

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.6, February 5, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."** (2 Peter 3:18)

TAKE the EASY Yoke/ROAD— not the Hard Road!

[Yes... this has some over-lapping from last week's Newsletter— but read this one carefully anyway— we never get past needing this! TO REALLY BENEFIT, SET ASIDE SOME TIME, LOOK UP THE SCRIPTURES— Read! Meditate! Apply!]

Sooner or later you will need the Biblical truth found in these pages! Some of the details may differ but the core situations are agonizingly similar in homes, churches, work places, and/or among friends and neighbors:

- 1.** Wrong attitudes are held; wrong words are spoken and/or wrong deeds are done.
- 2.** These are often followed by denial, self-justification, defensiveness, resentment, anger, finger pointing, and/or hurt. **This is a Hard, difficult Road! Now what?**
- 3. "BUT... I did none of the above! It was done to me! He/she/they have DESTROYED my life.** They are the reason for my misery, my depression, my lack of Joy, my heart full of anger, resentment and even bitterness!" **REALITY: Your response to wrong (real or imagined) done to you IS A VERY HARD ROAD! Now what?**

We can - if we so choose - keep blasting each other! But just remember that with every blast, we will most likely give the other side more ammunition! Indeed, in situations like these we can keep shooting at each other, pointing out the other's faults (**real or imagined faults!**) until hell freezes over! We will never run out of ammunition.

We can FEEL JUSTIFIED every step of the way and build up an army to agree with our side! (Our 'opponent' can do the same!) We can write each other off and refuse to seek reconciliation and leave a marriage and/or a church and/or a friendship. However, such paths are not sanctioned by JESUS, by the Holy Spirit, nor by His Holy Word; and JUDGMENT DAY IS COMING! **O my, what a destructive HARD ROAD that**

we so often insist upon traveling! HOWEVER, THERE IS A DIFFERENT ROAD, ONE LESS TRAVELLED—THE NARROW WAY OF ***‘IN THE STEPS OF JESUS!’*** When wrong deeds are done and/or when wrong words are said— IN THE STEPS OF JESUS **there is an EASY ROAD!**

MAKE A GOOD CONFESSION: “Because of being IN CHRIST, I am empowered to choose the following ‘roads’!”

1. I will make NO excuse for my own wrongs. Someone else’s wrongs NEVER justify a wrong, contrary to Jesus response from me!

2. I will be gracious, merciful and forgiving toward those who have wronged me.

3. I will only confess my own sin— it was wrong, it was against God and against others: “I did or said ‘so-and-so’— I was wrong, please forgive me!”

4. I will CONFESS to God and to myself: “Henceforth, I will NOT focus on the sins of others, only my own. I will make sure that I rest in God’s forgiveness for my sin. As to the sins of others, I will forgive others even as God for Christ sake has forgiven me, (Eph 4:29-32). Moreover, I will humbly ask for the forgiveness of any I have wronged in word or deed.”

5. I will embrace this truth: A sinful word or deed done to me NEVER justifies a sinful response from me! (Rom. 12:14-21; Eph. 4:29-32; Phil. 2:1-16)

6. When a person who has wronged me comes repenting, I must and I will forgive them as often as they so come! Jesus says to do it— Luke 17:1-5! That’s horizontal forgiveness which is conditioned upon their repenting!

7. When I am ‘hit’ by a wrong from others, I will choose to immediately forgive them VERTICALLY. This forgiveness is between God and I. This forgiveness insures that I am free from resentments and bitterness; and that I am ready to pray for, to bless and to do good to my offender. (Eph. 4:29-32; Rom. 12:14-21; Matt. 5:43-48) This forgiveness is regardless of whether or not they ever repent and ask for forgiveness! **NOTE:** A chief difficulty in forgiving others is that ‘they don’t deserve it!’ However, JESUS IS WORTHY! Forgiveness is an ACT OF GENUINE WORSHIP toward Jesus!

WARNING: If I refuse to give such forgiveness, I may well be given over to **TORMENTORS:** Matt. 18:21-35. (It is no wonder that the most miserable people on the planet are bitter, unforgiving souls!)

MAJOR PROBLEM: I have already responded to the sinful words or deeds of others with my own sinful responses! ... **I AM ALREADY ON THE HARD ROAD! NOW WHAT?**

1. Simply, I must turn from any pity party or anger or wrath or evil speaking or getting even or of trying to make them pay and, instead, I must function as the God-called minister of RECONCILIATION that (in Christ) I am empowered to be! (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

2. I must submit to the YOKE OF JESUS and confess my sin and not the sins of others. I must repent of my anger, wrath and evil speaking. **I must ask** for the forgiveness of those toward whom I have demonstrated my fleshly attitudes (Gal. 5:19-21)

3. No 'smoke-screens' and no 'blame-shifting!'— that is, I must NOT PREFACE my confession with excuses like— *"I did or said so and so, because I was tired or stressed!" "Do you remember when you 'made me mad' and then I yelled and cursed and.....?"* **(These responses are sinful excuses which add more sin to existing sin!) VERY SIMPLY I must forgive** offences done against me; and follow up with words and actions that encourage reconciliation. (Rom. 12:14-21; Eph. 4:29-32; Matt. 5:43-48; Gal. 5:22-24; 2 Cor. 5:17-21)

THIS WAY IS REALLY, REALLY, REALLY EASY! "Pardon me, Sir ... You keep using that word 'EASY' ... I do not agree. The path you have set forth is NOT EASY! My flesh hates it!" "Yes, I understand; AND MY FLESH AGREES WITH YOUR FLESH! BUT MY FLESH AND YOUR FLESH ARE deeply deceived!" Jesus says that **HIS YOKE IS EASY!**

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30) That is the path being unfolded in this article— **the path of the EASY YOKE of Jesus!**

IN RADICAL CONTRAST: The Bible also says that the way of the TRANSGRESSOR is HARD! (Prov. 13:15) HARDNESS is what is presently being experienced as we heed our own understanding; and it won't get better until YOU and I YOKE UP WITH JESUS!

WHEN THE EASY STEPS OF JESUS ARE NOT TAKEN—

We deny ... even lie ... cuddling up to the author of all lies, satan. We get mad. We start and/or continue shooting DEFENSIVE, NON EDIFYING WORDS at each other **and blasting one another to our friends as we SEEK TO develop an evil army to defend us and destroy our offender!** We break off relationships, friendships, marriages, Church membership, etc.

Moreover, instead of submitting to GOD ORDAINED LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH, we rebel and go our own independent way; and may even turn to the WORLD to defend our case, just like the carnal Corinthians who took each other to the court of man, while rejecting the judgment/justice and mercy that God ordains through the church.

IN PRIDE, we will do ANYTHING OTHER THAN to humbly come to the cross. IN PRIDE, we become TOTALLY BLINDED to the fact that it is ONLY by pride that contention flourishes; and by pride we are blinded to the reality that we are grieving

the Holy Spirit, breaking the heart of Jesus; and that by our HATE we are pointing people - especially our children - toward hell and not heaven. **SUCH ARE THE WAYS and such is the fruit when we travel the HARD ROAD of the way of the TRANSGRESSORS!**

WAKE UP! For those who have 'ears to hear' what the Holy Spirit says— IT IS TIME TO SUBMIT TO THE EASY YOKE OF JESUS! In spite of all of the evil that has been said or done which pleases satan and slanders Jesus— nevertheless, today is a day of mercy and grace! God is calling each of us to a wonderful opportunity to DEFEAT our flesh and the lying devil. **The road to the freedom and joy of THE EASY ROAD starts as we SUBMIT TO GOD. (This defeats our flesh) Now, restored in fellowship with God in Christ, we can RESIST THE DEVIL and he MUST flee! (James 4:7)**

Thus, we have a wonderful opportunity to not only defeat our flesh and the devil, but a wonderful opportunity to experience GRACE greater than our sin, to bring glory and honor to Jesus; and to give a powerful witness to the world around us!

HERE'S HOW to get off the HARD ROAD and on to the EASY ROAD:

- 1.** Get alone with Jesus and His Word and ask the HOLY SPIRIT to guide you according to the pure Word of God... and not according to your emotions. Get pen and paper. Make yourself aware that JESUS IS PRESENT... **Now:**
- 2.** "LORD JESUS, guide my pen to write down any and all THAT I and I ALONE HAVE DONE OR SAID which did not please you!" **Make your list...** Make NO excuses.
- 3. MAKE GODLY CONFESSIONS, like these:** "LORD, I confess MY own sin, **only**. It was wrong; it was against you, O LORD! (Psalm 51) LORD JESUS I ask for forgiveness and I WILL GO and ask the forgiveness of the person or persons I wronged."
- 4.** "LORD, IF SOMEONE COMES ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS— I WILL grant forgiveness to the person asking for forgiveness. We will reaffirm fellowship in Christ and we will go forward."
- 5.** "LORD JESUS, even if they never repent and ask for forgiveness of their sin against me— I will still deal with my own sin; and IN MY HEART I will forgive them; and I WILL INVEST IN THEM with love, blessings, prayer and good deeds— JUST AS YOUR WORD COMMANDS!" (Rom 12:14-21)

PRAISE GOD... HIS WAY IS REALLY EASY!

BEWARE! A MULTITUDE OF 'HARD ROAD' VOICES BECKON... such as—

1. Live for yourself. 2. Pleasure, fame, fortune - all for self. 3. Glory and Honor for self.
4. Justify self. 5. Defend self. 6. Blame others. Fill the air waves with Smokescreens.
7. Revenge, Bitterness, Envy, Hate. 8. Refuse to Forgive and to Sacrificially Love.
9. Trust in self and in those who will encourage self. 10. Rebel Against God-given Authority.
11. Be a victim. Join V.A. (Victims Anonymous). My what hard roads all these are!

JESUS walked the EASY ROAD; we are to walk in the Steps of Jesus:

NO ONE has ever suffered such injustice as Jesus! **And yet, Gaze Upon Him and See—**

1. There was no resentment. 2. There were no plans for revenge. 3. He had no bitterness. He held no grudges. 4. There was no self pity. 5. He never demanded His rights. 6. There was no anger, no depression.

INSTEAD: 1. There was Silent Suffering for the sake of others. 2. There was Meekness, Gentleness, Humility, and Acceptance. 3. There was Love and Forgiveness and Prayer for those who betrayed and tormented Him. 4. Moreover, there was abiding trust in His Father!

5. And there was Submission to the will of His Father! 6. He lived to GIVE— not to get!

O WHAT AMAZING FOOTPRINTS HE LEFT FOR US TO FOLLOW AFTER on His EASY ROAD! **REMEMBER:** In Christ we have the indwelling Holy Spirit who will always lead and empower us, IN THE STEPS OF JESUS! **(And don't forget, no one ever lived a happier more joyful life on earth than Jesus!) Look yet again. Drink deeply: Jesus Has Set Before Us An Extraordinary Example of,**

1. Silence in Suffering; 2. Nonresistance; 3. Returning Good for Evil; 4. Love; 5. Forgiveness;
6. Abiding Trust in His Father; 7. SUBMISSION to His Father— My what miracle steps!

MOREOVER, His silence in suffering was not a secret PITY PARTY, nor a state of Passivity! He was anointed with the oil of GLADNESS above all others who have ever lived.

Please also under score this: The silence and suffering of Jesus does not cancel out the Biblical mandate of PUNISHMENT FOR SIN. Indeed, on the cross, Jesus paid the stiff penalty for our sin; and from the New Testament GOSPEL MESSAGE we are assured that VENGEANCE IS MINE, says the LORD, He will repay! The way of the cross, **(THE EASY ROAD!)** RELEASES AND RELIEVES US FROM THE PAYBACK BUSINESS!

THE EASY ROAD— AS A CHRISTIAN, I CONFESS:

1. I MUST walk the EASY ROAD yoked to Jesus because that is the Real Essence of what it means to be a Genuine Christian! (John 10: 27-28; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6)

2. I MUST walk the EASY ROAD yoked to Jesus because that is what God commands in His WORD! (Rom. 12:19, 21; Matthew 5:44; 1 Peter 2:18-21)

3. I MUST walk the EASY ROAD yoked to Jesus less my actions and reactions to circumstances and people CAUSE me to deny Jesus and Grieve the Holy Spirit; and rob me of a life of joy and amazing miracles! (Philippians 1-4)

4. I MUST walk the EASY ROAD yoked to Jesus for God has not authorized me to take His Divine Prerogative of vengeance! (Romans 12:19-21; Matthew 5:44-47)

5. I MUST walk the EASY ROAD yoked to Jesus, for God has personally designed my own Road for His glory and for my good! (Romans 8:28; Genesis 45:8; Genesis 50:19-20)

6. I MUST walk the EASY ROAD yoked to Jesus, less I lose perspective! (Genesis 50:19-20)— When life tumbles in, it is but an opportunity to FURTHER the gospel! (Phil. 1:12-14)

7. I MUST walk the EASY ROAD yoked to Jesus because, LOVE is better than hate! FORGIVENESS is better than bitterness! FAITH is better than unbelief! TRUST IN GOD is better than despair! SUBMISSION/OBEDIENCE TO GOD is better than rebellion!

8. I MUST walk the EASY ROAD yoked to Jesus because SUCH IS THE PATH where supernatural GRACE is found, where POWER AND DESIRE to follow Jesus rise up within me and where I experience anointing from God and CUPS RUNNING OVER! (Ps 23!)

IT IS TIME TO GO FORWARD IN THE STEPS OF JESUS!

1. The next forward step must be one of repentance!

As I repent of my previous- GOING MY OWN WAY, I REPENT OF SINFUL DEEDS THAT I HAVE DONE AND THEN ADDED SIN TO SIN BY LYING ... JUST LIKE KING DAVID DID LONG AGO. I repent of LEANING TO MY OWN UNDERSTANDING, DRINKING IN COUNSEL THAT HAS JUSTIFIED MY FLESH AND CONDEMNING OTHERS: "LORD JESUS, I HAVE STRAYED...

AND NOW I AM COMING HOME!" THE RESULTS WILL BE THAT Floodgates of MERCY and GRACE will come open! (Proverbs 28:13)

2. I CHOOSE to Announce to myself a Proclamation of Reception of my DIVINELY designed EASY Road! (Romans 8:28; 1 Peter 2:19-23)

3. Jesus walked the EASY ROAD of being YOKED to His Father! Jesus says to us today! "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30)

MERCY and ABOUNDING GRACE TO ALL IN CHRIST! James Bell

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

1. Ladies Bible Study— ‘LORD, HEAL MY HURTS!’— Tuesdays @ 10:00AM! Call the church — 615-452-5951

2. WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM! / YOUTH: Wednesdays, 6-8pm @ Adam and Bethany’s home.

3. Thursdays @ 6:30pm: OUTREACH VISITATION

4. EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am: Men’s Fellowship and Bible Study

Sunday Schedule for February 10, 2013

1. 9:30am- Sunday School /
2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children’s Church
3. Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal /
4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service

Sunday Schedule for February 17, 2013

1. 9:30am- Sunday School /
2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children’s Church
3. Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal
4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service [LORD’S SUPPER SERVICE!]

Sunday Schedule for February 24, 2013

1. 9:30am- Sunday School /

2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children's Church

3. Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal /

4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service