

IMPACT

September 2013

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The Real World Crisis:

Low Self-Worth

JIM RICHARDS



In the beginning man came into the world with the innate knowledge of his uniqueness. Unlike all other species he was created in the likeness and image of God! This was borne out of the fact that he had the unique emotion and spiritual capacity to commune with God! In fact, knowing God was man's primary purpose for being created. God did not need soldiers or servants; He wasn't creating an army, He was creating a family. Understanding God's intention in creation provides the framework for understanding almost everything about God's nature and man's destiny. Any so-called science or theology that does not begin its understanding of God and man from this truth will not only lead to error but will undermine the very fabric of humanity and pervert the representation of God!

God is love. This is His root nature and motivation for all things. His desire for man is a loving, harmonious relationship that is bountiful in peace and abundance. Any lack of these two is never the work of God, but the foolishness of man.

I've heard it said by new parents, I've heard it said by struggling adults, and, sadly, I've heard it said from pulpits, "If only we had come into the world with an operator's manual! " We did! We have been provided both intuitively and in written form everything we need to know. The problem is that man changed. He stopped believing the truth about who he was in relationship to God thereby perverting his understanding about every aspect of life. A self-worth crisis began in the Garden. From that moment man projected his low self-worth onto every aspect of creation, but on none more than God!

When man chose to know good and evil for himself he stopped seeing and experiencing himself as God saw him and began to see and experience himself based on his own judgments. Even worse, he began to experience God through his own judgments! Through fear he isolated himself from the One who had the answer and solutions.

We hear the phrase "Man brought sin into the world." While that statement is true, it is very doubtful that our

understanding of what it really means is true. When we talk about sin we generally think of it as some evil that is so unbearable to God that He rejects us. We forget that God does not change (Mal. 3:6). Therefore, it was not God who changed when sin came into the world - man changed! Sin is failure to believe the truth about who we are which leads to missing the mark of the goal.

In Genesis 3:8 when God called out to man in the Garden Adam's fear moved him to pass a judgment on God. This was the first time man used his newly acquired ability to determine good and evil. Adam determined God was calling out to him to harm him. Keep in mind God was not calling out in anger. In fact, some scholars say God was calling out for reconciliation. There was nothing in God's voice or action that caused Adam to hide from God. Instead, he was completely motivated by fear.

Adam's reaction brings new meaning to this often misused Old Testament verse that says, *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear* (Is. 59:2). God is not hiding His face from us; our sins hide His face from us. In reality, the "His" face is not in the original language. It is not His face that is hidden, it is ours. Again, the idea that He will not hear and respond should probably be interpreted, "**we will not hear and respond!**"

Just like Adam, man creates pain and suffering by his own ignorance and foolishness, violating all that God teaches about how to have an abundant life; then we blame Him when the circumstances are painful. I like the way The Message Bible says it: *People ruin their lives by their own stupidity, so why does God always get blamed* (Pr. 19:3).

Sin came into the world because man believed a lie: *You shall be like God*. In order to believe this lie they had to first disbelieve a truth: *You are created in the likeness and image of God*. The moment man believed the lie sin had its opportunity. Remember, *Whatever is not from faith is sin* (Rom. 14:23).

Sin and its power to destroy are not rooted in the committing of bad things that cause God to turn His back on us. Sin starts from the belief that we are not who God says we are, a diminishing of worth.

The nature of all behavior emerges from our self-worth. Sinful actions, those actions that are not harmonious with the nature and character of God, can only emerge from a sense of self that is incongruent with who we are in relation to God. The only long-term solution for behavior problems is a sense of self-worth that emerges from a sense of who we are in relation to our Creator. In forty years of ministry the only people I have ever seen who break the cycle of destructive behavior are those who establish themselves in their identity in Christ.

In the beginning God crowned man with glory and honor: dignity and worth (Ps. 8:5). The love and value that God bestowed on man was the foundation for godly living, proper management of the planet, and loving treatment of his fellow man. We were originally wired to look to God to have our sense of value. When man experiences the love (value) of God he is able to determine his worth, thereby creating a sense of self-worth.

When man lost his sense of connection to God and when fear made him feel hated by God, he lost his sense of dignity and worth, i.e. he lost his source of healthy self-worth. This meant that he had to look elsewhere. He started looking to his accomplishments and possessions. He looked to the approval of others. This perversion of our inherent need to look to God results in all manner of evil: sexual conquests, greed, and the ultimate perversion of domination.

When man no longer had a godly sense of value for himself he no longer had a sense of worth or value for others. If mankind was not precious to God then dominating or taking the life of others was not a major offense. All sin issues begin with the pervasion of man being created in the likeness and image of God and thereby being uniquely precious and valuable (loved) by his Creator!

Evolution is a THEORY; it is not a proven fact. There is as much or more supporting evidence for intelligent design as there is for evolution. Yet, any scientist or teacher

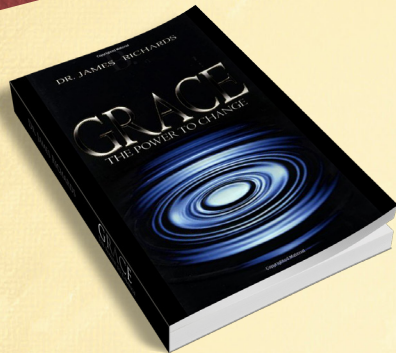


that teaches intelligent design will be ostracized by the “scientific” community and may be in danger of dismissal. (If you want an eye opener watch the movie *Expelled* with Ben Stein.)

The Church has sat ignorantly and silently by while the very foundation of man’s existence has been undermined by what we have wrongfully been told to be scientific. Once creation, especially the creation of man, has been undermined there will NEVER be a solid faith, even in the heart of the most dedicated believer. And there can never be a healthy sense of God-based self-worth. We don’t know who we are unless we know who we are in relation to God. Any kindness or fairness to others will be a humanistic, self-righteous philosophy based on man’s own determination of good and evil.

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September Testimonies

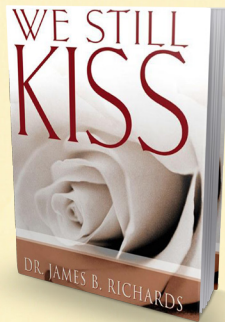


Hello!

My husband and I have been following this ministry since 1994. We are blessed by the ministry and we feel like our lives are better in every way because of the life we have received from

your messages of grace and peace.

So many amazing things have happened in our lives due to this ministry... I was healed of Multiple Sclerosis in January 2007 which was a direct result of the *Heart Physics*® teachings. Our journey has been a “doozie” but we have felt the favor and goodness of God all along the way.



Our transformation began we read *Grace: The Power to Change*. My husband came along a lot faster than I did, but we knew we were in the right place at the right time when we were on the *We Still Kiss* cruise. From that point in our lives until now we could sense being on a beautiful path to health and healing for our whole family...spirit, soul, and body!

Thank You! ~DB~

Thank you for your prayer support. It has been quite a journey.

On Monday my husband actually left his body but the Lord raised him up. The tumors in his belly have gone and his body is warm again. The healing is progressive. He is eating and drinking again and is being restored to his work for the Lord (which is sharing a word in season to whomever comes on his heart.) It wonderful what the Lord has done. I am grateful for Impact Ministries for giving me a word in season for such a time as this.

Big Blessings! ~RH~



Hi, Jim and Team,

I have been thinking I need to write to you to tell you how incredibly effective your *Heart Physics* module, *The Ultimate Put Off - Put On* meditations are...I am really focusing on the *I Love Righteousness* now and I have to say it is one of the greatest gifts in my life I have ever received. This is directly as a result of a friend sharing her resources with me (we do this in our little iGroup in Vienna, Austria) and I have been going through a difficult time this past month....so I started to listen to the meditations, *The Nine Virtues* and *I Believe in God*....all night long....and I am definitely coming out of this horrible time with some amazing GRACE outcomes. Thank you for creating resources in such a strategic way as to really reach people all over the world!

With Much Love to you and your family and team, ~SK~

I have found great value in the FREE online course, *Foundations of Faith*! I am going to teach these principles to the children in my Sunday School class!

Thank You! ~CS~

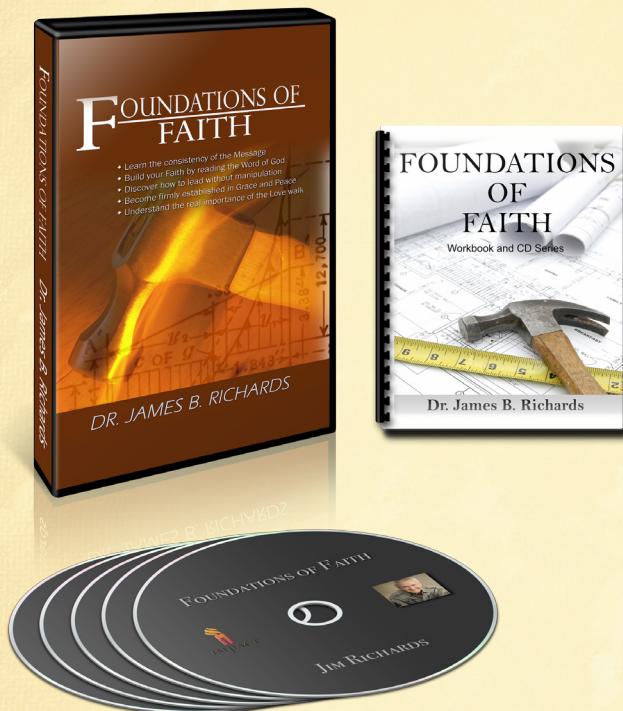
I used this course (*Foundations of Faith*) for my son's 5th grade school course. I have never seen anything so complete.

Thank You for all you do. ~LB~

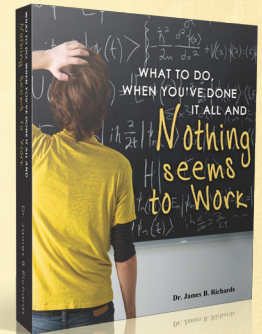
I am very grateful to have a renewed mind to receive the fullness of what Jesus accomplished for me through His death, burial, and resurrection. Through the *Foundations of Faith* teaching I have taken my eyes off of me and am focusing on Jesus and to the Holy Spirit allowing the grace of God to manifest in my life. He Is Faithful!!! ~VJ~

Hi, Dr. Richards,

The ministry of *Impact Ministries* regarding the heart journey is definitely making an impact in my family and my journey, therefore, a BIG "Thank You" from your friends in Melbourne, Australia! ~CP~



Your ministry has changed my life! Last weekend I purchased *What to Do When You've Done It All and Nothing Seems to Work*. I knew there were some heart beliefs that were wrong, but this series is helping me to write on my heart. My dreams have changed drastically and I am seeing immediate results in my physical body. I am very grateful for you!



Sincerely, ~TP~

Hi!

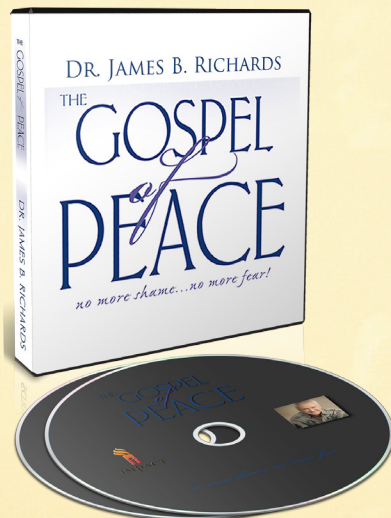
Thanks for your ministry! I was feeling like I couldn't go on "playing church" and feeling like God was standing over me with a lightning bolt ready to strike. I had lost the joy and confidence I had when He saved me at 6 years old. Finally, I just cried out to Him and said, "I can't do this anymore, God! I can't bear this burden of failing to please You anymore! I know You're real but I don't even know where to start to get to know You!" And He led me to your series – *Knowing and Feeling the Love of God* and it was just stepping stones from there to *The Gospel of Peace* and the *Heart Physics®* programs. I'm falling in love with God and following the Holy Spirit, and my stress level has gone way down!



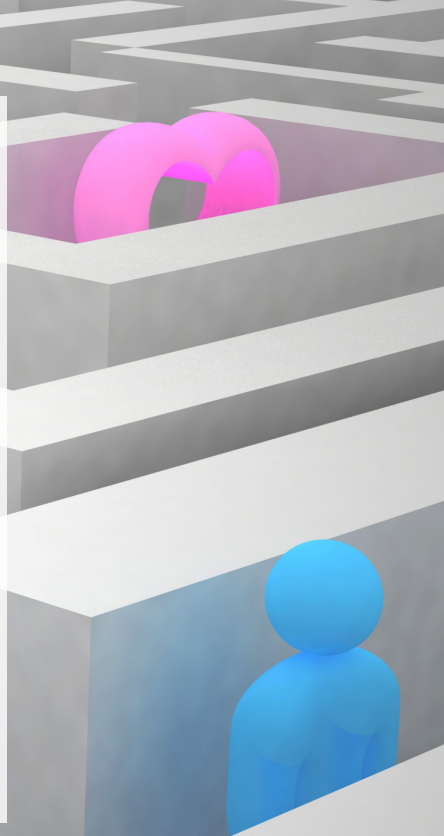
I really enjoyed the series, *Three Days that Changed the World*. It was life-changing and I never knew that Jesus died as a man and not God. It was like being born again for the first time! I grew up in the Church and I have asked the Lord what the great news of the Bible was because all I felt was guilt and condemnation...now I finally know!

Blessings, ~HN~

God bless you all at *Impact Ministries*! Thanks for what you're doing! ~CD~



Until we see every person (starting with ourselves) as valuable and precious to God we will never love ourselves, our neighbor, or our Creator



God so you will give lordship of your life to those who wish to exploit you. Every value that makes us decent human beings is stripped away so that any behavior can be expressed by the ungodly or exploited to make them richer.

Until we see every person (starting with ourselves) as valuable and precious to God we will never love ourselves, our neighbor, or our Creator. The word “love” means “to value, consider precious, and hold in high regard.” The most important thing we will ever do, and the basis from which all godliness will flow is this: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your*

soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself (Lk. 10:27). We can’t love God until we first recognize that He loves us (1 Jn. 4:19).

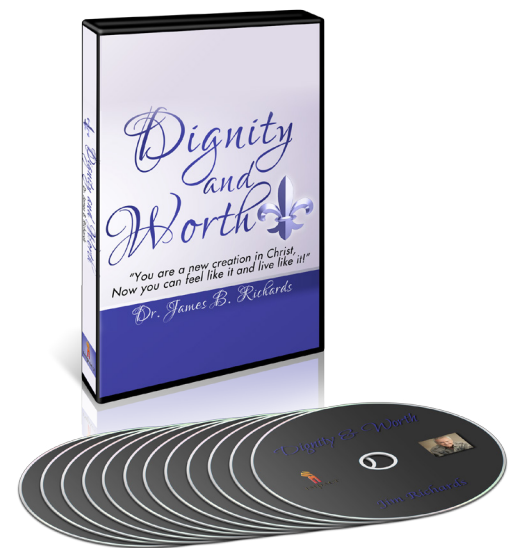
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Evolution presents the very flawed concept of survival of the fittest. It was that philosophy that fueled and justified Adolf Hitler and the Nazi extermination of millions of Jews. It is that philosophy that justifies the elitist left’s plan for the extermination of millions of elderly. It is a little known fact that Planned Parenthood and the whole abortion agenda was originally started to eliminate the black population. The whole concept of the survival of the fittest is what empowers the Utopian, elitist plan to eradicate the middle class, preserving the resources of the world for an extremely reduced population of the very wealthy and the very poor who will serve them.

We thought we were being open-minded when we passively allowed the theory of evolution to be taught as a fact. We slept when Creationism or even intelligent design was all but outlawed. We trusted the scientist more than we trusted God. We actually thought we could trust ungodly scientists to support godly wisdom. Evidently we didn’t understand the repercussions of taking prayer out of school, removing every mention of God from our government buildings, and the outlawing of any representation of God in public places. The very fact that we were so passive about this methodical planned attack on all that represents God is the first and best indicator that we do not have a sense of who man is in relationship to God.

My reason for pointing this out is not to make you feel guilty for not knowing. My reason is to make you aware that everything in public education and everything in government is aimed at undermining your awareness of who you are to

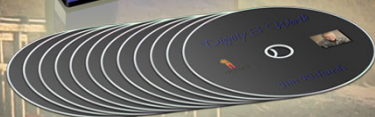
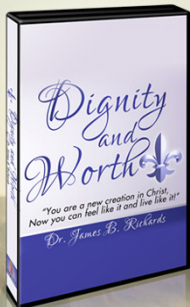
We do not have the capacity to love others until we love (have value) for ourselves. Jesus said to love others as we love ourselves. If we don’t love ourselves in a healthy, godly manner we cannot love others in a healthy, godly manner. When we see ourselves as righteous we will live as righteous. When the light comes on for us that God wants us to live in abundance and we see ourselves as successes who can do anything we will make the kind of decisions that lead to success. The more we experience ourselves as being loved the more we will give love. The more profound our sense of dignity and worth the more we hold others in high regard.



This article is based on the series *Dignity and Worth: Seeing Yourself as God Sees You.*

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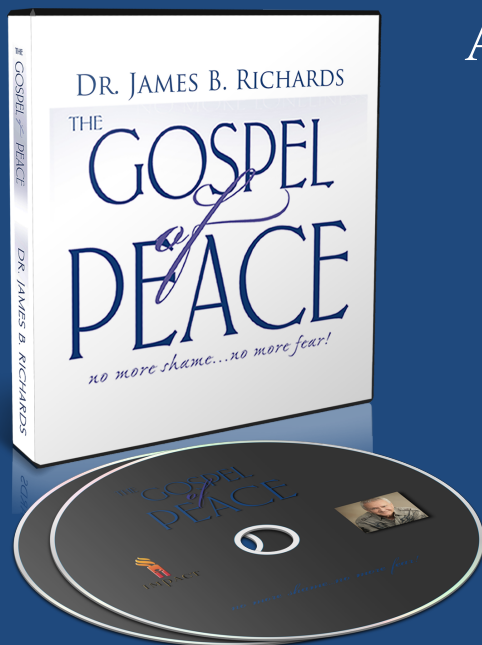
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Changing the Way You See GOD

Changing the Way You See YOURSELF

I recently did a meeting in a southwestern city of the US. I was helping a large throng of people at the conclusion of my message when I noticed out of my peripheral vision a woman patiently waiting to talk with me. When the crowd dissipated I looked over at this seemingly despairing woman and asked, “Can I help you?”

This woman looked at me quizzically and mused, “I don’t know.”

I responded, “Obviously something happened tonight that put enough hope in you that caused you to wait a long time to talk with me, so let’s give it a ‘shot’.”

She glanced downward to avoid eye contact as she stammered to get some words to come out of her mouth. She finally muttered a small litany of inadequacies and problems. Her list of insufficiencies included everything from being overweight to not enjoying life, to some specific failures, to criticisms from her husband, and finally to family problems.

Trying to gain her attention I asked, “On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the most acceptable, how accepted do you feel?”

She pondered a long time before answering. Finally she stuttered, “I’m not sure, but no higher than a 3.”

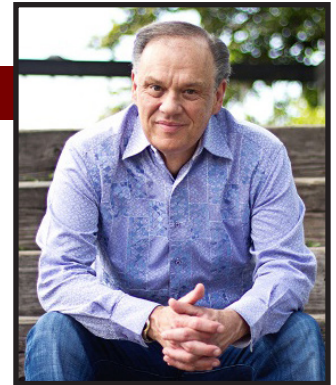
I followed up with a second question, “On the same scale how accepted to you feel by God?”

Her eyes rolled with the agony of her response, “Less than 2 (not a 1, but less than 2).” Now tears were streaming down her face.

I gently caught the glance of her eyes as I responded, “It’s hard to feel intimate with someone you don’t feel accepted by!”

She began nodding with the agony of her revelation. Again grabbing her attention I reflected, “I don’t think you’ve grasped how much God loves you and that nothing

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can separate you from the love of God” (Romans 8:39). In the ensuing moments I elaborated on God’s love, grace, and righteousness. I was privileged to witness a transformation of countenance that would rival the metamorphosis of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. Assuredly, this was the very beginning stages of a radical transformation.

This story illustrates the simple principle of how you see God determines how you will experience God. If you see Him as someone who judges your every misstep that is how you will experience Him. If you see God through the eyes of love, righteousness, grace, and blessing that is how you will experience Him. That is the goal of this article: **to change the way you see God and change the way you see yourself.**

Listen to these two astonishing passages of Scripture:

1. **I Corinthians 2:9, 10** *No eye has seen, no ear has heard, what God has prepared for those who love Him—but He has revealed it to us by the Spirit. Most people would have you take this to mean eternity; however, in context this is about what can be ours by the revelation of the Spirit.*
2. **Ephesians 3:9, 10** (TMB) *And so here I am preaching and writing about things that are way over my head, the inexhaustible riches and generosity of Christ. My task is to bring out into the open and more plain what God, who created all of this in the first place, has been doing in secret and behind the scenes. Through followers like yourselves gathered in churches, this extraordinary plan is becoming known and talked about even among the angels! While there’s a main exegesis to this Scripture it should be plain that God wants you to live an extraordinary life.*

What does the word “extraordinary” mean? It means “surpassing the norm; to break status quo (accepting things as they are); to exceed the common, mundane, or usual; remarkable, amazing, unimaginable...abundant.” This is the life God has for you! You might be thinking, “But I was born on the wrong side of the tracks.” “I had a bad home life.” “My education is lacking.” or “I’m the wrong color.” None of the excuses negates God’s extraordinary plan for you. It’s all wrapped in your identity as a believer.

Seventy per cent of the top thirty movies of any time are about extraordinary people doing extraordinary things. However, that’s not what the Bible is about. It’s about **ordinary people doing extraordinary things.**

Look at **Acts 4:13** –*When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized they were **unschooled, ordinary men**, they were astonished and took note they had been with Jesus.*

What extraordinary event done by ordinary men transpired that astonished the religious leaders then? The context of this passage is Acts 3. Here is the story of a man crippled from birth. He is begging at a temple gate called Beautiful. Peter demands his attention. He said to the crippled beggar, *silver and gold have I none, but what I do have* (you have to have something to give something) *is the name of Jesus. So in that name, rise up and walk.* You know the story. The lame man went walking and leaping and praising God.

So the real question is, “What did these unschooled, ordinary men have?” They had the name of Jesus. Now Jesus’ name is not an addendum to a prayer, “in Jesus name, Amen!” According to Greek scholar R.C.H. Lenski, in Greek “the name” meant to be connected to and have the revelation of Jesus (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 128). In other words, I don’t

have any money on me but I am connected to and have the revelation of Jesus - so, *rise up and walk.*

Thus, “the name of Jesus” is your identity in Christ. I define “identity” this way: “knowing who God is, what He has already done, and who He has made you to be.” All these aspects are important:

1. **Know who God is.** Don’t know about Him, know Him in intimacy. Don’t just know the book, know the Author. (Be personally connected to Him).
2. **Know what He has already done.** Stop trying to get Him to do what He has already done and receive what He has done by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8, 9). What has He done by grace? Everything! The finished work of Christ has provided “salvation” at Calvary (salvation, healing, prosperity, to do well, to make whole, experience, deliver, protect, preserve, health).
3. **Know who He has made you to be.** Most believers have little idea who they are in Christ. Look at who you are in 2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 2:20; Philemon 6; 1 John 4:9; Rom. 5:17; Eph. 1:2,3; 2 Pet. 1:3; Col. 2:10, etc.

The key is to renew your mind to who you are in Christ. You will always do what is in your heart (See Prov. 23:7, 4:23). It is an automatic law. You can only produce what is in your heart.

The result for ordinary, unschooled men who change the way they see God and change the way they see themselves (identity) is the extraordinary Ephesians 3:9,10 speaks about.

How you see God determines how you will experience God



The results for them were:

1. The lame men went walking and leaping and praising God.
2. Religious leaders rejected the event and sought to protect their misguided theology.
3. The miracle “in the name of Jesus” caused the religious leaders to be speechless because the miracle was standing before them.
4. The courage of the unschooled, ordinary men confounded all involved. (See Acts 4:1-14 for all of this)

Why is it that so many people become less than they are? You see, Christianity is not as much about who you aren't, but discovering who you are. People who don't understand this suffer from spiritual schizophrenia: I know God can, I just don't know if He will for me. It's time to change the way you see God (love, grace, righteousness and blessing) and change the way you see yourself (identity).

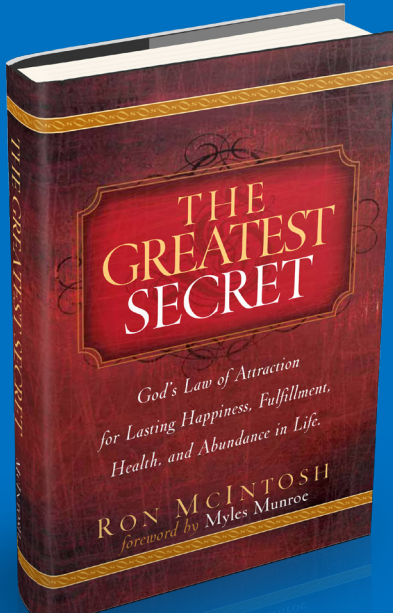
How you see yourself and how you see God determines how you experience God (identity). Take an astonishing look at Numbers 13. In this passage God promises Canaan (the Promised Land) to Israel. Thus, Moses sends out twelve spies into the land to “scout” it out. They come back with the extraordinary report of a land flowing with “milk and honey.” However, there are two reports. The first report is from ten spies who say “It's a great land but there are giants in the land and they are stronger than we are.” Joshua and Caleb countered with, “We are well able to take the land.” However, the culminating statement comes in verse 33: ...*we seemed*

like grasshoppers in our own eyes and we looked the same to them. Here is the key principle: You don't see things as they are, you see things as you are. In other words, two people can see the same thing but their perception is more about how they see themselves than what is actually going on. One study revealed the #1 thing that will distinguish millionaires from the pack is that millionaires see themselves bigger than their problems. How you see God and how you see yourself determines how you experience God. The biggest factors to the extraordinary life are identity and grace (with faith).

You might be thinking “I'm more like the ten spies than the two spies. I've lost my promised land.” Temporary setbacks are not disqualifications. Let me give you an example. I love football! One of the most interesting parts of a game is the instant replay. A referee may rule against a touchdown reception because the receiver's feet were not inbound. The coach can challenge the call. The head referee will go to a television booth and review the play from multiple angles and vantage points. He may even watch in slow motion. He then comes back on the field and states, “Upon further review, the receiver's feet were inbounds. It is a touchdown!”

It's the same way in your life. It may look like things are not going as they should but God is seeing things at a different vantage point and He declares, “Upon further review, you will have the reconciliation, the provision is coming through, the healing is actualized, the wayward child is coming home!” I think you get the picture.

God has something extraordinary and amazing for you. Let His grace and identity take you there. **Let's do amazing!**



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IDENTITY: Filling the Gap

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The New Covenant is just that: NEW, thereby making the old outdated, ineffective, and no longer in force. The writer of Hebrews said it like this: *In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete.* (Heb. 8:13) It is not a revised covenant, it is a NEW Covenant; any similarities to the Old are based on the fact that the old was a type, a shadow, but not the real thing! *For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things...* (Heb. 10:1) As such, every aspect of application in this Covenant is totally different from the Old.

The promises in this New Covenant include all of those of the Old, (2 Cor. 1:20) but the stipulations are different. All promises of the New Covenant are contingent upon us being **in** Jesus and that being the source of our hope and faith. In this New Covenant we are delivered from all curses of the Old. (Gal. 3:13) The contingency for that protection is the same as the stipulation for the promises, we are **in** Him and that is the source of our hope and faith!

This NEW Covenant doesn't simply offer you the guidelines to a better life; it offers you a new life with a new identity. *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* (2 Cor. 5:17) If you were not new the past would not go away! The past still exists but it no longer has power over you. That person is now dead. You have been raised up in Christ as a new creation! The identity we have received in this New Covenant is one where we maintain all of our emotional sense of self, but we gain a new spiritual sense of self. This new identity is based on the fact that we are now in Christ. Spiritually we are as He is now, resurrected from the dead, accepted by God, victorious over the devil, heir of all the promises, and filled with all the power. Like all other New Covenant stipulations this is activated by the **fact** that we are **in** Him and by our faith being rooted in that fact!

Since the resurrection of Christ the Church has been making a journey of discovery. Some longingly look to the

Book of Acts and naively pine for the Church to be as it was then. What they fail to see from Acts is that for about the next sixty years the Church continued to worship in the synagogues. They had little understanding of our identity in Christ. They had not yet read and believed the truth of Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, and all the other New Testament books. The Church in most of Acts was infantile in their knowledge of the New Covenant.

The glorious Church was not the Church at Acts. The glorious Church will be the one that fully realizes who we are in Jesus, and that every aspect of our faith is rooted in His finished work and our position **in** Him! The issue is not that everyone else has been wrong; the issue is that they were making a journey. They took us as far as they had the heart to go. We have built upon their revelations, trials, and errors to reach this place of simplicity of faith: Christ **in** me is the Hope of Glory, me in Him is the source of New Life!

If we became a new creation in Christ who did we become? As previously mentioned, we retained all of our memories, our sense of humor, and all other aspects of our life experience, but we received a new *righteous* nature. The word "righteous" has so many aspects of reality, but its most simplistic definition is "as it should be." In Him we became as we should be. This is how God sees and relates to us. The struggle is understood in this question: "Is this how I see and relate to Him?"

Man's struggle has always existed in the gap between how God sees us and how we see ourselves. Religion was formed to fill that gap and sin was conceived in that gap; in reality, every struggle of man exists in this gap. In fact, the first temptation (which is the basis for all temptation) found its footing by creating the gap. Like Adam and Eve, the one thing that makes us susceptible to any temptation is

the dissonance between how God sees us and how we see ourselves.

Genesis 3:4-5 gives us the heart of the deception in the Garden. *Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* The one thing Adam did not believe was that he was already like God. The one power he believed would make him like God was the freedom to choose good and evil for himself!

The two greatest areas of trust (faith) with which we all struggle is: "Will I see myself the way God sees me?" and "Will I see good and evil as God sees it?" Adam was moved from his sense of identity which immediately drove him to fear, and fear provoked the need to be in control (choose good and evil for himself!) The moment we lose our sense of connection with God fear drives our decisions. Our sense of connection is lost when we doubt how He sees us.

Jesus, who modeled every aspect of our life of faith, launched into His destiny with the one challenge that would face Him at every turn: *If You are the Son of God...* (Matt. 4:3) was the devil's taunt. The issue was not the temptation to turn stones into bread; it was to prove His identity by His performance!

Proving our identity by our performance (works) is the product of not believing we are who God says we are. It was the first temptation, it was the primary assault against Jesus, and it is the daily battle we all fight! Knowing I am as I should be (righteous) because I am in Him frees me from any feeling of emotional lack. In the absence of lack there is no basis for temptation.

It is this very issue that caused the Apostle Paul to put so much emphasis on the **in Him, through Him, by Him** concepts presented throughout his writings. This apostle knew that the mystery of the Gospel is Christ in us (Col 1:27) and our faith that we are in Him. (Eph. 1:17-22)

If we had to simply make an intellectual decision about these facts it would be pretty simple: decide it is or is not true. But wait a minute! Wouldn't that be sort of like choosing good and evil, thereby judging God? The issue really isn't as simple as "Will I agree with God or not?" This issue is "Will I believe this in my heart so that it becomes the sense of who I am and the root-power of my life?"

Nothing affects your life if you don't believe it! The moment we believe something we start acting as if it is true; but belief can go even deeper. Once I believe something in my heart I start feeling like it is who I am. Heart beliefs ALWAYS affect our sense of identity.

Salvation occurs when we believe *in our heart* that God raised Jesus from the dead, and when that belief is heart-based our entire

sense of self changes. Everyone can remember what it was like to be a new believer. At that moment the Bible says that God gives us a new heart and a new mind. *I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts.* (Heb. 8:10)

If we had no freedom of choice or power to influence our heart life from that moment would be without hardship or struggle. But God does not control our mind (thoughts) and we still have influence over the beliefs of our heart.

The heart seems to be some combination of spirit and soul. (It is impossible to be completely specific.) But we know that our spirit man is made righteous, brand new, and blameless. But since the heart is part spirit and part soul we still have freedom of choice, particularly as it pertains to our thoughts. This is why Paul said *...be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.* (Eph. 4:23-24)

The renewing of the mind is all about filling the gap between how God sees us, who He has made us to be, and how we see ourselves. If we continue to think about ourselves as we were we will influence our heart (sense of self.) If we choose to believe we are who God has made us to be in Him we live a sense of identity that parallels the great work which has been done in our inner man.

The Bible is full of passages about writing on our heart, influencing our heart, and establishing our heart. Even the writer of Hebrews goes on to say: *For it is good that the heart be established by grace.* (Heb. 13:9) As in every case about affecting our heart, the responsibility falls to the believer. We either invoke our freedom to be "god of our own world" and determine righteousness (good and evil) for ourselves, or we accept God's righteousness. It is then through the process of contemplation, pondering, considering, and meditating that we influence our heart to maintain the truth that God has put in our spirit! We are **in Christ**, therefore we are righteous! Thereby, I *put on righteousness*; it becomes my way of life because it is my sense of who I am!

The great struggle of faith in the New Covenant revolves almost totally around identity. Are we in Him, is He in us, and are we a new creation?



Weekly Message

Weekly Messages by Dr. Jim Richards



3. Abiding in His Name

The Bible promises abundant life to those who abide in His name. This is not a magical formula, but a lifestyle of faith and obedience. It is a life of love and service to others. The more we love and serve others, the more we abide in His name. This is the secret to a life of joy and fulfillment. It is a life of peace and harmony with God and with others. It is a life of hope and faith in the future. It is a life of love and service to others. This is the secret to a life of joy and fulfillment. It is a life of peace and harmony with God and with others. It is a life of hope and faith in the future. It is a life of love and service to others.



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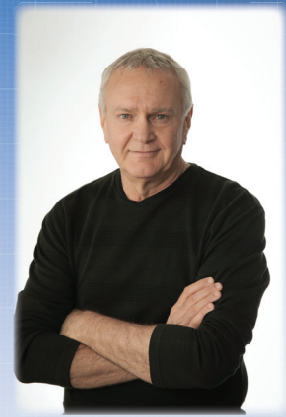
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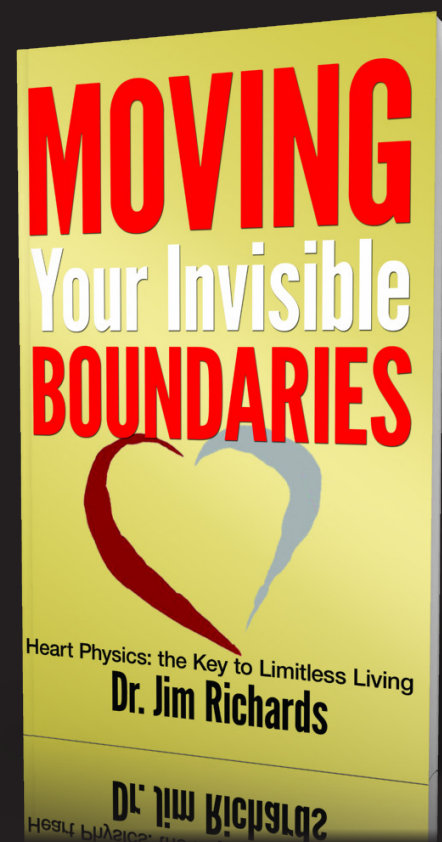
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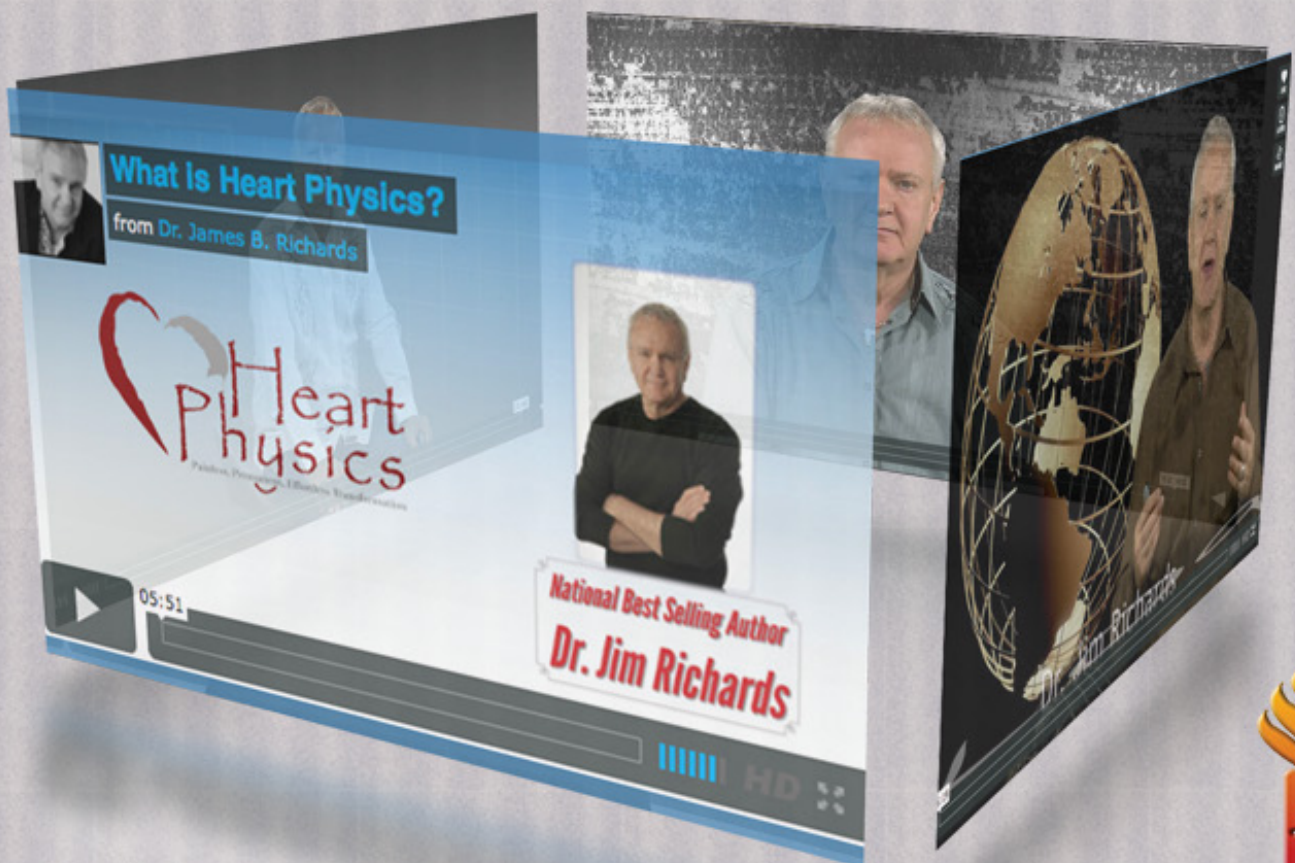
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