

God's Love And Teachings For His Children

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What I am going to speak on today is about a gift I received by two of my good friends, John and Mary Hoffman. They sent me and many other brethren an encouraging plaque entitled “Christ’s Sacrifice for our Sins.”

Now you and I make all kinds of statements and say things that we probably should not. Things like “I can’t forgive myself,” or “I’m not smart enough,” or “I can’t manage.” We are going to start with a statement we have all probably said a number of times. You and I say, “It’s impossible.” Have you ever said that? But God said all things are possible for His children.

Luke 18:27 But He said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”

You and I are with God. We are His children. Remember, as we go through this sermon, who we are and who we belong to. We are God’s children.

Jeremiah 32:17-18 ‘Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them—the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the Lord of hosts.’

Everything is possible with God. The problem is nothing is possible without God. And on top of that, God shows us kindness or grace it says in verse 18. He shows it to who?

Exodus 20:6 But showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

God is talking about His children, you and me, in this verse. We are the ones who keep His commandments. That is who He is showing love and kindness to.

Now when Ian, my youngest grandkid, was about 5 years old, Nick Weis, my dumpster diving son-in-law, dove into a dumpster behind K-Mart, (if I remember correctly) and got a bike for Ian. So I told Ian that I was going to teach him how to ride a two-wheeler. Well, Ian was excited, he could not wait. He kept saying, “Come on Papa, show me how to ride! Let’s learn how to ride, let’s get out there and ride.”

Now I taught my three kids how to ride their bikes. My kids learned to ride their bikes in California so they had the luxury of sidewalks to ride their bikes on and when they fell over, they would usually fall on the grass or into the bushes. In Oregon where I live, there are no sidewalks in my neighborhood, so the kids learn to ride their bikes on the street or the asphalt. Well, when they fall over, they get scraped up.

So I put Ian on his new used bike and he took off with a little push from me. He was very wobbly, you can imagine that. And he was jerking the handlebars back and forth. He turned the bike straight

toward the curb across the street and before I could catch him, he hit the curb straight on. Well that launched him over the handlebars and onto the grass. He did not fall on the concrete or the asphalt.

Of course, he started to cry and whimper, and he said “Papa, I can’t do this, It’s is too hard. I don’t want to do it.” He did not say it was impossible because he did not have that word in his vocabulary at that time, but that is exactly what he meant. “This is impossible, grandpa; I don’t want to do it.” Well, I got him up, and I said you are ok and I put him back on the bike and it took us three or four lessons over the next three or four days and a few scrapes, a little bit of blood, to teach him how to ride a bike.

Who have I taught to ride a bike? My kids and my grandkids. Nick Weis taught Noah and Sofia how to ride their bikes, his kids. Who did I help with their schoolwork? My kids. Who did I teach to swim? My kids. Who did I teach to drive a car? My kids. I have also had the fun of starting to teach Noah how to drive a car. We started his driving lessons when he was twelve years old. We would go early Sunday morning to the Clackamas Community College when there were no other cars around and Noah would drive around the college. He is getting to where he can drive pretty good now that he is 14.

Now I have never taught *any* of the neighborhood kids to ride a bike, swim, or drive a car. I only teach my children and my grandchildren how to do things and the way our family works. Not the neighbor kids.

Who is God teaching His ways and laws to? He is teaching *His* children, not the children of this world. He picked us and we were born into His Family at baptism. What a fantastic blessing! That is why all things are possible for us. We have God, our Father, looking over us and teaching us. He is with us all the time.

Now here is something else you and I say. You and I say, “I’m afraid.” But God says I have not given you a spirit of fear.

II Timothy 1:7 (AMP) For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control.

Now I really do not want to get into the Chinese flu. I think Richard and others have done a really good job at calming us all down. But a number of brethren were scared, even petrified, of this flu. If we, the Family of God, were that scared of the corona virus, how will we react to the seven seals in Matthew 24 and Revelation 6 and the seven last plagues, the trumpet plagues in Revelation 16?

Brethren, do we have faith in the leader of this Family we have been born into? Do we realize that when we were baptized, we became a part of the Family of God? God is the leader of the Family we are now a part of. Do you and I, as parents and grandparents, protect our children? Well, of course we do. We will do anything for our kids and grandkids. We love them. Well, God loves His children to. You and I are children of God so why do we get so concerned with everything that comes down the pipe? We as God’s children should be confident that no matter what happens in our lives, God is with us, He loves us, and whatever it is it is for our good.

Isaiah 41:10 “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God [your Father], I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

Now I am not telling you to be stupid with the Chinese flu. I am not telling you to go fly to Europe or get on a bus with twenty people or anything like that. But I am saying do not be fearful or overly concerned, live your life. Our Father is with us.

Deuteronomy 31:6 “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”

How much confidence and faith do we have in God, the Father of this Family we have been blessed to be a part of?

Joshua 1:9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

What a blessing we have of being kids of God. And that is what we are, we are the very kids of God.

Proverbs 3:24-26 When you lie down, you will not be afraid; yes, you will lie down and your sleep shall be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror, nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; for the Lord will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught.

If we as God’s children have faith and confidence in the Father of this Family, we should not be afraid. We should be able to sleep like babies. Our Father is with us, so be of good cheer, brethren.

Now here is another thing that we say, “Nobody really loves us.” Have you ever said that, how many times have you said that? Nobody loves me. But God says, “I love you.”

John 3:16 For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life.

If God loves the world that much, brethren, how much does He love His chosen children—you and me? We belong to an incredible family, the Family of God. Our blessings are tremendous.

Hosea 2:19 And I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy.

The book of Hosea is directed to the northern kingdom of Israel, we all know that. And the northern kingdom of Israel never had a good king and they sinned greatly. So this passage shows how much God loves Israel after all their sins and shortcomings and rebellion against God the Father. He still loves them. If He loves *them* this much, how much does He love us?

Now in my experience in the church, our Father works with us fully in our conversion like we work with our kids when they are little. When our kids are little, we teach them to have faith and trust in us and we teach them to know that we love them no matter what. We do this in a whole array of ways. We feed them when they are hungry. We tell them when they are little and cannot swim, to jump to us in the pool and we catch them. We teach them to swim they trust us not to drown them.

We teach them to drive a car and they have faith in us that we are not going to get them killed. We teach them to roller skate, and we hold onto them so they do not fall down and get skinned up. We buy them clothes and toys and we show them that they are loved. As the years roll by, our kids grow in confidence, trust, and faith in us. A lot of this faith, trust, and love is built in them early on in their lives.

God kind of works with us the same way. Now I'm going to share one of my many ways God built faith and trust and confidence in Debbie and my lives when we were young and in the church. In 1975; Debbie became part of the Family of God in early 1970, I became part of the Family of God late 1970. So we were both really young at that time in the faith.

I married Debbie when she was 16 years old and we had our first child when Debbie was 17 years old. Now Debbie's weight all of her life was 135 to 140 pounds. Debbie was not a big girl. Our first girl Michelle was a big old ape at birth. She weighed 9 lbs. and 8 ounces and all the nurses in the hospital was talking about this big baby. Now all three of our kids were born in Lakewood General Hospital, which is a very small community hospital. One of the nurses said that a baby weighing 9 lbs. 8 ounces was very close to being the biggest baby ever born in Lakewood General.

Two years later we had J.B., another big old ape. He weighed 10 lbs. and 4 ounces. The doctor then told us not to have any more children because Debbie was a diabetic and each child would be bigger, and the chances were pretty great that she could die at birth of another child. Well, 8 years went by and then guess what happened. We had a whoops. In 1975, only 5 years after our baptism, early on in our conversion, we had our third child. This kid was not a big old ape. This kid was a full-grown gorilla. She weighed 14 lbs., 2 ounces and she was premature. Go figure!

Not too long after the birth of Nicole, our doctor, who knew us well, and had delivered all three of our kids, came into Debbie's room with bad news. He said this child is very sick. He said she had a hole in her heart, she had a very significant heart murmur. He said she had way too many white blood cells, he said she was jaundice, and I cannot even remember all the other problems that he said she had. He also said that we probably would not be able to take the baby home for months, maybe even as long as six months.

Well, Debbie said to me from the hospital bed, "Call Mr. Ritenbaugh and get Nicole anointed." Well, Mr. Ritenbaugh was not even our minister at that time. He had not been our minister for 3 years. So I called Mr. Ritenbaugh and Mr. Ritenbaugh being Mr. Ritenbaugh said he would anoint Nicole. And he did not only say that. He went over and above and said he was calling his congregation and ask them to pray for the baby.

Our doctor was in a conference with a heart doctor and a blood doctor the next day. The next day, our doctor came into Debbie's room and he said that they, these three doctors, had never seen a baby with so many problems and have them just disappear overnight. The doctor said that Nicole now had a perfect blood count and she was not jaundice anymore.

Then on the next day (I think it was on the third day), the doctor told us that they could not find a hole in her heart anymore or any other problems. And the doctor said they had never seen anything like that before in their lives. Then he told us we could take Nicole home. He also said that he was going to send an RN to our home to check Nicole out every three months. Now each time the RN came out, she would say, "This kid is just fine." The fourth time she came out, at the end of a year, she told us, "I'm telling the doctor that I don't need to check this baby out anymore." She said, "This kid is perfectly healthy." And that was the end of that.

Is this not how we work with and teach our children when they are very young? When we are fairly new in the Family of God, God seems to really build our faith and really show us His love and concern for us.

At this time, Debbie and I had only been in the Family of God about five years, like I said, we were new to the church. Now I am not telling you that God does not do things like this or work miracles when you have been in His Family for years. He does brethren, He does. His love is so great for us that He is working with us and helping us toward His Kingdom every minute of every day. God *is* love and we are His kids. We are so blessed brethren.

Romans 5:8 (AMP) But God shows and clearly proves His [own] love for us by the fact that while we were still sinners, Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) died for us.

Ephesians 2:4 (AMP) But God—so rich is He in mercy! Because of and in order to satisfy the great and wonderful and intense love with which he loved us.

We are His kids, brethren. We are much loved. And the only way we could lose this love would be if we returned to the father of this world, Satan.

Now you and I say this too. We say, "I can't do it." Have you ever said that? But God says you can do all things.

Philippians 4:13 (AMP) I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency].

We say we cannot do it. But God says He is with us and all things are possible for His kids.

Isaiah 40:29 (AMP) He gives power to the faint and weary, and to him who has no might He increases strength [causing it to multiply and making it to abound].

I had a very good friend of mine back in 1973 or 1974. He was my age and He had been chosen by God to be part of the Family of God. He taught me a lot about the Bible and God's way of life and I really miss this guy. One day he came to me and he said these very words. "I can't do this anymore." He was talking about the Sabbath and the holy days, the Feast of Tabernacles, Christmas, and Easter, and living in the Family of God. And then he and his family left God's church. They trampled all over the blood of Christ. This is what he said to me, "If the whole world was living God's way of life instead of Satan's way, I could also do it," he thought. But they were not, so he felt he could not live God's way either. It was way too hard he thought, and they left, like I said.

Acts 6:8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.

Stephen was flesh and blood just like we are, brethren. He was close to his Father God through prayer and Bible study and the Holy Spirit. He was able to do great wonders and miracles. He was full of faith, and he could do wonders and miracles among the people because of his great faith because the Holy Spirit was strong in him.

Brethren, we are God's children. All things are possible with God. God empowers us through His Holy Spirit. We are so blessed, yet we think that so much of life is hard, impossible, and nobody loves us. But we are wrong.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Now do you realize what God is telling us in this verse? He is telling us that we have been given the Holy Spirit. We are His children and we can do it. All things are possible for us. We possess the Holy Spirit. Brethren, Satan's followers do not have the power of God. They do not have the Holy Spirit, but we do. There is a big difference.

Ephesians 1:4 Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

In verse 4, God is telling us just how much we are blessed, and boy, we are blessed. Yet we say we cannot do it. Oh yes, we can.

Ephesians 1:5 Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

Wow brethren, we are so blessed. We are the kids of God and we can do everything with and through Christ. Brethren there is nothing too hard for us. God loves us, we are His children.

Now here is another one. You and I say, "It's not worth it." But God says it will be worth it.

Romans 8:28 (AMP) We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose.

Romans 8:18 (LNT) What we suffer now in this life is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later.

Now years ago, a man in God's church again, worked for Speed's Towing and I think he was making about fourteen dollars an hour. He had a wife and two little kids and he did not own a house and he was struggling financially. And I really liked this guy. He is still in the church. I wanted to get him into the sheet metal trade. So I talked to him about getting into the trade. And he told me, "It wasn't worth it." See, we have all said that.

He said it was not worth it, because he would have to take a cut in pay of about five dollars per hour, as he would be starting out as an apprentice. I told him within two years he would be making more than fourteen dollars per hour and in four years when he became a journeyman, he would be making double what he was making at Speed's Towing. He would also have retirement, dental care, fantastic health care, doctor care, and he would get holiday pay. And after a lot of talking and reasoning with him, he became a sheet metal apprentice and he still works in the trade today. He was able to buy a house and he and his family do quite well.

Now you will never be rich working in the construction trade, and that is not what I am telling any of you. But you can live a decent life. We as humans think a lot of things are not worth the time and the trouble, even God's way of life in some cases. We even think His laws are not worth it either.

Malachi 3:17 "They shall be Mine," says the Lord of hosts, "on that day when I make them my jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."

This way of life in this present world is difficult. I know that. You and I suffer many trials and temptations. I know that too. We are fighting an uphill battle every day. It is easy for us to say, it is not worth it. Really easy, brethren. God is telling us here in Malachi 3:17, that He will acknowledge us as His followers because we departed from evil, because we exhorted one another, and because we taught God's Word and laws to one another.

Brethren, what we all go through in this present life, is worth it. It really is. What the future holds for us is *unimaginable*. Now these next two verses are what makes this struggle we are now going through in this present life all worth it.

Matthew 13:43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear!"

He even gives us a warning there. He says if you are listening to what I am going to give you, have ears to hear.

II Corinthians 6:18 "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

Brethren, everything we go through in this present age is well worth it.

Here is something else that you and I say, "I'm always worried and frustrated." Have you ever been frustrated and worried? God says cast your cares on me.

I Peter 5:7 (AMP) casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.

Now I had a friend, in the church again, who was full of anxiety. This guy was as negative as they come. In fact, we use to call him Negative Norm. He was concerned about everything and he was down and worried all the time. He was *extremely* negative.

Now one time he wanted to go with me to a swap meet. He had some household stuff he wanted to sell. One of the many things that I had for sale, when we were unloading the truck, was a brand-new

cloths hamper. It was still in the original box, and I do not even remember where it came from, but it was the wrong color for our bathroom. My friend looked at the hamper and he said, "How much do you want for that?" He had interest in it, he liked it. He said it was the perfect color for his bathroom. I said, "Take it, it's yours, you can have it."

He said something I have never forgot. This is how down and negative this man was about everything. What he said made me laugh as I had never heard anyone say that before. He said, "The new hamper would look like a pearl in a pig snout in my house." Now his house was just an average home. I had been in it. It would not look like a pearl in a pig snout. His house was nowhere near what he would lead you to believe. He did not take the hamper no matter what I said that day.

Brethren, you and I should not have anxiety, worry, and concerns and be full of negativity. We are the children of God; we are His kids. He is with us and looking out for us. Do we not as parents look out for our kids when they become anxious and concerned about something? Do we not as parents take care of their worries and their troubles? Well, our Father God does the same for us when we go to Him with our concerns and our worries.

Psalm 55:22 Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

That is a blessing, brethren.

Matthew 6:30 (NLT) "If God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won't He more assuredly care for you, O men of little faith?"

Another warning to us, brethren. Do not be upset, do not get yourself all crazy. He loves the flowers of the field, but He loves you and I more. When God says, oh "men of little faith," He is rebuking here, brethren. He is rebuking doubt, He is rebuking reasoning. God is telling us that we are in good hands, we are in His hands.

I John 3:1 (AMP) See what [an incredible] quality of love the Father has given (shown, bestowed on) us, that we should [be permitted to] be named and called and counted the children of God! And so we are! The reason that the world does not know (recognize, acknowledge) us is that it does not know (recognize, acknowledge) Him.

This verse talks about who we are, and knowing who we are, the very kids of God. We should not suffer from fear and anxiety that much, knowing who we are.

Now the world should be anxious, absolutely, with what is going on. They should be worried, and they should have great concerns, because they do not know God. Things do not look all that promising for this country. Not us though, brethren. We should have faith that our Father is with us.

Here is another one, you and I say, "I'm not able." But God says, "I am able."

II Corinthians 9:8 (NRSV) And God is able to you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

Psalm 121:3-4 He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

In these verses, God is telling us He never takes His eyes off of us. Modern day Israel is the church, we all understand that. You see, brethren, God is with us, God is watching over each of us. God is able to take care of us.

Are we as parents able to take care of our kids? Well we can for the most part, so the answer is yes. And we are not able to watch our kids all the time brethren. We watch them really very little of the time. They go to school, they have jobs, they go and they do things. But God is watching us every day, all day long. We should never get down and think that we are not able. We are God's children. All things are possible for us.

Philippians 4:19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

We as God's kids have fabulous promises from God. It is really great to be a kid of God.

Now I would like to look at a few scriptures that show who we are. We are God's kids, or His children.

John 3:10 (NLT) Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things?"

I choose these scriptures because it shows us basically that there are two families living on earth. The Family of God, which we are, and the family of Satan who deceives his kids. So now we can tell who is of the Family of God and who is of Satan. Whoever is living a life of sin and does not love his brethren, shows that he is not in God's Family.

Philippians 2:15 (NLT) So that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.

How much love is the world showing to their brethren in rioting and breaking up each other's property? This verse is telling us who we should live or how we should live, and whose kids we are, and where we live. You and I should shine out to the world as beacons of light.

Galatians 4:6 (AMP) And because you [really] are [His] sons, God has sent the [Holy] Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba (Father)! Father!"

Brethren, we as the kids of God are so blessed it is almost unbelievable. But that does not mean that we will not have trials. We will!

Romans 8:16-17 (AMP) The Spirit Himself [thus] bears witness together with our spirit [assuring us], that we are children of God. And if are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory.

So God is assuring us that we are His children and we are His heirs with Christ. Another great blessing, brethren. We should be so encouraged by these scriptures, but there is more to all of this. Brethren, we are kids of God, but we will have trials, that is a given. Do your kids have trials? Of course they do. They bring a lot of them on themselves and we as God's children bring a lot on ourselves.

But God is always with us no matter what we experience or what we are going through. Just like us as parents we are always there for our kids.

I Peter 4:1 (NLT) So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer too. For if you have suffered physically with Christ, you have finished with sin.

So we will have trials and we will suffer from time to time. That does not change who we are. We are the kids of God and our Father loves us, but God also corrects us from time to time.

Proverbs 3:11-12 My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; for whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.

So as kids of God we are deeply loved and blessed, but we are also corrected, and we will have trials. That is a given. But brethren, we should be so confident in all things as God's kids because God also protects us.

II Thessalonians 3:2-3 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things that we command.

Brethren, we should be so encouraged knowing that we are the kids of God, knowing that God is with us, and knowing that He loves us. We as God's kids should never say, it is impossible, or nobody really loves me, or I cannot do it, it is not worth it, I am afraid, I am always worried and frustrated. We as God's children should not be worried or concerned about any of what I just read to us. From it is impossible to I am worried and frustrated.

Now I want you to think of this. All these things that I went over are about us. They are inward, they are towards us, there is not outgoing concern in any of that. Now in I Thessalonians 5, God tells us what we should be concerned about, what we should be worried about because it should become part of our nature in the things we should be doing.

So in I Thessalonians 5, God is instructing His children and how His Family is supposed to work and act. Just like we teach our kids how to act and behave and conduct themselves in our families. In verse 11, God tells us how to edify one another. In verse 13 it says to be at peace among yourselves. In verse 14 God tells us to support the weak. In verse 15 God tells us not to render evil for evil. In verse 16 God tells us to rejoice because we are His kids. In verse 18 God tells us to give thanks in all things. All of this is outgoing concern. These are the things we should be working on, brethren.

We as God's children should not be worried or concerned about much. We went through a lot of scriptures proving that God is with us and He loves us and we are His children. So don't worry, be happy.