



Embracing Life

Timeless Encouragement for
Every Generation

Volume 1: Welcome Home



Emmanuel Israel

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The Introduction





The Introduction



It was a cold spring morning. The dew laid light on the grass as the sun rose. Naomi woke to prepare for her morning prayers and Bible reading while the children, Eli, Abel, and Sophia, slept. She woke her husband, John, to pray, read his Bible, and brush his teeth. After reading the Bible, Naomi went to the children's rooms to prepare them for family prayer and Bible reading. John joined them in the living room.

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Eli gladly exclaimed, “Good morning, Daddy.”

John replied, “Good morning, Eli. How was your night?”

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Eli replied, “It was good, Dad. I hope you and Mom had a good night’s sleep, too.”

John replied, “Yes, we did, thank you.”

Abel joined the conversation and said, “Good morning, Daddy.”

John replied, “Good morning, Abel. How was your night?”

Abel replied, “It was very good, Daddy. How about you?”

John replied, “It was good, thank you.”

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Sophia came from her room and said,
“Good morning, everyone.”

She ran to her dad, who embraced her.

While the children and their father conversed, Naomi entered and gently reminded everyone of the time. She said,
“Children, we need to start, or you will miss your bus.”

They read the Bible and prayed. The kids brushed their teeth, showered, and had their breakfast.

While waiting for the bus, Eli exclaimed, “Mama, we have to run home. I forgot my book!”

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Naomi replied, “It’s okay, sweetheart. We will get it when you get home. You don’t need it for school anyway. Remember you’re only supposed to read it in your spare time, not at school. You have another book for English that you must read during your free time.”

After school, Eli raced into the house in search of his favourite comic book. He loved reading it and imagining himself living during biblical times. He played with his slingshot and pretended he was David slaying Goliath. He searched his room but couldn’t find his book. He went to his brother’s room and solemnly asked, “Abel, please, I need your help. I

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can't find my favourite comic book. Can you please help me find it?"



Eli and Abel searched their rooms for the comic book. Their mother was in the kitchen with Sophia, talking and preparing dinner. She heard a loud noise

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and rushed out the kitchen with Sophia to investigate.

She called the boys, “Eli and Abel, come here, please.”

The boys responded and ran to their mom. She asked, “Why are you making so much noise?”

“My favorite comic book is missing. I can’t find it. We searched everywhere. It’s gone forever!” Eli cried.

Naomi wiped away his tears and reassured him, “We will help you find it.”

John entered the house upon getting home from work.

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“My favorite comic book is missing. I can’t find it since I came back from school,” Eli rushed to his father, crying.

Naomi gently interjected, “Hello, my love. Welcome home. I told Eli we would help find his book.”

Dad immediately removed his shoes and looked for the comic book with the rest of the family.

They searched the house but could not find it. Sophia suggested to her mother they should check the garage, which is also the children’s playhouse. Naomi agreed that they should go to the playhouse and search for the book.

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“It is impossible that the comic book should be there,” Abel said.

“Well, we must give it a try. Until we check everywhere, we cannot rule out anything,” their father replied.



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The family went to the garage, and lo and behold! “Eli, I found your favourite comic book!” Naomi shouted joyfully.

Eli ran to his mom, embraced her, and said, “Thank you, mama, for helping me find my book.”

Suddenly, Sophia became quiet and contemplatively said to her dad, “Dad, this feels like the parables you told us about the Lost Sheep and Coin last week. Can you tell us more about the parables?”

John replied, “You are right, Sophia. What happened today reminds us of the parables we discussed last week. Okay,

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let's sit here in the garage while Mom goes to prepare dinner in the kitchen.”

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**The Parables of the Lost
Sheep
and Coin**





The Parables of the Lost Sheep and Coin



John opened his Bible to Luke 15:4-10
and read the parables below:

“What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the other ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls

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his friends and neighbors and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'

I tell you that in the same way, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house, and carefully search until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In

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the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents.”

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Overview and Interpretation





Overview and Interpretation



After reading the parables, John said, “It’s important to understand the setting behind the parable. The scribes and the Pharisees question why Jesus spends so much time with sinners, the same people they avoid. Jesus responds to their murmuring against Him with these parables.”

John continued, “It is essential to understand why Jesus associated with the

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sinners. Jesus associated Himself with them because the sinners need Him in the same way a sick person needs a medical doctor.”¹

John reminded his children of the importance of understanding Jesus’ parables. He said, “The parable of the lost sheep reminds us that God is willing to go through any means to seek even just one soul that has wandered from his family. The Pharisees and scribes need

¹ You can read more about this overview in Beth Kreitzer, “1-10 The Parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin in *Luke*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015.

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Jesus like the sinners do, but they won't admit their need for forgiveness. So, Jesus is the Great Shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep to seek and save the lost sheep. Ironically, the scribes and the Pharisees see themselves as the ninety-nine sheep without the need for saving. However, these parables remind us that Jesus cares for everyone.

The parables tell us that Jesus welcomes all sinners. Some sinners acknowledge and are ashamed of their sins. Others consider themselves righteous. The scribes and the Pharisees fall into this category. They believed their

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good works alone would be enough to save them.”

Abel asked his father, “I thought if I did good, that’s all I needed to do to go to heaven. So, are you saying we should not do anything good for God, others, and ourselves? What then must people do to enter heaven?”

John said, “You’ve asked crucial questions. Some people, even during Jesus’ time, believe all they need to enter the Kingdom of God is that their good actions should outweigh the bad. This idea of getting into heaven is common among people of other religions. Some

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Christians even believe that if their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds, they will automatically go to heaven. However, this is not true.

See, my children, it has been said many times before, and I will repeat it, 'Jesus did not come to make bad people good. Jesus came to make dead people live unto God – those who are dead in sin, who continually give their body to sin and its passions, and to make them

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live unto God - to offer their bodies as instruments of God's righteousness."²

John continued, "To be dead in sin means someone is spiritually dead although they are physically alive. People who refuse to believe in God's existence, with an intense love for sin, cannot

² You can read more about what the Bible means by 'dead to sin, but alive to God' in the book of Romans chapter 6. For an overview of the book, I will gently advise you to read from Romans chapter 1 so you can understand the context of Romans chapter 6. Romans is the 6th book of the New Testament

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understand spiritual truth.³ Someone may be dead to spiritual things, but if they respond to the Gospel by faith, and through faith - the Holy Spirit convicts them of their evil ways, and they can receive forgiveness through Jesus Christ.”

“Hmmm,” Eli sighed. He said, “I think it is important always to do good. But we are not saved by our good works

³ You can read more about this when you read 2nd Corinthians 2. 2nd Corinthians is the 8th book of the New Testament.

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but by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Is that true, Dad?”⁴

“You are right, Eli. It is important to do good work. However, this cannot be the criteria to be God’s children and go to heaven. We must understand that no matter how great our good works are, they can never be enough to outweigh and cover our bad actions nor grant us entrance into God’s kingdom. This is a

⁴ You can read more about this in the book of Ephesians 2. Again, it is important to read through the whole book in order to understand the background/overview of the book. Ephesians is the 10th book of the New Testament.

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crucial teaching. Some people would say they have not killed or committed a ‘so-called’ big sin, like fornication, adultery, theft, cheating on taxes, etc., and have done plenty of other good things. Why won’t their good works be enough?”

Eli looked puzzled.

John said, “Let me explain. These people must understand that if a cup is dirty, it doesn’t matter if fresh water is poured into it and given to a person to drink. The result would always be polluted water filled with bacteria that could make the drinker sick or die. As humans, we are like the dirty cup - giving

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clean water is complimentary and humanly good to do, but because the cup is already dirty, i.e., our spirit, soul, and body are dirty, sins taint good works. Our good works alone can never get us a place with God. So, no amount of sacrifice can do it for us. Someone born without sin must come to make us righteous toward God. Then, our good works as Christians are not for publicity or humanitarian purposes, as good as it sounds or needed. Instead, God works through us to meet the needs of others.

But you may ask, why Jesus? Why is there only one way to God? Why can't all religions lead people to God that

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Christians talk about? Interestingly, many faiths, including famous ones, include Jesus in their understanding and description of reality. They say Jesus was a Prophet, a Wise Teacher who came from God, a Holy Man, and a Teacher without acknowledging His Lordship and as God-Personified, or God revealed in human flesh.⁵ However, while these

⁵ You can read more about it here, J. Warner Wallace, “Who is Jesus, According to Other Religions,” *Cold Case Christianity*, last modified December 4, 2017, <https://coldcasechristianity.com/writings/who-is-jesus-according-to-other-religions/>.

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other religions talk about Jesus as someone being ‘a way’, i.e., a Prophet that reveals God’s way to us, hearing what Jesus says about Himself is vital. These religions may say Jesus did not see Himself as a way to God. However, He sees Himself as ‘The Way, The Truth, and The Life. No one can come to the Father except by Him.’⁶ It is one thing to

⁶ You can read this interaction in John 14:6. Traditionally, the book of John and Romans are very helpful for those who are exploring Christianity and those who claim to be Christians but do not have a living relationship with God. You will see the claims of Jesus Christ as God revealed to us humanly. John is the 4th book of the New Testament.

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say I am a way to God, just like what other religions or religious figures claim. It is another thing to say: I am 'The Way' to God, which Jesus said about Himself. He made it very clear that He is not just a Way but The Way to God and that no one can come to God except by Him.

It is one thing for other religions to see him as a way to God, like a Prophet. Jesus sees Himself more than a prophet. He sees Himself as the Only Way to God.

So why Jesus? We need someone who is also sinless to save us. It's like the dirty cup analogy I used earlier. It would take

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something or someone outside of that dirty cup to clean it. But for God to save us, God must assume human nature. He must take human nature upon Himself. Think of it this way, my children.

When parents play with their child, especially a baby or toddler, they play, interact, and talk differently with the child than with adults. A man may sit on the floor and change his voice to sound like a baby to interact with the child. So, an adult will not treat the baby like an adult but as a baby. The adult must ‘assume’ the characteristics of a baby to interact with the baby. Similarly, God must assume our position to interact

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with us. So, God took it upon Himself, to become human, in the Person of Jesus, to interact with and save us. This is why Jesus is vital in the salvation of humans.”

“Does it mean God only cares for Christians and not others?” Sophia asked.

John replied, “My daughter, you have asked an important question. My children, you should understand that God is good toward everyone. Jesus tells us that God ‘makes His sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the

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just and on the unjust.⁷ God is good toward all His creatures and creation. The rain falls on the wicked and good people just as the sun shines on us all. But you know there is a difference between being God's creatures as male and female versus being God's sons and daughters. Let me explain.

Just imagine if a young boy who is not my child runs to me and calls me Dad. I will stop and look at him. I would question why he would call me Dad.

⁷ Matthew 5:45. Matthew is the 1st book of the New Testament.

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While I talked with the boy, I noticed he was hungry, naked, and unkempt. As a human and a father of three children, I know I should feed him and, afterward, take him to the police so they can find his parent. So, after I fed the young boy, I took him to the police station. However, something strange happened.”

Abel asked enthusiastically, “Dad, what happened?”

John continued, “The child kept calling me his biological dad. I told the police I did not know him. I only fed him and brought him to the police. They said they needed to verify whether I was

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telling the truth. I said there were no blood relations between us and no DNA tests would confirm I was his father. The young boy insisted that if I wasn't his father, why did I feed and clothe him? I said I did those things because they were the right things to do as a human. However, the police officers were confused. So, they took us both to a hospital and did a paternity test.”

“What is a paternity test?” Sophia asked.

John replied, “It is a test to determine and establish a biological relationship between a father and a child.”

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The children were eager to hear what their father would say about the imaginative story.

John said, “All the tests, including paternity blood tests and DNA paternity tests, came back negative, indicating I was not the child’s father.”

“Yeah! Well, of course – there are only three of us.” Sophia exclaimed.

Eli and Abel looked at Sophia and said, “Dad is just sharing a story to explain his point.”

Sophia said, “I know. I am just happy it ended well.”

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Everyone laughed. John continued the story, “The blood is an essential factor between a child and his parents. In the same way, God cares for us all - those who love and obey Him and those who do not. However, like in the story I shared, God’s children must share in His image. To share in God’s image is to be related to Him through blood. The blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross for us is the only way to reconcile with God.

Like the story I shared about the boy and the police, one way for the boy to be a part of our family would be to adopt him. So, because of Jesus’ birth, work, life, death, resurrection, ascension (His

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taking up to heaven), and the Second Coming of Christ, we are adopted into God's family. The Bible tells us that through God's goodwill, we have been adopted as sons and daughters of God by Jesus Christ.⁸ To be adopted by God means becoming a member of God's family, having a new identity and a new name in Christ. This new identity makes us think differently, not as the world wants us to believe.”

⁸ Please read Ephesians 1. Ephesians is the 10th book of the New Testament.

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Naomi joined them in the garage. She told the kids and her darling husband that dinner was almost ready. She prepared salmon, veggies, roasted potatoes, and freshly squeezed orange juice while homemade biscuits were baking in the oven.

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Sophia ran to her mom, telling her everything she'd missed. Sophia said, "I'm sorry, Mom. I did not join us in the kitchen because Dad's stories are fascinating. I like yours too, Mom." She giggled.

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John embraced his wife. They all rose, left the garage, and went to the living room. On the way, Naomi jokingly said to John, “Don’t you have more stories to tell? I want to hear some of your stories.”

The children laughed at their mom, and playfully pleaded with their father to tell them more stories. John said, “You know what? I have one more. Just because Jesus is the Good Shepherd seeking us so we can be part of God’s family, does not mean we do not have our part to play.”

Abel asked, “Dad, what do you mean? I thought God had done all the work by

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sending Jesus Christ into the world. How do you mean people have their parts to play?”

John said, “Let me tell you the parable of the prodigal son to explain myself.

‘A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So, he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. After he

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had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be

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called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’ And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive

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again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So, he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’

But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore, his father came out and pleaded with him. So, he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many

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years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is

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alive again, and was lost and is found.”⁹

John continued. “You can see that unlike the parable of the Good Shepherd whereby the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, went out to look for us, here, Jesus tells us we have a part to play. We must be willing to receive His offer of salvation. As I think of the parable of the prodigal son, a song comes to mind.”

⁹ You can read the story in Luke 15:11-31. Luke is the 4th book of the New Testament.

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John went to his piano and played.
The family sang along with the piano's
tune:



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1. Years I spent in vanity and pride,
Caring not my Lord was crucified,
Knowing not it was for me He died
on Calvary.
2. By God's Word at last my sin I
learned—
Then I trembled at the Law I'd
spurned,
Till my guilty soul imploring turned
to Calvary.
3. Now I've giv'n to Jesus ev'rything,
Now I gladly own Him as my King,
Now my raptured soul can only sing
of Calvary.

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4. O the love that drew salvation's plan!
O the grace that brought it down to
man!
O the mighty gulf that God did span
at Calvary.

Chorus: Mercy there was great and
grace was free,
Pardon there was multiplied to me,
There my burdened soul found
liberty—
At Calvary.¹⁰

¹⁰ William Reed Newell, “Years I Spent in Vanity and
Pride,” *Hymnary.org*, September 5, 2024,

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After the family shared a wonderful moment of music, John said, “We can learn many lessons from the parable.

These are a few:

1. Instead of the father rebuking the child, he lets him go.
 - It shows that God will not force Himself on us to receive Him or stay with Him. He’s granted us free will to choose how we want to live,

[https://hymnary.org/text/years_i_spent_in_vanity_and_pride.](https://hymnary.org/text/years_i_spent_in_vanity_and_pride)

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even if He knew it would lead to destruction.¹¹

- The scripture says, ‘There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. Even in laughter, the heart may ache, and the end of joy may be grief. The faithless will be fully repaid for their ways and the good rewarded for theirs. The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps. The wise fear the Lord and shun evil, but a

¹¹ See Deuteronomy 30:19. Deuteronomy is the 5th book of the Old Testament.

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fool is hotheaded yet feels secure.¹²

So, just because things seem to be going well doesn't mean we are right with God.

- Also, just because we are fed up with life doesn't mean we cannot return to God.
- 2. The younger son left home, indicating the human desire to live independently of God.
- It shows that many detest living under God's laws. These laws have

¹² See Proverbs 14:12-16. Proverbs is the 20th of the Old Testament.

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proved over time they are for our good.

- The son eventually learned that living independently of the father would always lead to dissatisfaction and want. He returned home, showing genuine repentance. God is eagerly waiting for us so we can return to Him.
- 3. The father saw the son from far away and ran to him.
 - He killed a fattened calf to welcome the child back into the house.
 - God is always waiting for us to return home like a good father and mother would wait for their child.

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- While the son wanted to be considered an enslaved person, the father accepted him as his son.
- The robe the father requested for his son signified dignity, authority, and honour. When we return to God, He puts Christ's righteousness and holiness upon us. He would forgive our wrongdoings when we genuinely repent and turn from evil ways to living right with God.
- Instead of condemnation for our wrongs, there is rejoicing before God because the son was dead but now alive, lost but now found.

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Remember I said earlier that Jesus did not come to make bad people good. Jesus came to make dead people live unto God. Those who are dead in sin, who continually give their body to sin and its passions, and to make them live unto God - to offer their body as instruments of God's righteousness.¹³

¹³ You can read more about what the Bible means by 'dead to sin, but alive to God' in the book of Romans chapter 6. For an overview of the book, I will gently advise you to read from Romans chapter 1 so you

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- Also, the sacrificed animal signifies Jesus Christ. We can now be adopted into God's family because Christ was sacrificed for our sins."

John read another lyric from his hymn book. This time, the family did not sing, but they listened as John read the following words:

1. "What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

can understand the context of Romans chapter 6.
Romans is the 6th book of the New Testament

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2. For my pardon this I see:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
For my cleansing this my plea:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
3. Nothing can for sin atone:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
Naught of good that I have done:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
4. This is all my hope and peace:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
This is all my righteousness:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Chorus

O precious is the flow
that makes me white as snow;

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no other fount I know;
nothing but the blood of Jesus.¹⁴

4. The eldest son was unhappy with the father's behaviour toward his siblings.

- Sometimes, this behaviour represents older Christians' behaviour toward new converts. When new converts are welcomed into Christ, they receive everything

¹⁴ Robert Lowry, "What Can Wash Away My Sin," *Hymnary.org*, September 5, 2024, https://hymnary.org/text/what_can_wash_away_my_sin.

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they request. Sometimes, older Christians get jealous. As older Christians, we should not be envious of others. Jealousy is not a good trait of a Christian and a follower of Christ.

- The older brother's relationship with the father was based on work. He mentioned everything he has done for the father.
- The father gently corrects the older son and says his relationship with the son is not based on performance. Instead, the son should rejoice that the younger brother is back in the family.

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- The older son failed to see the blessings of the father around him. Instead of celebrating with the rest of the family, he chose not to.
- Likewise, as Christians, we become so accustomed to God that we forget we live in His house where there should never be a lack of anything.”

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**Sophia Responded to
God's Call**





Sophia Responded to God's Call



Naomi checked the oven and said the biscuits would be ready soon. The family gathered at the table as John concluded the parables. However, Sophia, who enjoyed her father's stories about Jesus' parables, felt convicted and no longer interested in dinner.

Sophia asked, "Dad, I don't want to be like the prodigal son who left and had to return. I don't want to leave. I want to

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give my life to Jesus. What must I do to be saved?”

John and Naomi embraced Sophia elatedly, tearing up upon hearing that Sophia wanted to give her life to God.

Naomi said, “Your brothers, Eli and Abel, were about your age when they gave their lives to God.”

Eli and Abel nodded.

Overjoyed John held Sophia warmly and said, “My daughter, to be saved all you must do is: ‘If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the

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heart, one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.¹⁵ You must repent from your old ways. To repent means expressing sincere regret about what you have done and deciding not to do it again. It means to make a U-turn from the old ways. It means to think differently and let God, through His Holy Spirit, guide you for the rest of your life. Through the Spirit of God living in the lives of believers, they learn to hate

¹⁵ These are biblical references which you can find in Acts 16:31 and Romans 10:10. Acts and Romans are the 5th and 6th book of the New Testament.

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evil and sin and to love what is good and right before God. The scriptures remind us that when we ‘repent, turn to God, and {we} do works befitting repentance’¹⁶ our actions, reactions, what we say or didn’t say, do or didn’t do, and for all our life must prove our genuine repentance. True repentance indicates a change of mind, which must result in a change of action. To repent means to have a change of mind toward sin and know that Jesus is the only Way to God.

¹⁶ You can read this reference in Acts 20:26

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Having Godly sorrow about our sin and sinful nature leads to salvation.”¹⁷

John continued his discussion about repentance with Sophia: “My daughter, like I told your brothers when they gave their lives to God, I tell you also, repentance means having faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. He is the Lord we love so dearly that we trust and obey His commandment because His commandment always leads to life. He is our Saviour. We know there is no

¹⁷ You can find this reference in 2 Corinthians 7:10. 2 Corinthians is the 8th book of the New Testament.

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‘salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved’ except the name, Jesus Christ.”

Upon hearing this, Sophia moved close to her father and said, “Dad, what is the next step to become a child of God?”

John said, “You have to pray to God, confess your sins, ask Jesus to come into your life to be your Lord and Saviour, to wash away your sins through His blood, and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you from now henceforth.”

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Sophia said, “Dad, would you pray for me?”

Naomi gently interjected their conversation and said, “My daughter, you can say all these things to God. He wants to hear your voice, too. We can indeed pray for you and help lead you together in prayer. But praying to God is as easy as talking to Mom and Dad. But when we pray, we pray to God. You can tell Jesus to come into your life, and you will be saved.”

Upon hearing Naomi’s guided words, Sophia said, “Thank you, Mommy and

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Daddy. I will go to my room to pray now.”



When she left for her room, John, Naomi, Eli, and Abel joined their hands and prayed to God while Sophia prayed in her room.

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When Sophia arrived in her room, she knelt to pray. She said, “God, I am Sophia. You already know my name and all about me because You are God. I am sorry for all the things I have done in the past - things I cannot even remember and things I can. I am sorry for stealing Abel’s biscuit the other day. I am sorry for disobeying Mom when she told me to clean my room. I am sorry I pushed my friends in school and am not always nice to my brothers.”

As she poured her heart into God, she cried. The more she cried, the more she remembered all the wrong she’d done. She wept. Then she remembered

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that Jesus was her Saviour and asked the Lord to come into her life.

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Sophia and Family Dinner





Sophia and Family Dinner



After she asked the Lord to be her Saviour and Lord, she asked the Lord another request. She said, “Lord Jesus, I want you to be my friend.” After she finished her prayers, she felt so much joy in her heart. She laughed and left her room to join her family. Naomi wiped away her tears and laughed with Sophia. They always shared a wonderful bond.

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John embraced Sophia, holding and hugging her. Her brothers joined, embracing a group hug. Sophia apologized to each family member. She promised, “By the grace of God, I am now a new person.”

John helped Naomi bring the meal to the dinner table. The boys brought the cups and cutlery. Sophia carried the biscuits neatly laid in a dish to the dining table.

After a prayer of thanksgiving over the meal and for the salvation of Sophia’s soul, John said, “I am

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giving the biggest salmon and biscuit to Sophia.” The family laughed.



Eli said, “Hmmm. Is this like the parable of the prodigal son

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when the father killed the fatted calf?”

Abel said, “Well, maybe we should call it the parable of the prodigal daughter since Sophia is a girl.”

Everyone laughed as they shared a delicious meal of salmon, veggies, roasted potatoes, freshly squeezed orange juice, and homemade biscuits.

After dinner, everyone helped Naomi. The children cleaned the dishes and the dining table.

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John and Naomi stayed in the living room after the evening prayers. The children embraced their parents and left for their rooms.

John and Naomi held their hands to thank God for saving Sophia's soul.

John is a man of prayer and loves to sing, so with Naomi, they sang:

1. Blow ye the trumpet, blow!
The gladly solemn sound
let all the nations know,
to earth's remotest bound.

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2. Jesus, our great High Priest,
has full atonement made;
ye weary spirits, rest;
ye mournful souls, be glad.

3. Extol the Lamb of God,
the sacrificial Lamb;
redemption thro' his blood
throughout the world proclaim.

4. Ye slaves of sin and hell,
your liberty receive;
and safe in Jesus dwell,
and blest in Jesus live.

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5. Ye who have sold for naught
your heritage above,
receive it back unbought,
the gift of Jesus' love
6. The gospel trumpet hear,
the news of heav'nly grace;
and, saved from earth, appear
before your Savior's face

Chorus:

The year of jubilee is come;
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home;

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Return, ye ransomed sinners,
home.¹⁸

¹⁸ Charles Wesley, “Blow Ye The Trumpet Blow,”
Hymnary.Org, September 5, 2024,
https://hymnary.org/text/blow_ye_the_trumpet_blow.

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Conclusion





Conclusion



Dear readers, saying yes to God's hands reaching out to you is vital. Like Sophia, merely because we listen, read, or preach the word of God does not necessarily mean we have a living relationship with Him. Because we say amen at the end of prayers does not equate to having a relationship with God. Many people follow the crowd, yet they know they do not know God.

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It is easy to get carried away with life and forget that God created us as immortal souls who can never die. God has created an eternal desire that nothing in the world can quench. We should not see the world as a permanent home. It is very temporal. Therefore, no matter how hard we try or what we do, we feel it is never enough. We always seek the next big thing, like the next adventure, promotion, trip, etc., to fill our unsatisfied feelings. We are not designed to fill the void. No matter how much we try, what we do or don't do, nothing can fill the void but God.

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Probably the most quoted saying of Augustine captures this feeling of our void. In Confessions, he writes, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”

The world is like a transit where we should never feel at home. Think of the airport and its terminal gates. A transit has a clean environment. Some have shower rooms, and others equipped with a theatre to watch movies, a business lounge for your business meeting, a gym, and a mini zoo (and yes, many airports around the world have facilities listed here and more). However, we do not feel

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at home at the airport. Our focus is always on our destination. Earth is like a transit, with its seemingly great appearance and things that occupy our minds and give us temporary happiness. Yet, like a transit, our focus should always be on our final destination, eternity with God.

Please consider giving your life to God. Repent from your sins, make a U-turn, and accept the sacrifice of Jesus on your behalf so you can be with God eternally. Wherever you are, pray and talk to God. In your prayers, confess your sins, ask for God's forgiveness, and believe that Jesus Christ died for you,

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your sins, and the death penalty you deserve. Ask Him to be your Lord and Saviour and promise Him you will turn from your sinful ways and live unto Him from now henceforth. As you do, He will welcome you like the father welcomed the prodigal son. May you always live for His glory, amen.

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More About the Author





More About the Author



Thank you for reading the book. I hope you are encouraged to embrace life, an abundant, joyous life found in Jesus Christ. He is the Way, the Truth, and Life to God, the Father, and no one can come to the Father except through Jesus Christ.

For more information and resources, including original songs, books, articles and podcasts, all written/composed by Emmanuel Israel through God's grace,

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please visit our website at
www.emmanuelisrael.com

May the consciousness of Heaven
always fill your heart, may the
blessedness of His Presence be your
delight, and the Joy of His Second
Coming be your strength from this
moment henceforth.