

Timothy ... will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

Paul - 1 Corinthians 4:17 (NIV)

In Christ

Or don't you know that all of those who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death...burial...and resurrection.

Paul - Romans 6:3-5 (NIV)

David Kuykendall Ministries

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In Christ Testimony of John Belken

Obey the five commands listed below and experience your life "in Christ." Experience the abundant life through living by grace. Notice that each command is either to believe something or to choose to do something.

THE FIVE COMMANDS

Believe

Romans 6:11

Reckon (believe) yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord

Choose

Romans 6:12

Do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in its lusts

Choose

Romans 6:13a

Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin

Choose/Believe

Romans 6:13b

Present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead.

Choose

Romans 6:13c

[Present] your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

We can and should obey each of these commands because Romans 6:3-5 teaches that all believers have been baptized into Jesus and as a result all believers have been baptized into his death, burial, and resurrection.

John Belken is a member of the State Parole Board in Arkansas. At a very young age, John became a Correctional Officer for the Texas Department of Corrections. After Seminary, God led him to serve in Arkansas as a Chaplain's Assistant and later as a head Chaplain. Prior to assuming his present role on the State Parole Board, John worked several years as an Assistant Warden.

GENESIS 4: 5B SAYS, "So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell."
(New American Standard Version).

As far back as I can remember, I recall having a problem with my temper. I was also very insecure and did not like much about myself. This was due in part to living in a very dysfunctional home. I was raised in an environment of abuse, neglect, a broken home, and other negative things. Being very poor only added fuel to the fire that was raging in my soul. I was ashamed of almost every aspect of my life. Although I was raised in church as a child, I blamed God for my circumstances and often screamed out at Him in rage. It was not unusual for me to use every word of profanity that would come to my mind during my fits of anger.

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As we became older, my three brothers and I were notorious in our community for fighting. My personal reputation was so well known that neighborhood "kids" would come to my house looking to pick a fight with me. Being quick tempered and prideful, I seldom ran from a fight. At times, I was so out of control that it was a miracle that I did not end up in prison.

"After the divorce of my parents and the tragic death of my oldest brother, I began to lose all hope in life. I blamed God for taking my brother and for the despair I was experiencing. The only thing that held me together at the time was my love for sports, especially basketball. I loved basketball so much that it became my "god." Although my heart was in the wrong place, it did prevent me from quitting school.

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Soon after my seventeenth birthday, an older brother began visiting a church in our local area. A few months later, he accepted Jesus as his Savior. Through his influence, I began attending this same church. The members there were extremely loving and kind to me. I continued to attend, both out of curiosity and due to them being so loving to me. I had not felt this kind of love in my seventeen years of life.

At the age of eighteen, sensing the Lord speaking to my heart, I repented of my sins and accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I recall feeling that all of my anger, resentment and bitterness were literally removed from my body. I experienced for the first time that God loved me and had a plan and purpose for my life. For an entire year, I experienced what is referred to as "the Spirit Filled Life." It was by far the greatest year I had ever experienced.

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Continued on back page

After that first year of my life in Christ, I found myself repeating some of the same sins that plagued me prior to becoming a Christian. THIS RESULTED IN my experiencing a great amount of guilt. I WOULD rededicate my life to the Lord and “feel” better for a while. I continued these same actions for the next eight years. I grieved over my life and often wondered if I was truly a Christian. Like the Apostle Paul, “I was not practicing what I would like to do, but I was doing the very things I hated” (Romans 7:15).

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In 1979, God brought into my life my wife, Jean. We were married in May of the following year. In that same year, as a newly wed, I was hired as the Director of Housing at Dallas Baptist University. One of my responsibilities was to hire seventeen employees for the fall semester. Two of the seventeen were a couple by the names of Dick and Carol Tribou who would eventually become very good friends of ours.

During some of our free time, Dick would share with me an approach to living the Christian life that was foreign to me. Dick was sharing with me a message he had learned under the mentorship of David Kuykendall, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church of Oak Cliff in Dallas, Texas.

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Dick talked to me about a book Kuykendall had written titled “Our Oneness With Christ.”

Dick shared that our sin problem was a “know-it-all-attitude” which results in confidence in self.

Being taught that we need self-confidence, I rejected what Dick was teaching. Sadly, I often became angry with him. Fortunately, he was very patient and did not give up on me. During some of our conversations, he invited me to visit Calvary Church and hear David Kuykendall preach. I do not recall all of the events leading up to it, but we did visit Calvary. I recall being not only angry with Dick, but also angry with Pastor Kuykendall. Due to Dick’s persistence, I did return to Calvary and even attended the Sunday school class Kuykendall was teaching.

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After a few months of hearing his teaching, God opened my spiritual eyes to the truths of our oneness with Christ. I discovered that my oneness with Christ is taught throughout scripture. I soon began experiencing the life changing truth that I am one with Christ in crucifixion, burial and resurrection (Romans 6: 3-5).

I experience this truth as I “consider (believe) myself dead to sin—the sin nature—and alive to God in Christ Jesus; I do not let sin—my “know-it-all attitude”—reign in my mortal body that I should obey its lusts; I choose not to present the members of my body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; I present myself to God as being crucified, buried and resurrected, I present my body to God as an instrument of righteousness” (Romans 6: 11-13).

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buried and resurrected, I present my body to God as an instrument of righteousness” (Romans 6: 11-13).

Experiencing my Oneness with Christ changed our marriage of 29 years. It affected the way we raised our two sons. We raised them from God’s point of view! Both sons graduated valedictorian from high school and both graduated with honors from college. Living out my oneness with Christ has affected my relationships with others, especially in regard to my problem with anger. I have believed that I am “dead to anger and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

In closing, let me encourage you to read “Our Oneness With Christ.” You may receive a free copy by going to the Web Site, www.livingbygrace.org. If God so chooses to reveal this message to you and you are open to receiving it, I promise that you will experience the wonderful abundant life our Lord Jesus promised in John 10:10.

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NEW TRANSLATIONS

“Our Oneness With Christ” has recently been translated and printed in three different languages in Burma. It has recently been translated and printed in Nepali for the Christians in the nation of Nepal. Translations into three different languages spoken in India are under way. Several other translations of “Oneness” are in the talking stage.

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