

August-September 2023

# Glory Magazine

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## WELL DONE

Since the inception of *Glory Magazine*, there has been a steady voice ever hovering in the background, “Hello, Friend.” That voice was of Jenny Pfister, Bible teacher and founder of Brushstroke Ministries in Buckhannon, WV. I knew of Jenny; however, the first time I met her was God-ordained and outside our local post office. Since that day, our acquaintance grew, and a unique friendship was struck. One where it was weeks or months in between our texts, calls, or lunch dates, but upon seeing each other, we knew we could be honest with each other and speak our minds on any subject. And oh, how she loved to tell what the Lord had shown her!

She was especially gifted to lead Bible study at the ministry building weekly, along with her weekly TV show. Her ability to paint a picture with scripture (and come up with songs and props to accompany it) and lead one of the most anointed worship groups in the area was not only a joy to partake of, but her passionate love for Jesus was always at the forefront.

It was such a refreshing time in her presence, whether in a group or one-on-one. The joy she exuded as she would offer to pay for another’s lunch or be asked to pray for someone was palpable. You could feel nothing but love for the person and the Lord whom she chose to serve for the rest of her life.

Jenny went home to the Lord on Monday, July 17, 2023, after a sudden illness. Though we cannot see her now, she has left an indelible impression that no one who knew her will forget.

Jenny will not only be forever a part of *Glory Magazine’s* journey, but she has touched so many lives over the years through events, Bible studies, retreats, vacations, books, counseling, teaching, music lessons, and over 500 episodes of her TV series *One Brushstroke at a Time*. I will remember her legacy as an utter and total commitment to her One True Love, her Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Well done, my friend. Well done. I will see you again.

Blessings and honor,

*Angela Errett*

**Jennifer Pfister**  
1961-2023

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*That I may publish with the voice  
of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy  
wondrous works. Psalm 26:7*

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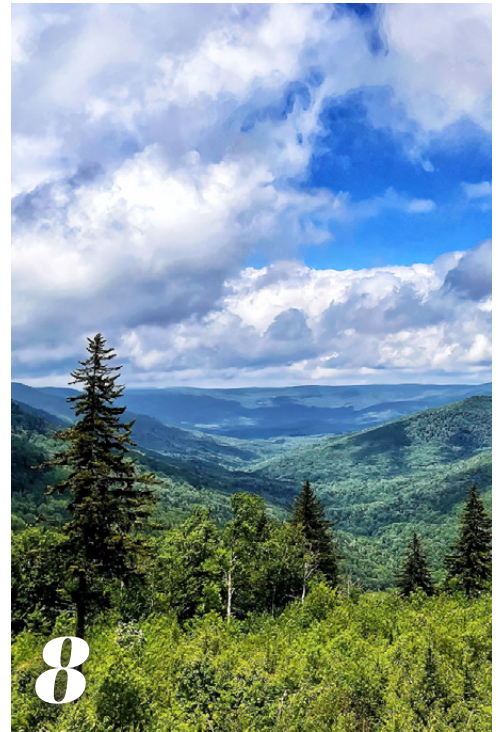


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by Bob Jacobus

# Who Can Hide?

**“Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?”** declares the Lord. **“Do not I fill heaven and earth?”** declares the Lord.

*Jeremiah 23:24 (NIV)*

This scripture arrested me recently. Who can live and not be noticed by God? Who can do good or evil and not be noticed by God? Who is completely safe unless they hide in Christ? Who can help but ponder these fearful and wonderful concepts found in the scriptures?

Everyone, yes, every person who lives, or has lived, is noticed by the

Lord. Whether good or bad, whether just or unjust, whether reconciled or in conflict with God, who can hide? A thought to mull over is God's justice for mankind. The Bible says everyone falls short, so who has a chance? Everyone. The thing is, God provides a remedy that is available to the righteous good and the unrighteous bad in equal measure, the sacrificed

life of Jesus Christ. In all fairness, every person must accept the atonement provided by the blood of God's only generated Son to be reconciled with God. Okay, I will just go to hell instead of accepting Christ, and who will know. The question remains, “Who can hide?” In the last days of Adam and his descendants' time, God has made a judgment day appointment

for every person. No one hides, no excuses, only exemptions if covered by the blood.

In Bible College, money was always an issue. Many students were there on faith, that is, believing God for provision. For the most part, things were very tight. This was just part of the “practical” ministry education. I had a little extra towards the end of a semester and recognized the Lord wanted me to put it on the tuition bill of a young lady anonymously. The registrar clerk conspired with me, and the funds were placed. About a week later, her fiancé told me of the wonderful miracle God had done by providing for his love’s tuition. I had a big smile inside as I said, “Wow!” The neat thing is I was still hearing about that marvel 10 years later. It was no secret to God, and He was reminding me, *who can hide from God?*

The thing about secrets is that no secrets are kept from God. Consider the idea of trespass, a word that can describe any wrongdoing to anybody. Not only does the trespasser fail in hiding from God, but the culprit is usually made known to the victim if that person belongs to the Lord. Case in point: several years ago, my house was broken into while it was under renovation. A tree stand was stolen. The next deer season, a man stopped to admire the work being done on the house; his parents had lived there at one point. I happened to be in a position to see a deer stand in the back of his truck. “I had a deer stand just like that,” I recalled. The man left with great haste. I did not realize it was mine until he was gone;

I could not mistake the brand or the special construction rated at 350 pounds. It probably was God’s mercy on me for delaying the recognition of the trespasser.

There was another break-in during renovation, and many tools, fixtures, and materials were stolen. A couple of years later, a man stopped to ask to go deer hunting. He never got out of his truck, so I had a bird’s eye view of the bed. “I used to have a log chain just like that,” I said. The man replied the chain belonged to his son-in-law and offered to give it to me. He knew, and the whole neighborhood knew the son-in-law was a thief. I declined, but on reflection, I was able, without any doubt, to identify the chain because it had unique connecting links. Again, God’s mercy took the form of slow wit on my part.

FOR YOU DIED,  
AND YOUR LIFE IS  
NOW HIDDEN WITH  
CHRIST IN GOD.

COLOSSIANS 3:3 (NIV)

This reveals the clue on how to hide. The great catchphrase “born again” comes into play. Positionally, one is not dead if born again, and conversely, one cannot be born again unless dead. One’s life in Christ happens at the new birth, but now the issue is that the death of the old man may take a while. Are you not glad that God is willing to hide you while you transition to a new life as

the fullness of Christ takes place? If the old nature rules, then a person is not in Christ and is no longer hidden. A compliant spirit and heart will always keep one in Christ.

The Bible gives direction on how to handle conflicts within the church. If one person sins against another, the victim confronts the transgressor. If that does not resolve the issue, then the victim faces the transgressor again with a couple of witnesses. If there is no remedy, at this time, the offender is challenged in front of the whole church. In order to keep one hidden in Christ, He will also confront a transgressor in private first, with some witnesses if that does not work, and then make a public spectacle as a final corrective measure. Are you not glad we can hide in Christ?

One little hidden concept in all of this is as we conform to the image of Christ, at some point, we begin to behave and live like Him. At some point, we who are in Christ hide others just like our Savior does. We become the rescued who are rescuers, slaves who are freed to become servants, and prisoners who become leaders. God is good to His Word, and a promise is never made void on His part. And if one is hidden in Christ, they are not hidden from God. He sees His dear Son, who emptied himself of glory and experienced mankind’s first birth, death, and the resurrection for all who would only believe and accept. All praise, all glory to our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him, we have an inheritance, a life that cannot perish, spoil, or fade.



# The Duel State of *liberty*

“BUT WHOSO  
LOOKETH INTO  
*the perfect  
law of liberty,*  
AND CONTINUETH  
THEREIN, HE BEING  
NOT A FORGETFUL  
HEARER, BUT A  
DOER OF THE WORK  
THIS MAN SHALL BE  
BLESSED IN HIS DEED.”

*James 1:25 (KJV)*

## WHAT DO WE EDIFY?

What we edify through our liberty can bring us down one of two roads: narrow or wide. The more limited the path, the more it leads us closer to knowing the truth about the world, our part in it while we are alive, and how to operate in our trials and triumphs. However, the wide path can pull us into accepting falsehoods, leaving us wandering in confusion about our existence, thereby leaving us unaware of the reality of our choices and the consequences.

The good news is there is a way to navigate the paths of liberty, bringing us into knowledge and understanding of the smaller path. Those instructions are also freely given. The duality of liberty comes with the constant choice between right and wrong, and by whose definition we choose to define that freedom: the world's definition or God's. This dichotomy is the duel state of liberty. When we set our minds to believe something, the duel begins, and we will either live by faith, listen, and obey that conviction no matter what,

“ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL FOR ME,  
BUT ALL THINGS ARE NOT EXPEDIENT:  
**all things are lawful for me,  
but all things edify not.”**

*1 Corinthians 10:23 (KJV)*

or be willing to question our understanding in search of truth.

### **WHAT IS LIBERTY?**

Liberty is freedom. At its core, liberty is a condition of being completely open and free from any restrictions or anyone's or anything's control within its set boundaries. It's a situation where one can act any way they choose and believe anything. For example, someone in prison can be given the liberty to do certain things within the building they live in but are still bound to their overall restriction from society. They may eventually become liberated, released after serving their time, and given the freedom to do as they choose again.

Liberty can also be abused. When someone overreaches or steps outside of the social acceptance of a thing, taking “liberties” that are known to lead to either harm or destruction, those freedoms, when breached, break down the framework of that socially accepted idea. Case in point, people have the liberty to drink alcohol, but drunk driving leads to destruction. And like a drunk driver who has been incarcerated and returned to society, they can live from this experience in a new way or stay in old habits that will lead back to destruction. This scenario applies to

everyone and everything we choose to do with our version of liberty.

### **WHAT IS EDIFY?**

Edify can mean *tutor, education, and indoctrination*, but in the Biblical sense, it also means *to build, establish and use instructions to improve intellect and morality*. Edify is the root word of *edifice*, an architectural structure, but it can also refer to building a school of thought. An architect is the “chief builder” of whatever is being constructed.

When people edify something, they use what has been passed down their bloodline, what they have been taught and experienced, and what they choose to learn to build their reality. To edify is to establish and develop through instructions. We get to decide if it is for a moral or immoral life, and by living prudently or not, the results will be made known. First, they are usually made known privately, but if these beliefs are challenged and remain, they will manifest publicly.

What happens when the information we have been given is veiled, twisted, or intentionally modified along the path, and what one chooses to edify based on these things takes them down a road which leads to beliefs that are not socially considered moral and breach the

freedoms offered to them? Again, whose definition a person uses for what is acceptable, the world's definition or God's, makes the difference in the answer. The “chief builder” of the person will be the deciding factor on who they edify.

### **HOW TO LOOK AT AND BE A DOER OF THE WORK, NOT MALICIOUSLY, BUT UNTO GOD**

*“As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke [cloak] of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.”*

*1 Peter 2:16 (KJV)*

How could freedom ever be malicious? There are endless ways it can, especially if those offering “free” do so to deceive or enslave a person or a nation. Sometimes false freedom, so well disguised, will fool even the wisest and most knowledgeable people. False freedom can also be achieved through fear and manipulations, playing solely on human behavior. Specifics on this subject would be futile because the world, being set against those things above, actually believes it can win and has endless means of manipulation.

There is a way to override malicious freedoms, but it requires us to be willing to walk that narrow path. This road is easy to explain,

but it is sometimes difficult for our minds to understand. Again, the “chief builder” you choose comes into play. The narrow path is traveled and maintained by building, learning, and relying on God’s instructions. To be a doer of the work is to give our education, our edifying over to the Word of God, Jesus Christ, and allow the Holy Spirit to train us. The wide path of the world, with all its shiny objects, empty promises, and quick fixes, will never edify its Creator. It thinks it will win because it has been given over to its desire to be worshipped as if it were the ‘one true god.’ Only the God of Truth can have that title. *(Sorry, Aquaman.)*

### **THE CONSEQUENCE OF BEING OVERCOME BY LIBERTY AND COMING INTO BONDAGE**

*“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”*  
2 Peter 2:19 (KJV)

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is documented in the Bible, and with the Bible being the most-sold book in the world (around 5 billion), it is safe to say, very publicly known. His words contain all the instructions necessary for us to understand the narrow path which leads to a personal relationship with Him and the Holy Spirit. But what happens when a person or a nation is overcome by the very liberty they have been given? 2 Peter is a place to look for that answer. In chapter one, Simon Peter tells us to look for the truth about Christ in the testimonies of the Apostles and their eyewitness accounts,

as well as the testimonies of the Father and the prophets. Simon Peter says this, *“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”* (2 Peter 1:3-4 KJV). This lust found in the world is a longing, a strong desire for what is forbidden.

We are given the very greatest and most precious promises. Peter lists some essential things that, if found to abound in us, *“they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Peter 1:8 KJV). We are to add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. But, if any are lacking these things, they are blind and have forgotten that they have been purged from their past sins. Edifying faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity keeps us on the narrow path void of laziness, and we yield what we ought to yield.

In chapter two, Peter warns of the false prophets and teachers, who are not moved by the Holy Spirit for their interpretations and knowledge but *“privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction”* (2 Peter 2:1 KJV). Many will follow them on this wide road, coming into bondage and punishment

as they use false reasoning and extortion to make merchandise of those choosing to edify them. These teachers and false prophets will be trading their mesmerized devotees for their own gain. Even though they promise liberty, they are servants of destruction.

*“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”*  
Galatians 5:1 (KJV)

Peter uses Lot, Abraham’s nephew, as an example of the godly: those revering God, respecting and edifying Him. Yes, Lot was in the city and did horrible things, but he knew where his deliverance came from. He was vexed in Sodom and Gomorrah’s broad path, yet his soul was righteous. He was in the world but not of the world. The Lord knows how to rescue the godly, those edifying Him, out of the world’s temptations and its wide path. What an exceedingly great and most precious promise! However, in Genesis 19:17-26 Lot’s wife did not move forward with this knowledge. She looked back when she was expressly told not to, and was turned into a pillar of salt.

*“In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot’s wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.”*  
Luke 17:31-33 (KJV)



## **DISCIPLINE IS KEY**

*“As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believe on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*  
*John 8:30-32 (KJV)*

The law of liberty requires discipline. That discipline, whether defined as a method of gaining obedience to a chosen authority, “the chief architect,” or as a specific branch of knowledge, means there are works to be done. Faith alone has no proof in it. It takes faith cooperating with our works to accomplish righteousness.

For example, Abraham heard God, but his faith was made perfect when he offered up Isaac for sacrifice. And Rahab, the harlot, was justified by being hospitable, sending the messengers out a different way, and avoiding detection. Both of these situations would have been extremely uncomfortable for anyone. However, Abraham and Rahab knew the great promises of God, had faith in them, and chose the righteous path over fear.

The law of liberty found in the world goes something like this: what the world has faith in, it does the work to complete it. The evil spirits also believe but do not have works edifying God. And their works illuminate what they believe to be the truth.

The dual state of liberty requires we not only choose our discipline and our mode of operation wisely but that we simultaneously discipline our mind to follow God’s word if we are to edify Him and be a testimony of His goodness. We are to become disciples of His Word. Once we recognize this key process to accessing the narrow road, it becomes a new way of occupying this world. One where His glory is more important to us than our own comfort or the fear of any man.

*“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he? All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.”*  
*1 Corinthians 10:21-23 (KJV)*

## **CONCLUSION**

The dual state of liberty can be seen all around us today. The expansive road before us keeps increasing its boundaries as the world accepts the craftiness of its god. It may feel as if the darkness is about to envelop those choosing the narrow path by what is seen and heard daily. Still, the duel is not over, and we must continue to seek the truth. We must be aware that we have been given the liberty to do all things but not all things edify righteousness. We are to edify one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11), seek to edify the church with spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 14:5, 12), edify the body of Christ increasing in love (Ephesians 4:12,16), and pursue edifying so it may minister grace (Ephesians 4:29). And, we are to neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith. (See 1 Timothy 1:3)

True freedom can be found on the narrow path. This is the place where mercy, grace, and liberty walk. This is where faith and works cooperate. This is where provision and protection reside. This is where the light of truth abounds; even with a single candle’s flame, the darkness must flee. This is the road that leads to the house of the Lord.



“CREATE IN ME A PURE HEART, O GOD, AND  
*renew a steadfast spirit within me.*”

*Psalm 51:10 (NIV)*

By Al Tucker

## REVEALING God's Glory

Dolly Sods, Tucker County

**Have you ever been to a fete? I am sure you have, but maybe you did not know it. A fete, a rarely used term anymore, is nothing more than an outdoor party, celebration, or festival, sometimes used to honor someone. It was a common term for fun events that I was very familiar with as a young boy in England in the late 1940s and early 1950s.**

One particular fete I attended, probably when I was 10 years old or less, left a lasting impact on me. I have no recollection of the reason for the event, but I do remember there were many children there, and it was held at Major Vickers,

a wealthy landowner's estate. I remember towering trees, a beautifully manicured lawn, and large groupings of shrubbery throughout. Regular townsfolk rarely got to go into Major Vickers' grounds, which had a huge ornate fence around it and whose only access was through a driveway entrance guarded by a beautiful gate. So, there we were playing and, I'm sure, eating when it came time for a pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey contest. Oh, how excited I was. I'm sure the anticipation grew as I waited. I was one of the last ones to try. I walked up and had the blindfold placed on me, and I was asked if I could see. I said no. But I lied; I could see, albeit barely. But it was enough for me to pin the tail precisely on the spot. Kids

were cheering, and adults clapped and fussed over me at the award ceremony. I couldn't tell you what the prize was. I must have feigned happiness, but I knew I had cheated and felt terrible. That guilt grew as I went home. I always told my mum everything but couldn't bring myself to tell her what I did. It would have broken her heart to know I had been dishonest. I didn't ever want to make her sad. So, I must have masked my shame and played the role of the hero for the next week or so. I am sure I made that prize disappear as it brought me no joy, but it took years for me to come to grips with being a fraud. Fortunately, I think I was lucky to win a far more valuable prize, and that was the realization that being honest and doing things the right



Above: Scenic Highway Overlook, Pocahontas County;  
Right: Fire Tower Road, Tucker County

Photos: © Backyard Photography, Alan Tucker



way is far more rewarding than gaining things deceitfully. It was an early life lesson on integrity, the topic of my previous testimony, that will be concluded with this edition of *Glory Magazine*.

**“And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect...integrity and seriousness...”**

**Titus 2:7 (NLT)**

To recap from last time, I mentioned that integrity is a precious commodity; it requires doing the right thing in all circumstances. It is described as “doing the right thing even when no one is watching.” As a young

boy, I could cheat and win a contest as only I knew I could see the donkey. Pleasing my mum was important to me as a young boy. I couldn’t let her down by telling the truth. No one was watching, only me. It turns out I was wrong. This latter description doesn’t work well for Christians, as God is always watching. Previously, I wrote that “integrity is the very fabric of being a Christian.” You are no longer living per what you think or what society tells you is right or wrong. There is only one measure: what God expects of you. This is spiritual integrity, the bedrock of being a Christian. I then shared five intertwined Godly areas that, for me, capture the essence of spiritual integrity as I seek to please God. I call them the 5G’s: **God, Grace,**

**Generosity, Gentleness, and Glory.**

In the previous edition, I elaborated on God and Grace. Succinctly, integrity for Christians is about living by His Word and His commands no matter the situation. It’s called obedience, hear the word, do the word. Jesus told us that for us to show our love for Him, we need to keep His commands. Billy Graham calls this living by God’s truths, not by what society or current culture tells you. So, truthfulness began and continues for me with learning God’s truths and how to apply them to my daily life.

Is living a life of obedience or spiritual integrity easy? In today’s world, we face all sorts of cultural challenges, worries, temptations, hurts, fears, frustrations, etc., all



Old Railway Bridge Near Elkins, Randolph County

Photos: © Backyard Photography, Alan Tucker

of which bring opportunities to compromise ourselves. Our once cherished freedom and forms of religion are under attack to the worry of many believers. On Sundays, churches lock their doors during services to keep evil out, i.e., for safety reasons. No, doing the right thing is not always easy, and I don't think it was ever meant to be. Jesus telling us to take up our cross and follow Him suggests challenging times ahead. He faced Satan's temptations directly and never wavered; Daniel faced a myriad of compromising situations, even the threat of death, yet he stayed rock solid; and the Apostle Paul stood firm in his faith while enduring a lifetime of brutality following his conversion. Whether rough waters or smooth sailing, obedience is meant to be pursued, and you do that by choosing a life of integrity based on God's truths.

We are blessed that God also knew it wouldn't be easy. He knew we would need His help. When we are saved, He pours His Grace upon us and sends His Holy Spirit to help us. I previously wrote, "I believe that an obedient life is impossible without God's Grace." It

was His Grace that equipped me to live uprightly. The following scripture applies to us as it did centuries ago, ***"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'"*** (2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV). When I was saved, I immediately realized that something happened to me. I didn't understand it, nor could I explain it. I began to see things differently; my old ways, desires, and activities no longer seemed important. Before being saved, I can say with certainty that God's priorities were not mine. Getting saved reversed what was most important to me. It led me to start living a life that hopefully pleases God and is less about me. Little did I realize at the time that His grace was becoming more sufficient within me, allowing me to grow closer to Him. Without His Grace, spiritual integrity would be impossible for me.

In summary, **God** and **Grace** are the first two G's of my understanding of spiritual integrity. They are the most important. The other three flow from it. God's truths are out there for all. They are the standards against which

real integrity is measured. He offers salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. If you accept His invitation, He will pour His Grace of salvation on you and equip you to live obediently. That brings us to the remaining 3 G's, **Generosity, Gentleness, and Glory**, which, to me, capture how I should live my life of loving and serving God. They are what guide me in my walk with Him.

**“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all ‘grace’ abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”**  
**2 Corinthians: 6-8 (NKJV)**

What a powerful piece of scripture worthy of rereading and meditating upon!

**Generosity**, what a lovely word, what a loving word, what a Godly word! I didn't always think of it that way, as I thought it was associated with the church or someone wanting my money. Looking back, although not miserly, at least in my own eyes, I tended to be very close-fisted when it came to people wanting or needing

something from me, especially money. Early on, if I wanted or needed something, I knew I had to work for it. Very few people gave me anything. From the seventh grade, I worked continuously, often at the bowling alley from 6–11 p.m. on weekdays. It was hard work, and we didn't get breaks. Sadly, I missed out on most regular kids' activities. I worked for three years after high school to earn enough money to go to college and worked throughout. I supplemented my college finances with a national defense student loan which I paid off every penny. I did it the old-fashioned way; I earned it, making me very frugal with my money. Other than a dollar in the Sunday offering plate, that was the extent of my monetary generosity. Getting married changed that.

Liva said we had to tithe 10 percent. Yikes, that much! Of course, I bit my tongue and went along begrudgingly. Decades later, when I had retired from the Air Force and worked for a company in the D.C. area, I received a nice Christmas bonus. When I took it home, Liva was happy and immediately said 10 percent. I said, why? It's not wages; it's a bonus. Grumble, grumble, but 10 percent it was. I now thank God I was so blessed to have married someone who understood “doing the right thing all the time.” We have been blessed immeasurably for it.

I look at generosity from a much larger perspective since being saved. It is much more than money. It is a way to live a life that allows me to realize my spiritual integrity



Above: Wild Columbine, Pocahontas County;  
rt: Wild Azaleas, Tucker County

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Photos © Backyard Photography, Alan Tucker

Farm Scene near Jane Lew, Lewis County

Photos © Backyard Photography, Alan Tucker

not for obedience's sake but to please Him and to bring Him glory. I see it as a way of expressing gratitude to God for the abundant grace He has poured out on me. Paul urged the Corinthians ***“not to receive the grace of God in vain”*** (See 2 Corinthians 6:1-2). God was so gracious in sending His Son to die for the forgiveness of our sins, to pour out His grace and mercy so abundantly, to send us His Holy Spirit to help us, to provide angels to watch over us, to provide each of us unique gifts to serve Him and to allow us to spend eternity with Him. We shouldn't be miserly about anything; we must be willing to share our abundance with others. Developing

a spirit of generosity has allowed me to focus on what matters most, loving God and loving others. This process has immeasurably enriched me, just as Jesus said in Luke 6:37-38 (NLT), ***“Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”*** Oh, how it has been poured into our lives. He is a promise keeper.

A spirit of generosity is manifested in so many ways. One of the first ways I noticed how grace changed me was realizing that God had forgiven me for everything,

# “BEAR ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

*Galatians 6:2 (NRSVA)*

and I needed to forgive others. I had heard a lot of forgiveness sermons over the years, and if they happened to go in one ear, they quickly went out the other. I had my hurts, grudges, and dislikes and wore them secretly as badges of honor. As a friend once said jokingly, “Can’t I hang on to being mad a little longer.” It seemed fair to me; how can you get it even if it still doesn’t bother you? But the answer is no, forget about it, let it go, resolve it. Why? Because as it is written in Ephesians 4:31-31 (MSG), we should **“Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.”** I always thought forgiving others, especially some, would be difficult. But as the scripture goes, “all things are possible with God.” It is refreshing to have that weight of bitterness removed from my shoulders. Only God’s grace made it possible for me to restore broken relationships.

There are so many ways that a spirit of generosity allows you to please God and bless you in return. Things like speaking graciously to others, treating them with respect and thoughtfulness, being an encourager, building people up, and being there when needed. These kindnesses should be an active part of every Christian’s life. They apply to the “doing unto others as you would have done unto yourself.” God expects us to be extremely generous in being kind: **“And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you”** (1 Thessalonians 5 3:12 NKJV). One of the joys of my life is trying to find ways to pass God’s grace onto others. I do that by actively sharing my spirit of generosity, which comes from God. It allows me to try to do the right thing all the time.

The past few months have been extremely difficult for me and my wife. We lost my dear niece, Liz, to cancer a few weeks ago. She battled it valiantly for well over

a decade. It didn’t define her; her spirit of generosity did, and it shone brightly. No disruption to her life was big enough to keep Liz from being there when needed. A young woman with two teenagers was at Liz’s celebration of life. Liva spoke to the mother, who said, “Liz came into my life at the moment I needed someone. I couldn’t have made it without her.” That was ten-plus years ago when the children’s grandfather passed away unexpectedly. He was everything to his daughter-in-law and grandchildren. The father had been out of the kids’ lives for quite some time and had passed away earlier. The grandfather loved his grandkids and their mom and became a surrogate father to all three. His sudden death devastated the young family; they were lost, per the mom. Liz had been a good friend of the grandfather and was aware of the challenges he faced caring for his loved ones, and she helped out when needed. Liz did not hesitate to fill the void when the grandfather passed away, just as she had done many times before in her life. Liz looked out for them for the next several years as if she were their mother/grandmother. She often had them in her home for dinner and Christmas and made sure to attend all the family’s important events. Liz bought them clothes and other things they needed. She took them to the movies and many other places. She made sure they had everything they needed, especially love. That wasn’t a singular event. Liz did it over and over for family and friends during her lifetime. She embodied the spirit of generosity. She lived Galatians 6:2 (NRSVA) more than anyone I ever knew: **“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.”** And oh, how Liz loved God. She gave Him all the praise and glory and often said, “I would be nothing without God.” What a testimony!

Coupled with Generosity is the 4th G, **Gentleness**. These go hand-in-hand to maximize the impact of your



Farm Scene near Elkins, Randolph County

Photos: © Backyard Photography, Alan Tucker

spiritual integrity. For most of my life, if you asked me if gentleness was a desirable trait. I would not have ranked it very high on the desirable priority list. I grew up in a world where an independent, tough John Wayne attitude prevailed, with so much emphasis on personal achievement and success. It was a world of ‘get-er done at all costs’ focus and with a ‘suck it up buttercup’ mentality. Gentleness, humility, and soft-spokenness were considered to be weaknesses. However, once in a while, I would run across someone different, someone who was not only extraordinarily confident and competent but possessed a great strength of character.

Brigadier General John Russell was such a man. He was the Tactical Air Command Inspector General (IG) when I was on the IG team from 1979 to 1982. He replaced a take-no-prisoners, self-serving type of general, which was all about his next promotion. General Russell was tough. You needed to have your act together when you sat down to review your report on the inspection you had conducted. He was a man

of a thousand questions; if you didn’t have the answer, you had to go and get it. He did it tactfully and almost from a teaching perspective, never from an angry, get-it-right attitude. He made me a better inspector and a better officer. He was clearly a man of God. I hadn’t encountered many fighter pilots who demonstrated their faith as he did. He often added Godspeed at the end when he wrote you a note. I was so impressed with his strength of faith that I adopted Godspeed for myself.

People possessing such Godly character stand out. I think God wants it that way because it reflects those with a heart filled with the Holy Spirit: ***“And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father’*** (Galatians 4:6 NKJV). When we are saved, we start a journey to become Christ-like. To the disappointment of the Jews, Jesus wasn’t the Messiah they were hoping for: the ultimate warrior who would establish a new kingdom to rule the earth by annihilating their enemies. Instead of bitterness, harshness, and revenge,



he was full of gentility: soft-spoken, forgiving, merciful, compassionate, kind, tender, and loving. He came teaching new commandments to love God with all we have and love our neighbors as ourselves, healing the sick and offering peace and salvation. The Jews couldn't abide such heresy and were so fearful of Him that they crucified Him, per Jesus, not knowing what they did.

**“Forget the former things,  
do not dwell on the past.”  
Isaiah 43:18 (NIV)**

I realized the importance of gentleness early in my faith journey through my scripture, Bible study, and devotional reading. To grow and become Christ-like, modeling His behaviors and traits had to be my goal. To change, I've learned that you must think about what you think. Thinking about the past, the world, current events, or things I once liked to do gets me no place, only stuck looking backward. Good works come from thinking about good things, while bad behaviors or actions come from pondering on such things. Jesus told us, **“But the words you speak come from the heart—that's what defiles you”** (Matthew 15:18 NIV). I was lucky when I was saved. I was around many friends who exhibited Godly traits. You can learn a lot by observing and listening. You can't force gentleness; it has to be nurtured within you. Learning to speak more generously, treat others with thoughtfulness, encourage and build others up, and pass along the abundance of grace God has given me are behaviors I had to learn and develop. I am still a work in progress, but with God's guidance, that work will continue. I've learned that if you are not walking the talk (God's truths), you are just a fake pleasing no one, not even yourself. Anyone can talk the talk; however, walking gently and treating others like Jesus would both take conscious effort sprinkled with God's grace.

That brings me to the final and 5th G, **Glory**. Jesus tells us to let our **“light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”** (Matthew 5:16. NKJV). Peter further reminds us we are to be faithful stewards of God's grace by using the unique gifts we've been given to serve Him and others for the sole purpose **“that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever”** (1 Peter 4:11b NIV).

I once was a competitor. I competed to win not only in sports but in life in general. That independent John

Wayne syndrome I mentioned earlier drove me to personal achievement and success. Since being saved, I have focused on matters important to God, serving Him and others to glorify Him. Too often, I receive too much praise, and I try to find ways to deflect that. Pleasing, honoring, and glorifying God drives me now, and I try to follow the path He illuminates for me. I do find great joy in trying to reveal God's Glory. I have and will continue to anchor my faith in **God's** truths and share the **Grace** he pours upon me by being very **Generous** and **Gentle** in the process, all to bring Him **Glory**. Seventy-plus years ago, a little boy could have let his mother down when he cheated. Fortunately, his mum never knew as he wasn't caught. Fast forward decades later, an old man has seen the light and is now trying not to disappoint God by compromising his integrity. Thankfully, my 5G's are serving me well in that quest.

If you are concerned about your spiritual integrity or you cannot say like the Psalmist, **“I treasure His word in my heart so that I may not sin against Him”** (Psalm 119:11 CSB), and would like to learn more, seek out a pastor or a friend with strong faith, you will never regret it. Until next time, Godspeed!


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*One thing have I desired  
of the Lord, that will I  
seek after; that I may dwell  
in the house of the Lord all the  
days of my life, to behold the  
beauty of the Lord, and  
to enquire in his temple.  
For in the time of trouble  
he shall hide me in his  
pavilion: in the secret of  
his tabernacle shall he hide  
me; he shall set me up upon  
a rock. And now shall mine head be  
lifted up above mine enemies round  
about me: therefore will I offer in  
his tabernacle sacrifices of joy;  
I will sing, yea, I will sing praises  
unto the Lord.*

*Psalm 27:4-6 (KJV)*

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