

Kenneth E Hagin on

Covenant



Kenneth E. Hagin

Knowing Where You Stand With God

In a time when much of the world is up in arms, we must recognize that we are in a fight of faith. The greatest enemy to faith is a lack of understanding of God's Word. A lack of understanding regarding righteousness and its privileges holds more Christians in bondage than any other thing.

Each Christian has been called upon to fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). There wouldn't be such a fight to faith if there weren't enemies, or hindrances, to faith. We need to understand the enemies to faith and overcome them so that our faith can grow.

In this article, I want to talk about the greatest enemy, or hindrance, to faith: a lack of understanding of God's Word. The Bible says that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). When people pray for faith, it's really knowledge of God's Word they need, because we cannot have faith beyond our actual knowledge of God's Word. As soon as the light of God's Word shines in the heart of man, faith comes. That's why the Psalmist said, "The entrance of thy words giveth light. . ." (Ps. 119:130). When you have knowledge of God's Word, you have faith.

The one area in which believers lack understanding of the Word is the subject of righteousness—our right-standing with God. And this lack of understanding of righteousness is one of the greatest hindrances to faith.

JAMES 5:16

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a RIGHTEOUS man availeth much.

This verse states that the prayer of a righteous man avails much. A lack of understanding of what righteousness is and what privileges righteousness gives to the believer holds more Christians in bondage than any other thing. In my opinion, righteousness is one of the most misunderstood subjects in the Bible.

ROMANS 10:10

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. . . .

ROMANS 5:17

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

Notice that Paul makes two significant statements in these verses about righteousness:

1. With the heart man believes unto righteousness.
2. When we receive Jesus and are born again, we receive the “gift of righteousness.”

The Bible says in Romans 5:17 that righteousness is a gift. Too often, we have associated righteousness with good works. The Bible

teaches good works and right conduct, of course, but all of our good works and right conduct will never make us righteous. If good works could make us righteous, we wouldn't need Jesus.

Another fallacy about righteousness is that we've thought we had to grow into some kind of high spiritual state in order to be righteous. We've thought, My prayers would work if I could just get to be righteous. If I could just develop to some high spiritual state, then I would be righteous.

Well, thank God, we can grow in the Lord and we can develop spiritually, but did you know you cannot grow to be any more righteous than you are today if you are born again. There are some things you can grow in. For example, you can grow in the fruit of the spirit: love, gentleness, meekness, long-suffering, and so forth. But righteousness is a gift. You will never be any more righteous than you are right now! You will not be any more righteous when you get to Heaven than you are right now—at this very moment!

Lack of understanding concerning righteousness was one thing that hindered my faith. What can hinder me can hinder you, because we are all human. This very thing, a lack of understanding righteousness—my right-standing with God—almost cost me my physical life. It almost caused me to die prematurely. So you can see the importance of fully understanding this subject.

On the bed of sickness more than sixty-five years ago, after five doctors had given me up to die, I began to read the Bible. I knew if there was any help for me, it had to be in God's Word. My spirit kept telling me I didn't have to die. (You see, your human spirit knows things your head doesn't know, particularly if your spirit has been born of God.) Something on the inside of me—in my heart or spirit—told me there was hope and help for me in God's Word. So I got into the Word with an open mind, and I began to see some things about faith and prayer.

When I read in James 5:16 that “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails [or works] much,” the devil took advantage of my lack of understanding of God’s Word to try to defeat me. He knew he could defeat me on this point because I didn’t know what righteousness was, nor what privileges it gave the believer.

The devil spoke to my mind, saying, “Yes, you could pray the prayer of faith, if you were righteous. If you were righteous, you could pray the prayer of faith and receive your healing. But you’re not righteous.”

Notice that in this case, the devil didn’t contradict what the Bible said, nor did he say, “You can’t pray the prayer of faith,” because he knew I recognized my rights in this area. So he used a more subtle tactic by reminding me of all my mistakes, faults, and failures and by telling me I wasn’t righteous. He knew I didn’t understand righteousness. I thought righteousness was some kind of spiritual state I might eventually attain—if I could grow enough spiritually.

Then the devil bluntly asked me, “Well, are you righteous?” I said, “No, I’m not.” As I looked at myself from the natural standpoint, I wasn’t what I considered righteous. I knew I was far from it.

Because I didn’t understand my right-standing with God and because I accepted what the devil said, I permitted Satan to rob me of the blessings God intended for me to have.

However, as I kept reading the Bible, I found that in the Old Testament, God had set up a system whereby the blood of innocent animals was shed to cover the sins of the Old Testament saints. Thus, God did not hold sin against them, but He “counted,” or considered, them as being righteous.

PSALM 32:1–2

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. . . .

Then in the New Testament, I saw that the Bible says we have a better Covenant established on better promises (Heb. 8:6). In the Old Testament, sins were covered, but the New Testament declares we are cleansed from sin by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ!

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

17 Therefore if an man be IN CHRIST, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

21 For he hath made him [God has made Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God IN HIM.

In Christ we become new creatures (v. 17). In Him we become the righteousness of God when we are born again (v. 21). Hallelujah!

When you are born again—when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior—you become a new creature in Him! God does not make any unrighteous new creatures. That would be an insult to the work of God! No, we have been made the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:10 says, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. . . .” How does a person become righteous? He believes unto righteousness, because he believes on Him who is our righteousness—Jesus Christ!

Romans 5:17 tells us that we have received an abundance of grace and “the gift of righteousness.” Righteousness is a gift! When you were born again, you became a new person in Christ Jesus, and you were made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17,21).

You are born righteous when you are born again! You are made the righteousness of God in the New Birth. That’s why the Bible says that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17). That’s also why the Bible compares being a new creature to the innocence of a newborn baby. “AS NEWBORN BABES, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2).

The Bible teaches that there is a similarity between spiritual growth and physical growth. Christians are born babies, and they grow up. But those who are newly born into the Kingdom of God are just as righteous in the sight of God as older saints who have been born again and living for God fifty or sixty years.

We must realize that we have right-standing with God not because of what we did, but because of what Jesus did! Right-standing with God is a gift!

After I realized that I had received the gift of righteousness when I was born again, Satan had to find another tactic to use on me. He tried to trip me up by using the fact that since becoming a Christian, I had sinned. Indeed I did feel so guilty over missing it. Have you ever missed it, sinned, or failed since becoming a Christian?

But I began to look at God’s Word again, and I found this verse in First John:

1 JOHN 1:9

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

John wasn't writing to the unsaved in this passage. He was writing to Christians!

When we sin, we fall under condemnation and lose our sense of righteousness. But when we confess, "I have sinned, God. Please forgive me in Jesus' Name," God does two things. According to First John 1:9, God forgives us of our sins, and God cleanses us from our sins. If God just forgave our sin, it wouldn't help us much, because we would still be under the condemnation of sin. But, no, God actually cleanses us from all sin.

What does God cleanse us from? All unrighteousness. Part of our unrighteousness? No, all of it!

After I saw this in the Word, I answered the devil with that news and put him on the run. And he's been running ever since! Up until then, the devil had me on the run. But after I learned who I am in Christ Jesus, I started meeting the devil head on. Now he's the one who turns and runs, because he found out I know what the Word says. I know where I stand with God!

Jesus Is Our Advocate

If we sin, do we lose our salvation? If we are truly saved, will we ever sin? And if we do sin, what should we do to get rid of the guilt and the grief that hangs heavy in our heart?

If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. — **1 John 1:9–10;2:1–2**

The word “advocate” means lawyer or one who pleads our cause or case. Jesus acts as our lawyer, pleading our case before the Father. When we are tempted, if we sin, we can claim the promise of First John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

After verse 10, the Apostle John went on to say, “My little children . . .” (1 John 2:1). Man put the divisions between these chapters; John did not write in chapter and verse like this. Therefore, reading the four verses of our text in sequence, we can see that John was not writing to sinners; he was writing to Christians.

First John 1:9 is often quoted to sinners, telling them to confess their sins. God didn’t tell them to. It would be impossible for a sinner to

confess every wrong he had ever done, because his whole life is wrong! No, this verse was written to Christians.

John writes, “My little children [because they were saved under his ministry and were his spiritual children], these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

This brings us to a very sensitive subject in the Church world. When you teach about God’s grace and forgiveness, someone always believes you are giving people a license to sin. I always say, however, that people do enough sinning without a license!

It is quite obvious that God does not want us to sin: “. . . these things write I unto you, that ye SIN NOT” (1 John 2:1). It is quite obvious that if we walked completely in the Word and in love, we wouldn’t sin. But it is also obvious that none of us has achieved this yet.

Considering the other side of the issue, when people continually want to sin and choose to sin, I doubt that they ever were Christians to begin with. Why? When people live any way they want and do anything they want—cheat, lie, steal, and so forth—I doubt that a true Christian conversion ever took place.

Some have said to me, “It doesn’t make any difference what I do. Christ is my advocate.” One man said, “I might steal something next week. I’m not planning to do it, but if I do, Jesus already has forgiven me for it.” I doubt seriously if a man like that is even saved.

This scripture in First John never was intended to encourage people to sin. John is simply telling us about God’s provision for sin. The Spirit of God will help us overcome sin—not encourage us to practice it! After all, John said, “These things write I unto you, that you sin not.”

In the first place, if a person is born again—if he has accepted Jesus Christ as Savior—he doesn't want to do wrong. But often the devil tempts him through his flesh and overcomes him because he is not strong spiritually.

Paul said, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a FAULT, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

If it were just a fault Paul was talking about, we all would need restoring, and there wouldn't be any spiritual people left to do the restoring. We all have faults. The Greek actually says, "If any man among you be overtaken in an offense, or sin, you which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness."

God wants His people to be restored to full fellowship with Him. It is a different matter, however, when people do not want to be restored. If they want to be restored, it is our obligation to restore them in a spirit of meekness, not arrogance. Why? ". . . considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

When it comes to healing, James 5:14–15 says, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." We see here the possibility of sin in conjunction with sickness, and of forgiveness in connection with healing.

By way of illustration, if a man were to speak sharply to his wife, he is not eternally lost because of it. He is, however, out of fellowship with her! He needs to get back in fellowship with her by apologizing and asking her forgiveness.

Well, First John 2:1 says, “. . . if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” If we sin, we lose our sense of righteousness and cannot enter God’s Presence. Righteousness means right-standing with God. Righteousness means the ability to stand in the Presence of God without any inferiority complex, without a consciousness of sin.

If you have sinned or failed, you cannot stand in the Presence of God without a consciousness of sin. But there is One who can go in on your behalf — Jesus Christ, the Righteous. He is the propitiation—the substitute—for our sins; and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1,2).

As our advocate, Jesus restores to us our lost sense of righteousness, for He said, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins . . .” (1 John 1:9). But He does more than just forgive us of our sins; He cleanses us from all unrighteousness. He cleanses us from that sin-consciousness or spiritual inferiority complex that would keep us from going into God’s Presence.

There are those who live under a cloud of fear. They say things like, “I am so afraid of displeasing the Lord. If Jesus comes, I might not make it. I don’t know if I am ready or not.” And they are robbed of their joy in Christ. They are afraid that God is mad at them and will not have anything to do with them.

We do not have to live under such a cloud of fear and gloominess. We can know that if we have failed—if we are Christians—our hearts will be grieved about it. If you can keep sinning and failing, however, and are not grieved about it, you had better check up on your conversion experience. If you have been born again and have the life and nature of God in you, you don’t want to do wrong.

Many times new Christians miss God’s will and sin in ways they are not even aware of, but they are walking in the light they do have.

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

As I look back now, after nearly seventy years of being a Christian, I can see that I missed God many times when I didn't even know it. At the time, I walked in what light I had, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleansed me from things I didn't know about.

I can remember the first time I was conscious of the fact I had done wrong after I became a Christian. It nearly broke my heart.

If a believer is tempted and Satan gains mastery over him in something, when the believer cries out for mercy, he can hear Christ whisper, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

And then we also can hear Him say in this marvelous scripture from Hebrews 4:16, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.” Why? “. . . That we may obtain mercy . . .” It is mercy that we need when we have sinned. As long as we are doing right, we can get by on justice.

In Hebrews 4:14 we read, “Seeing then that we have a great high priest . . .” We have a High Priest who also stands in this office of Advocate that we may “. . . come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (v.16).

Grace is unmerited favor. When you fail is the time you need grace; that's when you need mercy.

Once while driving through a small town, a minister friend of mine drove through a red light. Before he knew it, there was a flashing red light behind him and the sound of a shrill siren. A policeman pulled him

over and gave him a ticket for running a red light and for going 45 in a 30-mph zone.

When the minister had to appear in court, his case was stated and the judge asked if he had anything to say.

He answered, “Yes, I do.” He said that he was on his way to preach and explained that he ministered in small country churches. Then he said, “Judge, I don’t have a dime. I’ll just have to go to jail or work it out on the county farm. I’m not going to ask you for justice. I would be in trouble if I got justice, because I’m guilty. So I am asking instead for mercy.”

He continued, “I’m like the woman in the Bible who was taken in the act of adultery. Her accusers brought her to Jesus, and He said, ‘. . . He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her’ [John 8:7]. Jesus stooped down to write something in the sand, and when He looked up, everyone was gone.

“When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: GO, AND SIN NO MORE” (John 8:10,11).

The preacher added, “I’m asking for mercy, and I’ll go and sin no more.”

The judge asked, “Is that story in the Bible?”

“Yes,” the preacher answered.

The judge said, “I wish you would show it to me.” The preacher had his New Testament with him, so he turned to that passage and showed it to the judge.

The judge said, “I teach a Sunday school in a local church, but I didn’t know that was in there. I’m going to teach on that. Case dismissed!”

The judge showed mercy. If the preacher hadn’t been speeding and hadn’t run that light, he could have gotten by on justice; he wouldn’t have needed mercy. But he broke the law and, therefore, needed mercy.

Mercy and grace are always available to us if we break God’s law. All we need to do is call on Christ our Advocate!

Knowing What Belongs to Us

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. —Ephesians 1:1-3

Thank God this letter to the Ephesians applies to the saints all over the world and wherever you live. Notice verse 3 does not say, “Blessed be the God who is going to bless us,” but it says, “Blessed be the God who hath [has] blessed us.” It’s past tense!

What has God blessed us with? Verse 3 tells us: with all spiritual blessings. God has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings there are. There aren’t any more that He hasn’t already blessed us with.

Many Christians don’t know what belongs to them, so they keep trying to obtain what is already theirs. Our wonderful Heavenly Father in His great grace has given enough to the Church to make us rich and strong. We’ve been given every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. (“In Christ” refers to all that God did in Christ’s redemptive work.)

Let’s learn from Scripture what some of these blessings are—these blessings that are ours in Christ.

One blessing that is ours is the blessing of reconciliation. Second Corinthians 5:19 tells us that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:19

19 To wit, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

The word “impute” means to charge, ascribe, or attribute, especially something discreditable. The Amplified Bible says that God is not counting up and holding against mankind their trespasses, but canceling them.

Notice that God didn’t cancel just our sin. He canceled the whole world’s sins—every single person’s sins. Some may say, “Well, if that’s true, then won’t everyone be saved and go to Heaven?” No, because unless people accept Jesus as Savior, they’re still sinners. They need to be born again and become believers.

But that is what will be so terrible—if they go to hell and find out they didn’t have to go there, and then discover that God had canceled all their sins and wasn’t holding them against them. 2 Corinthians 5:18 tells us that God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. In other words, we are His ambassadors, charged with the mission of telling others that God has canceled their sins and reconciled them to Himself through Christ.

In God’s great redemptive work (from the time that He made Christ to be sin until the time Jesus ascended on High and sat down at the right hand of God), everything that God did in Christ belongs to the Body of

Christ. Jesus didn't do anything for Himself. He did it for us. We have been blessed!

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved THE WORLD, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jesus was our Father God's gift to a lost world. He's not God's gift to the Church alone. He's God's gift to the whole world.

God has never taken the gift of Jesus back. Jesus still belongs to the whole world. Whether people acknowledge Him or not, Jesus still belongs to them because God gave Him to the world and hasn't taken Him back.

The sinner does not need to beg God to save him. The work's already been accomplished. All he needs to do is accept it and thank God for it—then it becomes his.

Romans 6:23 says, "The GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." What do you have to do to receive any gift? You just have to receive it! If I had a birthday gift for you in my hands, would you have to get on your knees and beg, and cry, fast, and pray before you could have the birthday gift? No! You wouldn't have to do any of that. You just have to acknowledge the gift is yours, believe it's yours, reach your hands out, and take it!

The gift of Jesus and all He purchased for us belong to everyone! I've been preaching this truth for more than 60 years. I've had pastors to say to me, "Brother Hagin, you make it too easy for people to get saved." I tell them, "No. It wasn't me who made it easy. It was God." Thank God, in His great mercy, He made salvation possible—and made it easy.

Ephesians 2: 8 and 9 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any

man should boast.” Salvation is a gift. We receive that gift by acting on the Word of God. We act on the Word and receive Jesus Christ as our Savior. We confess Him as our Lord, and we receive eternal life that very moment.

Now, let’s go just a step further. Thank God, salvation and the remission of sins belongs to us. But do you know that healing also belongs to us?

ISAIAH 53:4–5

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs [sickness and disease], and carried our sorrows [pains]: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

This passage is a prophecy Isaiah spoke before Jesus’ death on Calvary ever took place, giving us a preview of the coming Messiah and of what He would purchase for us through His death and resurrection.

Then in looking back at the Cross, Peter says, “Who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye WERE HEALED.” Isaiah prophesied, looking to the future at what would eventually come to pass. Peter is not prophesying. He’s stating the truth of a fact that has already taken place.

I've met people who had been seeking healing for years. Many wonderful, Spirit-filled people have said to me, "I don't know why God won't heal me." And just to get their attention, I've told them, "He's not going to heal you."

They ask, "He's not?"

"No," I tell them. "He's not going to heal you. Healing has already been bought and paid for. It's yours."

We think we believe what the Bible says. But many times we don't really believe it at all. The Word says, ". . . by whose stripes YE WERE HEALED." Well, if we were, I was. And if I was, I am!

Every single time that I have been able to move people to the place of simply believing what the Bible says, they have been healed—almost instantly, they were well. I've seen people who were crippled and couldn't walk a step. The doctors had told them they would never walk again. They had been praying, begging, crying for God to heal them. But when I got them to see the truth that healing already belonged to them because of what God wrought in Christ—they walked again!

Very often in our early state of spiritual development, God will meet us where we are because we don't know any better. We are spiritual babies, so to speak. I remember when I used to pray, "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take." Did you ever pray that? But do you pray that way now? No. You've outgrown that kind of prayer.

The same thing is true spiritually speaking. When we are first born again, we are in the babyhood stage of development. And God meets us on that level because we don't know any better. And, thank God, He does meet us where we are. But there comes a time when we have to grow up and walk in the light of the Word.

The believer doesn't need to ask God to heal him because Jesus has already borne our sickness. All the believer needs to do is to know that healing belongs to him. You really don't need to pray for something that already belongs to you.

We're talking about what belongs to us. We've seen that salvation and healing belong to us. Now let's look at Psalm 27:1.

PSALM 27:1

**1 The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength
of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?**

Who is the strength of our life? The Lord is. Isn't He our present-tense Lord? Then this belongs to us now: He is our strength, light, and salvation.

The Hebrew word translated "salvation" in this verse means deliverance. God is my light and my deliverance. He's the strength of my life. Light, salvation, deliverance, redemption—these belong to us now. That's the reason I can say, "Whom shall I fear? Of whom shall I be afraid?"

I'm talking about things that belong to us now, not things that will be ours in the "Sweet by-and-by."

1 CORINTHIANS 1:30

**30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who
of God is made unto us wisdom, and
righteousness, and sanctification, and
redemption.**

That's enough to get you started shouting into the middle of next week! This is a list of what God has made Jesus to become unto us—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption! These all belong to us now. They aren't ours only if we'll promise to be better and do better. They aren't ours if we fast every other day. They belong to us now.

Notice that through Jesus, we have been made righteous. We believers (we who have been born again) don't have to try to become righteous—because we are righteous.

I remember when I was holding a meeting in one of the northern states, and there was a gentleman who attended every morning service. The pastor had told me about him—about what a great Christian he was, the finest member in the church. During one service, I somehow started teaching on the subject of righteousness, that we are the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21).

After the service, this particular gentleman said to me, “Brother Hagin, I know I've been born again and filled with the Holy Ghost. All my family are saved and filled with the Holy Ghost and are in this church in regular attendance. I'm trying to be righteous, but I just don't understand what you're saying.”

I said, “I want to ask you a question. Are you a man or a woman?”

He answered, “Why, of course, I'm a man.”

I said, “Could you ever become a woman just by trying to be one? How did you get to be a man, anyway?”

“Well,” he said, “I was born that way.”

I told him, "That's the way you get to be righteous. You're born that way."

He saw it. I thought he was going to go through the ceiling; he was so excited! He'd been working for years trying to be righteous, but when he saw the truth, I thought he was going up to Glory right then!

Very often, we're praying for things that are already ours. Sometimes I wonder if God isn't saying, "Why don't you wake up, find out what belongs to you, and walk in the light of it?" It is time for us to believe God's Word and walk in the light of what belongs to us!

Make this your daily confession: I am redeemed. I am delivered from the authority of darkness. Satan has no authority over me. Sin cannot dominate me. Jesus is my Lord. He has delivered me and given me authority. He is my Strength. He is my Light and Salvation. Through Him, I am righteous. I walk in the light of God's Word. I walk in the fullness of everything that belongs to me through Jesus Christ.

You Are the Caretaker

Satan has no authority—no legal right—to dominate the Christian. Each and every member of the Body of Christ has a perfect right to experience all the blessings of redemption, including healing and deliverance from any Satanic oppression. The Name of Jesus is the key—what will you do with the Name?

I have said many times in my preaching and teaching over the years that the last headache I had was in August 1933. Now, I never said that symptoms didn't come; I said, in effect, "I've been without headaches for all that time." And I have, because when I demanded that pain to leave in Jesus' Name, it left!

Whenever I had an experience like that, I would go along for several years, and the devil wouldn't try that one for awhile—I wouldn't have any more symptoms of a headache for a long time. But, you know, the devil is persistent. You remember in the Gospel of Luke, where it said, "After Satan tempted Jesus, he left Him for a season" (Luke 4:13).

Notice it didn't say, "Satan left Him and never came back." It said, "He left Him for a season." Yet later on, it said that Jesus ". . . was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). That's the reason we have in Jesus such a faithful and compassionate High Priest to help us (see vv. 15–16). He understands what we're going through. And we have a right to use His Name when we experience adversity!

So if pain comes, if sickness or disease comes, instead of accepting it and telling somebody, "I have this, that, and the other thing," you say, "In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, leave my body." And the pain or the sickness or disease must go.

I said it must go, because you are the master of your body, not me or anybody else. And I am the caretaker of my own body. You are the caretaker of your body; your spirit is the caretaker that lives in that house, your body.

The body is the house that you live in. And you are to rule your body. But that's where folks get into trouble; they don't rule their bodies.

The Apostle Paul said about himself (and he admonished believers to do the same), “. . . I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection . . .” (1 Cor. 9:27). In other words, Paul was saying, “I rule my body.”

A failure to rule the body produces carnal Christians. One translations calls them “body-ruled” Christians. In other words, their bodies rule them.

I heard Brother Lester Sumrall, who knew Smith Wigglesworth personally, say that during one of their visits, he asked, “How is Smith Wigglesworth today?” The older preacher answered, “I never ask Smith Wigglesworth how he feels; I tell him how he feels!”

Now some folks, bless their darling hearts, don't get that. But, you see, you rule your body. Paul said, “I keep under my body. I bring it into subjection.” Paul was talking about his spirit, the real man, or the inner or hidden man (1 Peter 3:4).

Somebody said, “Yeah, but that was Paul. He was an apostle, so he could do that.”

Now isn't that illogical reasoning? Just because Paul was called to the office of the apostle didn't make him any more a Christian than you or I or anyone else. Paul wasn't any more saved than any member of the Body of Christ. The office Paul stood in didn't give him any more authority to rule his body than you have authority to rule your body. And it didn't give him any more power to do it, either.

I will further prove to you from the Bible that all Christians, not just a select few, can rule their bodies.

ROMANS 12:1

1 I [Paul] beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Now, Paul wrote the epistle, or letter, of Romans to believers. He addresses the letter, “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints . . .” (Rom. 1:7). Well, “saints” can apply to people everywhere who are born again—“to all that be born again in” Tulsa, the United States of America, or wherever you’re from!

Well, what did Paul say that saints should do with their bodies? He said, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that YE present your bodies . . .” (Rom. 12:1). So you see, you are to do something with your own body. This verse proves that you can do it.

You are the master of your body. If you weren’t, you couldn’t present it to God. You wouldn’t be able to do anything with it. But you are the master, the ruler, of your body. And thank God, you have a right to freedom from pain and sickness and disease in the Name of Jesus! You can command those things to leave your body in that Name, and they must go. But notice who has to do the commanding—you do!

In the early days of my ministry, I pastored for nearly 12 years. And in those days, I’d sometimes have to get myself by the ear and lead myself out to the church, saying, “Come on, boy, you’ve got to pray!” Then I’d put myself down on the altar, and I’d make myself pray. The Bible says, “. . . the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41). Sometimes you—the real you, your spirit being—just have to assert yourself. And you must take advantage of your rights and privileges in Christ, including your right to use His Name.

Just after I was healed and raised up from the bed of sickness in 1934, I read an article in a magazine about a certain government building in Washington, D.C. In front of the building were two little plots of grass on either side of the main walkway. Well, people entering and exiting the building would cut across the grass to and from the walkway. Eventually, they wore a path in those little plots of grass.

The caretaker put up stakes and string as a barrier to protect the grass so it would grow back where it had been worn down. But that didn’t help. People just stepped over the string and continued cutting across the grass.

Eventually, the caretaker painted two crude signs on pasteboard and placed them on each plot of grass. The signs read, “Gentlemen will not, and others must not, trespass on this property.”

You see, it was that caretaker’s job to take care of those grounds. He was the custodian or guardian of that property, and it was his responsibility to ensure that the building and grounds were kept neat and in good repair. Similarly, I—the man on the inside—am the caretaker of this building of mine, my body. And you are the caretaker of your body.

When I read that article and got to the part about the “No Trespassing” sign, I simply put up a sign on my body in the spirit realm. I wrote on it with invisible ink with the pen of the Spirit of God: “Gentlemen will not, and others must not, trespass on this property.” Then I wrote in parentheses, “Devil, this means you! Don’t you trespass on God’s property!”

Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” That new creature is the man on the inside, the spirit man. And you, as that new creature are the caretaker of your body, the overseer of your house.

You are the caretaker of your body, but, really, your body doesn’t belong to you; it belongs to God.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19–20

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own [well, whose are you if you’re not your own]?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

As a new creature in Christ, you and the Father are one. As I've said many times, concerning John 14:13–14, when you use the Name of Jesus to exercise spiritual authority, you're not demanding anything of God the Father. You and the Father are one, and He has given you authority in that Name over demonic forces. Directly or indirectly, sickness and disease come from the devil; they don't come from God. So when you command sickness and disease to leave your body in Jesus' Name, you're just taking your place and demanding your rights. You're exercising the authority that God gave you and commissioned you to exercise. And you're acting scripturally as the caretaker of your own body.

Reigning in Life

Romans 5:17 says, “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” If you have made Jesus your Lord and Savior, you have received this abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness that Romans 5:17 talks about. This verse goes on to say that you shall reign by Jesus Christ. Now where are you are to reign?

It is inferred, and sometimes plainly taught, that we’ll reign with Jesus during the Millennium. This is true, but it’s not the whole truth. Others teach that we’ll reign in Heaven, or the Sweet By-and-By. This is also true, but it’s still not the whole truth. In both cases, either because of wrong teaching or the lack of right teaching, the impression is that we can’t expect much in this life.

This “impression” says, You can be saved, all right. But you have to continue to be ruled by the devil—by sin, sickness, poverty, fear, and bondage. You have to go through life this way until you finally barely make it into Heaven. But that’s not what the Bible teaches.

Romans 5:17 says we can reign in life—in this life—by Christ Jesus. Weymouth’s translation says, “For if by the trespasses of the one, death reigned as king through the one, much more shall they who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign as kings in the realm of life.” We are to reign in the here-and-now!

The King James Version doesn’t use the word “kings” as Weymouth’s does, but the very idea of reigning brings the thought of “kings” to mind. The very notion of reigning carries with it the idea of ruling, of dominion, and of having authority.

Well, where do kings rule and reign? In their particular domain or kingdom. Paul said we “reign in life.” We have the authority to rule and reign and have dominion in our life—in the life we have here and now!

Someone might say, “Well, I don’t see very many people ruling and reigning in life.”

One reason is that this truth hasn't been proclaimed or taught as it should be. Hosea 4:6 says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge . . ." Notice this verse doesn't say sinners are destroyed for lack of knowledge. It says God's people are destroyed because of their lack of knowledge. This infers that if God's people had knowledge of who they really are in Christ, of who God is, and of the rights and privileges of their dominion—they wouldn't be destroyed. One reason Satan is often able to reign, or rule, in the life of Christians is because those Christians do not realize the authority that has been given to them.

Many times Christians think Jesus is going to do everything for them; they do not realize they have a part to play. Notice that Romans 5:17 doesn't say, "Jesus Christ will reign through you." No! It says, "... THEY [that's us] which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." This verse says that you and I will reign. Of course, it's by, or because of, Jesus Christ that we have this authority, but He has given us the authority to rule and reign!

Many times people say, "I've left it up to the Lord; He's going to do it." But, no, the real truth about the matter is, He has left it up to you! Let's find out our job and position. Let's find out what we're supposed to do!

Romans 5:17 mentions two things we have received: abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. It's receiving the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness that enables you to reign. If you don't know what you've received, you'll be hindered in reigning.

We've heard a lot taught about grace, and thank God for His grace. But not only have we received abundance of grace; we've also received the "gift of righteousness." What does the "gift of righteousness" mean? First, it's a gift, which means we didn't do anything to earn or deserve it. Second, it means we have been made right with God. It means we have right-standing with God!

If you're in right-standing with God, there is nothing coming between you and Him. If you're in right-standing with God, you can't be in any better standing with Him. That is a truth you need to learn and get firmly settled in your heart and mind.

The Bible never talks about growing in righteousness. The Bible does talk about growing as newborn babes, desiring the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:2). And Paul talks about faith that can grow exceedingly (2 Thess. 1:3). But nowhere does the New Testament ever talk about growing in righteousness.

The truth is, you can't grow in righteousness. In other words, you can't have any more right-standing with God than you have right now. Even when you get to Heaven, you won't have any better standing with God than you have right now. You will never be any more righteous—or any less righteous—than you are right now! Did you know that a newborn believer has the same standing with God as a Christian who's been living a holy and sanctified life for 80 years? How is that possible? It's all through Jesus and what He did for us! Hallelujah!

Unlike the sacrificial blood in the Old Testament, the blood of Jesus Christ does not cover our sins. The blood of Jesus washes away our sins (Rev. 1:5). We're not a "covered creature"; we're a new creature! Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." God doesn't make any unrighteous new creatures. We have been made the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:21)!

As new creatures, we don't want to sin, and God doesn't want us to sin, either. But if we do miss it, provision has been made for us. First John 2:1 says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The Greek word translated "advocate" means lawyer or one who pleads our case. We've got a lawyer in the "Supreme Court" of Heaven pleading our case. Who is it? Jesus Christ the Righteous!

If I sin and lose my sense of righteousness, I quickly turn to God and say, "Dear Lord, I've sinned. I've failed. I didn't want to, but I missed it. Forgive me." Then Jesus goes to the Throne Room of God and says, "I took his place. I shed My blood for him." And, Hallelujah, God sees Jesus instead of me! God sees what Jesus did to wash away sin, and He counts me righteous because of Jesus!

First John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” When I sinned, I lost my sense of righteousness. When I confessed my sin, God forgave me. But if that’s all that God did, I’d still have a “spiritual inferiority complex.” I’d still be ashamed to come into His Presence. I’d still lack boldness in approaching Him. But First John 1:9 goes on to say God is “. . . faithful and just to forgive us our sins, AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.” God cleanses me from all unrighteousness! If I’m cleansed from my unrighteousness, that means I’m righteous. I can start ruling and reigning!

That means I can stand in the Presence of God without a sense of spiritual inferiority or condemnation. It also means that instead of being ruled by Satan and all of his works, I can now rule and reign over him! If this truth ever fully dawns on the Church and registers in our spirit, we’re going to rise up as giants in the land. We will be like those in the Early Church, and it will be said of us, too, that “. . . These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also” (Acts 17:6)!

A New Creature

People ask me about methods of studying the Bible. I suggest to believers everywhere I go that they read through the New Testament, primarily the Epistles which are written to the Church, and underline with a red pencil or write down the scriptures that have the expression “in Him,” “in Christ,” or “in Whom,” referring to Jesus.

The moment you find these scriptures, begin to confess that this is who you are and what you have. If you’ll do that, I’ll guarantee you that before many days, life will be different for you.

Second Corinthians 5:17 has always been one of my favorite scriptures. I believe one reason for that is when I was raised up off the bed of sickness, I began to tell everyone everywhere I went that I was a new creature in Christ Jesus.

I was a seventeen-year-old Baptist boy, but I never had the problems that so many young people have had, and do have. That’s simply because I was quick to tell everyone, “I am a new creature in Christ,” and I was quick to witness and to testify of my salvation. You see, the more you talk about the New Birth, the more real the new creation becomes to you, because that’s who you are and what you are.

I remember one time when I was just a young Baptist boy, preaching in the jails and on the streets and working in the church, a young fellow came up to me one night. I had gone to town and was standing on the corner when he came along and said, “Kenneth, would you do me a favor?”

I knew this fellow belonged to a church, all right. He belonged to the same kind of church I did. But I’m sorry to say if he had ever been saved, I didn’t know it. And neither did anyone else, judging by the way he lived. And in talking to him, I learned he had never been saved, but that he had just joined the church. (There’s a difference between joining the church and being saved.)

Anyway, this young fellow said to me, “Would you do me a favor? I wouldn’t ask you, but I’m already running late.”

He continued, “You know my girlfriend, don’t you?” I did. He and his girlfriend were just about two of the meanest and toughest people I knew.

He said, “My girlfriend’s cousin is visiting, and I promised my girlfriend that I would bring a date for her cousin, but I haven’t been able to get anyone.”

He added, “Her cousin is not like my girl,” because he knew if she were, I wouldn’t agree to the date.

He asked, “Would you come along and help me out of this jam? I’ll be grateful, and I promise we won’t stay very long—30 or 40 minutes at the most. Then we’ll leave. There won’t be any drinking or dancing, and I won’t even smoke a cigarette while we’re there.”

I finally agreed and went along to help him out. When we got to his girlfriend’s house, she introduced me to her cousin, and we sat on the front porch, talking. Then they put a record on the phonograph and began to dance. The cousin asked me to dance. I said, “No, I don’t dance.”

Her eyes got big and she said, “Why not?”

I said, “Because I’m a new creature.”

She asked, “What do you mean, you’re a new creature?”

I said, “Well, in Second Corinthians 5:17 it says, ‘Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.’ There was a time when I was interested in things like you folks are interested in, but since then I’ve been made a new creature in Christ Jesus.”

While that record was playing, she began to cry. This cousin got under conviction as I told her what the Word of God said, and she wanted to be saved. When the record stopped, the other boy and girl saw I had her under conviction, and he said, “Let’s go.” He was ready to take me home immediately!

I didn’t care where it was—whether in the home, on the streets, or in school—I told everyone that I was a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Friend, if we’ll confess that, it will make all the difference in our lives. I wasn’t tempted by the things of the world because I constantly confessed, “I am a new creature in Christ Jesus.”