

## **FOR NICE PEOPLE ONLY!**

I meet all kinds of folks everyday. Some are pleasant and cheerful; some are not. I gave you this booklet because you strike me as someone who likes to make people happy.

For instance, you seem to smile easily and have a friendly outgoing way about you. I'm guessing you try very hard not to get angry or bitter, even when someone has provoked you or hurt you. You probably try not to be greedy or selfish, even when others are obviously looking out only for them selves.

Have I described you so far? Then I was right: you are a nice person, and this booklet will be especially meaningful for you.

## **IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY TO BE NICE, IS IT?**

Nice people I know tell me that if they could just be left alone, they could be pleasant and happy most of the time. But they keep getting bugged by other folks. They are prodded and provoked by inconsiderate actions and hostile remarks, tempted into immoral situations, and forced to insist on their rights to defend themselves from selfish people.

Are you satisfied with how you're doing in the battle to stay a nice person? I considered myself such a person, and just between the two of us I wasn't at all happy with my progress. I knew I was gradually slipping. As I grew older, I was becoming

forgiving, more complaining, more concerned if I wasn't "getting my share."

I finally found out why I was dissatisfied with myself, and the reason stopped me cold. Here it is:

### **I WASN'T AS NICE AS I THOUGHT.**

I began to realize that these selfish concerns of mine were not going away. Something in me was bent on satisfying myself, and that something would not let go.

I tried religion. Maybe you have too. And maybe you too have found that no matter how hard we try to study the Bible or do church things, we still struggle with

- Foul temperament
- Selfishness
- Uncontrollable lust and desires
- Aggression
- Pride
- Inability to forgive and forget.

### **WHAT CAN I DO?**

I knew something was terrible wrong. Try as I might, I still fell far short of being the person God wanted me to be. Then it came to me. To all my other selfish aspects:

- Self-interest

- Self-glory
- Self-opinion
- Self-image
- Self-improvement through self-righteousness.

That's why it wasn't working! God was calling me to deny myself, yet I was compounding the problem by concentrating on improving myself.

The more I tried to improve myself in the eyes of God, the harder it became. The more I would think about giving up smoking, for instance, the more I wanted to smoke. Something was saying to me, "Go ahead and smoke if you want to. You'll never be good enough for God anyway, and your smoking just proves it all over again. You're doomed, so you might as well enjoy yourself."

You see, the selfishness that we were born with cannot be scrubbed away bit by bit until it is finally gone and we are left standing clean in God's sight.

There is only one way to be truly clean. After we realize we cannot make ourselves good enough for Him, He shows us the way. And that way is given to us by God; it is not something we can do for ourselves.

Now this is where Christianity is different. All other religions say, "Do this and this and this and you shall see God." Christianity regards this as **futile**, and instead offers the chance to become a whole new person—to begin again.

## **START ALL OVER AGAIN?**

If you were going to become a totally new and different person, of course, you would have to be born anew, to actually be born a second time. That 's exactly what can happen; you were born once into the flesh. You now can be born into the Spirit of God.

You'll note this is a far cry from the expected answer to the question, "What can I do? Suddenly we're talking not of reform, but of starting all over again as a new person! Not changing our life, but exchanging it, if you will. What an opportunity!

## **IS THIS NEW LIFE REALLY DIFFERENT?**

What makes us think this new person is any different than the old one? Get ready for a surprise. This new person is no less than a child of God! We actually become related to God! We can call God our Father. Where the Old Testament proclaimed God as holy and to be approached with fear, the New Testament revelation is that we can with boldness and confidence draw near to Him and commune with Him as our Father who loves and cares for us.

## **THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE!**

“Ah,” you say. “surely this cannot be. I’m in no way worthy of being God’s son or daughter.”

Now you’ve got it! You’re not worthy, nor can you ever make yourself worthy. God makes it possible out of His grace, not your worthiness.

It is possible because God acted in history to make it possible. God sent forth His son to bring back those who were trying to make themselves acceptable. To those He offered adoption as children of God (Gal 4:4).

So how do we become children of God? Here’s the answer:

*“But as many as received Him (Jesus), and believed in His name, He gave the power to become the children of God, children born not of natural descent not of human decision not of a husband’s will, but born of God.” (John 1:12).*

It all comes down to receiving Jesus, the Son of God into your life. It is not a matter of trying to be a nice person, or shaping up your life, or even saying you’re sorry—but receiving Christ into your life and becoming one with Him.

**THIS DOESN’T MAKE SENSE!**

“What about the 10 commandments and the Golden Rule? You mean it doesn’t matter how I live—all I have to do is receive Jesus?”

Ah, my friend, think of what it would mean to truly **become one with Jesus Christ**, who is God Himself in the flesh. Would your life not be transformed? Would you not expect the power of Jesus—the power that shines so brightly through His ministry on earth—to flow also through you if you were to join with Him?

And isn’t this what you are lacking—the power to change your life? You’ve tried and tried, struggling with your conscience. God gave you that conscience, and now He wants to give you the power to fulfill it. And even more than that, He wants to give you life itself, new life in Jesus.

**WOW!**

**WHAT FANTASTIC NEWS!**

You’re getting it now. The Bible says Christians are clothed with righteousness. They are 100% blameless in the eyes of God!

How can this be? All your life you’ve heard that you can **receive** forgiveness, **receive** the Holy Spirit, **receive** a new nature. But it is more than that. When you accept, totally and without reservation, what Jesus has done for you

on the cross...when you accept that Jesus has born the penalty of your sins through his death...something incredible happens to you.

A Christian is not simply a person who has **received** something. A Christian is a person who has **become someone he was not before**. A Christian is a new person, born again into a different life altogether.

But many Christian beat themselves down every day, feeling guilty about the uprisings of their "old nature." They still see themselves as sinners.

Oh friend! If you have been acquitted by God of all your sins, why do you still call yourself a sinner? Would God have you born again into the same nature you had before?

No, you are a new person, and your mind should be set on the things of the Spirit, not on trying to improve the "old you." (Rom. 8:6)

When you are united with Christ, your human spirit becomes one with His Spirit—and that is the new you! Condemn yourself no longer. When you are in Christ, Jesus, there is no more condemnation! (Rom. 8:1)

Remember this: when a person unites with Jesus the Son of God, he becomes a born child of God, a citizen of Heaven, a divine masterpiece!

As Paul said, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20) And Peter, "we are partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4)

### NOW WHAT?

Receive Him, your savior from your selfish master. Receive His life and His power.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in." (Rev. 3:20)

Have you heard Jesus knocking lately? If you'll open the door that has been shut all these years—not try to remake your life, but just open the door—He will come in.

Pray this prayer, remembering that it is not what you say with your lips but what you believe in your heart that is important to God.

*Lord Jesus, I am selfish and have greatly sinned. I know I must become a new person. I receive you as my Lord and Master right now and ask you to come now and live in me permanently. I want to change masters from my selfish will to Your will. In your Name I pray Amen.*

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