

Counsel from the Bible

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man [and woman] of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17)

Yes . . . but is the Bible practical?

- Of course! The Bible portrays people as they really are!
 - Abraham
 - Sarah
 - David
 - The citizens of Ephesus, Corinth and Rome
- The Bible speaks deeply into our lostness.

God's grace transforms sinners!

- The good news, the gospel of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, ascension and ongoing reign speaks deeply into our hearts.
- God's grace, His unexplainable love for sinners, is the vehicle whereby He plants the good news that frees us into our hearts.
- Unbelief

But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. (1 Tim 1:13-14)

- God's grace plants faith where there was once only unbelief.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing: it is the gift of God. . . (Eph 2:8)

- Anger

And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities (Acts 26:11)

But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. (1 Thess 2:7)

- Anger flows from unmet desires (James 4:1f). In Christ all our desires are met.
- Fear and Worry

. . . for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. (2 Tim 1:7)

When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. (1 Cor 16:10)

You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon. (Heb 13:23)

- Because we are no longer in doubt of our Father's love for us and His commitment to sustain and bless us, we are given grace to put off worry and put on gratitude and prayer in its place.

The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Phil 4:5-6)

- Self-Indulgence

*Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you.** But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:9-11).*

- The guilt, hopelessness and desire to anesthetize and pleasure yourself will all be answered in the good news of God's grace. You are already more loved than you could possibly imagine. You are already clean in His sight. You don't need to cover yourself or try to hide or lash out. You've been washed and welcomed.

How would you change if you knew

- You are loved?

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8)

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. . . (Eph 2:4)

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world. (1 Jn 4:9)

- You are righteous?

And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness. . . (Rom 4:5)

. . . much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ (Rom 5:17)

- Your future is secure?

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory to be revealed to us. (Rom 8:18)

... an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Pet 1:5-5)

- We don't have to scheme, manipulate, worry, fret, or try to control our lives so that everything turns out the way we want it to. Christ has proven that He loves us and that we will be cared for.
- If Jesus was willing to do all this for you, don't you think He'll keep you until the end?

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The gospel humbles us

- Because we know He loves us and has given everything for us, we open our heart to be taught by Him.
- Because we know He knows us completely and yet loves us, we open our heart to be reproved by Him; we can be criticized by Him because we know that His criticism is given to us in complete acceptance, welcome and love.
- Because we know He has already welcomed us as His bride we are willing to be corrected by him and we're not afraid to admit our mistakes; His love stops us from being defensive.
- Because we know that His ultimate goal is our marriage to Him, we are willing for Him to train us to become what we already are in Him, righteous.
- He will have a bride who will be equipped to do all He asks her to do. . . and she will absolutely love it!