

# Grace Walk Experience - Part 3

by Steve McVey

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*The sermon teaches that understanding our true identity in Christ is essential for genuine transformation in our lives.*

**Duration:** 44:55

**Scripture:** Psalm 103:14, Acts 20:24, Romans 6:6-7, 1 Corinthians 3:17, 1 Corinthians 15:10, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:8-9

**Topics:** "Identity In Christ", "Gods Grace"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding our identity in Christ to transform our behavior. It highlights the truth that our actions do not define who we are, but rather knowing who we are in Christ leads to a change in our conduct. The speaker discusses the liberating concept that God's love and grace are not dependent on our actions, but on our identity in Him. The message encourages believers to embrace God's grace and allow it to work in their lives, leading to a transformation that reflects His love and kindness.

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## Transcript

Dr. Steve McVeigh has been with us the last couple of days. He's back with us today. We're talking about walking in grace, walking in the grace of God.

Steve, what areas are we going to discuss today? Today we're going to cover two truths that the Lord used to really transform my life. And the first one is that in order to, you must first know who you are to change what you do. Okay.

That's very important because we tend to get it backwards. We often think that what we do defines who we are. But who we are defines who we are.

That's right. And the second one is that we don't have an evil twin living inside us. Okay.

Thank you. Some of us think we've got a Siamese twin on the inside with the other color. Anyway, we'll take a break and I want you to stay with us.

It'll be a great hour. Dr. Steve McVeigh is our guest again today. He's been with us for the last several days.

We're talking about grace, about the walk of grace. And there's a book that he's recently put out. It's really an eight-week, it's kind of like a workbook, Steve, isn't it? The Grace Walk Experience.

It's 240 pages, so it's very thorough. It has a lot of substance in it. But this book is built around eight truths that God used to transform my life.

And now I'm hearing from many others who attest to the same, that their lives have been transformed by understanding these eight truths. And it's broken into eight chapters or eight weekly studies. And each week is divided into five daily studies designed to take about 15 or 20 minutes a day so that you can assimilate the truths and allow the Holy Spirit to change your paradigm.

So just walk this thing through will make a big difference for people. We all have what sociologists call plausibility structures. A plausibility structure is the underlying belief system that we have that we see as being so self-evident in its truth that we don't even question it.

And a lot of us have had a viewpoint of what the Christian life is, that we're wrong, and they've kept us in bondage. And so what this book does is it faces straight on some of the faulty beliefs in our belief system and challenges us through Scripture on allowing the Holy Spirit to change our plausibility structure, our paradigm. I like the way you put it because one of the things as we've been chatting for the last couple of days is realizing how the very nature of humanity is one that believes a lie rather than the truth in some of these areas.

In other words, you're going to be confronting some of the things that we find naturally want to go there. Our natural tendency is to want to do some of these things that seem so contrary. I mean, the biblical way is so contrary to our natural way.

That's right. Okay, that's what I'm finding. You know, we sometimes say, well, where did this bad truth come from in the first place? I'm going to blame some teacher somewhere.

And the truth is, the more you're talking, I'm realizing this is almost inherent in every one of us. And so there's something, there's a bent in me that wants to believe a lie rather than believe the truth. And that bent is called the flesh.

That's right, that's right. I think it's there. Absolutely it is.

And again, you know, we're born out of the spiritual gene pool of Adam himself. And the gene pool that we were born into the first time is one that generates in us the characteristics of self-sufficiency, of religion, you know, trying to be religious. Because we want to reconnect with God.

That's right. Because Adam lost it. That's right.

And there's a desire to reconnect with him somehow. And we think we've got to do it. That's right.

But then when we become a Christian, we die out of the family of Adam. And we're reborn into the family of God through Jesus Christ. And now we have a new gene pool.

And the truth is, when we become a Christian, we don't get a lobotomy. We don't forget that life that we had in Adam. And so the key, we get a new spirit at salvation, but the key is we need to begin to understand the truth.

And there has to be this paradigm shift in the way we function. And we believed a lot of lies before. And now, unfortunately, a lot of folks in the church, we still believe the old lies.

And so what the Grace Walk experience is intended to do is to confront us with the truth. Because Jesus said you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. And I wrote this book for any Christian who says, you know, I love Jesus Christ, but I want to enjoy my Christian life more.

And I want to be more consistent in my walk. And I want to feel that my life is more aligned with the kind of Christianity that I find described in the New Testament. I want to be free from nagging feelings of self-condemnation and inadequacy.

That's who I wrote this for. And I'll tell you, Willard, again, it's all grounded in Scripture and what the Bible teaches. And it's not just my life, but many have used these resources.

And they attest to the fact that their Christian walk has been transformed after many years of living in bondage. And so that's the key. We're just offering freedom, folks, through Scripture and Jesus.

Okay, well, the first program we talked about the fact that working harder or changing my behavior won't necessarily bring more victory in my life. That's right. Truth number one, improving your behavior will not give you victory in the Christian life.

Yeah, that's what brings you more abundance in living. That's right. How do you work doesn't make it happen.

That's right. Number two, we talked about the fact that the problems I go through may become the best thing that happens. That's right.

How does that work out? That's truth number two. And we spent time on that yesterday. Today we're talking about.

Well, today we're going to kind of combine, excuse me, chapters three and four. We're going to do an overview. We don't have time to do everything.

So we want to touch on chapters three and four, which chapter three, the truth is, you must know who you are to change what you do. Okay. Now, we'll talk about that.

That's backward from the way we tend to see it in the church. I always used to think I need to change what I do so I can become a better person. But this chapter three, the truth is, you must know who you are to change what you do.

And then number four, you don't have an evil twin living inside you. That's truth number four in the book. Because, again, many of us feel like we're almost schizophrenic Christians.

We tend to think that there's this good guy, bad guy living inside me, and they're constantly battling for preeminence. And we need to talk about that in this program. Okay.

Well, let's get there. So let's start off with the first one then, knowing who we are in order to change what we do. Yeah.

Let's contrast this for a minute. Let's talk about the traditional view that a lot of us have held and show what we have believed. And I say we because I think I believed it for a lot of years, and I think I'm typical in so many ways.

A lot of us have developed the mindset that in order for me to become the person that I need to be and ought to be, then I need to change what I do. I need to stop doing these things, and I need to start doing those things. And that's a very common viewpoint.

And every week in churches all over the world, people come to God in prayer, and they promise him that they're going to try to do better. And they ask him to help them to change what they do so that they can become a better person. And in reality, we already are at the core of our being who God wants us to be.

And the key is not changing what we do out here so that we can become a better person inside, but the real key from a grace perspective is that we need to understand who we are at the level of our spirit. And when we understand who we are, then that life that is in us will begin to spill over through our soul, our personality, and out through our body and our actions. And so understanding who you are is the foundational truth of the grace walk.

All of us were created as threefold triune being, spirit, soul, and body. We have a body, but that's not who we are. We live in a body.

It's just a temporary dwelling place. We have a soul. The soul consists of our mind, will, and emotions, but the soul is not the core of our identity.

Your personality is not who you are. You have a personality, but that's not the real you. We are a spirit.

That's what separates us from the animal kingdom, from cats and dogs. They don't have a spirit. They have mind, will, and emotions, but they don't have a spirit.

The spirit is that part of us that connects us to God once we know him and we trust him. But we're born into this world with a dead spirit, a spirit filled with sin. We inherited that from Adam.

And consequently, we behave like who we are when we come into the world. We behave like sinners because we are sinners. You don't become a sinner the first time you ever do something wrong.

To the contrary, the first time we ever sinned, the reason we sinned is because that was true to our nature. You see, you live out of your nature. You live out of your nature.

Now here's an important thing, too. Let's talk about the word nature for a minute. What does the word nature mean? Describe it.

There are a lot of ways we could define the word nature, but let's talk about that. Okay. How would you? My nature? I would say it's-- The nature of anything.

The nature of this book. What is the word nature? The substance of it. The substance.

That's good. That's right. The substance.

The core. The very essence of what it is. There you go.

There you go. If you boil something down, so to speak, to its very essence and get it down to its most fundamental composition, that's its nature. Right? Let's take the cover of this Bible beside me.

Excuse me. The cover of this Bible has, as its nature, leather. It's not part water, part leather.

It's not sort of wood, sort of leather. You come down to its most basic element, and it's leather. The word nature, by definition, means it can only be one thing.

Okay. Down to its basic element. It can only be one thing.

It can't be two things. It can't be leathery water or watery leather. Its most basic composition is one thing, one single thing.

All right. Now let's go back to when we were born into Adam. Came into this world in Adam.

We had one nature, and what was that nature? It was Adam's nature. Adam's nature. The nature of Adam, yes.

Ephesians chapter 2 says you were born, you were dead in your trespasses and sins. You were by nature children of wrath. So we came into this world with a nature of Adam, a sin nature.

And because of that, we lived like the sinners that we were. That's how you and I acted, like a sinner. So what we were doing was being consistent with who we were.

That's exactly right. Living out of our nature. You know, sometimes people in the modern church have as their goal to make sinners stop sinning.

I mean, you know, folks at work, they'll say, I wish I could. You know, on my job, I'm working on cleaning up their language. You know, I'm trying to get this guy to quit doing drugs.

I'm trying to get this guy to stop abusing alcohol and using foul language and all of these things, you know. But the truth is, if we could get, first of all, it's impossible. You're not going to get a sinner to stop sinning.

You're asking them back contrary to their nature. And even if we could, what have you accomplished? You know, I worked in a nursing home when I was in high school. When I was a teenager, I worked in a nursing home.

And I worked on a wing of the nursing home where there were indigent patients. They had no families. And they were just destitute, pitiful, you know, circumstances.

It was a very sad situation for these people. And a part of my job was when these people would die, these men would die, it was my responsibility to take that man's corpse and get it ready for the funeral home. I'd take these dead corpses, and I'd take them and put them in a geriatrics chair and tie their body in the chair.

And I'd wheel them down to the shower. And I'd take the corpse of these old men, these guys that had died, and I would wheel them into the shower and I would bathe their bodies. And I would shave these men.

And I would comb their hair. And I would dress them. And I would have them lying in their bed waiting for the funeral home attendants to come and get them.

And I don't mean to sound disrespectful toward those men that died. But I'm telling you, some of those guys, when they were lying there waiting for the funeral home attendants to come get them, they looked better than they'd looked in years. Their hair was in place.

Their face was at rest. Their clothes were clean because they weren't drooling or dropping food on themselves. They looked great, better than they'd looked in years.

But they only had one problem. They were dead. They were dead.

And so I'm saying that people in Adam are born spiritually dead and they sin because it's their nature to sin. And even if you could take those folks at your work or wherever and clean them up. They're still sinners.

They're still dead. They're still sinners. Dead in that part of their being, the spirit part of their being.

That's right. They're still spiritually dead. So now what happens at salvation? That was you and me before.

Well, Ephesians says, such were we all. That's right. We all were in that condition.

And I say this as a parenthetical thing. And I mean this lovingly. But I say this to Christians whose crusade is to change people's behavior.

Quit worrying about how people talk and act at your job or wherever, whatever environment you're in. Because it's not our role to change people's behavior. It is our joy to point them to Jesus Christ.

They don't need reformation outside of Christ. What they need is resurrection. And there's only one person who can give them that, and that's Jesus.

You know, it's an interesting thing you're bringing up here because we want our world to change. I want my environment to change. So I want people to change their behavior because that will make my environment more comfortable.

Who are we trying to change them for, for themselves or for us? We're really trying to change our society and make it nice for me. But you see, Jesus wants their hearts transformed. That's right.

Because eternity is what's in his heart. And a part of our reason in wanting to change people's behavior who don't know the Lord is because it's a fear-driven motivation on our part. I grew up in the South, in Georgia, in the state of Georgia.

You can tell by my accent I'm not Canadian, I'm sure. I kind of figured that one out. We had a thing when I was a kid, you know, when I was a young boy.

There's a time when you're a young boy, now you outgrow it, but there's a time where you don't want a girl to touch you. Because if a girl touches you, we had a saying in the South, I don't know if you ever heard it in Canada, but we'd say you get cooties. Did you ever hear that? Cooties was like germs, like girl germs.

If you don't want to be touched by a girl, you might get cooties. And those in the States will understand this, especially the Southerners. But sometimes I think it's that way in the workplace.

We're afraid we're going to get sinner cooties. And I mean that as a metaphor for saying we're afraid we're going to get contaminated. If this guy uses bad language around me or if this guy has bad habits, it might

contaminate me.

And so we try to change his behavior or else insulate ourselves from the people that sin, it's not the way of Jesus. Jesus didn't just know sinners. He was a friend of sinners, right? And he wasn't worried that they would contaminate him.

He didn't have any fear of that. He knew who he was. And he wasn't fearful they would contaminate him.

So I say it again, let's stop trying to change people's behavior. And instead let's be Jesus in the midst of our circumstances on our jobs or wherever we are. Can we be resurrection life where they are? That's our challenge.

Can we be a signpost that points to resurrection? The resurrected one lives in me. So what does that look like in the middle of death? Go ahead. Well, I think that would so much change our approach to evangelism, wouldn't it? Because instead of trying to change people's behavior, if we would just be salt and light as we're called to be, we would create in them a thirst for Jesus Christ.

And the world feels condemned enough without us heaping condemnation on them. We all know John 3, 16, but what about verse 17 that says that the Son didn't come to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. The gospel is a proclamation to the people we work with.

And I use that arena to make my point. Well, we're around unbelievers. The gospel is the proclamation that Jesus has come.

The cross has dealt with your sin. And it's the proclamation that through Jesus Christ your sins have been addressed. And Jesus said, neither do I condemn you.

Go and sin no more. And so we proclaim to people that there's life in Jesus Christ. We don't come to condemn them and to cause them to feel estranged from us.

We want to invite them into the party, which is experiencing the life of Jesus Christ. And so we've talked about who we are in Adam, but we need to move forward because you and I were born into Adam, but then when we were born again, what happened? What happened is God took the person that you were and that I was, and he placed that person into Jesus Christ at the cross so that the person that we were in Adam died with Jesus. And this chapter that we talk about here, chapter 3, you need to know who you are to change what you do.

Here's the problem. A lot of us in the church don't know who we are. We think we're schizophrenic.

We think we're Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. We believe that when we trusted Christ and that now we're split personality with the life of Adam and the life of Christ both residing in us. And that is not true.

The Bible says that when we were placed into Christ at the cross, the person we were in Adam died. We died the old person we were. Romans 6.6, knowing this that our old man was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed.

Colossians 3.3, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ and God. Romans 6.3, for as many as were baptized into Jesus were baptized into his death. I know we're coming up on a break, but I want to make this point very clear.

The person as a Christian, the person you were is dead now. The person you used to be died with Jesus Christ. And in that place, God has given this new life which is the resurrection life of Jesus.

You know, Steve, that's very true. I believe that. Hard for me sometimes to comprehend when I see.

See, we look at behavior and judge nature out of behavior. Absolutely. And what a tragedy that is.

But we do. We do. So I've got behavior that really looks like it belongs to where I was instead of who I am, okay? That's right.

And now I assume that that's who I am, okay? And I know you'll deal with these issues. Let's talk about it after the break. If the old person that we were died with Adam, then why do we still behave in ways that do not reflect who we are in Christ? That look like Adam instead of Christ.

That's right. Like Jesus. That's right.

There's a contrast there. I think that's really, really important. We'll take a break.

We're talking to Steve McVeigh. The book is The Grace Walk Experience, and it's available from him at his website, which is [gracewalk.org](http://gracewalk.org). Got it. Even I can say that.

Okay, good. We'll take a break and be right back. We're back here with Dr. Steve McVeigh.

Steve, by the way, is from St. . . . Tampa Bay. Yeah, Tampa Bay area, St. Petersburg. I don't know what . . . Is it Clearwater? No.

Clearwater is . . . It's north of . . . Clearwater is the northern part of Pinellas County, Florida, and I live in the southern, the very southern tip of Pinellas County. It's a string of barrier islands. Okay, how close to the bridges? There's a bridge that goes across.

I live five minutes from the Skyway Bridge, yeah, that you're talking about, Sunshine Skyway. That's it. That's it.

It's been so many years since I've been that far. Hey, I bet that. Yeah, you were right in my backyard there.

Okay. Well, you weren't living there then, though. No, that's right.

Okay. Anyway, Steve, we're talking about this why, the why problem. Why when I've been made a new . . . like 2 Corinthians 5.17 says, If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

The oldest passed away. Behold, all things have become new. Okay, so there's a new nature that I have when I believe in Jesus as my . . . the one who's redeemed me from my sin, broken the power of sin in my life.

The cross has made the difference. His blood has been . . . has cleansed me. You know, that's right.

And note that the verse doesn't say if any man is in Christ, he ought to be a new creature. No, no. It says he is.

But, you know, I say that because a lot of folks . . . I used to teach this in church. You ought to be a new creature. You ought to change.

You ought to be different. Show that you're a new creature. Right.

The Bible says you are a new creature. If any man is in Christ, he's a new creature. And let's look at the word creature.

The root is the word create. It means to bring into existence something out of nothing. Create.

It's not to make. To make is to take material and work with it. Right, to take substance and reform it.

To design something. But to create means to bring into existence something out of nothing. Here's what happened at salvation.

And this is all in chapter 3, truth number 3. Here's what happened at salvation. And that is God took the person that we were in Adam, and he placed that person into Jesus Christ at the cross. And all of the wrongdoing that we would ever commit, and more importantly, our very sin nature was absorbed into Jesus Christ.

He took it and wrapped it all up in himself. And when he died on the cross, again, Romans 6, 6, our old man was crucified with him. Romans 6, 3, we were baptized into his death.

Colossians 3, 3, we died with Christ. All that we were before in Adam died with Jesus Christ. We died with him.

We were buried with him. And then the Bible says we were raised to walk in newness of life. That's at that moment when we became a new creation or a new creature.

We were given the divine nature of Jesus Christ. And so now at the core of our being, we have the life of Jesus in our spirit. Before, sin filled our spirit, so our identity was that of a sinner.

Now, Christ is in our spirit, so we have the new identity, and the identity is that of a Christian. And the reason we still sin, Willard, is twofold. First of all, it's because we do have a new nature, and that nature is righteous.

Romans 5, 17 says, By the abundance of his grace, he's given us the gift of righteousness. That nature is holy. 1 Corinthians 3, 16, 17 says, You're the temple of God.

The spirit of God dwells in you. And then it goes on and says, The temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. We're one with him.

1 Corinthians 6, 17, He that joins himself together to the Lord is one spirit with him. We're a divine work of art. Ephesians 2, 10, You're his workmanship in Christ Jesus.

We're not who we used to be. But then why do we still sin? Two reasons. Number one, because we do still have in our bodies the power of indwelling sin.

And I don't have time to teach the whole thing. You just have to get it. I mean, I'm plugging the book again, but I go into depth for five days on this.

In session four, chapter number four, you don't have an evil twin living inside you. The reason we still sin, though, is because we have the power of indwelling sin in the members of our body. Our spirit has been made new.

Our soul is being redeemed, but we still have the same old body we always had. And so we have that residual power of sin dwelling in our members. Paul says in Romans 7, multiple times, the sin which is in my members.

So there's still the propensity to sin because I've not yet got my glorified body. Right. So the lust thing that comes up every once in a while or the pride or whatever that is that comes up in me, that's residual to my body, to my members.

That's right. Paul says it. I'm not making this stuff up.

He says it in Romans 7, verse 11, verse 13, 17. He says it's in my members. Paul talked about, we know that classic passage where he said I don't understand myself at all because I'm doing the things I don't want to do and not doing the things I want to do.

And then he goes on and says I find then that evil is present in me, the one who desires to do good. He didn't say I am evil. He said evil is present in me.

It's in me, but it's not me. Here's the thing we need to understand. The power of indwelling sin is in my members, but that doesn't define who I am.

Do you know when we died with Jesus, we received that new nature at salvation? And now how many natures do we have? Remember what we said about nature? It can't be two things. It can't be two. It's only one, and it's the nature of Christ.

But do you know why people, I used to argue with this myself. I'd say that guy believes we only have one nature. That's crazy.

We have two natures there at war. What's the word nature mean? No, the old nature died, and now we have a new nature. Why do we sin? Because the power of indwelling sin is still in our members.

But do you know why people, some of you that are watching, you'll find it hard to believe this thing if it's only having one nature. Do you know why people struggle with that? Because they confuse the power of indwelling sin or the flesh with the old nature, and they think it's the same thing. I used to merge the two into one.

But let me make it as clear as I can. The flesh or the power of indwelling sin and the old nature, two separate things. The old nature was in our spirit.

The flesh, Paul said in Romans 7, is in the members of our body. It's a different part of us. It's not who you are.

In other words, what's happened in the spirit is one thing. What's happened in the body is a whole different ballgame. And what's in your body, your flesh, the flesh, the power of indwelling sin doesn't define who you are.

I had a kidney stone a few years ago, but I didn't tell people to start calling me Rocky. I mean it was in me, but it didn't define me. It didn't define who you were.

It's not who I am. And it's true. When I do something that's sinful, it doesn't define me as being.

I mean, I did it. That's right. But that's not who I am.

I'm not sin in us. But when we sin all, we have the power of indwelling sin in us. But when we sin, that sin is inconsistent with who we really are.

We're saints who sometimes sin. But God took that sin nature and put it to death. And back to the truths now that we're zeroing in on here.

Number three is, truth number three, you must know who you are to change what you do. You see, the enemy wants to turn to him. The first lie ever told in the Bible was, here's something you can do to become more God-like.

But back in Genesis 2, the scripture tells us when God created them, he created them in his image. They were like God before. They were like him.

He looked at them and said, behold, it's good. Yeah, that's true. But the enemy caused them to believe the lie that they needed to do something to become God-like.

The fact that they were deficient of something that they already had. I mean, that was his lie. That's right.

And that's the same lie. And that they could do something to get them to where they already were. Exactly.

And that's the same lie that we bought into today. There are things I need to do to become Christ-like. Well, truth number three, you need to know who you are to change what you do.

The truth is, just like Adam and Eve in the garden, you're already created in his image. You're already like him. You don't become holy by doing certain things.

We must understand we are holy. It doesn't get more clear than 1 Corinthians 3.17. The temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. It doesn't get more clear than that.

No, it's very clear. 1 Corinthians 3.17. But when we know who we are, then that becomes the catalyst for changing what we do. Well, you see, again, getting back to that trick of Satan is that if he can get you to define or the fact that you'll change your behavior to become something, then on the other hand, he'll use the same lie which says your behavior tells me that you're something different than you are.

That's right. It's a two-edged sword, that thing. It's wrong both ways.

That's right. Our identity doesn't come from our behavior. Exactly.

Because as soon as I believe that, now the devil can convince me I'm anybody. I'm real evil. He will make us, if we don't know the truth, it sets us free.

He will cause us to perceive that we are who we are based on how we act. And how you act and who you are don't necessarily coincide. But the reality of who you are is not changed by how you act.

No, that's true. And that's why it's so important to understand who we are because otherwise no person can consistently behave in a way that's different from how he perceives himself to be. No, it's true.

You end up going back to what your perception is of who you are. That's right. And that's why it's so important to know who we are.

To know who we really are. And so therefore, if you see yourself as holy, holiness will become more and more part of your life. That becomes the catalyst for your behavior.

Understanding the holiness that you have and who you are in Christ Jesus becomes the catalyst for a change in our behavior. And when you realize how loved you are of the Lord. That's right.

That love is a very motivating thing to bring changes in our behavior. But the behavior doesn't bring us to love, where he'll love us more. It's the love that changes the behavior.

Absolutely. Here's a statement I often make. Identity is determined by birth, not behavior.

Identity is determined by birth, not behavior. That's good. And so you see, when we sin, if we don't know the truth, then what happens is we begin to think, well, I am that person.

That behavior reflects who I am. And that is so far from the truth. I mentioned what the Bible says about who we are.

Do we believe the Bible or not? It's really that simple. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 3.17 that we are holy. But if you go to the average church next Sunday and ask a Christian there, are you holy? They're going to say, I'm trying to be.

That's right. I know. I wish I was.

I wish I was. I'm trying to be. Well, no, no, no, no.

You're answering that because you're looking at behavior. I can act like a Canadian, eh? But it doesn't make you a Canadian. No, you'd have to immigrate to become one.

That's right. Or in reality, I'd have to be born a Canadian to be true, you know. And so in the same way, I can act like a sinner, but that doesn't define me as a sinner.

And again, I don't want to be misunderstood. I'm not saying we don't sin, but I'm saying that what you do does not define who you are. I can bark like a dog right here and now, but it won't turn me into a dog.

It won't make me be a dog. Are Christians capable of sins? Yes. Can a Christian lie? Yes.

Does that make him be a liar? No. Here's one that sets people free. I've had folks that have come to me and said, I had a relative that trusted the Lord, and I really know they believed on Christ and they were Christians, but then they became addicted to, say, alcohol.

And my dad or my grandfather died from an addiction to alcohol. The Bible says that, you know, drunkards won't be in heaven. Where did they go? Well, it all depends.

Was your relative a Christian? Did they know the Lord? Yes. But they were addicted to alcohol. Then I say to you, your relative was not a drunkard, or the politically correct word, alcoholic.

They were only acting like one. Do you hear the difference? There's a huge difference. There's a huge difference.

Is it possible that I could act like a drunkard? Yes. Can I act like a liar? Yes. Can I act like an adulterer? Yes.

Can I act like a thief? Yes. Right, right. Unfortunately, yes.

I mean, it's just reality. It's not even unfortunate. That's just truth.

It's just the truth. Christians are capable of any sin anybody else can commit, but that doesn't define who you are as a person. And it's important to understand this because if we don't understand the truth of who we are, and the fact that the old person died in Adam and that now we are a brand new person in Jesus Christ, if we don't understand that, then we're going to spend our lives seeking to change our identity based on our actions.

And I think it was Watchman Nee who said, Oh, the folly of trying to enter a room that you're already in. The reality is we can relax. We can just believe what God says about us, and when we believe what God says about us, then that river of living water comes flowing out of us without any struggle on our part.

The challenge often comes, okay, because if we see that new nature, then we feel, I mean, sometimes we'll get involved now. I guess a little bit like the Galatian church, you know, having begun by the spirit, do you now think you're going to be perfected by the work of the flesh, okay, by your getting involved in making it happen? So, man, I have a new creation. I'm holy.

Therefore, I'm going to work hard to look as holy as I can. I believe the problem that the Galatian church faced is the biggest threat to the modern church. You know, some people say that the book of Galatians was written because Paul was trying to battle the legalistic idea that a person is saved, that we know Christ by works, but that's not what that book is about.

Paul was writing to people who he had led to Christ himself. They'd already believed on Christ. The danger at the church at Galatia was not that they would misunderstand salvation.

These people knew what salvation meant and how it is received by faith and not works. The threat to the church at Galatia was the threat that was injected by the Judaizers when they said, you know, Paul did a good job. He told you that we're saved by grace through faith, and he's right, and you trusted Christ, and now you're a Christian by grace and grace alone.

Then they said, but now I know you want to be a good Christian, don't you? Exactly. And so now to become a good Christian, here's what you need to do, and they laid all these laws. And you add to what you got.

That's right. And Paul said, as you have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk in him. They must have been born again, but now they were going to fall into this thing of trying to live their life based on religious rules.

But that's what we get into very, very easily in our today world. That's the danger in the modern church is that we think now, you know, it's up to me to improve and to make progress and to become who I ought to be by changing my behavior. And, you know, I could be a better person if I could just do better, and we get

it all backwards because the reality is it's by understanding who we are that our behavior is changed.

And here's a liberating truth, and we'll talk about this more in another program. But, you know, if we just believed what I'm about to say, it would transform our Christian life. Here it is.

Willard, you, me, you, we're all right in God's book. We're all right with him. Do we blow it? Yes.

Often and sometimes terribly. But does that change anything? No. Not only does it not change our relationship, it doesn't even change how our Father feels toward us.

It doesn't even change how he feels toward us. It doesn't cause him to reject us. You know, I tell the story a lot of times about my grandson.

In a time before he could speak, he's able to talk now, but when he was younger and I was playing with him on my lap and throwing him in the air and he was laughing and I was laughing, and suddenly I realized my grandson had committed a sin against me. It was one of those horrible diaper sins. And I'll often ask people, when my grandson committed that sin, you know, so to speak, and I knew what he had done, what do you think I did? Do you think I threw him on the floor and said, depart from me, you worker of iniquity? No.

Was I pleased with his behavior? No. I didn't like that happening at that moment. I wished he hadn't done that.

In reality, it changed nothing in your relationship. Was I happy about his behavior? No, but I knew something. I knew that he was a baby, and that's what babies do, and I knew he'd outgrow it.

And you know what? The Lord used that and impressed in my own mind later when I thought about it. Do you think you love Jonathan, your grandson, more than I love you? And I said, no. And the truth is, the Bible says in Psalms, he knows our frame, he remembers that we're but dust.

Sometimes people say, well, are you being soft on sin? No, I'm being soft on people. God accepts us, and it's not about our behavior. He accepts us in the person of Jesus, his son.

And when we know that we've been given the divine nature and that Christ is our life, then that's what changes us. And in the meantime, we need to stop beating up on ourselves. And the fourth truth is that you don't have an evil twin living inside you.

Just because we have the power of indwelling sin, and just because we don't walk without ever stumbling, it doesn't mean that God rejects us or that he's mad at us or that he's saying, well, I'd love you more if you'd just get your act together. No, God knew before he ever saved us that we would fall, and fall a thousand times and change nothing. You know, as you were chatting about us, about your grandson, about Jonathan having his accident, and you knew he'd grow out of it.

And I guess what came to my mind is that, you know, some people are born into this world with deficiencies that stay with them all their lives. And they end up doing things that are difficult for us to handle, because they just, it isn't there. There's a deficiency in their life.

And they still wear diapers when they're 20 and 30 years old. And some of them have to be kept in places where they can be cared for all their lives. But that doesn't change the fact that they're people.

That's right. They were born. That's right.

Okay. I mean, you know what I mean? That's right. And they're somebody's kids.

That's exactly right. You know, and so sometimes we've got some disaster situations in our hands. That's right.

We do have. You know, my friends Bill and Annabelle Gillum in Texas had a child that Bill wrote some books, Lifetime Guarantee and others. And I love hearing Annabelle tell about the story of their child that they had, who would eventually die, but he was disabled.

And Annabelle tells about how that one day she saw him in the kitchen drooling on himself, and he couldn't talk. And she said, I thought to myself, if only I could make you understand how much I love you. And she said it wasn't because of what he could do or not do.

He was totally disabled. It was because he was mine. And she said the Lord spoke to her and said, that's how I am with you.

Did you get it? That's how I am with you. You drool all over yourself, make a mess of things, but I love you because you're mine. Irrespective of your behavior, you're mine, and I love you.

You don't have an evil twin in you. None of us do. And I just challenge folks about this fourth truth, to let that truth sink in.

You don't have an evil twin inside you. Get a hold of that. It's because you make a mess of things.

It doesn't change anything. And just because you can't live to the standard somebody else seems to be living. That's right.

And you say, well, I guess I really don't belong to this family. The only standard God sets on you is the finished work of Jesus Christ. And guess what? We passed the test.

We won. Because he passed it. I passed it.

That's right. Because he made gold. That's right.

Because he passed the test, we passed the test. We're totally excited. We'll take a little break, and then we'll come back and conclude this portion.

So stay with us. I just want to say, Willard, it is so good. I just enjoy the kinship and the friendship that we share with Steve.

And he is. He is just a real friend, and he's been with us for many years. And so it's good to have him back.

Yesterday, we started something here in our devotional time. So we'll see if we can bring it to an end today. But I want to bring out a few verses, and this is Paul's life.

And Paul lived a unique life, not necessarily an easy life, but one of great effectiveness. If there was anyone who had deep, deep passion, it was Paul. Even when he was persecuting the church, I mean, he did it with all his might because he believed that that's what he was doing was right.

And then Jesus himself appeared to him and says, Stop it. And immediately he stopped it and went into a wilderness, and the Lord just taught him. But I'm reading here in Acts chapter 20.

It says this, and Paul is traveling to different places as the Holy Spirit leads him. It says he goes into the city after city, and he knows that jail and suffering may lie ahead. He says this, But my life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned to tell others the good news of God's wonderful kindness and love.

He recognized that his life really wasn't worth anything unless I use it to tell others of God's wonderful kindness and his love. You know, God's kind to us, you know, kind. Oh, I just like that.

And then in 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 10, But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor or his grace on me, and not without result. I want you to know, he pours his favor in his special grace upon us that it might have a result. And the result of it is being a display of his splendor and his glory.

For I have worked harder than all the other apostles, yet it was not I, but God who was working through me by his grace. He participated with God's grace. He worked.

He engaged himself with what God was doing. There was great effort in what he did, but God came alongside him, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the one who comes alongside so that he might do. And Paul was very quick to recognize this isn't my life, this is his life.

But I will work and I will labor alongside what God is doing. And he says, So it makes no difference whether I preach or they preach. The important thing is that you believe what we have preached to you.

The important thing is that you believe what has been preached to you. Steve has spoken deeply into our lives, and it has taken root, and he's helped us to connect to God's extravagant love and his grace. I remember sharing with him the story of our life when a crisis came, and we talked about how adultery had touched our home, and how we were faced with so many obstacles.

But what we did is we turned to the grace of God, and we embraced it, and he brought us through, not just to survive, but to thrive. And I remember sharing that with Steve, and he sat and he wept and he wept. And he says, You know what? He says, I knew God's grace was real.

I knew it was real. I knew it was real, and that we might see it. I want you to know today that God's grace is real, and it's real for your life.

You know what? It's as effective, just as alive as it can be. But all you need to do is engage it. It's about you believing, receiving it, and letting it be alive in you.

This is what it's all about. Open up your heart and let that grace be alive in you. Others may not understand it.

It's not the issue. It's alive. I'm tempted to entirely disclose what the next program will be about, but I'll overcome that temptation and let Steve McVeigh describe it himself.

It's not by trying harder. It's not by keeping religious rules. You don't overcome sin by saying, I won't, I won't, I won't, I won't.

You don't count to ten. You don't grit your teeth and bear down and try hard. No.

We overcome the power of indwelling sin by setting our mind on Jesus Christ.

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