

# ***Made Whole***

***'Years that were stolen, I'll give you back.'***

(Joel 2:25)

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***I dedicate this book to anyone who missed  
out.***

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## Introduction

This life has some key experiences and relationships that we are all meant to have. But not everyone does.

Maybe you missed out on love? Maybe you never had a father in your life, or a mother. Or maybe you did, but their relationship with each other, or with you, was not what it was supposed to be.

Maybe your body is limited and you have not – cannot - experience what other people do. Maybe you don't look like you would wish to, or have not experienced acceptance or popularity that comes naturally to others.

Maybe you did things that you regret? Maybe you carry deep guilt and wish you could go back and change your actions?

Maybe innocence was stolen from you? It might not be that you missed out, but that you were robbed of what you had, or should have had?

Through the 'door' of Jesus, God promises you not just a future that is 'better', but a past that is fully redeemed, made whole. The power of God in your soul works backwards and forwards, out of time, will rewrite your history and fills voids of experiences. This same 'door' of God is also a door of justice. Those who wronged you will not get away with it. Let's explore this...

## 1. Missing Out

Jesus missed out. He created life, stepped into it, but did not experience its pleasures.

He died at the age of thirty-three. He never married or had any intimate relations with women. He was not good-looking. He was not wealthy, or 'from money'. He had a very humble education.<sup>1</sup>

The Lord of life, the designer of 'pleasure', chose not to experience it.

We are told he experienced temptation – all kinds – and fears and sorrows. He had angels at his disposal but did not call on them; he had power for all things but did not use it.<sup>2</sup>

*Why?*

One day when Jesus was thirsty, tired, he asked a woman at a well to help him get some water. But even in this moment of thirst, he said to the woman:

***'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again.'*** (John 4:10)

He then said these incredible words, made this amazing promise to her, and to you and me:

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 53:1-3

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 26:53

***‘But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. The living water I give them will become a spring of water within them, welling up to eternal life.’*** (vs.10,14)

There’s water, and then there’s ***‘living water’***.

Jesus created this life and all its pleasures. But this life is broken at the core. The water we drink here will never satisfy the soul. It may touch and relieve the flesh, the body, for a very little while, but it will not touch the soul.

There’s another aspect of pleasures and experiences in this life. Not only do they not satisfy the deepest cry of the heart, but they can often bring more pain than pleasure. We are told by the apostle Paul that people who choose to marry in this life – marry correctly, according to God’s will and way – they will have ***‘many troubles.’***<sup>1</sup>

Because of ‘sin’ – our choices to not obey God’s ways and Spirit – death has entered the world. Death is not just the ‘end’ of our bodies, but it is a spirit of darkness that is everywhere like the air, like the wind.<sup>2</sup>

Moses put it this way:

***‘Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best***

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:28

<sup>2</sup> James 1:15

***of them are but trouble and sorrow...'***

(Psalm 90:10)

If Jesus was tempted towards things that in themselves are *not* wrong or sinful, like marriage, why did he not allow himself to experience these? I understand not giving into temptation to do 'wrong', but why not experience what is *right* and made by God?

One thing we are told in Scripture is that Jesus was '***tempted in every way***' and so can help us in our times of temptation.

***'Because he himself suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.'*** (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15)

Jesus endured some temptation so that he could stand with us in *our* temptation. He loves you, he loves me, and Jesus knew that all people at times will go without, will want what they cannot have, and he wanted to be able to stand and suffer with those he loves. So one reason he went without, was to stand with us when we go without.

Another powerful reason Jesus side-stepped much of what life had to offer, is because he was on a compelling mission of higher importance. And what is amazing is that he offers us to be part of this higher mission. It is an incredible offer! It is a calling to something more than just doing life and surviving. It is a mission of God!

Jesus said to his disciples when their minds were on earthly food, bread and water:

***'I have food you know nothing about. My food is to do the Father's will and to finish his work.'*** (John 4:32,34)

Jesus went without many of life's pleasures because he knew that the ***'joy set before him'***<sup>1</sup> was of greater reward, would fill in all the gaps of what he missed. We are told:

***'Our present sufferings are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in us.'*** (Romans 8:18)

Jesus himself said, ***'The last will be first.'*** (Matthew 20:16)

We are told that the ***'years the locusts have eaten will be restored to us.'*** (Joel 2:25)

We are told that the ***'sun of healing will rise on those who revere his name'*** and that ***'those who endure will reign with Christ.'*** (Malachi 4:2; 2 Timothy 2:11-12)

There is a power of God that can and will fill in and restore every experience missed. There is reward of God for suffering that is 'great' and higher than what was sacrificed.

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 12:1-2



## 2. Sold Out

***‘Come, let us reason together,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.’*** (Isaiah 1:18)

We all have losses we have created. In my life, most losses are my own fault. Not what passed me by, but what I should have *let* pass by me. Or even worse, things I sought out to do that I should not have done. My choices. Scars I am responsible for.

In the next section we speak of being ‘robbed’ – i.e. losses in life that have come from other people’s sin against us. In the previous section we spoke of missed opportunities, not really anyone’s fault, just a faulty life that leaves some without. But in this short section I want to speak of losses *we* have caused – to ourselves and others. This is where we truly feel the sting of ‘regret’, and conviction of God.

My friend, if you are in a place where you ‘own’ your sin, you are in a place where Jesus can forgive you and set you free. If you allow yourself to look into your own wrong choices, and *not* make excuses, you are standing at the foot of the cross. Jesus died for people like you, people who can say, *‘I have sinned.’*

***‘If we confess our sins, Jesus is faithful and just and will forgive our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness.’*** (1 John 1:9)

This can be a really painful place to stand. But let me assure you, Jesus not only forgives here, but he **'purifies'**. He begins to take the sin – even your actions in the past – off your record, and put it on himself. We are told that Jesus **'became sin for us.'** (2 Corinthians 5:21)

He begins to purify your conscience, to actually lift off you a sense of guilt. You might think this is impossible – because it is! But Jesus does the impossible in his act of forgiveness.

This 'freedom' of heart and mind does not happen all at once. Yes, you are forgiven all at once, but the healing takes time. Look at the process of our life in Jesus in this verse:

***'The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, ever-brighter until the full light of day.'*** (Proverbs 4:18)

There is some light, then more and more until we pass from this life and step fully into the **'kingdom of light.'** (Colossians 1:12)

Look at what Paul says about this process:

***'For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.'*** (1 Corinthians 13:12)

So will there be judgment for these losses I have created? Do they simply go unpunished? Well,

not exactly. Maybe you, like me, have already experienced some 'punishment' from these sins?

In my own life I took many roads for wrong reasons, and the journey back has been hard, long, and seemed to have a lot of 'punishment' along the way. There have been consequences for the actions I took and the people I engaged and the thinking I had developed. I believe much of God's 'judgment' to those who confess and turn around, is already underway, part of the restoration process.

And although all people who come to Christ are fully saved, there is still a day of judgment and we will give account for things. How does this work? Not sure! But we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and even those of us who are saved in Jesus, we will be judged. Believe it or not, this is good news. It is deep, needs to sink in, and we are *not* called to dwell on it, *not* to fear it. But the fact that every man, whether saved or not saved, will stand before the **'judgment seat of Christ'**,<sup>1</sup> is good news.

So yes, in Jesus, his blood covers you and saves you if you repent of your sin, the losses you caused to yourself and others. You are saved! You are safe! This is what you need to stand on, and build on going forward...

***'But each one should build with care. For no***

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 12:34

***one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved – even though only as one escaping through the flames.'*** (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

My friend, you have the future ahead to 'build' on Christ, with Christ. This is all you need to focus on, the future. Jesus will take care of your past!

I end this section with the same verse that opened it: Isaiah 1:18. Ponder these words. Let them soak in. The blood you spilled, the scars you made, look at what Jesus does with them!

***'Come, let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.'*** (Isaiah 1:18)

### 3. Robbed

Before we consider the '*ultimate mission*' – i.e. the mission God gives us that is higher than all life experiences – let's consider another way that people 'miss out'.

We've considered how we may not get to experience some of life's pleasures, because they don't fall to us. Maybe seasons passed us by, attributes were not ours, or love did not find us. We missed out. The heartache is real, the loss is painful. Jesus will pour out his healing and his 'filling' one day. We will be whole.

We've also looked at losses we ourselves have caused. Again, in the forgiveness Jesus gives us, the light grows brighter and brighter until our past is fully eclipsed and rewritten. Things we've done, we will not have done.

However, others have experienced loss not due to missing out, or their own sin, but due to robbery. Something that was theirs – or should have been theirs - was stolen by another.

Maybe a father or mother who should have been present in your life, was not. Maybe they made choices that deprived you of their support, their love, their presence. They made choices, but *you* paid a high cost, suffered the loss.

Maybe you were sexually abused and your innocence was robbed? Maybe humiliated or

beaten? These experiences of loss are different. This is loss that comes from the sin and cruelty of other people.

It is important to understand that Jesus will judge those who took advantage of you, or deprived you. This may be hard to understand, how a loving God and merciful Savior can judge and punish people. But it is true. Jesus often spoke strong words of warning about coming judgment:

***‘Jesus said, ‘Anyone who sins against one of these innocent ones, it would be better for him to be drowned in the depths of the ocean.’*** (Matthew 18:6)

Jesus said the day would come when all peoples of all nations would be judged by him, and those who were wicked would be punished. (Matthew 25:31-32)

We are told that it is Jesus who will be on the throne of judgment, and that all will be judged and receive their due for things done in the body, good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

This is sobering news for all of us. But it *is* good news. The ***‘arrogant and the evildoer’***, we are told, will be stubble, and ashes beneath the feet of those they hurt. (Malachi 4:1-3)

Let this sink in. We are told that this day of judgment will ***‘burn like a furnace’***, because the Lord himself will ***‘set the day on fire.’***

Let this image of powerful judgment, even terrifying judgment, fall on your memory of the evil done to you, and even over the evildoer who harmed you. Let this image soothe your soul. It is not you who are 'wishing' this, though it is OK if you do. But it is the decree of the Lord, and will happen regardless of our wishes.

*(For more on what true healing and forgiveness means when it comes to sexual abuse, please read '**Broken Heart**', found under the BOOKS tab at [www.1peter1three.weebly.com](http://www.1peter1three.weebly.com))*

It is also important to understand that your heart will be healed. Your years of loss do not mean you are less as a person, or lack something in your soul. Your worth is not dependent on how much a person loved you – even a father or mother. No, your worth depends on God's love for you.

***'I pray you will grasp how high and wide, deep and long, is Christ's love for you.'***  
(Ephesians 3:14-19)

***'Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate you from the love of Jesus.'***  
(Romans 8:37-39)

When it comes to family being there for you, or *not* being there for you, king David wrote:

***‘Though my father and mother forsake me,  
the Lord will receive me.’*** (Psalm 27:10)

Your true father – and really *only* father – is God. He created you in his image. You may have some DNA from your earthly father and mother, but that is just surface stuff. God is the one who has put ***‘eternity in your heart’***, and cut your soul in his own image.<sup>1</sup> You belong to him, and we are told that he ***‘purchased us with his blood.’*** (Revelation 5:9)

Here on earth we don’t pick our father or mother or siblings. These are just ours due to our lot in life. Some of us get ‘good’ ones, others bad ones, and no one picks. But really we all have only one *true* Father, Creator, and that is God. Now, we *do* choose whether we come to know him, come into relationship with him. Everyone needs to make this choice.

Jesus himself made the spiritual family the most important one of all. When people told Jesus that his mother and siblings wanted to see him, he said this:

***‘Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?’ Pointing to his disciples, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.’***  
(Matthew 12:48-50)

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<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:11; Genesis 1:27



The most important family relationship anyone can establish, and build on, is with Jesus Christ. This connects you to your Creator and to your true family in God forever.

***‘A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families.’*** (Psalm 68:5-6)

So there is missing out on experiences we were meant to have, and there is experiencing things we were never meant to experience. There is also having done things we never should have done. All of these losses are covered by the blood of Jesus. It *had* to be blood – God’s own blood – that paid for these losses, and will heal them.

Let’s consider this deep story of the blood of Jesus, and its healing power.

#### 4. The Blood of Jesus

***‘Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.’*** (Hebrews 9:22)

Blood is the essence of life. It is like the river of life in a body, in the flesh. It flows. When it flows, we live.

The spilling of blood is the image of death, or even murder or sin. It’s the picture of losing life, or the picture of darkness and evil.

The story of Jesus is a story of blood. It is the story of payment for sin. Jesus said that when we call someone a *‘fool’* (or anything damning like that), we are guilty of murder, and the fire of hell.<sup>1</sup> *What did he mean?*

Well, murder is the ultimate outworking of hateful speech, a hateful heart. It’s all on the same continuum, the same road. Jesus is pointing out to us that the hearts of all people are sinful. And the image of murder - the spilling of blood - is the image of this sin. In one case we might whisper, *‘Fool!’*, and in another strike a blow, but the essence of all this sin is spilt blood.

Jesus is ***‘God with us.’*** (Matthew 1:23) Many prophecies for many years spoke of God coming to save people – including you and me. Save us not just from hardship in life, but save us from

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew :21-22

our sin.

***'His name will be Jesus... he will save people from their sin.'*** (Matthew 1:21)

When the time had come, God stepped into the form of man, Jesus Christ, and walked this earth. He lived alongside us, worked as a carpenter, grew up in a family, studied the Scriptures. At the age of thirty he began his ministry of healing and teaching and doing other miraculous signs. He was holy and true. He was loving and tender. His ultimate mission was to save us from sin and death.

How did he do this? Well, up to that time all wrongdoing, all sin, was paid for symbolically by offering a sacrifice, by killing an animal, often a sheep or lamb. Something living had to die to pay for sin. This had been the instruction of God through the prophets for thousands of years, which you can read about in the first part of the Bible.

But God's ultimate plan was to pay himself for the sin and mortality of all humankind. He did this by offering himself as the sacrifice. For this reason, when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming towards him, he referred to him as the ultimate sacrifice, saying:

***'Look! The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.'*** (John 1:29)

You see, the animal sacrifices were symbolic. They were an expression of regret, an acknowledgment that sin was offensive to God, and something had to pay for it. But in the same way an apology does not make a wrongdoing disappear, or never have happened, so these animal sacrifices did not make the 'sin' disappear.

But when God, holy and true, became a man, his own sacrifice would be perfect and acceptable to actually take sin away. We are told that his blood **'speaks a better word than the blood of murder.'** (Hebrews 12:24) We are told that Jesus **'became sin for us.'** (2 Corinthians 5:21)

This is spiritual truth. This is deeper than the ocean, deeper than space. God, through Jesus, has made a way to *erase* your past wrongs. Not just pay a debt, but rewrite history. This is true for things you have done that you should not have, things that were done to you that should not have been done, and things that were missed or lost that should have been yours. Your new story, new life, new name, is yours by the blood of Jesus. His blood put death to death.

**'Jesus has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light.'** (2 Timothy 1:10)

**'I will give you a new name.'** (Revelation 2:17)

## 5. The Door

***‘Jesus said, ‘I am the door, and anyone who comes through me will be saved.’ (John 10:9)***

One of the things that amazes me is how concrete the offer of Jesus is. He described himself as the **‘door’** to salvation. He was definitive, clear.

He told us again and again that he needed to be believed – believed that he was the Savior of the world – and he needed to be followed. Simple. Straight-forward. Not easy, but clear.

*Do you believe that Jesus is God, the Savior of the world?*

*Will you follow him by your actions? By turning away from your sin and wrongdoing, and following his lead?*

A great way to step through this door and mark the moment, is to pray. Praying is speaking to God. If you want to make this prayer your own, you can. You simply read it, but in your heart you are speaking it to Jesus:

**Dear Jesus, I believe you. I want your forgiveness and the eternal life you offer me. Thank you for paying for my sin. Thank you for loving me. I receive you now and will walk with you forever. Amen**

If you prayed this prayer, you are saved. Look at this amazing verse:

***‘Jesus said, ‘Anyone who hears my voice and believes, has eternal life and will not be condemned. They have crossed over from death to life.’ (John 5:24)***

There is so much to celebrate in this step you have taken! You truly are a ***‘new creation’*** in Jesus, and have been given here and now a new heart, a new spirit.<sup>1</sup> You have also been given the Spirit of Jesus, which is the Holy Spirit. Jesus promises this to all who believe!

***‘When you believed you were marked in Christ with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, which is a deposit guaranteeing your inheritance.’ (Ephesians 1:13-14)***

I would encourage you, when you have finished this book, to read, ***‘First Steps With Jesus’***, which is under the BOOKS tab at:  
**[www.1peter1three.weebly.com](http://www.1peter1three.weebly.com)**

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<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel 36:26

## 6. The Ultimate Mission

***‘Jesus said, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a man who found a treasure buried in a field. He went away and sold all he had and bought that field.’ (Matthew 13:44)***

Jesus spoke of ‘mission’, of treasure, in finding God. People who had eyes to see Jesus for who he was – God in the flesh – had discovered the very source of life. They had discovered the key to eternal life, to joy, to peace, to healing, to heaven. It was worth everything.

Jesus told a few parables – short stories with spiritual meanings – just like the one above, about a pearl, about a lost coin, and more.

In the Bible we read about some people of faith that had powerful vision of God. One man writes:

***‘Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever!’ (Psalm 73:25-26)***

We hear of people of such strong faith in God’s rewards *after* this life, that they when they were tortured here on earth they refused release, ***‘so that they might gain a better resurrection.’ (Hebrews 11:35)***

These people had vision of Light that burned

brighter than life itself.

***'Your love, O Lord, is better than life.'***

(Psalm 63:3)

Some people have truly stepped into this vision, this truth, and lived in that space, that Spirit. I am not there. I need to grow. I need to see more!

We are told that ***'Moses regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.'*** (Hebrews 11:26)

These people of faith had vision of reward that would overtake losses here and now. Paul writes:

***'Our sufferings now cannot be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us.'***

(Romans 8:18)

One writer describes this experience of God in this way: ***'All your waves and breakers have swept over me.'*** (Psalm 42:7)

So what's the mission, this *'ultimate mission'*? What can help us focus beyond our losses, and to build something beautiful to be unveiled one day?

**The mission is to know Jesus deeply, and share Jesus with others.**



As you and I come to know Jesus more intimately, we experience his Holy Spirit in deeper places in our soul, our story, our moments. We experience his healing where no mind or word can reach. We experience his touch where no worldly experience can touch.

As we know God deeper, we see deeper into that eternal light, eternal love, and ***'peace that passes understanding'***. (Philippians 4:7)

And we share him. We listen carefully to the Spirit as he leads us with people, and we share the name, the Spirit, the love of Jesus. This is building God's kingdom. This is advancing the ***'gospel of peace.'*** This is ***'good news to the poor.'*** And one day all this you build in spirit, in faith, will be unveiled as a living structure, the ***'kingdom that cannot be shaken'***<sup>1</sup>

***'Your work will be shown for what it is, for the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire.'*** (1 Corinthians 3:13)

*Do you want to grow in this mission in your life?*

Do you want this cause of God, of Christ, to be your ultimate cause? It can be! You are called.

Believe it or not, you are already 'gifted' and equipped. It is now a matter of growth and engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 6:15; Luke 4:18; Hebrews 12:28

## 7. Faith Forward!

Walking with Jesus is deep, real, peaceful, but can be hard. Look how Jesus describes the true path of following him:

***‘Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.’***

(Matthew 7:13-14)

It is important to understand the nature of this journey, this challenge. If we don't take stock of it, we can get discouraged quickly, and fall away.

Jesus said the **‘worries of life’** and the **‘deceitfulness of wealth’** could choke the word of God in us. (Matthew 13:22) Jesus also warned us that where we have no **‘root’**, persecution will cause us to lose faith. (vs. 21) The most common form of ‘persecution’ is rejection by friends, or ridicule for believing in Jesus and following his ways.

So we need to take root! We need to grow in our faith, so that winds and testing don't rob us of this treasure we have found. How do we do this? How do we *‘Faith Forward’*?

The key thing is to stay connected to Jesus both in Spirit and in his Scriptures. He has provided these Scriptures over time, now in the collection

we call the 'Bible', and it contains powerful truth, insight and instruction for walking with God. Growing in Jesus, in our faith, is a process and takes time. It is not just about head knowledge, but about heart response. It is about getting to know God personally, deeply, over time.

You have taken the key step of believing in Jesus, praying to him, and receiving his forgiveness and Holy Spirit. *This is everything! This is knowing God!*

Now over time you will get to know him *better*, just like two people in a marriage. They connect and commit at the outset, based on trust and love. But over time they get to know each other far better than they did at the start. Time deepens trust in a relationship and increases experiences and understanding. The same is true between you and Jesus. As you come to know his Word better, together with his power and presence in your day-to-day, you will grow in your love, your vision, your understanding of all that he is. You will see your reward to come with more and more clarity.

Here in life we will carry pain. We carry memory. Although Christ has poured new life into our souls, we still journey in a broken world, a broken body. So we journey in faith – not by what we see, or remember or feel. We take steps forward believing God in our lives, believing his love for us and his rewards to come.

This faith pleases God.<sup>1</sup> Our efforts to know Jesus better, and share Jesus with others, may take deep commitment, especially in some seasons of challenge. We may not find it easy to sow seeds of faith, and we may find ourselves **'sowing in tears.'** My friend, the reward for *this* kind of faithfulness in the face of loss, of discouragement, of doubt, is the place of highest prize. It is **'fellowshipping with Christ in his sufferings'**,<sup>2</sup> and so it is in the very place of reigning with Christ in his glory.

Ponder these few verses. Spend some time allowing them to soak into your soul.

***'Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come.'***

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

***'Those who endure will reign with Christ.'***

(2 Timothy 2:12)

***'They who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy.'*** (Psalm 126:5)

***'We live by faith, not by sight.'***

(2 Corinthians 5:7)

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 11:6

<sup>2</sup> Philippians 3:10

## 8. Unique You

***'I asked God three times to take the thorn away, but he said to me: 'My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness. When you are weak, you are strong. When you are weak, I am strong.'***

(2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

God has made you unique. There is only one of you. You are made in God's image, by his Spirit, and you have been given spiritual gifts of God to serve him.

With these 'gifts' (*maybe faith or kindness or mercy or healing*), God has anointed you with special authority and power and influence.

The devil will try to undermine you. He will lie to you, accuse you, and challenge this authority in you. He will ask you, *'Why do you think you have this authority, and not him or her?'*

The devil even tried to challenge Jesus in his authority, challenging him to 'prove it'. This is a trap. When you hear this voice – even if it comes through the mouth or memory of someone you know – recognize it as a lie of the enemy.

You cannot *prove* your identity in Jesus, and you cannot *prove* the spiritual gifts and authority God has given you. These things are 'invisible', come from God's spirit (not education or experiences), and they stand firm on God's grace. God's grace

is the firm foundation of God's voice and will. This is a spiritual realm. It cannot be seen or even defined, and yet the whole world, all of creation, stands on God's grace.

The same is true of the *'true you'*, the unique you. You are who you are by the grace of God. Your identity is not dependent on someone else's identity. Your gifting and calling is not dependent or even related to someone else God may have called. You are from God and to God. You will see what you see, and discern what you discern.

As you spend time in the Scriptures and listen to the quiet voice of Jesus, you will begin to see and understand the unique person God has made you, and your unique authority and influence spiritually.

Don't let anyone discourage you. Listen to God's voice, not man's voice. This will take faith and humility. It does *not* take intensity or striving. It takes a resting in your weakness. Here in your weakness – not having answers or proofs – you are strong! God is strong in you!

Being weak before God, is to settle on his grace and be very strong before people. No answers, no proofs, just a deep, quiet sense of who you are by the grace of God.

***'I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle,***

***because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am.'***

(1 Corinthians 15:9-10)

***'Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.'*** (1 Timothy 4:12)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:27; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; Jeremiah 1:11-12; Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 1:3

**Thank you for taking time to read this book. I hope it encouraged you!**

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***'Prophecy to these bones and say to them,  
'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord: You  
will come to life!''***

***(Ezekiel 37:4-6)***

***'He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.  
There will be no more death or mourning or  
crying or pain, for the old order of things has  
passed away. I am making all things new!'***

***(Revelation 21:5)***