

SET FREE!

Volume 2, Issue 3

We Can't Live FOR CHRIST!

Many of us have been taught that we need **to live for Christ**. To live each day for Jesus!

We have been told to do **our** best for Him.

So in order to do that we've tried desperately to live for Him, to do everything we can to please Him, to work hard for Him. We strive to keep all of the laws of Christian living.

Then after trying and failing, we might give up for awhile, maybe not consciously, but we just sort of glide along feeling lukewarm about our fellowship with God. Then one day we hear a message telling us we need to re-dedicate our lives and re-new the fire, to return to our first love!

So we dutifully trod on down to the front of the church and once again re-dedicate our life and promise the Lord that we will try to do better. We will be more consistent at prayer or Bible reading or witnessing or what ever comes to our guilt ridden, condemned mind at that moment.

"Yes Lord, I will try to do better." "I re-dedicate myself to work harder, to be more on fire for you, to live for you each day."

Then a little time passes and next thing we know we are burnt out from trying to live FOR Jesus. So back we go again, stirring up "revival fire in our soul" striving once again to live as a better Christian, living daily FOR the Lord.

**I am I reading your mail?
Have you found yourself on
this bondage treadmill?**

Then what you need to do is take a look at the preposition **"FOR."**

You've been trying to do things FOR the Lord. Trying to live FOR Christ. That is a hopeless way of living and it is nowhere to be found in the New Covenant. In fact you can do a word search, like I have done (using the KJV), and you will never find any of the New Covenant writers admonishing us to live FOR Christ. And yet in our own strength, which is in fact self-righteousness, we have tried desperately to do it.

**So what is the answer?
The answer is that we are to
live IN Christ, not FOR Christ.**

What is the difference you may ask? The difference is that by living FOR Him you are doing the works. Dead works! Thinking that Christ is in you but you are still doing everything. Asking Him to help YOU do it.

It is true that Christ is in us, but what we need to understand more fully is that we are also **"IN Christ."**

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)
*Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

He is living His life through us. We are really dead. He is now our life.

In fact this life that you are now living isn't really your life. It's Christ living in and through you. You died – remember?

Paul put it this way:

Galatians 2:20 (21st Century KJV) *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me*

Colossians 3:3 (NIV) *For you died, and your life is now hidden **with Christ** in God.*

God the Father sees you as IN Christ. He doesn't see a struggling, stumbling heaven ward failure, which is trying to live **like** Christ. He sees you **complete in Christ** Jesus.

Colossians 2:10 *And ye are **complete in him**, which is the head of all principality and power:*

Since we are "in Christ" and have died, there is no need for us to re-dedicate ourselves. This life you are now living is

Jesus living through you and He doesn't need to re-dedicate Himself. He doesn't need to re-kindle the fire.

Let's take a look at how Jesus explained this to us.

John 15:4-5 (MSG) ⁴"Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me. ⁵"I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing.

The vine is Christ; we are the branches. Can a branch produce fruit without the vine? John 15:4 says no. Does a branch produce fruit at all? No, it only BEARS fruit. Christ PRODUCES the fruit.

We are not called on to do OUR best, we are simply called on to submit to the vine, which is Jesus, and He has already done the best.

The branch is **set free** from the work of producing the fruit – that's the job of the tree. No more struggling to produce the "fruit of the Spirit." We just bear that fruitful life.

Stop trying to live the Christian life, or in other words, living FOR Christ and let Christ do it through you!

No more trying to live FOR Christ. You can't do it! Allow yourself to live IN Christ and allow Him to live through you. That's simple submission to the life of Christ in us and us in Him.

That's the life of one who lives SET FREE!

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

IT'S NOT ABOUT US.

If we understand the words **praise** and **worship** then why is there so little of it done in many churches?

To **praise** someone is to give credit to them for who they are and what they have done and are even still doing.

To **worship** is to give honour, adoration and love to the one being worshipped.

So often the songs that are presented to us to sing in church are neither about praise nor worship.

Much of the time the songs are "I" songs, "I am this" or "I am not that" or "I want or need this or that."

Why too are we expected to spend time asking Him to "renew us", or to "revive us again?" We are dead to self, but **alive unto God**.

Romans 6:11 *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but **alive unto God** through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Do we want God to "revive" that old dead person we were? NOT! Then why ask Him to revive us?

I hear other songs where the words go on about us being "broken and empty" or "dry and thirsty" or "set me free."

That's not what the Word says about us. It says:

Colossians 2:10 "And ye are complete in him"

So much of what is being promoted as a Praise and Worship time has really become a list of what we think we are not and crying for what we think we don't have.

It's become all about us and not about Him.

There was a song that came out awhile ago where the composer, Matt Redman, said:

I'm coming back to the heart of worship and it's all about you, all about you Jesus. I'm sorry Lord for the thing I've made it when it's all about you; it's all about you.

Unfortunately much praise and worship time has become about us and not about Him.

Sure it's good to sing songs about our freedom and our victory "in Christ Jesus". But praise and worship need to be directed toward Jesus the Son and God the Father.

Take time to look at the lyrics we are given to sing. If they are just a list of wants for things we already have "in Christ Jesus", then let's not sing them.

Remember, praise and worship, it's not about us. It's about Jesus and our Father God.

"I'm set free to worship, I'm set free to praise Him, I'm set free to rejoice forevermore!"

"Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you."
Galatians 5:1 MSG

Some thoughts on ...



PRAYER.

Praying For Our Nation?

For years we in this country, and others such as the U.S., have had what is called a National Day of Prayer. I'm sure there will be more of them to come as well.

I've always avoided them. At first I felt a bit guilty about that, especially as a pastor it seemed my duty to lead our church in this special event.

So I stopped and took a look at the premise of the event and the main verse that it was centered around.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land..."

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

It sounds like a great formula for Canada to heed-- **but this verse was not written to Canadians.**

It is an Old Covenant admonition to the Nation of Israel. It does **not** apply to us because the Old Covenant has been *"made obsolete."*

"If my people who are called by my name"

We, who are "called by His name" the name of Jesus, today, are Christians, not Israelites. Solomon made this statement, at the dedication of the Temple. Israel had fallen into disobedience, once again, and this was a call for national repentance.

In the Old Covenant God dealt with nations but today He deals with us as individuals. It's not correct to ask God to forgive us as a nation. We are individuals who have accepted His forgiveness. The New Covenant says, *"whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"*.

It's about individuals, not nations.

Under the New Covenant, our acceptance is not earned through our works; God's love and acceptance is lavished upon us, by grace. Jesus has become *"a surety of a better covenant"*, bringing in *"a better hope, through which we draw near to God."*

"and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"

God has accepted the offering of his son, therefore he sees us "in Christ." We are not wicked people who need to turn from our wicked ways; the Bible calls us *"holy ones"* and *"saints"*. At the cross, all of our sins (past, present, and future) have been paid for and forgiven. You have been redeemed!

We need not pray this verse from **2 Chronicles**-- We simply trust in God who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ.

Shots on Goal Praying.

I often hear *"If we can just get enough people to pray for our country, maybe God will heal our land and forgive our country for it's sins."* **That's not going to happen.** God has saved us individually based on faith in Him. The country didn't sin, only the individuals who live in it. From God's point of view, He sees us all forgiven. Remember what John the Baptist said about Jesus? *"Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world."* That's what Jesus did. He took away the sin of the world. He provided forgiveness for everyone. So God is not withholding His blessings from any nation because of sin. Sin was dealt with at Calvary.

If we want a Christian country we won't get it by complaining about what the lost want passed as laws in our land (i.e. gay marriage). We will never be successful by trying to impose holiness standards on un-believers. Even God won't do that!

There were a lot of unholy things going on in Rome at the time of Paul and Jesus, but they never instructed us to bombard the government with protest or to march around the city claiming it for Jesus.

We can't legislate sin out of our country. Non-believers are the majority and they will live how they want to live. Our righteous indignation will not change that. The imposition of prohibition in the 1920's should have shown us that that does not work.

As for getting enough people to pray about something is what I call *"shots on goal praying."* "Maybe if enough people pray we will get through to God." We don't have to "get

through to God!" He lives within us. How far away is that? We need to get away from that bombarding the gates of heaven thinking and remember that we are "seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

James said, "*The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with.*" (James 5:16 MSG)

One prayer offered in faith is all it takes to get an answer from God.

Do We Pray for Our Nation?

1 Timothy 2:1-3

(The Message) ¹*The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know.* ²*Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well so we can be quietly about our business of living simply, in humble contemplation.* ³*This is the way our Savior God wants us to live.*

Notice that the prayer is to be directed at **specific individuals**, not "Carte Blanc" for nations. You never hear Paul instructing the Church to pray for the nation of Rome or Greece or any other nation for that matter.

We pray for our mayor, our premier, our prime minister – for all who are in authority over us. We pray for everyone - for everyone **as individuals**.

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Do we pray for "revival in the land"?

I hear people praying to God to send the Holy Spirit down upon our land and to pour out revival. To "revive" means to bring back to life. Revival is not an applicable term to use for someone who has never been alive. The unbeliever is still dead – lost. He needs to be born-again, not revived.

Believers don't need to be revived they are alive "in Christ Jesus."

As for sending down the Holy Ghost, hey, He's already here. He lives inside each believer. So if there is going to be an "outbreak" of the Gospel in our land it needs to come out from within each of us believers. We need to individually set Him loose within our own environment. Jesus has empowered us to be witnesses – **Acts 1: 8** "*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me...*"

Sometimes I think that when I hear folks crying out for God to "move in the land," they don't really know what they are asking for. Perhaps they are hoping for some big swoosh of power to come through the streets and everyone in town will get saved without them having to do a thing. Or maybe a "goose bumpy kick in the pants" will happen in the meeting that will send them out into the world to reach the lost.

Jesus said, "Go ye". We do the going, empowered with the Holy Spirit and the Gospel.

If your "concert of prayer" is still praying based on 2 Chronicles 7:14, then might I suggest that its time to get a New Covenant song book to sing from.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem"

This has almost become a religious ritual in many churches. They have somehow gotten the idea that God will bless them, their church and their country if they do this.

Ephesians 1:3 says ³*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **has blessed us** with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*

So we already are blessed without carrying out a regiment of prayer to get it.

Not any where in the New Covenant are we instructed to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. So where does that come from? It's again a speech made by Solomon to the people of Israel. Here is the verse: **Psalms 122: 6** *Pray for the **peace** of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.*

The Hebrew word for "peace" used here means "the prosperity". It has nothing to do with getting the Arabs and the Israelites to stop fighting each other. They have done that for centuries and will continue to do that until the Prince of Peace returns. God will honour their free will to fight each other if they want to and getting your whole church to pray every Sunday about it won't change that. You can't override the free will of others, and neither will God.

Here's the good news - that's one more religious chore you've been **set free** from.

SET FREE

Is a complimentary ministry,
prepared
for you, by:
Ray Sargent.