speak not evil against a brother or sister ever again. For if you speak evil

against a brother or sister, you speak evil against the law, the Word.

“And there is one law giver, who is able to save and to destroy.”

Jesus Christ says, “Never speak evil against a brother or a sister ever again.” That means you don’t hear a word against your pastor, or any believer for that matter. If you have any issue with your pastor or a brother or a sister, you go alone and you don’t talk it over with anybody else—ever. You’re careful how you hear. You’re careful what you speak. When you speak, you minister grace to the listener, not negativity. Your speech is seasoned with salt (Colossians 4:6). You speak the truth but it’s in love.

Let Your Love Grow

In Christ Jesus, there is a faith that works by unconditional love (Galatians 5:13).

Do you know what that means? Edify through faith-love. I have the substance of God’s truth without evidence toward you, and I operate toward you in faith love, and I serve you in faith-love, and you serve one another in faith-love, and you serve one another in grace-love, and I serve you in grace-love, and you serve me in grace-love. Then we serve each other in faith-

rest love. And then we serve each other in faith-rest grace love. You see how it grows?

Faith love, grace love, faith-rest love, faith love rests grace, you see.

What does it mean? It means like Abraham we are self-sacrificing in our love in our attitude toward the other party who doesn't deserve to choose first because we have the rights. But Abraham was selfless and he was so occupied with God because he was identified with Jesus Christ at Calvary and not things, and not his rights, and not circumstances, and not what would be convenient.

He was identified with Calvary. He knew nothing but the Cross. And the world was crucified unto him. So was his flesh, and he was manifesting the works of Christ to reveal the destruction of Satan in that situation in 1 John 3:8.

That's the way it ought to be, don't you agree?

CONCLUSION

How does God establish our steps? In the preciseness and accuracy of His light in His Word. His Word says to love, so we respond. His Word says to forgive, so we respond. His Word says to lay down our life, so we respond.

We don't get an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth, and become troublemakers. We do not come between peace and joy and the happiness of a vision. We lay down our lives for God, and we do it gladly because it's our reasonable service. We don't listen to evil reports. We seek edification. We don't listen to carnal opinions. We speak doctrine. We don't live in the flesh—we walk in the Spirit. We don't live in doubt—we stagger not at the promises of God through unbelief. Instead, we are strong in faith, giving glory to God because we are persuaded that what He has promised, He is able to perform.

Identification with Calvary leaves me out of your life and puts God in. Identification with

Calvary leads your wife out and puts God in—and then He'll help you to love her. Identification with Calvary puts God in, and God will direct you how to live in accuracy.

You know, time is quite a thing. People in wrong relationships over a period of time usually are weakened by the circumstances to be conformed to the person that they're related to. Learn the difference between a relationship and a fellowship. Learn the difference between Word orientation and flesh orientation. Learn the difference between fellowshipping around clothes and fellowshipping around the robe of righteousness. Learn the difference around fellowshipping around material things and fellowshipping around spiritual things. Learn the difference around edification and just loose wasted talk. Learn the difference between a living adventure of faith and a natural adventure of sight prompted by natural faith because of circumstantial support. Learn the difference.

Learn the difference between an eye-for-an-eye and a tooth-for-a-tooth and loving your enemy. Learn the difference between getting what we deserve and not getting anything at all but giving it to others who don't deserve it. Learn the difference, because the difference is

death working in me that my life from Christ might work in you.

Father, I pray that the power of God will rest upon us corporately. There must be a corporate identification, and I certainly believe there is. There must be a corporate identification. There must be more than an organizational identification, a church identification, a personality identification, an organizational structure. There must be more than that. There must be an identification with the old rugged Cross with the Holy Spirit quickening our mortal body.

Grant that we might build up Christians with the ever-filling Finished Work of God's Lamb. Grant that the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and pleasures of this life and other things might not choke the Word. Grant that the Word of God and all of its light in purity might come forth into our hearts with great power.