

Believing this, your heart must be settled without a doubt, knowing that He did this because He loves you. Make your heart sound, secure, stable, and firm in His grace; that is, be established without question or doubt that He has given us everything we need to live an abundant life in and through Jesus.

If we continue to look at and focus on our shortcomings, mistakes, and sins, instead of Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, our hearts will be sad and powerless to believe we can receive anything from God. It is with the heart that we believe and receive His righteousness and grace. Our hearts must be wholly His. That is when we will be fulfilled and at rest.

“Above all else, guard your heart. For it affects everything you do” (Proverbs 4:23, The Living Bible).

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The Heart Established in Grace

By Wendy Krow

Last night I dreamed about a woman who kept being punished for all the things she did wrong (her sins). A man followed her around, and whenever she would make a mistake, he would shake his head in disgust, take off his belt, and beat her. If she said a wrong word or did something wrong, he'd punish her. She was limping around trying to smile and have a good attitude, but she kept on doing things that would get her in trouble. They were not big things, but every little thing that this man saw her doing wrong would get her a beating. It seemed hopeless. She couldn't keep from doing things that got her in trouble. I remember

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feeling sorry for her. I wanted to help her get away from the mean man who always beat her. And then I woke up.

I started thinking about God's grace, the unearned, undeserved favor and ability of God. When the heart is established in grace, we no longer try to earn God's acceptance through our performance or by trying to keep His Law in our own strength and ability. We are finally able to get away from the beatings we earned from breaking the Law of God. We are rescued by Jesus.

Think about favor. It means getting someone's approval, support, or blessing. When you want someone's favor, what do you do? You try to do and say everything that would please them, and nothing that would displease them. It's acting right all the time. Is that really possible to accomplish? It's like defying gravity. You can do it for a little while, but in the end, you will fail. It's stronger than you are.

I related to the woman in my dream. I've felt like that when I've tried hard to do everything right

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but missed one little detail and failed. I thought that if only I could make it through the day without messing up, I would've accomplished something. But no, my shortcomings always caused me to be imperfect. I thought that not only had I disappointed my heavenly Father, but I would condemn myself and beat myself up. I was self-defeated. I was focused on my abilities and inabilities. Never measuring up, never good enough to make the grade, I needed someone to rescue me!

God in His mercy sent us help; His name is Jesus. God sent Him to deliver us from ourselves and our powerless attempts to fulfill His Law. Jesus took the punishment for the Law we could not keep, so we wouldn't have to die, but could go free and have eternal life with Him. Jesus gave us the gift of righteousness so we could be righteous and holy before God the Father and meet all the requirements of the Law. We have peace with God through what He did for us in His death, burial, and resurrection. We have favor with God, unearned and undeserved. That's grace.

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