

GraceVine

June 2010

Quiet Service With Eternal Value

Steve McVey

Do you ever feel like your life as a Christian isn't making much of an impact in the world around you? It is easy to compare ourselves with other people who seem to be mightily used by God and wonder why we can't measure our own success to the same extent. Your heavenly Father wants you to know something about yourself – He is proud of you.

It isn't because of what you do or don't do. It's because you belong to Him. I've seen some ugly babies in my lifetime, but never found a parent yet who wasn't proud of their child. If we are proud of our children simply because they are our own, imagine how proud our Father is of His own children in whom resides His very nature. (See 2 Peter 1:3-4)

How can you find encouragement about your life and the effect you are having in God's Kingdom? Several actions on your part might help:

1. Remember that you don't always know the good you do. During the 19th century, political figure and diplomat Charles Francis Adams kept a diary. One day he entered: "Went fishing with my son today – a day wasted." His son, Brook Adams, also kept a diary, which is still in existence. On that same day, Brook Adams made this entry: "Went fishing with my father--the most wonderful day of my life!" The father thought he was wasting his time while fishing with his son, but his son saw it as an investment of time.

We may be surprised when we get to heaven and discover the many ways that the Holy Spirit used us to touch lives when we weren't even aware of what was happening. Don't underestimate the ways that the ordinary actions of your life may be used to touch others. Jesus lives through you everyday. Rest in the fact that He will accomplish whatever He wants to do through you. It isn't up to you to make things happen. Just relax. He'll handle it all and will use your life in ways that you may not even know.

2. Don't compare yourself to other people. The Bible teaches that comparison like this shows a lack of understanding. (See 2 Corinthians 10:12) I'm reminded of the story of the rooster who saw a softball lying in a field across the fence and remarked to the hens, "Girls, I don't mean to criticize, but look at the size of the eggs they're laying over there!" Comparison often stems from a misunderstanding of what we are seeing. We tend to compare the strongest points we find in others with the weakest areas of our own lives. Anybody can feel inferior when we fall into that trap. The best thing for your own peace of mind is to not go there. Our Father's plan for each of us is unique. It is foolish to compare ourselves with others.

3. Know that your Father will see to it that you fulfill the plans He has for you. Ephesians 2:10 teaches that He has prepared good works *in advance* for you to fulfill. It isn't up to us to manufacture good works. We are simply to rest in Christ and know that it is His responsibility to see that we fulfill every good work that our Father has determined for us. Good works aren't our gift to God. They are His gift to us! God is at this very moment working in you to will and to do His good pleasure! (Philippians 2:13)

Rest in the fact that your heavenly Father will accomplish in and through your life all that He has planned for you. Because you trust Him, your life will touch many people in ways that can't be measured in this lifetime. He will see to that.

Be encouraged. You are loved passionately by Almighty God. Abandon self-consciousness and trust Him. He will do the rest. You *are* making a difference. One day you'll see it. Until then, simply believe it by faith. Your Father has said so.

A Message From Steve McVey

As regular readers of the *Grace Vine* know, I very seldom mention the finances of our ministry. We thank God for each person who regularly supports Grace Walk through your prayers and donations. I'm writing about this now because I think those who care need to know.

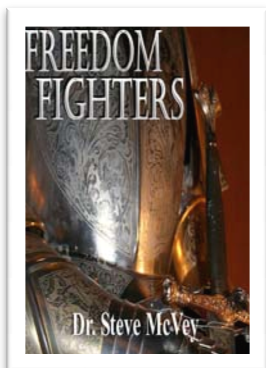
For the past few months, we have seen a downward trend in giving that motivates me to share where we are with you. Donations have dropped significantly during the spring. In May, our income was one half of what was necessary to cover the expenses of the ministry. Thankfully, due to year end gifts in December, we were able to meet our expenses.

It's not unusual for there to be a decrease in giving during the summer months, but since income drastically dropped during the spring and we are just approaching the summer, it seemed like a good idea to make you aware of the situation and ask you to pray with me about it. Would you pray that our Father will touch the hearts of those who love this message to continue to be faithful during these coming months? Would you ask Him to raise up additional donors who will become regular givers to Grace Walk?

I've been told by numerous people who love Grace Walk that the only way people know what's going on is if I let them know. It's interesting that the ones who give generously are the ones who think I should say more about finances. It's not an easy thing for me to know how to best do that. I sincerely try not to abuse the open hearts of those generous friends of this ministry who care about the month to month needs. At the same time, when I think it's necessary, I try to be honest and not wait until it feels like the ship is sinking. There's a constant tension between asking too much and not asking often enough. I probably err on the latter but I'm asking you now if you will pray and consider your donations because I think it's the right time and the right thing to do.

If such requests offend you, please accept my apology and disregard this request. If your heart resonates with mine about the desire to see Grace Walk Ministries continue to reach across the world with this message, I ask you to pray and respond as you are led. I hope you know my heart by now well enough to realize that I only ask when I really think it's important.

So, having said that - will you pray with me? Will you be faithful in your giving? Thank you so much to those who faithfully give. This ministry has shared the grace walk message on six continents since 1996 because of people like you, whose lives have been impacted by the message we share and who love and believe in this particular ministry. You are a gift from our Father and I don't take you for granted.



Freedom Fighters

Those who understand the message of the grace of God have a special place in this world as we fight the legalistic lies that enslave sincere Christians. In this series of teachings, Steve McVey sets forth four important topics that will equip you to be effective in leading others out of the bondage of dead religion into the freedom of a godly lifestyle apart from religious obligations. If you have friends or family who you want to see be set free from faulty ideas about what the Christian life is about and see them enter the freedom of the grace walk, this series will help you and them.

Session 1: Preach Grace!

In this session, Steve discusses the proclamation of grace and the contamination of grace. You'll learn here four ways to effectively proclaim the message of grace in a way that counteracts the contaminated view that many have of what it means to live a godly lifestyle.

Session 2: Protect Grace!

Drawing from the Apostle Paul's words to the elders at Ephesus about the wolves who would arise and try to draw the church into legalism, Steve shows the biblical way to act as a minister of grace who defeats the menaces to grace that still exists in the church world today.

Session 3: Practice Grace!

This session answers the criticism that those who teach grace advocate passivity by considering two paradoxical statements about the effect grace has on our service. If you've ever been told that grace encourages laziness in the Christian life, this teaching will equip you to answer that charge.

Session 4: Pursue Grace!

In this final session, Steve teaches about the five things that grace does in our lives to cause us to be successful in our fight for freedom on the behalf of others. This teaching will motivate and instruct you on how to move forward with the fight for freedom until you see the captives you love truly be set free in Christ.

*Four 30 minute teachings available on DVD and CD
or Download MP3 from our website.*

Disappointment

By Steve McVey

Dr. Lenore Campbell wrote, "Early in my career as a doctor I went to see a patient who was coming out of anesthesia. Far off church chimes sounded and the patient murmured, 'I must be in heaven.' Then she saw me. 'No, I can't be,' she said. 'There's Dr. Campbell.'"

Disappointment – we've all had to deal with it at times, haven't we? Even people who have been known as successes in life have faced disappointment. Alexander the Great conquered Persia, but broke down and wept because his troops were too exhausted to push on to India. John Quincy Adams, sixth President of the U.S. wrote in his diary: "My life has been spent in vain and idle aspirations, and in ceaseless rejected prayers that something would be the result of my existence beneficial to my species." Robert Louis Stevenson wrote words that continue to delight and enrich our lives, and yet what did he write for his epitaph? "Here lies one who meant well, who tried a little, and failed much."

Everybody faces disappointment, but how are Christians to deal with it? The answer boils down to trust in Jesus Christ. That means not just professing our trust, but practicing it. When we know that He is Life, the sting of disappointment finds a healing salve in the truth of His Word.

I have found a particular verse in the Bible to be a good antidote to disappointment in my circumstances. It is found in Philippians 1:6, where Paul wrote: "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." This verse is a reminder that the flow of our lives isn't up to us, but rests on the shoulders of God Himself. This verse promises that He started His work in you and He will be the one to sustain it. At the risk of oversimplifying the matter, "God's going to do what God's going to do." We get into trouble when we think that our agenda has to be fulfilled in life. It isn't up to us to fulfill our plans. That's God's business. Our role is simply to trust Him in every circumstance.

Are there disappointments you face in your own life today? Place them into the hands of a sovereign God who loves you and already has the details of life worked out for you. It's okay to feel disappointment. That's normal, but don't be dominated by it. Instead, acknowledge your feelings to the Lord and then lay your expectations at His feet. Then move forward, being assured that He has your best interest at heart and will work out all things for your ultimate good and His highest glory.