

GROWING IN GRACE LETTERS! – Calling saints in Christ, (in our homes and with one another in Church), to walk in the Steps of Jesus! (1 Peter 2:15-25) Edited by James Bell, a servant of Jesus Christ!

5 – 12 - 26 V2n2 GRAND MIRACLES ARE STILL TAKING PLACE!

ROMANS 12:20-21: " Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good!*"

Let me ‘spill the beans’ right up front: **MIRACLES HAPPEN when** we simply do our own God given assignments as acts of worship to JESUS (WHO IS ALWAYS WORTHY!) ... and we lay down everything else!

But know this — **SOME MIRACLES TAKE TIME!** **To illustrate, here is a ‘TRUE STORY!’** Like most young couples, who are moving toward marriage, this couple was sure that they loved each other. They were sure that they did not need the one, required, pre-marriage counseling session! Wedding day? — It was a beautiful wedding in a large church chapel. The wedding went off without a hitch. Fifteen months into the marriage, a son was born. BUT SADLY, the marriage was in deep trouble.

Soon after the birth of their son, the young family travelled to the city where they got married. They visited with the wife's family; the young husband later journeyed to another state

to briefly visit his family; and then he returned to their far away home to be back at work and school. **Just a few days later**, as the husband arrived home at the usual 2-3AM from work—a letter had been delivered. He opened it. ***His wife said, "It's over! My dad will be out on Friday to get my belongings."***

The young husband, alone in their apartment, was filled with anger and then wept like a baby; and then, he awakened upstairs friends; and handed them the letter. They were shocked. No one knew.

The 'destruction' came from both; with the greater part from the husband ... and LIKE SO MANY — the couple had been very good at hiding. ***THEN, back downstairs, the young husband, amazingly, became GRIPPED WITH a specific CONVICTION: he had vowed to God and before many witnesses, "UNTIL DEATH DO US PART!"***

He had not a clue of how or if the marriage could ever be healed. **He ONLY knew one thing— by the authority of God's Word, he had to try.** Thus, he got in his car and drove across several states to get to her parent's home.

[GIVE HIM NO PRAISE for this decision— the journey was instigated and empowered by GRACE and the POWER and the AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD!] He was BOUND by the Word of God to try to salvage and seek healing for what seemed to be a hopeless marriage.

THE 'GOOD SHEPHERD' worked in the young wife as well; and AS A RESULT, slowly ... (at times with two steps forward and

three backward; and then with more steps forward) this husband and wife began to learn the ways of God for marriage. THEY FOUND that it takes GOD'S GRACE; a HEAP of God's kind of forgiveness; and a heap of God's kind of sacrificial love to heal a broken marriage, to re-ignite love, to restore love, to take love to higher heights. TO GOD BE THE GLORY, THE COUPLE BEGAN TO EXPERIENE HEALING GRACE GREATER THAN ALL THEIR SIN!

TODAY, many years later, THE HUSBAND IS FEELING SUPER BLESSED THAT God 'ruled and over ruled' ... that God gave him a beautiful and wonderful bride, completer, and companion.

[THE 'STORY' YOU HAVE READ IS TRUE. THE OFFICIAL BEGINNING OF THE STORY IS, that on May 27, 1967, Cynthia Anne Baker became the wife of James Bell!

I AM TRULY A VERY BLESSED man to have been given such a treasure! WOW! Where did the time go? BEING AS 'YOUNG' AS WE ARE HERE IN 2026 [!!!] — IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT ON WEDNESDAY, 5/27/26, we will have been married 59 years! I love you, more than ever, Cindy!

LET'S DO MANY MORE! James

*** PS. WITH 'OUR STORY' ... we are not rejoicing in a "Story Book" marriage; but in an **"AMAZING-GRACE-BOOK!"** MARRIAGE!

OF COURSE, in reality, all CHRIST-GLORIFYING MARRIAGES are rooted in 'AMAZING GRACE!' BUT ... How beautiful and precious are those rare COUPLES whose ENTIRE married experience was/is 'story-book!' They started right, continued right, and continue strong to the time of death ... or ... they continue still! MAY YOUR TRIBE INCREASE!!

BUT ALL TOO OFTEN, marriages,
(Regardless of how they start!),
turn sour. Love's affections, kindnesses,
and good times disappear.

Anger, resentments, and hopelessness reign.

For a time, (sometimes for years), the couple may have it all hid. Nevertheless, evil, malignant, destructive emotions, words, and beliefs are in charge. The end is announced. BLAME-SHIFTING, accusations, anger, slander, and more RAGE. For most, the hurt never ends; the scars never heal.

AND, IF THERE ARE CHILDREN—

they are usually the biggest losers!

HOWEVER, the DAY OF MIRACLES is still with us!

SO, SAYS, ONE, "O, IF I COULD ONLY HAVE SUCH A MIRACLE!"

CAN WE HANDLE THE TRUTH?

IT TAKES TIME and a HEAP of God's kind of forgiveness;
and a heap of God's kind of sacrificial love; and a heap of

HUMILITY to heal a broken marriage, to re-ignite love, to restore love, and/or to take love to higher heights! **BUT KNOW THIS:**

PROFOUND Holy Spirit empowered, faith/obedience to the Word of God CAN TRANSFORM EVEN THE MOST 'SEEMINGLY' HELPLESS SITUATIONS!

***** MIRACLES COME when** there is the obedience of acting in faith upon the Word of God, so as to deal with one's own sins and failings ... and leaving the spouse in God's hands.

***** MIRACLES COME WHEN** there is the discovery that GENUINE LOVE IS NOT AN EMOTION or FEELINGS; but rather such love is SACRIFICIAL ACTION for the good of another without demanding a response.

***** SUCH LOVE is the OVERFLOW of being Born Again;** and the overflow of letting the Word of Christ dwell richly in one's mind and soul— ALL IN ORDER to please and honor JESUS! MOREOVER, over time the emotions of love will begin to be restored, as FRUIT of genuine love!

***** PRAISE GOD! YES!** There is the discovery that a beautiful life of growing love is NOT reserved only for the 'story-book' few!

***** Praise God, there are also MIRACLES of amazing GRACE, EVEN for THOSE who are presently feeling that they are utterly HOPELESS and FAILURES! I know.**

We were there.

***** PRAISE THE LORD: I AM REJOICING in** grace greater than all my sin! I am rejoicing in A PRECIOUS, GODLY, Proverbs 31, LOVING WIFE, CINDY! I am rejoicing in the LOVE OF GOD! To God be the GLORY great things He has done, IS DOING, and WILL DO! ***

***** I AM SO THANKFUL that by the grace of God, there came a day when we began to see** clearly... and today we see clearly that life's trials, tribulations, life's pressures, life's troubles, life's injustices, and life's disappointments are, among other things, **divinely designed to reveal what is in one's own heart!**

Life is not merely or primarily about what happens to us, or of how others may have wronged us, or how we may have wronged the other person! BUT LIFE is about Grace through the LORD JESUS CHRIST that is greater than all our sin — We simply have to flee to Him and lay everything at His feet!

LIFE IN CHRIST is all about being loved by God

when we were unlovable, undeserving, and unresponsive— and then giving that same love to others,

especially to one's spouse!

LIFE IN CHRIST is all about REPENTING GRACE, and of being FORGIVEN! And it's about the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence to motivate and empower any Christian to be a channel for God's love and forgiveness!

IN ALL OF THESE MATTERS— TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

PS ****WHAT ABOUT THIS QUOTE? “When trust has been betrayed, it is all but impossible to restore it again!”

With all due respect... if one embraces the confession of the quote -- then the situation, no matter what it is, is likely to remain hopeless.

HOWEVER, there is a different path ... that starts from a different starting point! SO, HERE IS THE SITUATION:

SOMEONE HAS VIOLATED MY TRUST IN THEM:

[1] My assignment is not to focus on their failure; nor to question the sincerity of their professed repentance or sorrow for their failings... OR LACK of such. (Those are real issues... but they are not my assignment!)

My God-given assignment is not to **‘TRUST THEM! ... or him or her— but to forgive, to love, to bless, to MANIFEST JESUS to them, him, her!!**

[2] My assignment is to walk in the steps of Jesus. To forgive as He has forgiven me for all the times and ways I have broken trust with Him;

[3] My assignment is to be redemptive and sacrificial as He was to me when I was His enemy.

[4] My assignment: God has set before us, in the Old Testament, the example of Hosea... who was to be toward Gomer, as God was toward Israel... and as God is toward us today: **'GO BUY HER BACK and LOVE HER!'**

[5] My assignment is set forth in Romans 12:14-21... summed up in verses 20-21: " Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

[6] MIRACLES HAPPEN when we **JUST DO** our assignments, as acts of worship to JESUS (WHO IS ALWAYS WORTHY!) ... and lay down everything else!

[BUT, BUT ... I SUSPECT THESE ‘GRAND MIRACLES’ are off limits to me and my spouse— because, we have divorce and previous marriage or marriages **IN OUR PAST! ...** Sadly, even many who are in a ‘good’

second marriage ... are still limping with guilt and/or bitterness as to the past... A BIBLICAL RESPONSE will require more space than we have here ... so ... we hope to soon have an article dealing fully with this matter.]

Abundant Grace to Each and All!

James Bell / www.southsidegallatin.org

SUNDAY SERVICES for MAY 17, 24, 31

[1] Sunday School at 9:30am: Nursery, Children's classes, Youth, and Adult classes.

[2] WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!

SPECIAL SERVICES during May:

***** MAY 17, LORD'S SUPPER, at the end of the Morning Worship Service // HOME GROUPS!**

****** MAY 24, SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP**

EVERY SATURDAY * 8:00 AM, — Men's Bible Study!**
(Doors open by 7:30am... coffee, juice, donuts, and Hardee's Biscuits are available!) **MAY 16, Romans 9:1-8**

Ladies Bible Study! TAKING A BREAK! THE NEXT LADIES BIBLE STUDY IS SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 23 @ 11:00 AM

*****TUESDAYS: LADIES PRAYER MEETING**
@ 10:00am

Young Adults ... Tuesdays at 7:15pm at Jaden and Rhi's home!

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ 6:30pm, MEN'S Prayer Service // YOUNG FAMILIES SERVICE

LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD by MAIL or by ONLINE: BY MAIL (checks), make out to Southside Baptist) — MAIL TO: Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066 / TO GIVE via ONLINE GIVING:

<https://southsidebaptist.breezechms.com/give/online>