

The Way of Transformation

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace World Outreach located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

Copyright © 2002

Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 5

Chapter 1 6

VIRTUE: THE BASIS FOR GOD’S VALUE SYSTEM

Chapter 2 11

THE ADDITION PROCESS OF DIVINE NATURE

Chapter 3 17

UNLIMITED POTENTIAL THROUGH VIRTUE

CONCLUSION 21

INTRODUCTION

What a beautiful era to be alive in. We see certain Christians advancing into maturity at very rapid rate. The times we are living in have accelerated the process of maturity for many believers, and they reveal a precocious faith.

With this in mind, it is so crucial for Christians to understand divine virtue as we advance into maturity. As we develop godly virtue, or spiritual excellence, in our lives, we will begin to value people and things the way God does. Few things are more important for a believer to experience than this.

This booklet will examine the transforming power of God's nature as it is expressed through His virtue and values. When we honor what He honors and place value in what He values, God's people reveal great power—not only in our communities and cities, but also throughout the world.

Chapter One

VIRTUE: THE BASIS FOR GOD'S VALUE SYSTEM

“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).

Virtue, in a child of God, is a spiritual mentality based on the integrity of God's Word, which is truth. Therefore, virtue is the basis of God's value system. Rather than “mental excellence” it is *spiritual* excellence, and it reveals the maturity of the believer who applies truth in his experience.

Practically speaking, there is no way to live the Christian life unless we have God's value

system. Only that which has its source in the combination and culmination of all the attributes of Christ is virtuous. It is the implementation of God's omnipotence imparted to you, the believer, for the specific thing that you need at a given moment in your life.

This impartation of virtue comes by a manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power and God's presence in the reality of your experience. As a result, in a situation that would naturally cause you to react in your all-too-human emotions, you allow all of your human faculties to be controlled by divine characteristics. So when people do something against you, instead of giving them a piece of your mind, you give them the peace of God's mind—which is grace and mercy—as you keep on receiving God's power, reaping what you have sown.

Divine virtue involves a child of God making choices based on a value system that reveals God's nature. Whenever we pray, our prayers begin to influence someone's destiny. Our prayers help to protect someone else's call. Whether it is a neighbor, a co-worker, or a family member—whoever we pray for in the name of Jesus Christ, that person's call is being influenced by our prayers. We make a difference in

everything that goes on in his life by continually praying with importunity and tenacity. This is what precocious faith and prayer does.

Power of Prayer

When we were soul winning recently, we knocked on the door of a house where it seemed as if no one was home. Just as we started to leave, a lady came out and she was extremely responsive. "I have visited your church for an Easter play," she said.

"Are you saved?" I asked.

"Not yet," she said.

With tears in her eyes, she listened intensely and received Christ right there.

The point is this: Soul-winning ministries will use whatever "fishhooks" are available to reach people such as this woman. God's value system esteems every soul as worthy of the Blood of His only Son, Jesus Christ. And when His values become ours, we will use whatever we can to bring the Gospel to the lost. In her case, it took our prayers and our availability to get up on a Saturday morning to seek and to save the lost. It also took countless hours of donated time and money to produce an anointed, professional-quality play and a printing press to

print booklets, flyers, and Gospel tracts that were given to all who attended.

We did not know on that Saturday morning all that God had done to prepare her for this moment—though in her case, we were able to see the fruit of it. The principle is that our value system is God's value system. And His value system says that her soul—and the soul of each person we witness to—is worth more than all the world (Mark 8:36). Her value to us is more than all the world! It is overwhelming! It is staggering to consider this!

We have been holding special prayer meetings where we pray for many things. We go to God for businesses, praying out loud for each one by name. One business owner came to me and said, "We had our best week in ages." There is great value in being able to pray for businesses, taking our time and staying with it.

God places a great value on prayer, making it as valuable as the precious sacrificial death of His Son. Why? All of the things of God are connected. Everything that comes from the efficacious death of Christ branches out from the value of the substance of Calvary. When a person begins to tithe and share offerings and gifts with God, he puts an amazing value on giving.

Wealth and riches are already in us, so we should not be ashamed of being financially wealthy. We have to learn how to be abased, but we can also learn how to abound.

Pure Mind, Pure Values

There is great value in being precise and specific with God and His Word. Consider the value of having a pure mind, the value of being able to look at yourself in the mirror and say that you have no memory of the last time that you lusted, because it hasn't been there.

What value there is in having pure motives. What value there is in having peace and not being depressed. Can a price be placed upon the peace that passes understanding?

Think of your value system and the value system of those who do not have Christ. Grace and peace are multiplied through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. He has blessed us with all things pertaining to life and God-likeness. He has given us exceeding great and precious promises. By these things, we become partakers of His divine nature because we have escaped corruption through lust in the world.

Chapter Two

THE ADDITION PROCESS OF
DIVINE NATURE

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

“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.

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your 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.

“For if these things be in you, and abound,

they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:2-8).

By receiving His great and precious promises, in comes the divine nature, helping us to grow and to produce fruit. With that divine nature, we have a treasure in our earthen vessels, a divine nature with divine virtue bringing in a value system that comes from above and begins to be locked into our souls. Then, we begin to add to our faith.

Through the process of adding to our faith, we become precocious children of God. That means that as we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, we will advance in wisdom and reveal godly maturity, making right choices and godly decisions. We can do that because we add to our faith virtue. To have virtue means we operate with a value system that sees everything in life just as God does, because of the divine nature within us. If these things are in us and they abound, then we do not fail the grace of God.

As we continue to grow, we add more and more godly attributes: knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, kindness, and charity. Our lives are made new, continually. We get up every morning and have new faith adventures added

to us. We are being transformed by Jesus Christ's value system.

God's Evaluation of a Soul

What an amazing value Jesus Christ has placed upon our lives.

"I will die for them," He declared in eternity past. "The moment they receive me as their Savior, I will give them eternal security, which includes doing sixty-eight things for them before they can say Amen.* I will begin to clean them all up. I will write their names in the Lamb's Book of Life. I will protect each one because they are members of My body, and I will cherish them because, at the Rapture, they will be My bride. ** I will do all of these things so they can reign with Me—now and forever."

All of this speaks of the price God has placed upon us. Thank God that whenever there is death, for the Christian there is also resurrection.

Satan says, "You die and you go into the ground. That's what happens."

God says, "You never taste death."

Satan says, "You are imagining all this."

God says, "You are absent from your body and present with Me the moment you take your last breath. That is the truth!"

There is such value in fellowship with other believers. We meet and assemble, developing relationships and friendships that are very rare on this earth. We have love for one another. Often, intimacy is shared through a prayer or just a smile. We have an intimacy through the mystery of God even when there are not opportunities to be together. One of the greatest means of communion and fellowship is soul winning together.

Oh, the value of coming to God and knowing that He is always available to meet us at the throne of grace. Through faith, we can go to Him and realize the value God places upon us. Without faith, we are left to our own devices and we cannot please God.

Faith Creates Heroes

God looks upon us as we exercise faith and counts us as faith heroes. Samson was recognized as a faith hero in Hebrews 11. So was Rahab, the harlot from the book of Joshua. God makes us heroes of faith just because we believe.

I cannot get over the fact that I am able to talk to God. I feel like a little child about it—just to know that it works. Through all these many, many years, He has drawn me closer and closer in a perfect plan (see Psalm 18:30). I won't even

get into my car without praying for a safe journey. I am serious about this because of all the terrible accidents that happen on the highways. "Lord, keep people from cutting me off, please Lord." To pray like this is not in vain. I believe God will show us how we were protected by simple prayers.

These are prayers that I pray because of the value of being able to take a promise from the Word of God. "Kiss the Son and kiss the promise," Psalm 2:12 instructs us in describing the sense of how we are to embrace the promises of God.

God mystically puts a team of people together with all the right players. Never have I had the team players that I have with me now. A lot of beautiful people have been with me through the years, but God has put together a great team to stand with me. They are people who believe in the value of doctrine. They are not interested in superficial and counterfeit Christianity.

Another thing of such value is true friendship. One of the greatest benefits of Christianity is having true friends. A true friend is one who will not forsake you, who will not talk about you behind your back, who will not gossip or

slander. True friends are closer than physical earthly brothers are. True friendship has tremendous value.

** To find out about the 68 things God gives a person the moment he gets saved, read What Happened When You Received Christ? by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1999.*

*** For a thorough study of what the Bible says about the Rapture, the time when the Church will be called out of the world and into heaven where she will feast at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, read The Pre-Tribulational Rapture, by Dr. Daniel E. Lewis, Grace Publications, 1997.*

Chapter Three

UNLIMITED POTENTIAL THROUGH VIRTUE

There are no limitations to what virtue in a believer can do. Derived from God in the Holy Spirit, the potential within us has no limits when we have the right values.

There are things that take away my values. Not submitting to godly authority takes away my values. Being negative about a brother or a sister takes away from godly values, so my attitude will not reflect proper values in these areas.

Instead of diminishing our values, we must continually add to our faith. Adding is the divine stimulation of growth. Adding involves getting up in the morning and saying, "I am not going to be negative against myself in any way. I will not confess even one negative thing because I am very thankful and very happy in Christ."

"Adding" also includes adding the Cross of Christ to my life and admitting that "I must de-

crease.” Because of demon activity and the confrontations of Satan against Christians today, there is such value in my decreasing, in terms of my natural life. I decrease only as I take up the Cross. When I do, I am operating on God’s terms, and I will decrease in certain areas I haven’t faced before. I must decrease and He must increase (John 3:30). What a great thing John the Baptist was saying in using the word “must.”

Our cities are so corrupted with sin. We have been praying for our city with more intensity than ever, praying that parents, teachers, and all people in positions of leadership will have the right value system. So few even begin to understand virtue. Imagine someone raising a good family on the earth, decent people, but then going to hell. That is what will happen to those who are without a value system that includes the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Begin to have the Spirit of God teach you on values. Values are not what you do; values are simply receiving what He says about you and receiving what He has done for you.

The Value of Obedience

A woman came to me sobbing after a recent

service. For a time, she couldn't speak. I asked her if she wanted me to pray for her.

"No," she said. "I just wanted to tell you that I was seconds away from committing suicide when I heard a message from you on the subject of grace. Honestly, pastor, I was right on the edge. I never listened to Christian radio. I had the pills and was ready to blast the music out when, just like that, God spoke to me. Since then, I have been coming to this church, and it's been several years now."

There it is: the value of answering a call to be on Christian radio.

I could go on and on. The tremendous value of tears shed in compassion, the value of forgiveness that truly forgets, the value of caring. The value of what God can do no matter where I am. I don't have to accept guilt and shame even though I certainly will have godly sorrow if failure comes in. I don't have to accept guilt and shame because of the value of my position in Christ. It is a position I can never improve upon.

God places such tremendous value in missions. We do the work of missions—preaching the Gospel, teaching the whole counsel of God, and making disciples in our Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria—as well as sending missionaries to

the uttermost parts of the earth. God moves in people's lives, and one will rise up and say, "I'll take Africa." "I'll take Europe." "I'll take South America." Going forward with a vision that *God* values, we are transformed.

CONCLUSION

Today, we can give of ourselves freely because of the value we have found in a vision—not a man's vision, but a vision from God.

During our international conventions, I look across the crowd on Missions Night and see all of those who have been sent out on the mission field. Many hear God's voice during that time, and they will say, "God is calling me, and I am going to go." They go because they understand their value in God's vision, and they are being transformed.

Never forget that you are so valuable to the Father. You are just as valuable to the Father as the Son is. I understand that this may be hard to believe, but in John 14:21 and 15:9, the Bible says that the Father loves us as much as He loves His Son, Jesus Christ. And Romans 8:31-39 reveals just how unconditional that love is.

Father, we thank You for how You value us. Pour out Your Spirit of healing upon us. Pour out Your

spirit of grace as we grow in a divine nature that is eternal. In Jesus' name, Amen.