

General Topics :: Grace, Brokenness, and the Exchanged Life**Grace, Brokenness, and the Exchanged Life - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2012/1/9 1:17**

Below is an excerpt from Steve McVey's book, *Grace Walk*. It is about living the "Christ Life" otherwise known as the "Exchanged Life" by grace instead of relying on self-effort. A Christian must be broken from living "out of" or "out from" the self or soul and instead live from the Spirit. The Christian's life can be described as a walk of trusting instead of trying. Do not misunderstand this as meaning living a life of pure passivity or waiting for a spiritual feeling or inclination to strike you into action. But it most certainly does not mean living a life of striving by sheer will-power and self-effort in order to get God to "bless" or approve of our service for Him. There is a balance between God working in us by His Spirit and our cooperating with His leading. Avoid the extremes on either end.

Book excerpt:

God's purpose is not that we should rededicate our self with all its abilities, but that we should give up all hope in self. We sometimes try to live for Him when He wants to live His life through us. It is important to see the distinction here. To ask God to help us live for Him is to request some sort of divine blessing on our effort to "do what He wants us to do." But that isn't what God desires. He isn't interested in what we can do for Him. Christ is interested in living His life through us. Is there a difference? You bet! It's the difference between law and grace. Law will cause a person to say, "Lord, help me to do the things You want me to do." In other words, "Help me keep Your rules." Grace will cause a person to say, "Lord Jesus, I am abiding in You and You in me. Express Your life through me in any way You desire." It isn't uncommon for Christians to think that God has a long list of things He wants His children to do. But in 1 Thessalonians 5:24 we read, "He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it." Not only does Christ call us to the Christian life, but He will also live it for us. After all, who else could live the Christ-life except Christ? When God determines to bring us to brokenness so that Christ can live His life through us and we keep trying to live it ourselves, things will keep getting harder. When does it stop? When we reach the end of our self-sufficiency and have given up all hope in our own resources. God wants to bring us to the understanding that we weren't saved to do something for God. We were saved so that we might know Him in intimate daily fellowship. Do good works have a place in the Christian life? Of course! But they are an overflow of our relationship with Him, an evidence of His life being expressed through us. The Subtle Danger of Service Being preoccupied with serving Christ more than with Jesus Himself is a subtle threat to every Christian. Even one very close to Jesus during His earthly ministry fell into this trap. When Jesus came to visit Mary and Martha in their home at Bethany, Mary sat down at the feet of Jesus and listened intently to every word He spoke. Martha was busy doing things in the home to make His visit more enjoyable. Whether she was cooking or preparing His room, she felt uptight because company was in the house and she wanted to be a good hostess. As she hurried around, she couldn't help but notice Mary sitting there talking while she was doing all the work. Martha was stressed out while Mary was resting. People for whom Christian living is strictly service-oriented often get impatient with those whose level of measurable activity is not as intense. Luke says that Martha was "distracted." Distracted from what? From Jesus! What was it that caused her attention to be distracted from Jesus? You got it—serving Him! It was a startling revelation in my own life when the Holy Spirit showed me that I had become more preoccupied with the work of the ministry than with the One who called me to it. Busyness in serving Christ can block intimacy with Him. Jesus could have said to Martha, "Now calm down. What you are doing is good, but what Mary is doing is important too. Both serving and resting have their proper place. Martha, you need to learn balance." Yet that isn't what He said. Instead, He said, "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." How many things? One thing is needed—resting in Him. Does this statement minimize the importance of serving Jesus? Not at all. How do you suppose Mary would have responded if Jesus had asked her to bring Him a glass of water? She would immediately have sprung into action. On the other hand, if He had asked Martha for a glass of water, she might not have even heard Him because she was too busy making His bed—and He wasn't even sleepy! Do you see the point? Resting in Christ is the sole responsibility of the Christian. Everything else flows out of that.