



"Growth begins when we start to accept our own weakness."
—Jean Vanier

14-Apr-17

Why Do We Observe Unleavened Bread? (Part Three)

As we have seen in Parts One and Two, God's instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread emphasize, first, remembering that He is the One who delivers us from sin's grasp, and second, that we are required to eat the Bread of Life—which is truly unleavened. It is only through continually feeding on that spiritual sustenance that we abide in Christ and have access to spiritual strength.

These foundational factors directly affect our responsibility to put out sin and overcome. We saw in [John 6:53-58](#) that, in order to abide in Christ, and He in us, we must ingest and imbibe of Him—His words, His involvement—on an ongoing basis. Building on that, in [John 15:4-5](#), Jesus connects our abiding in Him and His abiding in us with our ability to bear fruit:

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Bearing fruit is another way to describe overcoming. Our Savior points out the impossibility of a branch producing fruit without being attached to the Vine—to Himself, [Jesus Christ](#). He declares that without Him, we can do nothing. In other words, without the Unleavened Bread of Life, *we have no means to overcome*—we are powerless both

to avoid and put out the corruption of sin that leaven represents.

Putting this all together, the spiritual strength required to overcome is a result of eating the Bread of Life continually, and that Bread is available only to those whom He has delivered from spiritual Egypt. But to approach overcoming without that is to imply that we can overcome on our own—thus that we have no need of a Savior after our forgiveness. It is actually self-glorifying and self-righteous to focus more on our own efforts—which *are* necessary to the process—than on what makes our efforts possible in the first place and by whose strength those efforts will succeed.

Consider that during the exodus, [God](#) did not escort the ancient Israelites to the border of Egypt and then leave it up to them to make their way to the Promised Land and conquer it. In the same way, neither does God leave us to fend for ourselves when it comes to preparing to inherit His Kingdom and to overcoming corruption along the way. As the Potter, He is the principal craftsman of our transformation into the spiritual image He desires. The question is, do we trust Him enough to follow His lead, or will we try to find our own way?

As an example, imagine that we notice in ourselves a persistent lack of patience with others in our lives, and we want to get rid of that particular leavening. Currently, Amazon.com lists some 19,000 books on the subject of patience. High on the list is a book titled, *How to Be More Patient: An Essential Guide to Replacing Impatience with Patience*. It seems promising—it has received great reviews—and undoubtedly, the author has some insightful things to say. The word "patience" appears prominently in the title, and since patience is what we are lacking, perhaps we can find our solution in this "essential guide."

Yet, think it through from what God's Word reveals: Unless the author of this book has been given God's Spirit, what he is describing in its pages has only to do with the *human* spirit. Even the most patient, carnal person alive cannot guide us in producing the true *spiritual* fruit that God desires us to possess and display. The human spirit is entirely insufficient for the task.

The patience that God is developing in us is of a far higher quality than the patience that human wisdom can even grasp. So, if we ask God to help us to overcome our impatience—the right thing to do—He will not send us a step-by-step plan for us to carry out. Rather, the Author of the Book will Himself lead us into and through circumstances where *He* will develop His patience in us—because He is the only One who knows what true patience is. Ironically, His means of developing that fruit will not happen as quickly as an impatient person would like. It will happen on the Creator's

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terms, which is why we have to walk by [faith](#) while He does the work ([II Corinthians 5:7](#)).

This explains God's emphasis on overcoming, particularly in the book of Revelation. God does not stress overcoming because we have to *achieve* the Kingdom. There will be no glorying in His presence over our works ([I Corinthians 1:29](#); [Ephesians 2:9](#)). Rather, God is pleased to *give* the Kingdom to those who are victorious through *working with Him*, which is the only way we can be victorious ([Romans 8:31-37](#)). Overcoming points to a smoothly working relationship with our Creator, one that will continue to work for all eternity—and that is what He desires.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, then, does remind us of our duty to put out sin. But even more than that, it is a joyous memorial of the spiritual deliverance that has been given and the salvation that comes through the Bread of Life that sustains us all the way through the sanctification process—as long as we continue to feast on Him.

- David C. Grabbe

World News Highlights

[Terrifying Moment One of Two ISIS Suicide Bombers Detonates Outside Egyptian Church](#)

The Daily Mail 09-Apr-17

[Erdogan's Latest Power Grab Antagonizes Christians](#)

Newsmax 13-Apr-17

[Japan Relying for N. Korea Emergency](#)

The Japan News 13-Apr-17

[Us Drops Largest Non-Nuclear Bomb in Afghanistan After Green Beret Killed](#)

Fox News 13-Apr-17

[Russian Humanoid Robot 'Fedor' Learns to Shoot Using Both Arms](#)

Sputnik News 14-Apr-17

[U.S. May Launch Strike if North Korea Reaches for Nuclear Trigger](#)

NBC News 13-Apr-17

[The Latest: Russian Lawmaker: Us Bigger Threat Than N. Korea](#)

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Associated Press 14-Apr-17

[Russia Says Evidence Growing Syria Chemical Attack Was Staged](#)

Bloomberg 14-Apr-17

Prayer Requests

New prayer request updates have been posted for the following people:

[Deborah Clinton](#)

[Al Ferke](#)

[Shirley Hunt](#)

[Mary Lambert](#)

[David Schuff](#)

[Rachel Todd](#)

[Joni Widmer](#)

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[The Vinedresser - Revisited](#)

by Clyde Finklea

Clyde Finklea revisits the interpretation of John 15:2, which reads in most translations, "every branch that does not bear fruit, He takes away." This is assumed by many to mean "get rid of." Dr. Bruce Wilkinson, in his book, *The Secrets of the Vine*, explains that "takes away" should be more properly rendered "take up," deriving from the tendency of new grape vines to bend down and become covered with dirt. Vineyard owners in northern California explained to Wilkinson that a branch is too valuable to simply discard, but would be washed off and lifted up, tied to a trellis to enable exposure to sunlight. If a vinedresser lifts up a vine, securing it to a trellis or pole, it is because it is fruitless. Once it begins to bear fruit, it is then pruned for the purpose of bearing more fruit. As God's called out ones, we need to be able to distinguish between punishment for wrong-doing and pruning for greater growth, something which Job's 'friends' had to learn the hard way. As products of God's workmanship, we endure His discipline, producing quality fruit to glorify Him.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Fruit of the Spirit: Patience](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

From the Bible's perspective, patience is far more than simple endurance or longsuffering. The patience that God has shown man collectively and individually gives us an example of what true, godly patience is. It is this kind of patience that Paul urges us to put on as part of the new man.

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study will be **Hebrews (Part 10)**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh** on **Friday 14-Apr-17**. The Bible Study will be continuously available from **6:00 pm Friday** until **12:00 pm Saturday (EST)**.

Daily Audio Programs

Hear previous sermons, sermonettes, and Feast of Tabernacles messages, **Sunday through Friday**. [Available from the homepage.](#)

Date	Title
Sunday 16-Apr-17	Is the Cross an Acceptable Symbol?
Tuesday 18-Apr-17	Jehoshaphat
Wednesday 19-Apr-17	Je Suis Reconnaissant
Thursday 20-Apr-17	Reconciliation (Part One)
Friday 21-Apr-17	Eden, The Garden, and the Two Trees (Part 2)

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