

Freedom's Gate

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My Father is the husbandman

As founders of A New and Living Way Ministry, my wife Anne and I would like to speak a blessing to all of our readers this Christmas season. Our desire for you above all things is that you would experience and know His peace. He is your peace for He is the person of peace. When Jesus spoke peace to the storm in Mark chapter 4, He rendered it unable to speak anymore. It stopped immediately. You see, peace is a force – a violent force that destroys chaos! So we declare **peace** to you in every area of your life and say that all things must be in order. Praise the Lord.

If you have been receiving our newsletters for any length of time, you know we are called to teach about our position in Christ. We use a lot of visual aids, and in particular, the “Bowls” (you may go to our website at www.newandlivingway.org and view the video on the home page).

One of the key scripture portions we use to teach with is John 15:1-8. We find in these verses there are two very distinct positions – You in Christ and Christ in you. Christ in you is your hope of glory, you in Christ is the reality of that glory. Your position in Him is real!

This position is vital for you to know because it affects your whole life. Let's look at John 15:4, 5: “Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he that abides in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

Jesus makes an amazing statement here. He says “Without Me, you can do nothing!” When you study these verses, you find that you cannot bear any fruit unless you are abiding. Now it may seem to you that we say this a lot and you might be thinking, “I have heard this before.....” True, you may have heard it, but are you living it? Are you really abiding daily? Is peace ruling in your life or are you striving and fussing about things? If you are not resting (abiding) then you are trying to do the work of the Holy Spirit. Your part is to abide in Him (rest) and His part is to abide in you. Both parties have a requirement, but we get our parts mixed up sometimes. We try to do His work. Let me say it again; **our part is to rest!** Now that doesn't mean you kick back and do nothing. It means

you give the care of things to Him. When you do, He can speak clearly to you what steps He wants you to take.

2 Corinthians 1:21 tells us that God established and anointed us in Christ. If Christ is your Savior, then you are established in Him and anointed. You are **already** there. Stop trying to get somewhere you already are. Don't be like the two guppies swimming in the ocean; the one looked at the other and said, “I sure hope we can find our way back to the ocean.” Romans 8:9 says you are not in the flesh if the Spirit is in you. If you are not in the flesh, then there is only one other place to be – in the Spirit – IN HIM! Simply receive and accept that!

Now I would like to draw your attention to a very important verse. Most of us read John 15:1-8 and overlook verse 1, which is **so key**. It says, “I am the true vine and My Father is the husbandman.”

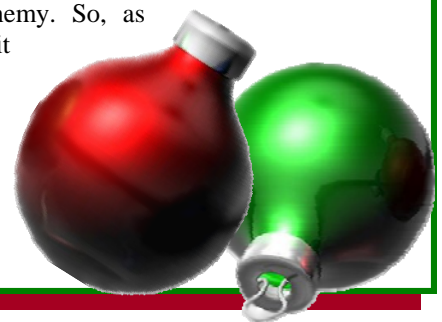
The Lord brought my attention to this and as I began to listen to Him, a whole new revelation began unfolding. You see, you are so far removed from having the responsibility of producing fruit that you must understand it is **grace**, not you! You are in a position of grace being in the vine. Abiding is your **only** responsibility, and it is simply a choice.

Having said that, let me share about the husbandman's responsibility to produce fruit; after all that is **why** He is the husbandman! The husbandman must determine where He wants to plant the vine, that has the branch, that bears the fruit. He knows the kind of fruit He is looking for. It is His responsibility to fertilize it so it will produce what He wants (not the branch!). It is His responsibility to water it, to make sure no weeds are growing near it, stealing its water and nourishment.

You as the branch are not the husbandman. It is the husbandman's responsibility to watch for disease and bugs that attack the vine and branches and keep it from producing fruit. Wow! Things that attack us as branches to stop us from producing fruit are an attack on the vine and even more so, are an attack on the husbandman, not an attack on us.

God is the husbandman, Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. God **knows** what to do with the attacks against Him, Jesus and us. He is not powerless; He knows what to do to free us from every assignment of the enemy. So, as branches, just abide (rest), quit trying to be the husbandman and being something you're not. Be what you already are – a branch in God's vineyard and member in Christ's Body.

experience & know
His
peace



By Cindy Hardisty

for the
Love of Janie

At one of our recent Friday night Bible studies, we were “considering” what the word *worship* meant. The Friday night group comes from a variety of churches and church experiences and, as we soon discovered, has a varied definition of worship. In fact, many times we evaluate churches (I won't say judge) by their worship or lack of worship, based of course on our own ideas. There is the *First Church of the Bulletin*. Everything that happens must be found in the bulletin – a welcome, announcements, three fast songs, one slow song leading into prayer time, a scripture reading, and a message followed by a song that moves the emotions, tugs at the heart strings, and gets the people down to the altar to get their lives “right” with God. Down the street you will find the *Free Spirit Worship Center*. There are no bulletins there. They have been delivered from bulletins. You never know what might happen on any given Sunday, and that's just the way they like it. Around the corner is the *All Things to All People Community Church*. They use the red hymnals and choruses. Their guitar and drum set are right beside the organ. Their style of worship is defined by the song leader of the week.

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Merry Christmas



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It was obvious that we were getting nowhere fast. It was time to pull out the big, red Strong's Concordance to see what the Bible had to say about worship. Checking the Old Testament, we discovered that the first time worship was even mentioned was in Genesis 22:5 when Abraham took Isaac up on the mountain to sacrifice him. That word worship and all the times the word was used in the Psalms of David, referred to bowing down, prostrating oneself as to royalty or a god. Next, we decided to see what Jesus had to say about worship. When talking with the Samaritan woman at the well, he said: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) That word worship had a totally different meaning. It meant to adore, fawn over, kiss – and then I saw it – lick as a dog licks its master!

About eight years ago my husband, Jerry, was taking our daughter, Lindsay, to school. Each morning they would turn at a particularly busy intersection of the farm to Market Road on which we lived and a nearby highway. One morning there was a black chow on the corner. She had been cast aside or at least separated from her owners and was trying to survive in a vacant lot in the middle of speeding cars. The only thing on that corner was an old faded fire hydrant. The chow had imprinted to the hydrant and would not venture far from it. While she was not well groomed and in need of some tender loving care, it was easy to see that she was quite a specimen of dog. Jerry had had a chow as a young boy and loves animals, so it was not a stretch of the imagination to know that Jerry was smitten with this dog. Others tried to capture her, leaving food and water for her as they could. My son, Lyndon, would give his dad daily updates on her as he passed the corner several times a day on his way to and from work. Jerry even managed to get close to her one day with some food, but didn't know how she would respond if he tried to grab her.

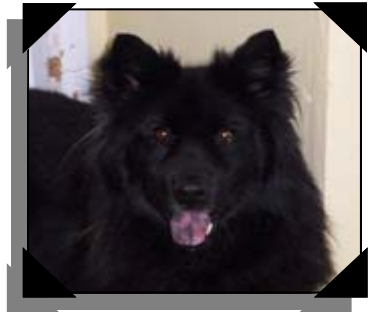
One day she was gone. The family double checked the area to see if she wandered off, even though it is not in a chow's nature to wander. They are very territorial. She was nowhere to be found. Jerry called the local animal shelter, and to his relief, she was there. They had caught her in a trap and were trying to revive her. They told

Jerry that she was not in very good shape and may not make it. He could check back in a few days to inquire of her.

Well, she did make it, and Janey, as Jerry named her, became a part of our family. We already had more than four dogs. (Four is the limit, but we have a hard time saying no to any animal needing to be rescued.) The shelter realized we

were over the limit, but looked the other way so Janey would have a home. She was snaggle-toothed with a doggy overbite, her hair was matted, and she was skiddish, but she was all ours. Chows are known for being one master dogs, and Jerry had become her master. She had exchanged her fire hydrant for Jerry. Everywhere he went Janey was right behind him. At first, he was the only one she would approach. She would allow him to pet her, and she loved for him to play with her. They would play for what seemed like hours, chasing each other around the yard. Eventually, she came to love and accept the rest of us, but it was obvious to all that Jerry was number one in her heart. Janey is older now and has graduated to be a back porch dog. With her coal black hair and our tropical summers, she needed the relief of the air conditioning. From time to time she will quietly sneak into the house and look around for him. If Jerry is not in sight, she will whimper and return to the back porch to try again later. When the family comes home, she will by-pass all of us and head for him, lavishing doggy kisses on him and whimpering as if to say, "I have missed you; I'm so glad you are home."

Jesus said that we were no longer servants but friends. (John 15:15) But if we can ever truly realize what Jesus did for us – rescuing us from our corner of life, saving us from certain death, and adopting us into His family – we can have a greater understanding of Janey's love for her master. When is the last time you lavished your thanks and affection on Jesus? This Christmas season, remember the love of Janey and consider how much more we should show our love for Jesus. Be extravagant! Worship Him!



**Worship
Him**