

## The Life of Faith

### John 3:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

- *John 3:16 is one of the best known verses in the Bible and in many ways encapsulates the Gospel message.*
- *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” – describes God’s part as both the initiator of our salvation and the One who provided the way for our salvation.*
- *“that whoever believes in Him” – describes our part as the one who responds to God by simply putting our faith in Jesus Christ and all that He did for us.*
- *“should not perish but have everlasting life” – describes the wonderful result of this salvation.*
- *The Gospel message is based on both God’s love and His righteousness.*
- *God’s love is seen in His wonderful attributes of mercy and grace that He extends to each person who is willing to receive them simply by putting their faith in what Jesus has done.*
- *God’s righteousness is seen in how greatly Jesus suffered so that our sins and curses could be fully paid for.*
- *God’s righteous judgment is seen in that those who refuse to come to Christ will experience God’s wrath and judgment so that sin and rebellion will come to an end once and for all.*
- *Thus sin, rebellion and death and all the accompanying curses from sin are dealt with either through Christ’s suffers for those that receive Him or through God’s wrath and judgment for those who refuse.*

### John 5:24 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup>“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

- *The Greek word for “passed” means, “to change from one state to another.”*
- *The verb tense in the Greek in the phrase “has passed from death into life” is in the perfect tense describing an action that has occurred in the past and was completed in the past and the effects of that event continues into the present.*

- *Thus we can understand for all those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ have passed from death into life with the result that we have eternal life and we shall not come into the condemnation of eternal damnation.*
- *At the moment we put our faith in Jesus Christ we have been justified – declared righteous and have passed from death into life and we have been freed from the penalty of sin.*
- *However, the Gospel message contains many other promises as well as warnings to believers.*
- *For us to understand these promises and warnings properly we need to interpret them in the context of the character of God.*
- *A good test to see if we understand a particular scripture properly is to ask ourselves this question, “Can I hear Jesus saying these words?” knowing His nature and character.*
- *Jesus is described as “being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power.” (Hebrews 1:3)*
- *Therefore, Jesus, being the Son of God, reveals the exact nature and character of God and through Jesus we can understand the Bible perfectly.*

## 2 John 8 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup>Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

- *There is a full reward that God is offering each believer but along with that is the warning that we could lose some or all of that reward.*

## Romans 14:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup>But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

- *Romans 14:10 warns believers against condemning others and showing contempt for our brothers with the words “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”*

## 2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- *This clearly says that we, as believers, will have to give account for how we lived our lives and we will be rewarded accordingly at the Judgment Seat of Christ.*
- *Even though believers are justified and saved from the penalty of sin does not mean we can live careless lives.*
- *The Book of Revelation begins by sending letters to the seven churches which contains words of encouragement, commendations, reproof, warnings and wonderful promises to those who overcome.*
- *To those who overcome are promised a number of wonderful things among them; the crown of life, a new name that only they will know, to rule with Christ, to be clothed in white raiment representing the righteous acts of the saints, to be pillars in the temple of God, and most wonderful to be seat with Christ on His throne forever!*
- *When the Bible speaks about our justification (freedom from the penalty of sin, delivered from the fear of death and Hell), it speaks about it using terminology reflecting unconditional promises based solely on God's faithfulness. It is many times described in the perfect tense, as a completed action and a gift that is irrevocable.*
- *However, when the Bible speaks about crowns, rewards and the inheritance that God wants to impart to His children, those promises are spoken about in the present or future tense and are conditional upon our continued response to God.*
- *If we have a distorted view of God, we will distort and misunderstand both the promises and warnings and God's motivation for giving them.*
- *If we view God as a distant God who is looking from afar, looking to judge and condemn us when we fail then we will totally misunderstand the Scriptures.*
- *We, as believers, must see God as He truly is, our loving Father who wants the very best for His children and deeply desiring to bless us and impart to us His gifts and rewards.*
- *These promises and warnings are not meant to crush and overwhelm us with hopelessness but to actually help us to understand that God loves for us is so much more than just saving us from Hell. God's desire is to lavish His love upon us for all eternity without any hindrances or restrictions.*

**Matthew 7:7–11 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup>“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

**<sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.**

**<sup>9</sup>Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?**

**<sup>10</sup>Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?**

**<sup>11</sup>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 good things to those who ask Him!**

- *If you ask, seek and knock then you will receive, find and it will be opened.*
- *Our part is easy, we just ask, seek and knock and God does the big part.*
- *Jesus uses the illustration that even earthly fathers, for the most part, respond to their children in a caring way, even though all are sinners and given over to sin. Then He points out how much more God, as our Heavenly Father, will answer us, help us and pour out His blessings upon us as His children if we simply turn to Him and ask Him.*
- *Many times Christians have a distorted view of God and end up turning prayer into a time of pleading and self-effort. Prayer is to be a delight as we come to our Father with our struggles and needs to receive His warm and wholehearted embrace to comfort and strengthen us.*
- *Jesus even taught us on the Sermon on the Mount how to pray beginning with the most wonderful words, “Our Father.”*
- *There are two extremes that can cause us to misunderstand the Bible:*
- *One is, God will do it all and I can live my life the way I want and I will end up being an overcomer, being fruitful and receiving the full reward.*
- *The other is, it is up to me. I must somehow have to pray harder, read the Bible more and strive and make myself perfect.*

**Matthew 5:48 (NKJV)**

**<sup>48</sup>Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**

- *In this one verse there are a number of truths that will provides us with insights into God’s heart for us and how He desires to accomplish His will in our lives.*
- *“Therefore you shall be perfect” – God desires for us to come to a place of freedom and spiritual maturity so that we are no longer struggling with the same things year after year. He intends for us to grow into the image and character of Jesus Christ with all the fruit of the spirit manifest in us; love, joy,*

*peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)*

- **“just as your Father in heaven is perfect” – *The key for us to be perfect as God is perfect is not found in striving in our self-effort because the flesh will never produce the things of the spirit, but to allow the imparted life of Christ in our reborn spirits to grow and be manifest in our souls.***

**1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 (NKJV)**

**<sup>23</sup>Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**<sup>24</sup>He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.**

- **“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely” – *We clearly see it is God Himself that sanctifies us and not something we are to do or even can do in our own strength.***
- **“the God of peace” – *Since God is a God of peace He desires for us to be filled with His peace that passes all understanding and to be free from fear, turmoil and insecurity. Therefore if we are feeling like a failure or frustrated it means we are not focusing on God’s faithfulness but on our own weaknesses, frailties and self-effort.***
- **“sanctify you completely” – *God purpose is not to do a partial or incomplete work but bring us to perfection.***
- **“may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” – *God’s intention is to have us fully experience His salvation and to be found complete in Him and to finish our lives victoriously. Spirit – justification (Freedom from the penalty of sin); Soul – sanctification (Freedom from the power of sin); Body – Glorification (Freedom from the presents of sin in our eternal resurrected bodies and the ensuing rewards.)***
- **“He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.” – *The concluding thought has three components:***
- **“He who calls you” – *We did not find God but He found us and He is the one who has put a calling on our lives.***
- **“is faithful” – *God is faithful and we can trust Him for He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, so we can agree with Job’s words about God, “I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.” (Job 42:1–2)***

- “who also will do it” – *The last piece that will give us complete peace is that He will do it!*
- *There are many Scriptures that repeat and reinforce the truth that God is the One doing this work in us and it is God who is the One who will bring this work to completion.*

**Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)**

**<sup>6</sup>being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**

**Philippians 2:13 (NKJV)**

**<sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**

**2 Thessalonians 3:3 (NKJV)**

**<sup>3</sup>But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.**

**1 Corinthians 1:8 (NKJV)**

**<sup>8</sup>who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**2 Corinthians 9:8 (NKJV)**

**<sup>8</sup>And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.**

**Psalms 138:8 (NKJV)**

**<sup>8</sup>The LORD will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever; Do not forsake the works of Your hands.**

- *The wonderful news is God is for us and not against us and that He is the One who does the work in us.*
- *If God is the one who does the work in each believer to bring us to salvation, to mature us and to make us overcomers and if God is faithful and is all-powerful why doesn't each believer live a victorious overcoming Christian life?*
- *There is only one thing that we must do that will enable God to work fully in our lives so that we will be overcomers and receive the full reward and live a fruitful life – our willingness.*

**Ephesians 2:8–10 (NKJV)**

**<sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,**

**<sup>9</sup>not of works, lest anyone should boast.**

**<sup>10</sup>For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

- *This principle “by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves” does not just govern our justification but every aspect of our lives.*
- *We are saved by grace and not by our works of self-effort.*
- *Good works are different than works. Good works is God working in us, “for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” as it states in Philippians 2:13)*
- *Works on the other hand is us trying to do something in our own strength which leads to pride and self-exaltation, “not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*
- *Since we are all saved by grace, we are all the same and no one came to Christ because they were better than another, regardless of what sins we had fallen into, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)*
- *One of the definitions of grace is “God working in us and through us to accomplish His purposes.”*
- *So if it is God’s grace that saves us, sanctifies us and enables us to live a victorious Christian life, what is our part?*
- *“For by grace you have been saved through faith” – Grace flows through the conduit of faith.*

#### **Galatians 2:16 (KJV)**

**<sup>16</sup>Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**

- *“by the faith of Jesus Christ” - Not only is it faith in Christ but it is “the faith of Jesus Christ”, in other words, God even gives us the faith to believe.*
- *“even we have believed in Jesus Christ” - Our part is to believe in Jesus Christ, in other words, to act upon our faith in Jesus by actually believing.*
- *Believing is choosing to act upon the faith that God has imparted to us and to cultivate that faith so that it will grow even more.*

#### **John 6:28–29 (NKJV)**

**<sup>28</sup>Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”**

**<sup>29</sup>Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”**

- *The people asked “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” They wanted to know what they needed to do to serve God. Were they to pray for two hours a day or go to Bible College or feed the poor or go on a mission trip?*
- *“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” – They asked what they need to do to work the works of God and Jesus responded by saying that there was only one work of God which is to believe on Jesus Christ.*
- *Believing is not an intellectual exercise but a vibrant, joyful, dynamic relationship with God as we take our eyes off everything else and place them fully on Jesus Christ and all that He has done for us.*
- *When Jesus said “believe in Him whom He sent” He wasn’t talking about a theological statement of faith but a relationship based on love and trust – a full, complete and unshakeable confidence in the very character of God.*
- *Out of this believing in Jesus Christ springs forth all the good works that the Bible exhorts believers to do.*

**James 5:11 (NKJV)**

**Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.**

- *Our God is very compassionate and merciful knowing that He is always there to receive us, embrace us and to comfort us for “God is love.” (1 John 4:8)*

**Mark 9:21-24 NKJV**

**21 So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.**

**22 And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."**

**23 Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."**

**24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"**

- *The father’s response, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" is very touching but even more touching is Jesus’ response to immediately heal. Jesus didn’t say, “you need to build up your faith and come back later.” The father’s response was actually one of faith for he fell down before Jesus and confessed his struggles without pretense and Jesus was there to meet him at his point of need.*



**Matthew 12:18-21 (NKJV)**

**18 "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.**

**19 He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.**

**20 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory;**

**21 And in His name Gentiles will trust."**

- **"A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory" – *What a tender description of how Jesus deals with us in our brokenness and pain. Jesus never turns us away or chides us.***

**Isaiah 66:1–2 (NKJV)**

**<sup>1</sup>Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"**

**<sup>2</sup>For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.**

- ***The God of all creation whose glory, power and wisdom are beyond measure is not moved by the grandeur of man or the great exploits of a nation but what moves His heart, "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word."***

**1 John 4:4 (NKJV)**

**<sup>4</sup>You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**

- **"Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" – *What is in the world? Our flesh. What is in us? Christ for He lives within our re-born spirit.***
- ***When our lives are filled with devotion to Him we will find we will live a victorious life because our re-born spirit will always overcome the flesh.***