

When we believe *right* in God's Word, we will live *right* in eternal peace and joy with God

As believers we have a duty from God to believe and to believe Biblically right!

- A **believer** is anyone who has confidence in the truth, the existence, or the reliability of something. First century Christians were called Believers, as they were convinced of the truth, existence, and reliability of Jesus Christ and His Word.
- **God's Word transforms our complete appetite so our real and burning longings, which God created in each human being for acceptance, belonging, truth, love, justice and total forgiveness, will be totally satisfied by the finished work of Christ on the cross. Notice the term "human being." God's desire is for each one of His children to be in a permanent position of being who He created them to be, by being in peace and joy with Him. It is then and only then that we can know how to live life, in this temporary and corrupt world, to the fullest. God has promised through Jesus Christ His abundant Grace (John 10:10b and I Peter 1:2b). Please remember that the devil's main objective with Christians is to make them ineffective by presenting to them half truths or apparent truths (not including the Cross, which is the only identity for a Christian) which are full lies (remember how the devil tempted Jesus [Matthew 4 and Luke 4], to worship him). The devil is competing for your worship so he can move you away from your permanent position of the Cross; the devil wants to steal your joy (that is the only thing the devil can steal from a Christian, and he **appears** to be succeeding today with lots of Christians who lack fresh joy and peace because of their belief in a cross-less Gospel. You and I must be determined to fight the good fight of believing right so our permanent peace, joy and Living Hope will be fresh and transferable to others.**
- **God's Word is Jesus incarnate.** He is **all** sufficient, **all**-powerful, **all** reliable, and **all** satisfying to speak, resurrect, and redeem anyone and any problem at any time (John 1:14). In other words, **Jesus Christ is supreme in daily life in Christ. He has and continues to envelope me with the love of the Cross**, which is the only love that counts, to give back to God the Father and to all of those neighbors, including those coming out of prison, He chooses to send my way for me to embrace (Luke 10:27).
- **Joy** is the trademark of a true Believer.
- **Faith** is the believer's unshakable belief in God's promises.
- **Biblical Faith** does not go against logical reasoning or reality.
- **Peace with God** is the most precious benefit a believer receives as a result of the finished work of Christ on the cross, and His resurrection.

*Peace with God must be the believer's number one objective, by embracing and experiencing the total and complete forgiving love of God the Father through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Martin Luther's Reformation was the result of his genuine desire to experience the truth of the Gospel, to proclaim it to others (when the Holy Spirit revealed Romans 1:17 to Brother Luther), and defend it with his very own life; justification by Faith alone, Grace alone, through Christ alone, which provided Luther with **permanent peace with God**.*

St. Augustine began searching to fill emptiness in his life only to discover what he really needed was God. From that time on Augustine's life was changed. He regretted that it had taken him so long to love God, who is the source of all beauty and happiness. He wrote:

*"Late have I loved you,
O Beauty ever ancient, ever new;
late have I loved you"
"Our hearts are restless,
O Lord, until they rest in you."*

*Not having permanent peace with God demonstrates our defective belief in a cross-less Gospel, which offers no living hope or new birth because it does not embody the love of God. Therefore, it cannot offer forgiveness. The Gospel without a cross cannot provide the necessary truth and love that flows out of the Holy character of God the Father to provide His required justice through the substitution of His only Begotten son, Jesus, who was crushed and crucified for sinners; Jesus' sinless required blood was shed so His Father's wrath would be fully satisfied once and for all, by paying in full the entire bill for our guilt of sin. In the Old Testament, God's chosen characters (Abraham, Moses, etc.) **were redeemed on credit**. Sinners may be reconciled to God the Father by experiencing permanent and eternal forgiveness and peace with God.*

Main Biblical Text:

To God's **elect**, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, **who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:**

Grace and peace be yours in abundance. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! **In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

(1 Peter 1: 1-6)

This is what I want you to know:

A believer in Jesus Christ must be totally enveloped by the amazing Cross-like Love of the Father. By the all-powerful, all satisfying, all reliable, and all sufficient Word of God (Jesus Christ), the believer must embrace, believe, and exercise daily and to the end (with fresh praise, worship, and joy), God's available abundant grace and peace as well as God's great mercy through the Holy Spirit. He has given us New Birth through the loving and joyful obedience of Jesus Christ for His Father's glory and sprinkling of Jesus' blood, which has led the believer into a Living Hope that will never ever disappoint (Romans 5:5). The believer has experienced the Resurrection of Jesus Christ **just like Corey Bush (a transformed life by the blood of Jesus. Corey was once a gang –banger, but now by the grace of God holds a Doctorate degree)** did in prison, which leads him, as it would any other Believer in Jesus Christ, to exercise the only choice: persevere with joy. The Christian believes with all of their new heart (Romans 10:9-10) that the same resurrecting power that raised the believer from the dead (John 11:25-26 Eph. 2:1-10) will also sustain the Believer enveloped in Christ with fresh levels of joy in the midst of suffering grief in all kinds of trials for a little while (1 Peter 1:5-6). The Believer **must not delay his/her obedience** to God the Father because God's uncompromising Glory and the Believer's Great Joy are at stake.

1. God Elected and Chose you. It is God's Call and it is God's glory—all of His glory (John 17:22) 2. Wake up from your false dreams, and become real by believing in the real Jesus Christ who is the real deal. False and shallow dreams are keeping you from living a fulfilled and honest life. Listen carefully, you had no ability (you have no ability apart from the grace of God) whatsoever to choose God, nor Find God (He was never lost), or seek God (Romans 3:11), or accept God (what right do you have to accept the Holy God of the Universe?), nor give your life to God (what life?), nor make a decision for God (how could you?), nor trust God (you do not even know how to trust in yourself because there is nothing good in you to trust) and to trust in your own terms (how arrogant can you be?), otherwise you become a thief of God's glory and you make God a liar if you believe that you had anything good—e.g. your common sense for a good decision, to contribute to your justification and redemption. The Bible says you were dead and wicked (2 Chron. 7:14), dead means dead, wicked means wicked. God's abundant Grace is irresistible. Therefore, we do not have the ability to resist Grace. 3. The Trinity is a reality and you better believe it right. God the Father is Holy and Love. God the Son is totally obedient and submissive to the Father. God the Holy Spirit is totally obedient to the Father and to the Son for our benefit. 4. It is all about God the Father, number one ranking member of the Trinity and the one who gets to receive all the glory not only from you and I, which He demands, but also from Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, all of it, everything points to the Father, through the Cross and Christ Jesus for obedience to Jesus Christ and sanctification of the Holy Spirit. 5. The Gospel is a blood expensive issue that purchased your permanent peace with God, the Judge, at a very, very expensive price. Someone had to pay your (mine) full debt of sin and guilt that makes you

deserve Hell for ever. Jesus paid your debt in full with His entire Life, joyful attitude and Sinless blood. He hung on the Cross so you do not have to hang on there anymore. 6. Quit complaining, wining, and arguing, and asking God to be with you and others, that is not a biblical prayer, it is very weak and unbiblical. He is with you already. He is Emmanuel. Embrace the fullness of the Truth of Jesus Christ and allow Him to envelope you totally. Jesus must become supreme, not just first or at the center; if He is first, then someone else, or something else, is second. Believe and embrace the abundant Grace and Peace that God the Father gave you through Jesus Christ. 7. Praise and worship God the Father for His Great Mercy that has given you New Birth. You have become a new creation, brand new, nothing old is left. You are no accident, God made you in His very image and likeness, aleluya! You are somebody in Christ Jesus and are totally secured in Christ Jesus and fully reconciled to your Heavenly Loving Father. Believe it all, and Live it all to the fullest. 8. Praise God also for the living Hope and for resurrecting you from the dead: One time, and for giving you an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade, kept in heaven (which actually starts the moment you are found by God the Father through Jesus Christ!) 9. The same power that resurrected you from the dead (not by luck, but by providence) will sustain you and move you to fresh levels of joy. You are shielded by the same resurrected power until Jesus' second coming, aleluya. 10. You cannot loose your salvation, believe it. It is not yours to loose. It is yours to live and transfer to others with consistent, contagious and magnetic joy. 11. No trial, no test and no suffering can separate you from the eternal Holy Love of your Father, God. 12. Your present and future are totally secured in Christ Jesus. All that happens to you is under the direct sovereign control of God the Father, for your faith to be proven genuine that will result in praise and glory and honor of God the Father. At the same time, you are responsible for what you bring to yourself by your disobedience. 13. Stop feeling sorry for yourself and believe right so you can live right in permanent peace and joy with God the Father, your true daddy who loves you!

- **Our Theology must be consistent with God's Character. You have no right to get angry with God because He is Holy** and expects us not to delay obedience to His clear commands in His Holy Word. Therefore, God implores us in 1 Peter 1:14-16 that as obedient children (*not all human beings are children of God but rather all are a creation of God. Only those who believed in Christ have been given the right to become children of God and born of God. As Chuck Colson said, "Born Again by the exclusive will of God not the will of man." It is God's choice: John 1:12-13*) we ought not to conform to the evil desires but just as He who called us is holy, we are to be holy in all we do (participate by invitation only). For it is written, "Be holy because God says that He is Holy." Please notice that God will never set up any of his children for failure, but rather, He will equip and assist all of His children with all they need. 1. The Word of God 2. The Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. He did not come to rent our house, but rather to own our house, and 3. The Body of Christ as the fence of love for our protection, biblical growth and encouragement. We are not a body of Christians, but rather believers are *the Body of Christ*. Therefore, we belong to God and to one another, this fact pictured in the visible image of the cross.

The Late Dr. Kenneth T. Wessner who became my spiritual daddy and to whom I dedicated my first book, "Radical Redemption," which my mentor and friend Chuck Colson was very gracious to write the foreword, transferred to me the practical aspect of God's Holy Character by his own righteous beliefs and the living out those beliefs. We first met in February of 1988 at the Washington Hilton as part of the Prison Fellowship Washington Discipleship Seminar (I also met Chuck Colson and Billy Graham at that time). Dr. Wessner, who by God's absolute sovereignty and orchestration, came and sat next to me at the same table in spite of there being over 500 people at the banquet. After taking his seat he asked me what I was going to do after my release from prison (which was many months away), and I told him that by faith I was attending Wheaton Bible College. At that point I didn't know who he was, but he tried to

convince me with abundant peace, grace, mercy and much humility a few times, that the name of the College was Wheaton College not Wheaton Bible College. I tried to counter Dr. Wessner, trying to persuade him that I was absolutely sure because I had just applied for the Charles W. Colson Scholarship at Wheaton Bible College. Although I was still incarcerated and was going right back to prison after the 2 weeks of the Washington Discipleship Seminar, he revealed his identity and I had no place to hide, except to humble myself. That situation connected Dr. Wessner and I for life. He transferred more life into my weak vessel and God used him because he took a huge risk with me and become God's instrument of amazing and abundant Grace for me to be accepted at Wheaton College. Nevertheless, Dr. Wessner said to me when he found out that I was released from prison early by God's abundant grace: "Manny, I am going to help you, however, you have no room to fail." Dr. Wessner's words continue to ring clearly and loudly in my mind, heart and conscience. Dr. Wessner's words injected the right fear of God within me: Holy fear of reverence and awe!

- Our faith must be rooted on the objects God had revealed in His word.
- Grace is receiving from God what we do not deserve. Mercy is **not** receiving what we do deserve. Every human being only deserves one thing: Hell.
- We cannot transfer what we do not have. Eugene Tanniehill, an inmate from The Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, has said, "The Word of God is the most vital and precious eternal gift a Christian has to profess and possess." Take to heart all the words I (Moses) have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you—they are your life (Duet. 32: 46-47). I'll never forget Chuck Colson's powerful transfer of practical truth to me in the context of serving others. He said to me, "**Manny, you can only serve God out of duty and gratitude.**" Chuck's wise advice has carried me through to persevere with Joy in the midst of many trials and tribulations of in-prison and post-prison ministry.
- Jesus Christ must be supreme in our life, not *just* first. In other words, Jesus' supremacy must envelop and seal the Believer.
- For one to believe right one must know right.
- Our belief will shape our character.
- There was a time when the Apostle Peter did not believe right. Peter's faith was not rooted in the unshakable belief in God's promises, or in the fact that faith does not go against logical reasoning and reality. His belief in Jesus was based on shallow feelings, not rooted. Thus it did not manifest itself in a biblical conviction. However, in 1 Peter we see a radical Peter whose belief has lead him to the biblical conviction and the Living Hope that Jesus Christ is truly the real deal. Furthermore, Peter is now compelled not only to believe, but also to live out his belief through the love of the Cross.
- The Heart of the Gospel is Reconciliation. The Peace of God becomes manifested in us in relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ. Reconciliation is fully applied by the Holy Spirit in the new birth of the Believer and as it is manifested in ***how we love our neighbor(s).***

What I want you to do:
Participate and live out to the fullest your right beliefs

- “One must love and serve God not for what He may do for us today or tomorrow, but rather, for what He already did through His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross.” – Chuck Colson (John 6: 37-40)
- We have a responsibility as prison ministry servants to transfer to those 2.4 million behind bars, and their families, the right beliefs, so they can believe right. “Until we see the price God paid for our peace in His own Son, we will be paying with our sons’ and daughters’ lives on the battle fields of our hates and brutalities, only to find peace ever eluding us.” – Ravi Zacharias
- Believe, embrace, experience and live out with fresh joy and passionate gusto **all** of the Word of God, even those teachings that may appear hard to believe. Steve Venable, former Director of Ministries for Koinonia House® National Ministries said, “We are not free to explain away those things we cannot understand.”
- Make sure your passion for the Word of God does not overshadow your authenticity for believing, preaching, and living out the Gospel. My good friend and preaching Coach Dr. Lon Allison, Director of the Billy Graham center, provided me with this fresh counsel on Tuesday, February 27th, 2007.
- Believer’s must live the entire Word of God, which is all inspired by God with 100% authority over our lives, as well as inerrant and infallible making the Word of God all-powerful, all sufficient, all reliable and all satisfying.
- Make the Word of God the air that you breathe, the refreshing drink that you drink several times a day and the daily satisfying and delicious bread you eat, making you come back for more.
- My good friend Dr. Sam Huddleston, a man who was on the brink of being sentenced to death-row many years ago profoundly said something that will stick with me for as long as I live. I want you to believe, that “you will always be an ex-convict, but by the grace of God, you will never be an inmate again!”
- Mr. Marion Wade, founder of Service Master, said it best: ***“If you do not live it you don’t believe it.”***

**** Please also see document: Believers Non-negotiable**

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