

***Session 5 Cooperating with Grace: Three Primary Principles (Rom. 6:11-1)***

*Please refer to the teaching notes for this message.*

**COOPERATING WITH THE GRACE OF GOD**

In this session—we will not cover all of it—I want to highlight the three primary principles of how we can cooperate with the grace of God concerning who we are in Christ, in order to have the power to walk out the eight Beatitudes. You find these principles all through the New Testament. They are stated in different ways, but they are the same three principles.

God requires us to cooperate with His grace, meaning He does not just give us the grace of God and then put us on automatic pilot. He freely gives us His grace and then He requires a relational interaction with Him in order for the grace to be activated in our mind and our emotions. The grace is ours freely and forever in our legal position. God has affection for us, no condemnation. We have the indwelling Spirit. We have the authority to use the name of Jesus, whether we ever use it or not. It is ours instantly and permanently. In order for us to enjoy the benefit of God's grace, God requires that we participate with the Holy Spirit in a relational way. We talk to Him, He inspires us in our mind, and our emotions become renewed. We deny fleshly lust and we know who we are in Christ. I will go through all that in a systematic way.

It is very possible to receive the grace of God and to receive it in vain, which means that you can receive it, but it doesn't cause your mind and emotions to be different. Beloved, if I am receiving the grace of God and I am going to enjoy it for billions of year, I want my mind and emotions to be renewed by the power of it in this age. We can neglect to cooperate with the grace of God. We can live in spiritual brokenness throughout our Christian life, which is a negative thing. We can live in defeat, with sorrow over our defeat, but still living in it. I don't want to live that way. I want to participate with the Holy Spirit in order to activate the wealth that is freely given to me by Christ Jesus.

**A DIVISION OF LABOR**

There is a division of labor. God will not do our part and we cannot do His part. I am going to say that again: there is a division of labor in the grace of God. Some people want God to do their part, I mean the part that God sovereignly called them to do. That is wrong. It is sincere, but it is sincerely wrong. The analogy I have used over the years is the one of the farmer. God provides the sun and the rain and the process of life, the miracle of life that is in the seed. The farmer has to plant the seed, water the seed, and weed the seed. The farmer could stay in bed all day and say, "O God, I trust You to plant my seeds and pull the weeds. God will say, "No, if you don't plant the seed and pull the weeds, you will starve without a harvest, even though I will keep sending the sunshine and the rain. You will die of starvation."

A lot of people say that if God wants it done He will do it. God has made it clear what His part is and what our part is, and the reason He wants us to have a part in it, is for us to be involved with Him relationally, because He values the relationship with us that much. We are not earning the power of God, but it is a relational value. He requires interaction with us in the name of love. It is because He values relationship. Some people think that any effort we make is earning it. No, we are putting effort into it, because we value the relationship of love and God requires that we respond in love, that we dialogue with the Spirit, and that we believe His Word. Those are all statements of love.

## **WE ARE NOW UNDER THE REIGN OF GRACE**

Now I am going to outline three principles. They are so succinctly put right here in Romans 6—the most dynamic chapter in the New Testament on living the transformed life. If you didn't know this, if it is new to you, make a note of it. Romans 6 is the most important chapter in the New Testament on living the transformed life, meaning victory over sin from our heart. If you put Matthew 5—the eight Beatitudes, the definition of loving God—with Romans 6, beloved, you are going to have a dynamic combination, but they don't work separately from each other.

Now Romans 5:21 introduces Romans 6. Paul says that before we were born again every one of us was under the reign of sin. He says that sin reigned in death, meaning that we were under the reign of sin. That means we were under condemnation. We didn't have the Holy Spirit. We didn't have the authority to use the name of Jesus etc. He says that in the same way we were fully under the reign of sin before we were born again, so now we are fully under the reign of grace the day we are born again. We are under the reign of grace. We are free from the reign of sin. It happened in one moment on the day we were born again. We received the righteousness of Christ and we became a new creation. Being under the reign of sin was a position before God of every unbeliever under condemnation. We were powerless to resist sin at the heart level and we had no authority to withstand Satan etc. We are now under the reign of grace. Now Romans 6 is the next chapter right after Romans 5:21. They go together. I would like to slip it into Romans 6, but they will not let me—that was a joke.

We are under the reign of grace. This is so remarkable! However, remember that you can only experience it in this life if you actively cooperate with these principles. You can have this great wealth and still live in spiritual brokenness. You can be the beggar living under the bridge with a great inheritance which you never use—the analogy we used in the last session.

## **A NEW POSITION, A NEW POWER, AND A NEW NATURE**

Under the reign of grace we receive a new position, we receive a new power, we receive a new nature—the divine nature in our spirit. We receive new insights: the Holy Spirit shows us the Word of God. We have a new destiny, which God honors forever. We receive so much wealth the day we are born again. Let me say it in a different way: we are enjoyed by God, indwelt by the Spirit, empowered, and commissioned—those are the four words I use to summarize the things I have been saying about the reign of grace. I am enjoyed by God, indwelt by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit, and commissioned by God. Beloved, what wealth and what an inheritance to walk out!

Now let's look at “being indwelt by the Holy Spirit.” This is the one I mentioned in the last session. I want to spend a little bit of time developing how you can practically overcome sinful desires, sinful impressions, and promptings that rise up in your mind, in your body, and in your emotions. I mentioned in the last session that the day you are born again the Holy Spirit comes to live in your spirit like the fire that was burning in the bush. It is the shekinah glory of God, which is the same as the burning bush. The shekinah glory is the Holy Spirit. It is the fire of God and more. It is that burning bush of Moses.

A matter of fact in the Solomon's temple in the Old Testament the shekinah glory, that burning-bush-glory of God was in the Holy of Holies in the Old Testament temple. Now that burning-bush fire of God, that real person of God, is dwelling in your spirit. Your spirit man is now the Holy of Holies. You receive that as a free gift as part of the wealth of what Jesus did for you on the cross, but if you don't dialogue with that Person, if you don't actively relate to Him, you are not going to activate the benefits of your wealth in your every day life in your

mind, emotions, and will. Look at Galatians 5:22. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, etc. There are nine fruits of the Spirit. These are the result of the Holy Spirit's power living in your spirit. This power is yours in your spirit man.

### **WE KNOW THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVES IN US BY BELIEVING IT**

Now remember that you don't feel your spirit man with your five senses. The only way you know that you have a spirit man, the only way you know the Holy Spirit lives in your spirit is by believing it. There is only one way we know: the Word of God teaches us this and we believe it. If we believe it, we talk to the Holy Spirit and we thank Him for the truth of His ministry and presence in us even before we feel Him, because we believe it. We talk to Him as though what God says about Him is true, because it is true and we thank Him for His presence in us and we thank Him for the implications of His presence in us. I am going to break that down in a minute.

### **TALK TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

For instance, the Holy Spirit lives in my spirit. It is the same with you. The Holy Spirit is full of peace. Again, my emotions, my mind, my soul—my soul is my mind—and my will don't have peace in them naturally. My body does not have peace in it naturally. There is supernatural peace dwelling in my spirit, but I can't measure it with my five senses. I can only believe it, because God's Word says it. So here is what happens: anger rises up in my emotions. Now before I had the Holy Spirit living in me, I just had to wait for five minutes, five hours, or five days—whatever it is—for that emotional storm to lift. Anger will only be like a storm for a short time and then it dissipates and it comes back again. That is how it is for all the unbelievers around the world.

Well, as a believer, that old, familiar feeling of anger rises up in me. I should just pause right then, instead of gritting my teeth and saying, "Oh, don't be angry, don't be angry, don't be angry, don't be angry." There is no power in doing that, by the way. It might keep you out of jail, but there is no power doing it. There is no power in your emotions by gritting your teeth and saying, "Don't say anything, say nothing, just leave the room, don't say anything, just leave the room." I have done that in my day. Instead, talk to the Spirit.

### **"TALK TO ME AND I WILL RELEASE PEACE INTO YOUR SOUL"**

Now this is really simple and really powerful. These next two minutes will change your life if you buy it and do it. It is very simple, but so few people I talk to actually do this. If anger rises up in you and you know you don't want to go there, so you grit your teeth for that second, turn the attention of your mind to that Person who lives in your spirit. He is full of peace. It is as if He says, "If you talk to Me, I will release peace into your emotions, into your soul.

So I stop and I am going say it a little bit more technically than I actually do it. I look at that burning bush of Moses, the shekinah glory of God, the Holy of Holies like a consuming fire—that is the picture I have. Again, it is the real Holy Spirit; it is not just symbolism. He is there; He is God. I look right at Him in my mind's eye and I say to Him, "Thank you, Holy Spirit, for peace." It is that simple! Instead of gritting my teeth and focusing my attention outward on the guy who is making me mad and how much trouble I will get into if I don't shut up, I focus my attention inward on a Person.

I don't ask Him to help me, but I thank Him that He is there in me. "Thank You for peace, patience, kindness"—you pick the one you want of the nine fruits of the Spirit. Here is the miracle—I challenge you to try it and you will find out that it works. What will happen is that the anger in your emotions will dissipate really rapidly. You lock your mind onto the Holy Spirit and thank Him for peace. Say, "Thank You, Holy Spirit,

for supernatural peace.” If you grit your teeth and try to get rid of the emotion of anger, it will never leave, until it naturally leaves over days, minutes, or hours.

### **YOU CAN TO CHALLENGE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS IN YOUR HEART**

The first time I did this was some years ago. When I said, “Holy Spirit, thank You for peace,” the anger lifted. I said, “Wait a second, I am going to get angry again, and try this again. I am going to see if this works.” The truth is I actually did that. I went to somebody and just bothered them. I have five sisters and guess who I went to? They said something really mean back to me, but it didn’t work because I was so excited, so the whole thing fell flat, but I had many times over the next thirty years to work on it.

So somebody will say something really insulting—a good friend, an enemy, it doesn’t matter who, and your natural anger rises. Now stop for one second, turn your attention inward and say, “Thank You, Holy Spirit. Don’t give me peace. I already have it. You dwell inside of me. I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. You live in me as a flaming fire. Thank You for peace.” It is remarkable how the emotion lifts.

Beloved, you can do that with various fears, you can do that with frustration, you can do that with the need for guidance—not that the guidance instantly comes but it comes over time. You can talk to that Person inside you. It is remarkable because here is what happens: when negative emotions rise up, if you will stop and talk to that Person, you now have the ability to challenge the negative emotion in your heart. You can do it with anger, lust, frustration, or anxiety. Before the Spirit lived in you, you had no supernatural power in you to challenge that negative emotion.

### **LITTLE BY LITTLE OUR MIND AND EMOTIONS GET RENEWED**

In order to not walk out that lust, or bitterness, or anger, you had grit your teeth, try not to do it, try not to say it, and in a little while it would pass and you thought, “Oh, I made it.” Beloved, you are not going to make it very many times by gritting your teeth. Eventually you will vent the anger. You will express the pride, you will walk out the lust, because you can only grit your teeth and stay away from it so long, but if you interact with a Person in you who is holiness and righteousness, if you have lustful feelings, you turn your attention inward and say, “Thank You, Holy Spirit, that You are purity, thank You, Holy Spirit, for self-control.” You are not asking for it, because this is who He is. You talk to Him and that feeling will change in your emotion.

Now here is the problem: the feeling will not stay there permanently. The negative emotion will come back again maybe ten minutes later, or maybe ten hours later. You have to draw on the Spirit again by talking to Him. The negative emotion will come back again the next day and you have to talk to Him again. “Holy Spirit, thank you for peace,” and the anger will lift. An hour later anger hits you, and you say, “Holy Spirit, thank You for peace,” and the anger lifts. Little by little your mind and your emotions actually get renewed so you end up with much less anger over time. I don’t know if the anger ever leaves entirely in the full sense, but I know that your mind and emotions are renewed by taking who you are in Christ and the Word and saying to the Holy Spirit, “thank You that this is true.” Your emotions get freed for that minute and later on that day they are freed again when you try it again. Over weeks and months and years your character dynamically changes, it really does.

Some of you are saying, “I wonder if this works?” Don’t worry, you are going to have a chance to practice this before tonight is over, I promise you. You will have a chance really soon. If that guy next to you is acting weird you have the chance right now to look at him and just say, “Holy Spirit, thank You for peace right now.” There

are always a couple of weird people doing crazy things in meetings and bugging five rows of people all around them; so just draw on the Spirit. Don't look at them and say, "Ah, why doesn't somebody make them stop?" Stop, don't do that. In your spirit say, "Holy Spirit, thank you." I mean, you can do it now; you don't have to wait until the end of the meeting. Praise God for that guy.

### **THE PRIMARY CHAPTER ON PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION**

Anyway, I want to again introduce to you Romans 6. If anybody knows the New Testament even a little bit you will know this is the primary chapter on personal transformation. The other chapter I would throw in with Romans 6 would be John 15. Those two chapters together are really the way to walk out Matthew 5, the eight Beatitudes.

The transformed life—Romans 6—has three sections. These are the three principles where we cooperate with grace. We are going to look at each one of the three for just a couple minutes each. Our legal position, you can read that later. Romans 6:11-13 is what we are going to look at in a minute. Romans 6:14-23 is our living condition. It describes the inward transformation of our emotions which we will experience if we do Romans 6:11-13.

If you will do these three principles consistently, you will experience Romans 6:14-23. I don't mean 100 percent consistently; nobody does anything 100 percent consistently. You will stumble sometimes, and sometimes you will not follow through if you are like me—but if you do these three principles as the rule of your life, if you will do you Romans 6:11-13, you will experience Romans 6:14-23. I want to make this practical; it is within your reach. All of this is based on who you are in Christ—Romans 6:1-10. That is what we talked about ever so briefly in our last session. We talked about who we are in Christ. Romans 6:1-10 restates the new creation realities in a more dynamic and elaborate way than the passage I used, but I am not going to take time to go through it. Paul says the same truths, but in an even more dynamic way.

### **SEE YOURSELF AS DEAD TO SIN AND ALIVE TO GOD**

So let's look at Romans 6. I am going to say it again. There are three sections. The first section is about who we are in Christ—our legal position. The second section contains the three principles of how we can interact with the Holy Spirit, so that we can activate the wealth of grace in our emotions and in our mind; what we can expect to happen in our transformed character over time.

Let's look at the three principles which we find in Romans 6:11-13. Principle number one: I call it the knowing principle. Paul said this in Romans 6:11. At first it might sound a little strange, but you will get familiar with the language, because the language gets backed up throughout the whole New Testament. However, if this is new to you, you might say, "What?" Here is what Paul says: "Reckon yourself to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ" (v. 11). Now the word reckon is used in the New King James Version. This is the same idea as "know." Know this about yourself. Or you might use the word "see." See yourselves as dead to sin and alive to God. The first principle is critical and it is overlooked by so many people. It is really what I talked about in the last session: knowing the wealth you possess as a new creation in Christ.

### **SEE YOURSELF AS BEING ENJOYED BY GOD**

Paul is saying that you have to see yourself as alive to God, meaning indwelt by the Spirit. You have to see yourself as enjoyed by God. You have to see yourself as possessing the authority of Jesus. If you don't see this about yourself, you will have a very difficult time with principle two and principle three. Most believers I know

skip principle one and this is one of the biggest reasons principle two and three don't work effectively in their life.

I am going to break that down for you. We have to be in agreement with how God sees us as new creations in Christ, in other words to see the truths of what we covered in the last session—even though we covered them very, very briefly. First, see yourself alive to God. Yes, you are enjoyed by God; that is what that truth means. You are indwelt by the Spirit. You have the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. You have the authority of the Holy Spirit. You have the Teacher living in you. Paul is saying that you must take time to cultivate that knowledge in your life. It is revelation knowledge. You must take time to have revelation of these truths. It must be living information in you, not just intellectual information. The way it becomes living information in you, is by you drawing on it. How do you draw on this? You simply talk to the Holy Spirit in your spirit. You say, "Thank You, I am enjoyed by God." You will feel His presence, and say, "Whoa!" You may not say whoa but you might.

### **PAUL IS SAYING THE SAME TRUTH FROM TWO DIFFERENT ANGLES**

I love talking to the Holy Spirit. I say things like, "Holy Spirit, I am enjoyed by the Father." You can say it to the Father on His throne. You can talk to our Father who is in heaven on His throne or you can talk to the Holy Spirit who dwells in you. You can go in either direction. I love to go in both directions, but I love to talk to the Holy Spirit, "Holy Spirit, the Father enjoys me." Oh, even right now, just saying this for you, I feel His presence and the reason I feel His presence is that He loves that truth, He loves it. Whenever I say it to Him, I feel it, and I say, "Oh, I love this." And I can imagine Him saying, "I love it more than you love it." I haven't heard Him say that, but I imagine it.

Being dead to sin and alive to God is the same truth but it is saying it in two opposite ways. To be alive to God is to say the truth in a positive way; to be dead to sin is to say the exact same truth in a negative way. Paul is saying the same truth from two different angles. Why does he say the same thing twice? Because everybody's personality is different; you might really connect with seeing yourself alive to God, but the other guy might connect to seeing himself dead to sin or you might really be strengthened by both of those perspectives of the same truth. They are two angles of the same truth.

### **YOU ARE NO LONGER UNDER THE RULE OF SIN**

To see yourself dead to sin, beloved, doesn't mean that sin is dead in you. That is not what it is saying. It is not saying that if you try hard enough envisioning that you have no anger, no pride, and no lust, it will all go away. He is not telling you to go into positive thinking so that if you think you don't have lust or you don't have anger. No, he is not saying sin is dead in you, but he is saying that you have died or you are permanently removed from the position you were in of being under the reign of sin. The day you were born again you were no longer under the reign of sin. Now you have a Person in you to challenge that angry thought when it rises up.

Now I say this in several different ways and I put a lot about this in the internet notes. If you really want to work this out, because you are hungry to know this, on the internet I have these sermons transcribed in twenty pages. I have it all broken down.

Beloved, this is essential. I mean, you can't walk out the eight Beatitudes without this truth. When he says you are dead to sin, he refers to the verse right before Romans 6. You are dead means you are separated, which means you are removed from the old position when you were under the mandatory reign of sin, meaning that

when lust or anger came into your emotions you had no supernatural power to draw on something that would dissipate that anger. You could only grit your teeth and ride out the storm, but now when lust rises up you can talk to the Holy Spirit and say, “Thank You, Holy Spirit, for peace, thank You for love, thank You for self-control—any of the nine fruits of the Spirit—and that lust will lift if you stay in that dialogue. Five or ten minutes later that lust might come back, but if you engage in that dialogue again, that lust will dissipate again. You now have a Person living in you and if you draw on Him by talking to Him—that is how you draw on Him; you draw on Him by talking to Him—the negative emotion in your soul will dissipate for a few moments or maybe longer. When the negative emotion comes back again, you talk to the Spirit again. You are alive to God. You are free from the reign of sin when you had no ability to challenge those negative emotions. Now you have a Person in you and you can challenge those emotions and they will go away temporarily. They will come back, but you can stand against them again. Over time they will begin to come less frequently and less powerfully. That is called transformation.

### **BY RENEWING YOUR MIND YOU WILL BE TRANSFORMED**

Paul says it later in Romans. He is talking about the knowing principle there. Now the knowing principle is only one of the three principles. It is not enough by itself. Some people who preach on this subject quite well, only talk about knowing who you are in Christ, but knowing who you are in Christ is only one of the three principles. You have to follow all three of the principles as a rule of your life for the power to consistently transform you.

Look what he says in Romans 12. He says that you will be transformed. He is saying that your mind and your emotions will be transformed. You will think differently and you will feel differently. I don’t mean 100 percent of the time, but little by little your emotions will change from lustful or angry, or from feeling self-pity or depression. Your emotions will experience a transformation, but it begins by renewing your mind and a key part of this is that you begin to reckon yourself alive to God. You see yourself as indwelt by the Spirit and therefore you talk to the Spirit, because you are indwelt by Him and you thank the Spirit for the truth of who you are. That is different than asking the Holy Spirit to make it true. You thank Him that it is true and those negative emotions will dissipate temporarily but if you do it over and over again, your life will get transformed. It really is that simple. It is so simple that everyone can do it, but it is so simple that most people don’t do it. They are like that homeless beggar under the bridge with a new inheritance but living in starvation, because they never write a check on their new inheritance.

The way you write a check on your inheritance is by thanking the Spirit. It is true. It is as simple as that. I don’t mean you speak to the air and I don’t mean you say it is true or say thank you that this is true in a nebulous way. Talk to a Person! It is called abiding in Christ. When Jesus said abide in Me, one way in which I rephrase this is that He says, “Talk to Me and I will talk to you! Abide in Me.” Put the words “talk to Me” in the place of “abide in Me” and you will be on the way to abiding in Christ. Talk to Him by the Holy Spirit living in your spirit.

### **EXERCISING FAITH IN THE WORKING OF GOD**

Colossians 2:10. You are complete, meaning your legal position is completed, you are accepted by God, you have the authority of Jesus, you have the indwelling Spirit, etc. You are complete; it is done; it can never be improved upon.

Now at the end of Colossians 2:12, Paul encourages us to exercise faith in the working of God. He means exercise faith in the things that are true about you which you can’t feel, see, or measure; exercise faith in the

working of God, because God gave you all those things even though you can't measure them with your five senses. We believe in them because they are written the Word. If you will draw on them by thanking the Spirit that is synonymous with exercising faith and having faith in the working of God, which means the Spirit really is in you and you really have the authority of Jesus.

### **WE CAN REBUKE DEMONS IN THE NAME OF JESUS**

When a demon harasses you, when you feel depressed in a heightened way and you feel tormented, don't just ride out the storm. Say, "In the name of Jesus, I rebuke that spirit and I command it to leave." Don't endure oppression, rebuke it. Not all oppression is a demon, but much oppression is directly a demon. It is more complicated than to make it all this or all that, but demons are involved. We can rebuke them in the name of Jesus. Many people when terror hits them in the night, when they lie on their bed at night or on their couch, they will just gut it out for four hours. Why? Say, "In the name of Jesus, I command the spirit of fear to leave me now!" I mean that. If it doesn't leave you, stay with it. I don't mean raise your voice louder, but just pull out your badge as that police officer with the whole government behind you. Show your badge! Your badge is the name of Jesus. Again, don't stick out your hand and show your badge, but say, "Devil, here is the badge: the name of Jesus. Leave me alone! Spirit of fear, I rebuke you, go!" I tell you, a lot of this is rooted in demonic attack.

Principle number two: we have to resist darkness. Now in each one of these principles Paul gives two applications. You will notice that there are two different ways to apply this. They are not opposites, but there are two different facets of the one principle.

### **"DON'T LET SIN REIGN IN YOUR BODY"**

He says in Romans 6, "Don't let sin reign in your body." (v.12, paraphrased) He is talking about lust. When you have sexually immoral feelings, they are real but lust is not limited to sexual immorality. There are many feelings that touch our body to which we have to say no. Notice, he says, "Don't let it reign" (v.12). He says that you have got to take some responsibility. You have to make the decision like the farmer. You have to plant the seed and pull the weeds. This is pulling the weeds. You have to do the farmer's part. It is as if God says, "I am not going to plant the seed or pull the weeds. I will provide the supernatural power of the sun, the rain, and the life principle in the seed, but, farmer, you have to do your part. You must resist the negative emotion that feels pleasurable in your sinfulness. That is number one.

Romans 6:13 is facet number two. He says, "Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness" (v.13). Your members means your body, but it means more than your physical body: your members is your emotions; it is your whole person, it is your money, it is all that is yours and all that goes into making you, you; that is "your members" It says, "Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin" (v.13).

Now I will break this down, but I will give you the summary: we are to resist sin, Satan, and sin-provoking circumstances; that is what Romans 6:13 means. Don't let sin reign. We must resist the evil of sinful promptings. We know we are alive to God so we are talking to the Spirit, but it is as if the Spirit is saying, "I will not resist that for you. You have to resist it. You talk to Me and I will help you, but you have to determine to resist that lustful impression. I will give you supernatural power to make your emotions temporarily feel relief from the pressure of it, and if you keep talking to Me, I will keep giving you supernatural power. I will release it to alleviate the negative emotions again and again and again. I will do it thousands of times over the course of maybe millions of sinful promptings.

## **WE MUST ABSTAIN FROM LUSTS WHICH WAR AGAINST US**

Peter says that we must abstain from lusts which war against us. The New Testament teaches us that lust wars against us in our society. The principle of sin operating in our body is pulling us to eat wrongly, it is pulling us to express our sexuality wrongly, it is pulling us to use our words wrongly, it is pulling us to vent and to get revenge. Peter says in effect, “Don’t yield to bitterness, lust, or covetousness. Don’t yield to those impressions. They are warring against you” (1 Pet. 2:11, paraphrased).

Now I know some people who say in the name of grace, “Jesus did it for me,” but He won’t do this part for you, although the Spirit will come along side you and empower you as you talk to Him. He will alleviate those negative emotions if you draw on Him by simply thanking Him for the fruit of the Spirit living in your spirit.

Now I am saying the same thing over and over. You might say, “I don’t quite get it; I am kind of getting it but I don’t quite get it.” That would be a normal response. If this is new to you, it may take hearing this message a few times. I want to encourage you to get this teaching and listen to it a few times. It is on the website for free. We will have the transcript on the website in a few weeks. When you read through it and think, “Now what? How does that work again,” work it through line by line, idea by idea, until it is yours. It is not something you heard, it is something you do, because you believe it and it has become living understanding.

## **SELF-DENIAL IS AN ESSENTIAL NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING**

Self-denial is an essential New Testament teaching on the grace of God. When I hear people talk about grace and they undermine self-denial by calling it legalism, people say, “Oh no, then I will not deny myself. Please don’t call me a legalist, that is the worse cuss word you can use in the kingdom of God, legalism. Ah, I would rather you call me anything besides that.” Don’t be intimidated by that, because the New Testament grace requires we deny lust; we have to deny it. The Spirit will help us and as we talk to Him He will help us more. We do it in relationship with the Spirit, but He will not do it for us. He will not plant the seeds or pull the weeds for that farmer, but He will produce the miracle process of life.

In Matthew 16:24, Jesus said that you have to deny yourself. You absolutely have to. There is no loophole in the grace of God where we don’t have to deny ourselves of lustful thoughts. It doesn’t exist. However, there is supernatural help for us as we walk with the Spirit through the process of denying ourselves. We are talking to Him and we believe His words.

## **DON’T PRESENT YOUR BODY TO A SINFUL CIRCUMSTANCE**

Here is the second facet of the resisting principle. This is really important. First we resist the negative emotions and the negative passions. Here is something where many young people make an error—not just young people but most of you are young so that is who I am talking to. Everybody makes this error, but I think of young people so much. Don’t present your body to a sinful circumstance. In other words, don’t get into your car, drive across town, and get into a setting where you have to rely on your flesh in order not to sin.

It is as if Paul says, “Why are you getting into your car on purpose, making the phone call, making an appointment, driving across town, getting in the context and situation which will inflame sin in you, as it has done a thousand times because you keep going back and then you cry and wonder why you fail? You presented yourself to be enflamed in your desire. Don’t do it! Don’t go to that hotel room, don’t go to that apartment, don’t go to that bar area, don’t go to that party which will enflame sin in you.” That is what Paul and others are talking about—there are many scriptures.

You say, “Well, what about the grace of God?”

“Well, you have gone there a hundred times and eighty times you have been enflamed and sixty times you fell, what else do you need? Don’t go there!”

“Well, I don’t know, you know, I want to live in grace.”

“This is grace: stay away from a sin enflaming environment.”

### **VERBALIZE YOUR COMMITMENT TO RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Again, you have gone there a hundred times and you got stirred only eighty times. Sixty times you did something and forty times you didn’t do anything. Sixty times is a disaster. Three out of ten is a disaster. Then you hear the argument, “Well, I got to lead them to the Lord.” OK, Jesus went there, but if you are going to use Jesus as your example, you have to do what Jesus did when He went there and I don’t just mean miracles. Listen here is the rule: you can go anywhere, as long as you verbalize your commitment to righteousness. You can go to that place and if they ask you to do A and B and you say no, and they say why not, you say, “I love Jesus, and this is not the way of the kingdom.” If you can say that, you can go there. If you can’t say that, you can’t go there. You can’t use the fact that Jesus went to the party. He spoke up with truth and you are silent on truth and yield to the sin that is in the environment.

### **THE PURSUING PRINCIPLE**

I am going to bring this to an end. Principle three: the pursuing principle. There are two facets. Facet one is that we present ourselves to God, This is that personal “I love you God and I read the Word to grow in fellowship with You.” This is the pursuit of the intimate relationship between you and the Lord. This is the first facet of the pursuing principle, but it doesn’t end with you loving God, reading the Word, and hungering and thirsting to be closer to God. That is facet one.

Facet two: you offer your body, your money, your time, your words, your energy—you offer your members—which is all you possess—as an instrument to be used by God to touch other people in the kingdom. The Lord wants us to walk in love, to serve and relate to others, and to use our vessel as an instrument to be a communication of the love and power of God to others.

Now don’t just think of going on a mission trip. It starts with your family; it starts with your annoying family members who are bothering you. You serve them. You present yourself to God to be a vessel of kindness and service to them, even if they annoy you. It starts with your friends in the university. It starts with the people in your church group who bug you. It starts with the people in the office or at the university. Don’t think this just means a ministry trip.

### **WE MUST PURSUE GOD AND RESIST DARKNESS**

The summary is really important. Here is what we must do. I have restated the three principles. If we want to walk out the eight Beatitudes by relating to the Holy Spirit here is what we must do: we must know the truth of who we are. It is more than that, but knowing who we are in Christ is the core point. We must resist darkness and we must pursue God, which always means we pursue people, because to pursue God who loves people always results in pursuing people by relating to them, serving them, humbling ourselves to them by acts of kindness to them, even if we don’t like them.

I am going to summarize the whole teaching. We pursue loving God and people. This is the key point. In other words, we pursue God as we resist sin, Satan, and sin-provoking circumstances, while we know who we are in Christ. None of these three principles in either of their two facets can be omitted. We can't omit them. We can't say, "I want to know who I am in Christ, but I don't want to resist sin."

### **WE HAVE TO FOLLOW ALL FACETS**

I have some examples. One group says they resist sin—the holiness group—but they might not know who they are in Christ. Another group is the prayer movement. They say they will go to the prayer room and pursue God, but they will not resist sin outside the prayer room. Maybe they pursue God in the prayer room, they resist sin outside the prayer room—well, nowadays you have to resist sin inside the prayer room too, because of all the technology people bring into the prayer room—but they don't know who they are in Christ. They say, "I love You, I love You, I love You," while being filled with condemnation. When sin rises up in them, they say, "Ah, I sinned, my life is miserable." Holy Spirit says, "Quit saying that! Draw on Me, I live in you, I can help you!" "Oh, I am just so miserable, I am so creepy." No, that is not the answer. Know who you are in Christ!

So I tell the prayer-movement people, "Don't just worship and cry, resist sin. Don't just worship and resist sin, know who you are. Don't just resist sin and worship and know who you are in Christ, serve people! We have got to do the whole thing together. We can't pick and choose in the grace of God, the ones we like and the ones we don't like. If we cooperate with the grace of God in the biblical way, we will walk in the victory which the last half of Romans 6 describes."

Amen and Amen. Let's stand.

### **RESPONSE**

Now some of you are new here, so here is the rule of IHOPKC. When the preacher says stand you don't have to; you actually never have to. The reason I want a bunch of you to stand is so that if somebody wants to slip out you can make it easy for them.

You can say, "Lord, I want to do this. I want to go all the way. I don't want to be the farmer who asks You to plant the seed and pull the weed. I am going to do my part, because it is the relationship with You that You want me to be engaged in." So just talk to Him about knowing, resisting, and pursuing. Say, "Lord, I am going to do all three of those. I won't be as consistent as I want, but I am going to keep signing up when I come up short." That is what you are saying in the next few minutes to the Lord.