

DENNIS BURKE MINISTRIES

# Insights

The Way to a New Life

JULY / AUGUST 2008

## GIVE THE GIFT OF **freedom:** forgiveness

▶ GOD'S FREEDOM FOR US | PG. 2

▶ THE ENABLING GIFT WE GIVE | PG. 5



“Therefore if the  
Son makes  
you **free**,  
you shall be  
**free indeed.**”

JOHN 8:36

# *crucified with Christ*



Y O U C O U L D B E A

# dead man

## **From a lonely, cold prison cell,**

**I** they begin the walk. A prisoner, accompanied by the warden and several guards, walks toward the end of his life. A condemned man, he is minutes away from his just punishment. He was found guilty, and now his crime is about to cost him everything—including his entire future.

“Dead man walking!” The cry is heard through the halls, announcing the inevitable. The prisoner is alive—but that is soon to change.

For a few minutes, it's as though this man is suspended between life and death. Although he's still alive, he has been condemned to die. He is a walking dead man.

[ by Dr. Dennis Burke ]

In many ways, the Bible describes the Christian experience in similar terms. Paul said it this way: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

“Crucified.” The word signifies the cruel execution of a condemned life. Paul had joined himself to the death of a condemned Man—Jesus. Paul was one of the saints who had received divine justice by faith. It was a justice that condemned him to death for his sins, and by faith he had died the death of the Cross.

Paul confidently accepted his sentence and, by virtue of Christ’s death, satisfied divine justice, finding his own place of freedom. It is as though Paul announced, “I am dead—the Law has killed me, and I am now free from its power. In my virtual death, I have borne the curse, and by faith in my Substitute, all that the Law required of me has been executed upon me.”

Think about it—death is liberating! It frees a person from every debt, from all physical weakness and disease. In Christ, the believer can also be liberated from all feelings of guilt and emotional pain attached to past issues. Paul embraced death and allowed it to be completed in him. Death freed him from all that sin had done to him. There was no more joy or excitement in the sins he once guarded, for everything from his life before Christ had died the death of the Cross.

The old corrupt nature was buried and, with it, all that had kept Paul from God’s presence and fullness. But Paul went on

weight of the enemy’s accusations can become a burden that paralyzes our Christian walk.

### You Can Live Accused or Acquitted

Let’s look at the word “accuse” or “accusation,” which means to charge with an offense or a criminal charge. When an accused person is brought into court to be tried for his or her crime, the end result of the trial will be a judgment on the case, or a verdict. That accused person will leave the courtroom one of two ways: He or she will either be guilty and condemned—or acquitted and set free.

We have stood before the Heavenly Court of our Father and been found innocent. Jesus bore our guilt and paid the price we would have paid. As a result, God said He would remember our sin no more (Hebrews 10:17). Colossians 2:13,14 (*NLT*) says He has even removed the handwriting of ordinances against us.

“You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins. He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ’s cross.”

There is no more record of our sins and our transgressions of God’s Law. We are acquitted and free!

In a natural court, once a defendant has been found innocent and thus acquitted, orders are sent throughout the judicial system stating that the charges against this person are to be expunged. This means that all accusations against the

# walking

**Think about it—death is liberating!  
It frees a person from every debt,  
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to say, “Nevertheless I live.” Although he was clearly dead—he was more alive than he’d ever been. Dead—yet very alive! He had been crucified, yet at the same time he was risen with Christ into a new resurrected life.

### The Dead Are Free From Accusation

The accuser keeps trying to fill each of us with guilt from all the things we have or have not done. But how can we be guilty if we’ve fully paid the price for breaking the Law by accepting the sacrifice of the One who gave Himself for us?

In the eyes of God, we are not guilty. Nevertheless, the

defendant are to be removed from his or her record.

The same thing happened in the Father’s Heavenly Court when you were found innocent by virtue of the blood of Jesus. There is now no condemnation or accusation held against you, nor is there even a record in Heaven that you’ve ever been accused of anything! It’s just as if you had never sinned or missed the will of God even once in your entire life. The Father sees you in the light of Jesus’ perfect and complete work of redemption.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who

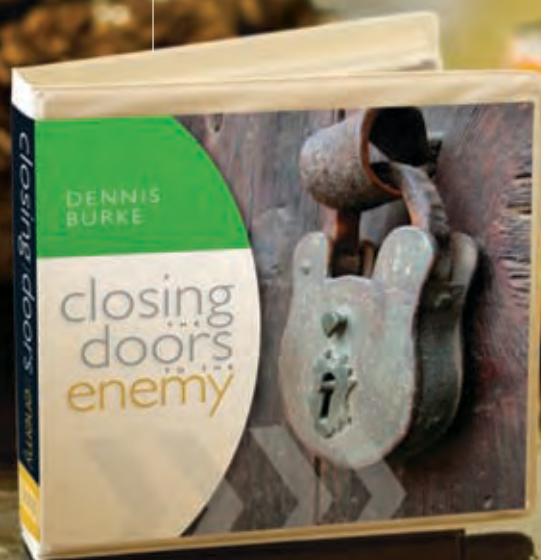
are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).

The *Ben Campbell Johnson* paraphrase of this verse is very powerful: “Now there is no accusing voice nagging those who are united to Jesus Christ...” Once you have put on the new life in Christ, you are acquitted; your sins are expunged; and the voice that accuses you is silenced.

Study the following verses to gain a deeper understanding of your freedom from condemnation:

- **“No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn.**

## accessdenied



**Most thieves do not break in to homes—they gain access through unlocked doors or windows.** If a thief can come in unnoticed, he can steal the precious things that belong to you.

In the same way, Satan examines your life, looking for the open doors that will give him access. His goal is to stop you from receiving from God and to rob you of your destiny.

In this series of messages, Dennis reveals potential access points in your life that must be closed so you can neutralize every demonic strategy set against you and fulfill your destiny.

You will learn:

- How the thief gains access to your life.
- How to identify and close the doors you have left open to him.
- How fear will keep you blind to the truth.
- How angels are working on your behalf right now.
- And much more!

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**This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,’ says the Lord” (Isaiah 54:17).**

- **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24).**
- **“Blessed and happy and to be envied are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered up and completely buried. Blessed and happy and to be envied is the person of whose sin the Lord will take no account nor reckon it against him” (Romans 4:7,8 AMP).**
- **“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).**
- **“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:13,14).**

It is clear that God is not holding our sin against us and that He has freed us from living condemned by any sin. Of course, this doesn’t give us license to continue in sin, knowing that we’re going to be forgiven. It is actually our license to receive God’s unconditional love, to live in His victories, and to walk in the liberty of His finished work.


God’s laws are now written in our hearts, and with those laws we receive the power of the Holy Spirit to live in the freedom from sin that we were designed to enjoy.

In conclusion, in Romans 7:6 (*NLT*) the Apostle Paul describes the Christian life as it now relates to the Law:

“But now we have been released from the law, for we died with Christ, and we are no longer captive to its power. Now we can really serve God, not in the old way by obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way, by the Spirit.”

You are dead to sin, to the Law, and to all condemnation over sin. You are now alive in Christ and have received rightstanding in the presence of our holy God.

All of this has been done to bring you and me back to the place where God’s blessing would freely reside on us and in us. Let your heart grasp this truth. Then enter into the rest of faith where you are accepted, acquitted, and blessed in all realms of life by the redemptive work Jesus finished for you.



FORGIVENESS THE GIFT OF FREEDOM

# the language

by Vikki Burke

*of heaven*

Jesus knew that **offense** would hinder our access to the blessing of God.

WHILE JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS IN PRISON, he heard about the many miracles Jesus had performed and sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus if He was the Messiah to come. Jesus said to them, “Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me” (Luke 7:22–23 *NKJV*).

From outward appearances, it sounds like Jesus changed the subject, doesn't it? He started out talking about miracles and ended up warning them about offense.

Actually, Jesus didn't change the subject at all. He

was purposefully warning John—and us—to avoid the pitfalls of offense. Jesus knew that offense would hinder our access to the blessing of God. He didn't want one of us to miss out on all God has planned—a life that lacks nothing.

We find a perfect example of offense hindering divine blessing when Jesus visited His hometown of Nazareth:

He returned to Nazareth, his hometown. When he taught there in the synagogue, everyone was astonished and said, “Where does he get his wisdom and his miracles? He's just a carpenter's son, and we know Mary, his

mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. All his sisters live right here among us. What makes him so great?” And they were deeply offended and refused to believe in him. Then Jesus told them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his own family.” And so he did only a few miracles there because of their unbelief (Matthew 13:54-58).

Isn't it amazing that these people recognized and acknowledged both Jesus' wisdom and the power to perform miracles that was working through Him—yet they became “deeply offended” simply because they were familiar with Him? Offense worked so forcefully against them that it limited the miracle-working power that flowed through Jesus in city after city throughout the surrounding region. In fact, Jesus was limited to only a few miracles in Nazareth because the people of His hometown “refused” to believe.

What a staggering thought! When we're offended, we become our own worst enemy because offense is the forerunner to “refusing to believe.” Offense—no matter how big or small—can hinder God's blessings from flowing freely in our lives. Yet although offense has the power to prevent us from experiencing God's blessings in our lives, there is a much greater force that paves the road to His blessings and makes them accessible to us. Whereas offense can prevent miracles, this godly force can enable them.

What is this prevailing force? It is nothing less than the power of forgiveness.

Let me give an example from my own life. When my father died, I was just sixteen years old. Only three weeks after his death, I came home from school to meet my mother's boyfriend—a married man she lived with for the next thirty years. I was already very angry about my father's death, but this man's unexpected presence in our home pushed me over the edge. As an unbeliever and a grieving teenager, I made my disdain for this man clearly known. Things in our home went from bad to worse as I expressed my hatred for him and my mother.

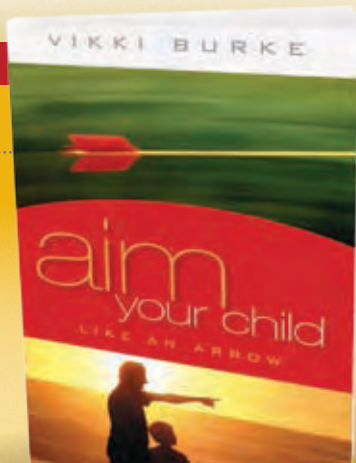
As you can imagine, our home was emotionally charged by enormous difficulties that fueled my ill feelings for both my mother and this man I saw as an intruder. But after I became a Christian, the Holy Spirit began His transforming work in my life. My feelings gradually moved beyond my own pain and anger to compassion as my eyes were opened to the guilt, shame, and misery these two people suffered.

Thirty years later when this man was about to die, the Lord revolutionized my thinking through a vision He gave me. I saw both of my hands extended in front of me, cupped together as though they were holding something. After a moment, this man's heart appeared in my cupped hands. And this is what I heard: “You have the power to crush his heart and allow him to continue suffering the guilt and shame of his sin. Or you can forgive him and release him from the prison of his lifelong bondage.”

Suddenly my eyes were opened to the life this man had lived and the guilt and shame that had isolated and imprisoned him. And I possessed the keys that would open his prison doors and set him free! It was overwhelming to know the degree of authority and power I possessed over another person's soul. It wasn't the kind of power that fed my ego or my flesh the way fame, fortune, or influence might do. It was the kind of power that resonates from Heaven. It was the power to influence another human being's destiny.

With all the wrong that had been done, I could have chosen to allow this man to suffer what I felt he deserved. But as I contemplated that alternative, another revelation hit my heart: Even though I hadn't deserved to be forgiven, God had forgiven me nonetheless.

Isn't that the message of the Gospel? Jesus bore the punishment that I deserved. How could I do anything less than what was done for me?



### For those of you with the responsibility of raising a family,

this book will be an invaluable tool that you will refer to many times as you seek to apply God's truths to training your children or grandchildren. In today's society with so many dysfunctional families, it is refreshing to know that the Word of God is still the answer.

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The realization hit me that if I completely forgave this man—holding nothing against him—I would be exercising the power that I had always imagined was reserved for God alone. I held in my hands the divine ability to release the man from his lifelong prison—the guilt of his past, the shame of hidden secrets, and the fear of being exposed and rejected.

This is the very message that Jesus spoke to His disciples after His resurrection. He commissioned them with this message: “...As the Father has sent me, I am

**I held in my hands the divine ability** to release the man from his lifelong prison—the guilt of his past, the shame of hidden secrets, and the fear of being exposed and rejected.

sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven’ (John 20:22–23 *NIV*).

Jesus gave the authority to forgive sins to those present at the resurrection—and to us as well. Forgiveness not only frees us to receive the blessing of God personally, but it also releases others from the guilt and torment that sin produces.

Paul used this same authority, “When you forgive this man, I forgive him, too. And when I forgive him (for whatever is to be forgiven), I do so with Christ’s authority for your benefit, so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are very familiar with his evil schemes” (2 Corinthians 2:10–11).

Don’t be surprised if people get very angry about this scriptural truth. After all, they got angry with Jesus! When a paralyzed man was brought to Jesus to be healed, Jesus told him, “...Take heart, son! Your sins are forgiven” (Matthew 9:2). Once again, Jesus connected the miraculous with forgiveness. The religious leaders who heard this were infuriated with Jesus, accusing Him of blasphemy. In response, Jesus simply replied, “Is it easier to say ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or ‘Get up and walk?’” (v. 5). Obviously, the answer was that both are equally as miraculous!

Supernatural power is released in our lives when we choose to forgive. Jesus said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come” (Luke 4:18–19). The same anointing that was on Jesus to release captives is available to each of us as believers. When we forgive those who have wronged us, God’s supernatural power is released to set us free and keep us free—to heal us personally and to heal all our broken relationships. Forgiveness gives us access to Heaven’s unlimited resources.

Power is also released in our lives when we choose not to forgive—either way, supernatural power is released. Unforgiveness, however, gives the kingdom of darkness the power to take us captive and then keep us in bondage.

Unforgiveness is one of the open doors Paul warned about that enables Satan to gain access into our lives. We don’t want to relinquish the power of God to the enemy by refusing to forgive. Anytime we hold something against someone, we give Satan the advantage over us. Holding a grudge is not worth forfeiting the

## Upcoming Meetings

### July 19–21

Faith Family Church | Canton, OH | (330) 492-0925

### July 27

Echos of Faith Christian Center  
Chino, CA | (909) 627-0927

### August 1–3

New Dimensions Church  
Yukon, OK | (405) 324-9000

### August 10

Jubilee Christian Center  
Burkburnett, TX | (940) 569-7344

### August 16–19

New Life Family Worship | Punta Gorda, FL | (941) 639-1700

### August 20

Living Word Family Church | Raleigh, NC | (919) 570-2007

### August 22–24

Living Word Christian Center  
Brooklyn Park, MN | (763) 315-7000

### August 25–26

ICFM Regional Convention | Brooklyn Park, MN

### August 30–September 1

The Living Word Bible Church  
Mesa, AZ | (480) 964-4463



supernatural power of God in our lives.

Martin Luther King Jr. said, “Forgiveness is not an occasional habit; it is a permanent attitude. We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love.” Martin Luther King Jr. had experienced his share of injustices—certainly enough to rationalize harboring unforgiveness; nevertheless, he chose to release every hurt and offense.

The truth is, we’ve all been wronged and hurt at some point in our lives. We’ve all been unjustly accused and called hurtful names. And we’ve all experienced betrayal in one form or the other. That’s why we all need to walk in the supernatural power of forgiveness. We must learn to forgive here on earth so we can experience God’s blessings in this life.

Think about forgiveness from this point of view:

The language spoken in Heaven by the angels and the redeemed is the language of forgiveness. It will be the only language spoken there. No other language will be understood. It will be spoken by the seraphim and the cherubim and the whole angelic host as they praise God, the Author of forgiveness and of eternal salvation. It will be spoken by all the redeemed as they greet one another on the banks of the River of Life and gather around the throne of the Lamb and sing their song unto Him who loved them and washed them from their sins. But no one can learn that language after he gets to heaven. It must be learned here upon earth—in this world, and in this life.

(author unknown)

If you find this “language of Heaven” somewhat strange, think again. The language of forgiveness was spoken in Heaven before man even existed. With such intense love for the family yet uncreated, our Heavenly Father designed a failsafe plan to ensure that nothing would hinder His blessings from being enjoyed by humanity. The Plan of Redemption—forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus—was thus conceived in the heart of the Father, accomplished by His Son, and now received by whosoever will.

Once you’ve received forgiveness for yourself, you then have the power to forgive others and thus gain access to the supernatural power of God working in your life. Many of the problems you’re struggling with today would turn around if

you simply forgave your offenders. You could be set free from guilt, shame, condemnation, fear of rejection, and a sense of worthlessness. And your forgiveness could be the instrument of divine release for those offenders who are trapped in the prison of their own self-made bondage.

Forgiveness is one of the characteristics that transforms you more and more into God’s image. And contrary to what you might believe, forgiveness is not weakness.

As I showed you with the example of the man who had wronged our family, you are never more powerful and strong than when you forgive. In doing so, you’re not conceding that the offender was right or that forgiveness was granted because it was deserved. Rather, you’re saying that you are releasing your offender from the sin that was committed against you and transferring the right to punish that person into the hands of the Lord.

So have you learned the language of forgiveness yet? Remember, it must be learned here upon earth and in this life. It’s the only language spoken in Heaven. No other language will be understood.

*Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptures come from the New Living Translation of the Bible.*

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