

"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe..." (1.THES 2:10).

That's a pretty powerful statement to make - to call on God as a witness to your holiness! Yet, without flinching, Paul boasted to the believers in Thessalonica:

"I and my co-workers lived blamelessly before you and before God. Our conduct was righteous and pure. God is witness to our holy behavior - yet you also are witnesses. You saw that we walked holy and blameless before God and men!"

Paul was an effective preacher. And he knew the secret of his effectiveness in moving people toward God. He could stand boldly before every living soul, every principality and testify: "I live daily under the gaze of a holy God. I walk always as if His holy eyes are upon me. And you all are witnesses to my blameless life!"

The apostle desired every believer to have the same power he had in moving people toward God. And he prayed night and day that all of God's children would be established holy and unblamable before God: *"To the end he may {e}stablish your hearts Unblameable in holiness before God... at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints"* (3:13).

Let me share with you Paul's description of a blameless life - and about the power such a life releases:

Paul Clearly Explains What a Blameless Life Is

Here is the kind of behavior required of the holy, just,

The Power of a Blameless Life

unblamable believer, according to Paul:

1. To be blameless is to have no deceit of any kind. *"For our exhortation was not of deceit"* (2:3). A blameless Christian is one without any deceit in his heart!

Paul said, "I was not a fraud, preaching one thing to you and yet living another. My behavior was an open book!"

He warned the Corinthians, however, that certain men were going about claiming to be apostles. He said, *"They boast that they walk as I do, in blamelessness. They say, 'I'm an apostle, appointed of God...' [But] such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ"* (2.COR 11:13).

Paul said, "You can't fake a blameless walk. My message goes right to the conscience of men - because I live the truth I preach!" (see 4:2).

2. To be blameless is to touch nothing unclean. *"Our exhortation was not... of uncleanness"* (1.THES 2:3).

Paul's emphasis here is on sensuality, lust. He's saying, "Not an unclean word came out of my mouth. My conversation was pure, coming forth from a clean heart,"

Paul had his body under control. No fleshly passion drove him - no spirit of lust or fornication possessed his mind. He was a free man!

Show me any minister - or any believer - who tells dirty jokes, makes sexual innuendoes or has roving eyes, and I'll show you someone whose heart has not been cleansed!

You may sit in church thinking you worship God from a pure heart. Yet if you go to your job and a stream of unclean talk springs out of you or if you even give ear to dirty jokes then you give credence to filth!

God says, "I won't have it! If you are going to walk blameless before Me, you're going to have clean ears, a clean heart and a clean tongue!"

3. To be blameless is to be without guile. *"Our exhortation was not... in guile"* (verse 3).

The Christian without guile is not clever, crafty or manipulative. He has no hidden sin or hidden agenda. He is totally honest and open!

Yet the church today is filled with manipulators - in both pulpit and pew! These people work to have their own way - not through the power or leading of the Holy Spirit,

but through the cleverness of their minds.

Paul said, "I didn't manipulate you into the kingdom of God. I didn't use clever words or try to play on your feelings. I gave the Gospel to you straight!"

Paul never played word games; he never used psychology to get people to like him. Can you imagine the apostle Paul going around to people in the congregation, hugging them and putting on a forced smile, wanting to be admired and accepted? Never!

Paul said, "*We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children*" (verse 7). But when sin came in, he rebuked it with thunder from out of heaven! He didn't desire or need the approval of any man, yet he loved people with all his heart.

"Neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness... Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others" (verses 5-6).

Paul didn't seek personal recognition from any person. Rather, he was always mindful that God was watching him and checking his motives. So he abstained even from any "*appearance of evil*" (5:22). He lived as if Jesus were coming within the hour!

Now, to be sure, there are many sinners who could meet all of these standards of behavior. No matter how wicked this generation is, there are still people who don't manipulate and aren't driven by sensuality. Their language and morals are clean; they are without guile and deceit. They possess a moral power, because their goodness creates a dignity and strength of character. Often these people are exalted by others.

But the fact remains - they have no power with God!

For example, the rich young ruler who came to Jesus measured up to these standards. He had been good from his youth upward. And that won him the love and respect of Jesus.

But something was lacking. And that one thing makes all the difference! Paul said, "All of the good qualities in my life - all of these godly characteristics - are

based on one rock-solid purpose in me. It is what keeps me from sin, corruption and deceit."

Beloved, if you don't have this same purpose operating in all you say and do, you can never be blameless before God and man: "*That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in (me)*" (2.THES 1:12).

Here is what motivated Paul to live a blameless life: He was jealous for the glory and name of Jesus! He knew everything had to be built on that foundation - because all human goodness is as filthy rags!

Indeed, this is what distinguishes the blameless walk - a consuming desire to honor the name of Jesus before all men! Such believers would rather die than do or say anything that would bring reproach on the Lord. They are not perfect - they still battle the flesh - but now they are pursuing the righteousness of Christ by faith.

Perhaps you've already said to your heavenly Father, "Lord, I lay down my sin - I lay down all iniquity and sensuality. I want only to walk blameless before You. I want to please You and bring glory to Your name.

Here are three things you can expect to happen in your life:

1. The First Thing That Happens to a Blameless Believer Is He Gains the Favor of God!

The bride in Song of Solomon was consumed by love for her beloved. And because of this, she said, "*I was in his eyes as one that found favour*" (SOS 8:10).

Indeed, God promises wonderful favor to the blameless believer: "*Keep my commandments...let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and men*" (PROV 3:1-4).

God is saying, "If you set your sights to walk blameless before Me, you'll walk in My favor. You will be pleasing unto Me!"

Oh, the greatest joy you could ever have as a Christian is to go through life knowing you're pleasing to God! The Lord won't

have to hide His face from you or shed a tear over you - because you do not bring shame or reproach to His holy name. Instead, you bring glory to Him - and He is pleased!

But that's not all. God's favor also includes power! Paul said, "*For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance*" (1.THES 1:5). **His favor brings the power of the Holy Ghost to all you say and do.** Your words will not fall to the ground - because they will have Holy Ghost power! (see 2:1).

Paul said those Holy Ghost-empowered words produce great results: "*And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost*" (verse 6).

Why were Paul's words so powerful, so effective? Because, he says, "*(We) were [examples] to all that believe*" (verse 7). It was not Paul's preaching nor his praying alone that won people to the Lord. It was his exemplary life! God had in Paul a clean heart - one He could favor with the power of the Holy Ghost!

God's divine favor also brings high esteem among men. It is written of David: "*David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed*" (1.SAM 18:30, NAS). "*And the fame of David went out into all lands; and the Lord brought the fear [respect] of him upon all nations*" (1.CHR 14:17).

The man who protects the name of Jesus by living holy before others will be given a good name before them - by God Himself!

I have heard some Christians say, "I don't care about my name. It doesn't matter what people think of me. I just want to be an unknown, a nobody. Let the Lord have all the glory."

That may sound humble - but it is not, according to Scripture! The Bible says, "*A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold*" (PROV 22:1).

A good reputation is a coin to be spent for God's glory. It is to be used to impact people and nations. And God gives the righteous a good name so they can use it to glorify Him in greater measure!

2. The Favor and Blessing God Pours Upon a Holy Life Results in a Disturbing, Repelling Power!

When you set your heart to walk blamelessly before God - laying down your besetting sins, living in a way that's pleasing to the Lord - you will be feared and despised by those who have lost the favor and blessing of God. Lukewarm or compromised Christians will be absolutely disturbed and repelled by your life!

We see this illustrated vividly in 1 Samuel:

"And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul.... And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him. Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him" (1 Samuel 18:12-15).

David's blameless behavior struck fear in Saul's heart! Whenever Saul was around David, he remembered the time he had enjoyed the favor of God and the high esteem of men. But disobedience, envy, pride and self-will had cost Saul every bit of power with God. And it robbed him of all respect of the people.

Now Saul had come face to face with a younger man - a less experienced, probably less articulate man - who exuded the power and integrity of holiness. He was pure in heart, full of the Holy Ghost. And Saul was afraid of him!

Keep in mind, this was no idolatrous Canaanite who was afraid of David. No - Saul was a man who had known the power of the Holy Spirit! He stood head and shoulders above David. And he had been God's anointed. He once was a mighty man, chosen of God!

Sadly, Saul represents the compromised church today - those Christians who have compromised and lost the anointing of God. He is a type of believer who once was full of the Holy Ghost, baptized, on fire for God. But disobedience, pride and lust robbed him of everything he once knew of God!

Now, David was simply living a clean life - and God was pouring out favor upon him! *"All Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them"* (verse 16) David walked before the people as a defender of God's holy name.

They remembered his battle cry when he slew Goliath: *"I come to thee in the name of the Lord!"* (17:45).

But Saul didn't want to be around David! Scripture says, *"Therefore Saul removed him from him"* (verse 13). He became so disturbed and envious of David's closeness to God, he threw a javelin at him. Saul even used his own backslidden daughter to try to ensnare David. He became consumed with a passion to destroy David and his good name!

I tell you there is nothing scarier to a compromised Christian than a holy blameless life! And the more your life lines up with the Lord's will and His holiness, the more repelling you will become to backslidden believers.

Your worst opposition will come from within the church of Jesus Christ - from compromised people who have secret sins they don't want to give up! They will call you legalistic, unbalanced, strange. They will attempt to disgrace you, to destroy your name and your blameless walk before God.

These are Christians who no longer walk in God's favor. They have no power of the Spirit on them. Their words are like feathers - weightless, bearing no spiritual authority. Nothing they say has any impact, because they have lost the power and presence of Jesus. And your holy walk will disturb and repel them!

You won't have to say anything to them. They'll simply see your blameless walk with the Lord, and it will be as a prophet's holy finger, pointing to their heart. And they will fear, envy and hate you!

You may say, "I haven't experienced such rejection. My church is full of saints who highly esteem me and stand with me. Is it because I'm not living a blameless life?"

No - it is probably because you are sitting among other blameless believers! But go back to your old, dead church - and tell them how Jesus has become real to you. Wait till they discover you don't sit in front of a TV and pollute your soul... you don't engage in filthy conversation... you love to go to every church service - you pray, worship and soak in God's Word.

They will give you the "good-bye" hand of fellowship! They will be repelled by you, they will despise you. And when you leave, they'll look at each other knowingly and say, "Boy, has he gone off the deep end. What a fanatic! He's no fun - he's too spaced out."

"They shall separate you from their company" (LK 6:22). Why? Because your life will have convicted them of what they once had - and what they now have lost!

Paul experienced this kind of rejection because of his uncompromising walk with God. He wrote to Timothy: *"All they which are in Asia be turned away from me"* (2.TIM 1:15). He wrote to the Colossians from prison that he could name only two or three who were a comfort to him: *"These only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me"* (COL 4:11). And in another letter to Timothy, he wrote, *"No man stood with me, but all men forsook me"* (2.TIM 4:16).

I ask you - **are you willing to pay that kind of price to have the favor of God in your life?**

Yet, if you do choose to live a blameless life, even the ungodly will esteem you highly. They'll point to your life and say, "That's what Christianity ought to be."

And likewise, the truly righteous ones in the church will flock to you. They'll say, "I like being around you. There is something comforting and refreshing about you. God is with you!"

3. Finally, God Favors The Blameless Believer with a Power of Proper Focus!

Once you enter into a blameless walk with the Lord - living above reproach, holy and unblamable - the Holy Ghost bestows on you what I call "the power of proper focus!"

Paul's blameless life brought him into a spiritual focus such as God desires for every member of His body. In a letter to the Thessalonians, Paul makes one of the most powerful statements in all his writings:

"For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord" (1.THES 3:8).

Do you know what Paul is saying? He's claiming, "I get my joy, my life, my greatest blessing, from seeing you grow in Christ!"

At one time, if I were asked about my spiritual focus, I would have answered, "I really live - I really get my joy - when I walk in victory. When I know I'm living an overcoming life, standing fast in the Lord, then I'm happy. I rejoice in knowing I'm not in sin!"

But that isn't what Paul said. You see, he had already worked through all of that. He didn't live his life focused on some sin or problem.

Yet most Christians today spend their entire saved lives focused on their own sin. Many have battled lust, perversion, fornication or addictions for years! They have victory in every area of their lives but one or two. And they are literally consumed by those remaining few!

They are spiritual cripples - powerless, full of guilt, living as a slave to their sin. And they have narrowed their focus to one question, one concern: "How will I ever become free of this?"

Such Christians derive their greatest joy and peace from gaining victories in their personal walk. But they have no vision for the church the lost or the eternal purposes of Jesus Christ!

Paul said he *"always labour[ed] fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God"* (COL 4:12). He wasn't interceding for himself or his own needs. He said: "Night and day I labor in prayer for you. I want you to stand complete in the will of God!"

Dear saint, complete victory is yours if you really want it! **God does want you finally free - free to live for others, to minister to others, to help others into blamelessness** - to rejoice over the work of the Spirit in the whole

body of Christ, and not just in yourself!

Paul believed that a blameless life changed a person's focus - from always looking inward, to looking instead to the needs of Christ's church and the world.

I ask you - when you sit in church and see someone you've been witnessing or testifying to, can you rejoice because you see victory coming into that person's life? Is your whole joy focused on that one lost soul? On that suffering elderly person? On Cuba, China, Mongolia?

God has fully provided for us in the sacrifice of His Son, so that we are able to say: "By grace, God has put His fear in my heart. I have forsaken all my iniquities - I am blameless before the Lord. God is my witness!"

Such a thing is possible - for every believer! Paul could say, "Sin no longer has dominance over me - I have laid aside every weight, every besetting sin. I have died to this world, and I die daily to my flesh."

And that is why he did not spend his time groaning over his sins. They were all forsaken! He could now groan over his lost brethren. And he groaned that Christ would come forth in His church!

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy" (verses 19-20).

God did not intend for you to spend the rest of your life fighting some perversion, addiction, adultery or secret sin. No - He wants you to fix your eyes on Jesus! He wants you to say, **"Lord, I'm going to turn my eyes away from my own need and pray for others - even though I'm not yet where I want to be!"**

Victory will come when you start giving yourself to others - interceding for other believers, and reaching out to the lost!

A Blameless Life is Possible - But You Must Desire It With All That Is In You!

First, you must face the utter reality of your condition:

"If I continue in my sinful ways, I'll grow increasingly weak and powerless. I'll no longer enjoy God's favor - I won't be pleasing to Him. And I'll never get the focus He wants to give me. I'll end up like Saul - dead inside, full of hate and envy. I'll go into eternity crying, 'God no longer is with me!'"

You've got to get that honest before God! I cried out to Him, "Lord, send Your Word! Convict me and heal me. Show me how to walk away from all sin!" And God sent this word to me: *"Behold, now is the day of salvation. Giving no offense in anything, that the ministry be not blamed"* (2.COR 6:2-3).

God says, "You can be free now - you don't have to wait!" When He told Israel to sanctify themselves before going into battle, they didn't have to wait a week, a month or a year before they got: clean before Him. They had to begin now, that very day!

"Giving no offense in anything that the ministry be not blamed" (verse 3). Let me ask you: Are you involved in anything that might bring reproach on the name of Jesus? Can you say with Paul, *"I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men?"* (ACTS 24:16).

Set your heart to be blameless now - today! Desire it with everything in you. Soon you will discover God's favor upon your life. Your words and actions will have an impact on others, with Holy Ghost power. And you will find yourself focused totally on Jesus and His desires.

That is blameless living! Hallelujah!

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